

Minute of Meeting of Lairdsland Primary School Parent Council

Location: MS Teams

Date: 29 October 2024, 6pm

Annamarie Conway, Libby Bradford, Maria Kerr, Nigel Rooke, Ruzooka Rwakishasha, Emma Alkirwi, Sandra McEntee, Kirsty McEwen. Sravan Vadaga, Maggie Noszczyk-McLean, Andrew Mawston

Apologies from Fraser Gallacher, Hannah Topalian-Loban, Deniz Uster-Harrup.

Introductions

Welcome to Annamarie Conway, the acting head teacher, who joined on 21 October. Everyone attending introduced themselves.

Review of minutes of last meeting

Action to circulate the Cost of the School Day Position Statement with parents has been completed.

Action to circulate a link to the School Improvement Plan and a summary with parents has been completed.

The Care Inspectorate Report for the Early Years Centre Care report was shared with the Parents Council earlier today. This topic for discussion will therefore be carried forwards to next meeting.

New Acting Headteacher

Annamarie Conway introduced herself as the acting head teacher whilst Mrs Donaghey continues her career break. Annamarie acknowledged the great job carried out by Libby as Interim Head Teacher and thanks Marie and Libby for the support provided as she settles in.

Annamarie would like to reassure everyone that her key aim is to ensure consistency and to take forward school improvement plan priorities. She spoke of her 30 years in education across North Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire Councils, including previous headteacher posts.

Council Budget Reduction Strategy

Annamarie raised the particularly important issue of East Dunbartonshire's Council's Budget Reduction Strategy.

The council is now in a phase of utilising only critical spend to address the shortfall in its budget. This is unprecedented in Annamarie's experience with the implications for the school not yet fully known. All expenditures must be handled with great care and

verified by the Council. NR thought that the school's budget for the year has already been allocated and therefore additional permissions on expenditure within this budget should not be required.

Yet the school is asked to make savings, for example at times of staff turnover, and creative approaches to the school budget will be necessary. Across the Council area there is an emphasis on reducing printing, leading to the removal of printers from schools. Lairdsland has only one printer and one photocopier. There is a 10% reduction in devolved school management budget lines (i.e. where the school has autonomy over expenditure, e.g. staffing, classroom materials and resources).

Alongside the budget reduction strategy will be a review of the Pupil Equity Fund conditions and funding (the PEF is intended to help schools reduce the impact of poverty on children's learning).

NR: This will be an ongoing discussion throughout the year, and it is requested to be a regular item on the agenda. It would be beneficial to bring any potential impact on Lairdsland pupils to the attention of the Parents Council.

Action: Annamarie to bring an update to the next meeting.

Kirkintilloch Community Sports Complex:

It is understood that the head teacher of Lairdsland has a place on the Sports Complex Board.

Action: Annamarie to follow up membership on the board with the Kirkintilloch Community Sports Centre.

The school will make contact to explore potential opportunities now that the complex is operational, and the necessary paperwork is in place. However, it is noted that health and safety constraints impose certain limitations. As a community sports facility there is an intention to broaden access to the facilities.

Halloween Disco

This was well attended. Annamarie expressed her thanks to the PTA, as well as the parents and staff who supported the event.

Residential P7 trip

The P7 residential trip is scheduled for next week. A checklist and programme will to be issued to parents tomorrow (30 October).

Bikeability Programme

P7 students also busy with Bikeability programme, the national cycle training programme for school children (<https://cycling.scot/bikeability-scotland>).

Newsletter

The next newsletter will be issued in early November and will cover seasonal activities and opportunities for parents to see performances.

School Improvement Plan Progress

The School Improvement Plan focuses on three priorities a year which are

- The Circle framework
- UNCRC accreditation
- Reading

Maria provided an update of the implementation of the Circle Model

There is a requirement to utilise space differently. All classrooms can use the open space – will look at how this is used by the children. Could consider how the dining room space can be better used. Going to go ahead with a small space to be a dedicated sensory space.

The overview of the circle framework was provided at the last meeting. The goal is to create a more universal and inclusive environment. Staff have completed the training and have examined the classroom scale environments. Since the last Parent Council meeting, staff have developed a whole- school action plan which is a working document and mainly focuses on the physical environment, as well as certain structures and routines. Maria and Miss Hill (who is also leading on this initiative) attended a local authority-wide collegiate session attended by other schools.

The next step is to involve students in reviewing the inclusive classroom scale and the school action plan will be adapted to incorporate pupil voices. Collaboration with Adrienne Wright, Link Educational Psychologist, has led to some promising developments. These include incorporating sensory zones that children can use in open areas, classrooms, and playgrounds, and auditing storage spaces to improve physical space. Consistent visuals and labelled resources across the school are being implemented to promote pupil independence. Additionally, elements of structures and routines, as well as updates to the Positive Relationships Policy and nurture principles, have been identified by teachers.

One issue noted is the limited space in the school. All classrooms can use the open space and how this space is utilised by the children will be looked at. There is also consideration of better use of the dining room space. Plans are in place to establish a small dedicated sensory space.

Libby provided an update on the reading objective. We are reviewing the programme of work, enhancing staff capacity, managing resources, raising attainment, and promoting reading for enjoyment. East Dunbartonshire has introduced a literacy framework which

we are cross-referencing although the majority of the elements are already in place. The working party held on the October in-service day conducted a literacy audit with staff to identify development needs and areas where they feel confident to share best practices, to inform future Continued Professional Development (CPD) Sessions. Miss Henderson is co-leading the working party with Libby.

East Dunbartonshire has held a CPD session with a follow-up session planned for next month. P1 and early years staff are participating in the Education Scotland pilot on early years reading, with a meeting this week to finalise its focus. Best practice will be shared through online sessions.

Book Week Scotland will take place between 18th - 24th November. Lairdsland has been loaned a wide selection of books to encourage reading for enjoyment. Book bags will be distributed to P1 pupils, while P2 and P3 pupils will receive Read Write Count bags. Library spaces will be created in both the bottom and top corridors, transforming these areas into dedicated library zones with spaces for quiet reading. This initiative will contribute towards achieving the reading accreditation.

Other actions include:

- Develop a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) learning plan for staff.
- Work towards reading accreditation.
- Engage with other schools to learn best practices.

Teachers discuss students' strengths and literacy needs, incorporating their preferred learning methods into universal planning.

SM asked whether pupils are asked their preference on how they learn. LB explained that teachers have regular discussions with pupils on their strengths and additional literacy needs, incorporating their preferred learning methods into universal planning and they will be gathering children's voices as part of the programme.

Miss Henderson will share more information on library visits shortly, an activity which received enthusiastic support from the Parents Council.

SV queried why numeracy is not an identified priority. LB responded that the School Improvement Plan is limited to three priorities at a time. Numeracy had been included in previous Improvement Plans, but the identified measures had been achieved. This will be reviewed for future Improvement Plans.

Early Years update

The inspection report will be discussed at the next meeting. Annamarie has visited the nursery several times. Weekly meetings are essential to devise an improvement plan, especially regarding staffing, which is a key priority. The hope is that recruitment and retention will become more settled going forwards.

Parental engagement and involvement.

NR asked the group what it would like to see in parental engagement, and the constitution of the Parents Council includes promoting parental engagement.

Pre-covid, there was a wide range of parental involvement, from reading sessions, to running clubs or committees, to activities sent home for families to complete together. Since then, the level of parental engagement has reduced although sports clubs are starting up again. We should now focus on how we can foster increased parental involvement and offer suggestions for how parents can engage with school life. At the last meeting we discussed how we could encourage parents if they had a skill they could share, possibly as a one-off session.

LB provided explained that previously a description of how parents could engage with the school had been shared but this received a low response. A follow-up with additional information will be circulated to parents shortly.

AOB:

Ruzooka and Deniz have offered to take minutes over the next two meetings. Volunteers are requested for the rest of the year. Future meeting dates are now attached to the agenda of this meeting. The next meeting is earmarked for the 10 December, but this might need to be changed to 3rd December subject to confirmation from Annamarie.

Action: Annamarie to confirm availability for 10th December with NR.