

Aboyne Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Meeting - Tuesday 26th April 2016

Attendees

Office Bearers	Parent Council Members	Parent Forum Members
Sarah Leahy (Chair)	Sheila McMurtrie	
Lynn Murphy (Vice Chair)	Jo Croll	
Pam Bruce (Secretary)	Gill Ewart-Bannister	
	Catherine Thomson	
Lorraine Scott (Head Teacher)		
Laura Larkworthy (Teacher Rep)		

Additional Attendees

Cllr. Katrina Farquhar, Susan MacGregor (Aboyne Community Network)

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Andrea Geddes, Karen Birnie, Cllr. Geva Blackett and Colin Feeley
Sarah welcomed Susan McGregor from the Aboyne Network to the meeting and handed over to her to open the meeting.

ABOYNE COMMUNITY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Susan MacGregor from the Aboyne Network gave a chat on the services offered by the council. She explained that they provided a number of different services.

- Youth Work in school -working in Partnership with the school and teachers to provide support for the Curriculum for Excellence and physical, emotional and social wellbeing.
- Provide programmes for parents, adults and families to help those with difficulties in numeracy and literacy.
- Provide support for Parent Councils which can help them grow and develop. An offer of an “MOT” was available to the committee should we wish one. Sarah said this was something that we may wish to think about in the future.

Susan finished the meeting leaving some leaflets and Sarah thanked Susan for her time.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

1. Sarah asked that Emma Davis be removed from further correspondence as she has now left school and has stood down from the Parent council.
2. It was noted that the Bingo Fundraiser had to be cancelled.
3. Following on from previous UCAS form discussions it was asked if it would be possible to include the fact that the school only offered a maximum of 6 subjects as part of the school reference. It was agreed that the school would do this as standard in the future. **Action (LL)**

The minutes were approved.

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

Sarah said there was nothing significant to report.

TREASURERS REPORT

Sarah reported from Andrea that the balance at present sits at £350.88

HEAD TEACHER REPORT

1. Staffing

Recent Appointments – Barry Drennan (DHT – starting date May), Aidan Lindsay (Teacher of Biology – starting date August), Rachael Forsyth (Teacher of Business – starting date August). Further advertisements have been posted in Modern Languages. Vacancies also remain in Art and Home Economics. Changes in Maths and Technical will also be necessary due to 2 members of staff who are due to go on maternity leave.

2. Attainment Review

March attainment review was positive.

Copies of the power point can be shared with interested members.

Lorraine also mentioned she is looking into helping the maths department with a view to Enable more pupils to sit National 5 Maths.

A parent asked if it would be possible to look at timetabling extra maths in the junior phase which would help raise attainment in maths during the senior phase.

Mr Foy is now responsible for timetabling and Lorraine said that they were looking at different options.

3. Vision, Values and Aims

Currently being reviewed following extensive consultation. Copies of the draft new version will be shared with Parent Council members this evening and comments are welcome. A graphic will be needed to help the final Motto and values become more visual for our pupils.

4. DYW

A successful Business Breakfast was held on Monday 29th March from 7am -9am. S3 Business and Admin students helped to plan the event and were present to act as hosts on the day. The event was sponsored by Arcadion who cooked and supplied the breakfast assisted by S4 Hospitality students. Many local employers were present and left an exit card indicating how they would be prepared to work with the school.

5. Learning and Teaching

Volunteer staffs are attending **Tapestry** workshops with a focus on improving the standard of Learning and Teaching across the school. There will be training for all staff from these Tapestry school leaders.

SMH – Teachers have been very positive about this online tool. The next step will be to roll this out at the start of the new timetable by engaging with parents and issuing login details.

6. Changes to House Structure and Prefect System

DHTs will be assigned to a House from next Monday. They will no longer be Year Heads. Prefect interviews and selection will take place prior to the start of the new timetable and there will be 8 prefects per house from S5 and S6 along with the Captains and Vice Captains.

7. School Working Groups

Parental involvement is crucial. Opportunity to get parental consent for email addresses to be used by Parent Council. Many P7 parents were interested.

Behaviour

Self-Evaluation

Careers Fayre

8. School Trips

Spain – all planning completed

New York – some work to be done prior to summer to finalise the risk assessment and itinerary. Parent meeting to be planned for start of new session.

Malawi – unlikely to proceed

9. Communication

School website – This has been updated

Now have a Twitter Account

IAN PARKIN VISIT – THURSDAY 17TH MARCH (see reports attached below)

1. 2 House Captains to meet and greet Ian and take him on a tour of the school period 1

Include: S4 Business Mrs Barr S2 English Ms Moodie

S3 Maths Mrs Birnie S5 Chemistry – Mr McTern

To give a flavour of work in different faculties – drop into classrooms for a few minutes.

2. Meet with group of pupils in conference room to discuss learning & pupil voice 10.05–10.30
3. Meet with Mr Foy and 2 members of Self –evaluation group 10.30 – 11.00
4. Meet with Mrs Scott 11.00-11.30 Coffee and plenary



VISITS TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS SPRING 2016
DRAFT

ABOYNE ACADEMY

17 MARCH 2016

1. Improving Learning

Aspects of school approach discussed/seen :

- The school's Community Code provides a context in which learning is valued and encouraged. This however would benefit from being revisited by current learners in the school
- There is a clear specification of expectations that should shape the experiences of learners in the classroom (The Nine Learning and Teaching Guidelines).
- There is strong cohesion between the school's self-evaluation processes and the classroom experiences of young people

How does the school support improvements in learning for young people?

- Teachers are very committed to delivering high quality experiences for learners
- Moves towards a revised approach to behaviour management are helping to create a positive climate for learning
- Engagement of learners within pupil focus groups allows for young people themselves to influence improvements in how they learn

How does the school support the development of teachers' capacity in this area?

- Through a range of In Service, collegiate and twilight events aspects of effective classroom practice are discussed and effective approaches shared
- All faculties evaluate and plan for improvements in learners' experiences. This assists in informing improvements across the school
- The PRD and GTCS Professional Update processes are influential in referencing the importance of reviewing and improving classroom practice



Overall strengths	Aspects for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive ethos in the school and the overall school climate • The commitment of staff to meet the needs of young people • The linkage between self-evaluation and the classroom experience of young people • The commitment to a planned programme of school improvement based on a Teacher Learning Community model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the revised school values as a backdrop, re-establishing learning as a cornerstone of school life • Refreshing the school's expectations of an Aboyne lesson and what it is to be a learner at Aboyne Academy • Further embed specific aspects of classroom practice: feedback to learners, development of higher order thinking skills and differentiation to meet the needs of all learners

2 .IMPROVEMENT THROUGH SELF-EVALUATION

Aspects of school approach discussed/seen :

- There is a clear commitment to self-evaluation as illustrated by a clear policy on this aspect
- A Quality Improvement Calendar shapes a range of evaluative activities across each school session. These activities include:
Learning tours,
Faculty Peer visits
Thematic Reviews
- A system of classroom visits confirms that evaluation activities are firmly rooted in the context of improving learners' experiences and outcomes. The emergence of paired observation visits is very good practice
- A Self-Evaluation Group is increasingly influential in developing practice that supports effective evaluation leading to impact for young people



How does the school engage with partners /stakeholders to support collaborative approaches to self-evaluation?

- The "Pupil Voice" is significant within approaches to self-evaluation. Amongst contexts for participation are : pupil focus groups, contribution to Thematic Reviews, 5 a day meetings with senior leaders and the Pupil Council
- Parents are engaged in self-evaluation primarily via the Parent Council and particular questionnaires. There are plans to extend this aspect including the establishing of Open days to allow parents to see and comment on the school in action
- The school enjoys positive relationships with partners and other providers and young people benefit from such liaison. Less well-established is the engagement of such partners in aspects of collaborative planning and evaluation
- The consultation process with staff is thorough and well-focussed. An extension of this could be the engagement of wider cluster colleagues in jointly evaluating aspects such as learning, teaching and curriculum

How does the school ensure evaluation activities have impact on learners' experiences and outcomes?

- As above, the main areas of focus for evaluation activities at Aboyne Academy is the classroom experience of young people
- The thoroughness of analysis of Insight data supports reflection and improvements targeted at raising attainment
- Evaluation activities such as Classroom Observations and Faculty Reviews have built in to them facility to indicate aspects to be followed-up
- A systematic approach to re-evaluating to ascertain impact and then sharing such outcomes is a development point for the school

How does the school support the development of teachers' capacity in this area?

- The Self-Evaluation Group take a lead role in shaping and disseminating practice
- In –Service days and other collegiate activities have focussed on improvement through self-evaluation
- Aberdeenshire E&CS resources and more recently HGIOS4 have been used as materials to encourage reflection and improvements in practice



Overall strengths	Aspects for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall commitment to self-evaluation • The development of self-evaluation as an on-going professional activity • The engagement of young people in aspects of evaluation that provoke improvements in their experiences and outcomes • The leadership at different levels of self-evaluation to the benefit of learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine procedures to ensure that demonstrable impact is seen and shared following evaluation activities • Extend the membership of the QI group (links to pupils, parents and partners) • Amend the QI calendar to confirm with whom evaluation activities engage • Engage more collaboratively with parents and partners in formal evaluation exercises • Continue to support professional learning regarding the implementation of HGIOS4

3. FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

Areas of practice to share with other schools :

- Approaches to Faculty Self-evaluation
- The process of revising the school vision and values
- The engagement of young people in evaluation focus groups

Aspects of support requested :

- Advice on the strategic direction to influence aspects of improvement-planning
- Support to develop consistency of leadership for all principal teachers

Other aspects discussed :

- As per above the engagement of Lucy Angel (Aberdeenshire Council HR officer) in supporting a leadership development programme

FUNDRAISING

The next fundraiser will be a raffle at the school concert in June. The prizes donated for the Bingo night will be used.

SENIOR PUPILS HOODIES

It was asked when the senior pupils would be allowed to wear the hoodies and LS advised that they could wear them for the last week.

It was also suggested that it would be beneficial for the leavers to be encouraged to wear their hoodies when they come in to sit their exams. This solved any awkward dress issues that often arise when pupils who have left school come in to sit their exams. Lorraine advised that they would let the pupils know.

(Action LS)

SEAT BELTS ON BUSES

Sarah advised that there is a Consultation on Seatbelt Requirements for Dedicated School Transport. Current Scottish Government Policy is to bring forward legislation to make it obligatory for councils to include in their contracts with bus operators that seatbelts are a requirement on dedicated school buses. The Government are seeking views of interested parties in this consultation. Sarah passed round her suggested responses and it was agreed that she would respond on behalf of the Parent Council.

(Action SL)

BRAEMAR BUS

There have for some time been serious issues with the Braemar Bus, which is also a service bus, including

- buses being late – both on morning and afternoon run
- buses repeatedly breaking down
- the double decker bus running in high winds
- pupils being left at roadside when the bus has broken down and then transferred to a bus with insufficient capacity to seat them all.

BRAEMAR BUS (cont'd)

A number of meetings have been held to try and address the ongoing issues;

- 9/12/16 : SMT at Aboyne Academy met with Aberdeenshire Council and Stagecoach.
- 17/12/16: SMT at Aboyne Academy met with Aberdeenshire Council, Stagecoach, a selection of pupils who travel on the Braemar bus, a Braemar parent and AAPC.
- 22/02/16: A public meeting chaired by Cllr Evison was held in Braemar to allow parents, pupils and members of the public who use the bus to express their concerns directly to Stagecoach. It was attended with representatives from Stagecoach, Aberdeenshire Council, Aboyne Academy and AAPC.
- At the meeting on 22/2/16 Stagecoach announced that they would trial a high capacity 15 metre tri-axle coach.
- Since the meeting on 22/2/16 there have again been a number of issues and pupils were late to school several times in one week. This was a week when some pupils were sitting practical SQA exams. Stagecoach have agreed for the rest of this term to have a direct bus to the Academy in the morning, as well as the service bus. The standby bus will also remain for the afternoon run. It remains unclear what will happen after the summer.

TIMINGS OF ASSESSMENTS/FOLIOS/PROJECTS

The concern was raised again about the timing of assessments and folios and projects. Many children are having to cram an awful lot of vital work into a period of a few weeks and sometimes just a few days. Many of these folios or projects can be worth a significant part of the exam and is causing some children considerable anxiety. The committee wondered if the SQA could perhaps do something to alleviate this stress. Laura has a contact at the SQA. She will approach him to see if he could come and discuss the problems that parents, pupils and teachers are having. (Action LL)

Sarah agreed to contact the Chairpersons for the other Parent Councils in the catchment area to see if they are having similar problems (Action SL)

AOB

- Rugby for S1 & S2 – Colin Feeley is still interested in starting an after school session for S1&2 and has met with Mike (Deeside RFC) who is keen to assist with the organisation and training etc but he is still waiting for contact from the active schools coordinator for Aboyne. Michael Foy has undertaken to canvass teachers to see if any would be willing to help. Lorraine Scott advised that M Adam from the P.E. department is going to liaise with Colin on this matter and Lorraine is to speak to Shona the Active Schools coordinator. **(Action LS)**
- Concerns were raised regarding some pupils understanding of the Enterprise initiative and whether the Parent Council could do more to assist with these initiatives. Lorraine advised that this would be followed up by the school. **(Action LS)**
- Possible Fundraising Opportunity

An email has been received from the “JUSTGIVING” website which suggested that the Parent Council could set up an account to raise funds for the school – Jo Croll advised something similar had been done for Ballater Primary and it was a success. It was agreed that we should look into setting this up. **(Action SL/PB)**

- The nine Learning and Teaching Guidelines

Lorraine handed out a sheet listing 9 learning and teaching guidelines for Aboyne Academy. She asked if people could look at it and feedback any comments or ideas.

(See sheet below)



2. The nine Learning and Teaching Guidelines

1. Effective learning is supported by a positive classroom atmosphere and ethos where good relationships predominate. We should aim to have a 'climate for learning' in class that is positive.
2. Teachers should have clearly established entry and exit routines for each classroom or teaching area that are shared with pupils. These routines are very helpful in supporting good classroom management.
3. Clear classroom rules and expectations, which are shared with pupils, support a positive class ethos and atmosphere for learning. These should be based on the Community Code and the Behaviour Management Policy and Procedures.
4. Sharing learning intentions with pupils at the start of the lesson and reviewing them briefly at the end is helpful for both pupils and teacher. This also supports learning gain and consolidation.
5. Where learning is an enjoyable activity that provides pupils with the opportunity to actively contribute there is evidence that it is more effective.
6. Pupils generally respond well to challenge. Lesson planning should aim to provide appropriate challenge for all pupils. This should be achieved through the use of flexible or differentiated tasks.
7. Pupils value receiving regular individual feedback, formally and informally. Wherever possible this should be a feature of lessons. Direct interaction, based on AiFL principles, with pupils or groups within the class during lessons is very effective.
8. Appropriate use of praise is valued by pupils and supports positive classroom relationships. The use of praise, including consistent use of Merit Stamps, should be a feature of lessons.
9. Planned use of homework is very effective. The guidance given within the whole school and department or faculty homework policy should be followed consistently. This includes ensuring that pupils make effective use of their planner.