

LINLITHGOW ACADEMY
PARENT COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT:
SESSION 2014/2015



Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September 2015

Committee

Parent members (continuing)

Kate Signorini (Chair)
Elspeth Brown (Vice Chair)
Helen Boxall
Lindsay Guthrie
Mark Fulton
Kathryn Morrison
Jennifer MacDonald
Douglas Taylor
Douglas Gray
Derek Wolfe

Parent Members (joined 2014/15)

Jo Smith
Laurie Boles

Head Teacher and Advisor to Parent Council

Karen Jarvis

Staff Members

Peter Scott, Rhona White

Pupil Members

Neil Anderson
Rebecca Carey

LAA Representative

Kathryn Morrison

Clerk

Jenny O'Donnell

1. WELCOME

Kate Signorini chaired the meeting and presented the annual report.

2. APOLOGIES

Derek Wolfe (parent member)
Karla Bischt (parent from Springfield)
Graham Kerr (parent from Springfield)

3. ANNUAL REPORT OF PARENT COUNCIL FOR 2014-2015

A copy of the Parent Council Constitution is available on the Academy website under Information for Parents/Parent Council

Summary of the Year

At the start of the academic year on the back of an excellent HMIE assessment, we welcomed Karen Jarvis as our new Head Teacher. The Parent Council has enjoyed an open and positive dialogue with Karen and the school over the past year, offering what we hope has been constructive support particularly in regard to the Senior Phase Presentation Model and course choice guidance.

The Parent Council has continued to work towards improving parental engagement through participation at Primary 7 induction events and representation at several parent evenings during the year.

Main Topics During the Year

The Parent Council priorities agreed for 2014/15 were as follows:

1. Continue to promote use of and subscription to the school website

The school has been using the website as the central means of communication during the year. The majority of parents/carers have now supplied the school with their email addresses and the Parent Council has continued to encourage parents/carers to subscribe to the school website to receive regular email updates and the daily bulletin.

2. Parent-friendly summary of school improvement plan (SIP) available on school website

3. Parents' guide to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

4. Update the prospectus/ rough guide for parents to school life including 'top tips'

A condensed version of the new school improvement plan has been produced. A more user-friendly School Handbook was developed in collaboration with staff and parents.

5. More interaction with primary schools particularly those out-with Linlithgow

It was agreed that representatives of catchment area primary school parent councils would be invited to this AGM and to attend future meetings as observers as appropriate. Catchment area primary school parent councils would be made aware of the Academy website as a useful source of information.

6. Discuss pupils off school premises at lunchtime

S1s are advised to stay on school premises during lunchtimes for the first month, at least until the September holiday. It is not feasible to enforce children to stay on school premises at lunchtimes but pupils who do leave the school are expected to act responsibly and as an ambassador for their school. There is felt to be less incentive for pupils to leave school at lunchtime now as there are a number of lunchtime clubs, better choice of food is available and queues are more manageable due to the pre-order machines.

7. School LGBT/Stonewall group had expressed a wish to come to speak to the Parent Council to talk about the work the group does.

The school LGBT/Stonewall group was invited to attend a Parent Council meeting. Unfortunately, this never came to fruition. The Parent Council has found the representation of the Pupil Council

enormously valuable at its meetings and is grateful for the pupils' enthusiasm, support and constructive participation.

Other topics discussed over the year have included feedback on pupil performance, cyberbullying and the school's policy regarding smoking.

In addition to our thanks to the Pupil Council representatives noted above, the Parent Council would also like to note its thanks to the two teacher representatives, Rhona White and Peter Scott, for their valuable contributions over the course of the year.

Formal Meetings

The Parent Forum consists of all parents/guardians of children at Linlithgow Academy who automatically become members on the entry of their child to the school.

The Parent Council is the committee representing the Parent Forum in the school and where necessary to West Lothian Council or other bodies.

There were 5 regular Parent Council meetings held during the academic year. Recurring items included the Head Teacher's report and regular reports on behalf of Linlithgow Academy Association (LAA) and the Pupil Council. Parent Council meeting agendas and minutes are available to view on the school website (under Information for Parents):

<http://www.linlithgowacademy.org/>

All parents/carers are entitled to attend the Parent Council meetings to observe the proceedings though it is helpful if you can notify the Chair in advance if you intend to attend (kate.signorini@blueyonder.co.uk). A number of parents/carers have attended Parent Councils throughout the year, we would like to thank them for their contributions and would like to welcome others to attend. Dates of future meetings are given below and on the school website.

Other Items

External meetings - a number of wider parental involvement bodies exist that Parent Council members are invited to. These include West Lothian Parent Forum (WLPF) and the National Parent Forum of Scotland. The Chair has attended these meetings where possible or brought them to the attention of other members of the Parent Council. Often useful information i.e, revision guides can be obtained at these forums.

The Parent Council has participated in a number of consultations from West Lothian Council throughout the year on such topics as Delivering Better Outcomes, Admission Arrangements for Specialist Provision and School Session dates 2016 -17. As the result of an agreement reached at the West Lothian Parent Forum, West Lothian Council has now purchased a group membership of the Scottish Parent Teacher Council for all Parent Councils in West Lothian which provides us with support and insurance for events.

4. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

Last year was challenging. Lots of big changes to grapple with alongside the school having a new Head Teacher. I enjoyed it. Feels positive. Finances have stabilised, staffing is stabilising and we have a clear idea of where we are heading.

Pride in the school

Best attainment over last 5 years

5+ highers 44%

3+ highers 59%

1+ higher 74%

Young people who sat N5 in S4 did well. Staff have been using existing data to inform our next steps and to advise pupils and parents. We are looking at data further down the school and using that earlier with a view to maintaining a performance around that level. A key feature is that we are using the data we have to support young people at an individual level and to make predictions for future performance at headline level.

Wider Achievements

Volunteering in Ghana, more locally at the Palace, and at Leadership camps (Rotary).

Sporting prowess - elite golfing, canoeing, swimming, cycling, football, dancing, the list goes on

Creative talents - musicians of all varieties, enterprising pupils, artists

Staff

Many staff are local and national leaders in their field advising colleagues across West Lothian and beyond. Senior team has been reduced - PTC have had responsibilities increased to have whole school role. Working well.

Summarised Improvement Plan

Learning and Teaching - for all young people to experience high quality teaching which allows them to learn. Developing skills which support independence in learning.

Monitoring and Tracking - Continue to improve the rigour we introduced last session. Build on growing bank of data and make use of appropriate interventions.

Review of curriculum - BGE (Broad General Education) and Senior Phase - improvements to ensure best outcomes for pupils.

Self Evaluation - continue to build on the consistency and use of data we gather.

5. ELECTION OF PARENT COUNCIL MEMBERS

There are currently 12 members on the council so membership is full. But parents are always welcome and are greatly valued at the meetings. Email Kate (Chair):

kate.signorini@blueyonder.co.uk to attend.

6. TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION 2015-16

- Elspeth (Vice Chair) reiterated the need for pre-emptive communication of Senior Phase tests and exams under the CfE. LA had tweaked the national model last year to allow S4s the option to sit their N5 at the end of S4, as per the norm, or to bypass these exams if they had attained an A or B in prelims. The priority moving forward was to make sure parents understood the rationale behind this option and the benefit to pupils who could decide whether to extend or consolidate at the appropriate level. New terms such as NABS, UASKS and AB tests under the CfE could be explained in advance via the website for those entering the Senior Phase. Course choices were another topic for which parents and pupils could have early warning and guidance.
- The Parent Council have talked about a project called 'Enhancing the LA Experience' the goal of which was to make communication 'clearer, easier, better' between parents and the school. To this end, a new website has been commissioned and should be up and running shortly. An

updated version of the School Handbook is on the current website in a more user-friendly format for parents and pupils. Questionnaires at parent evenings have proved very useful and will continue as a means of gaining important feedback from parents.

- More involvement at the National Parent Forum to understand what resources are available for parents and pupils, e.g. revision guides etc.
- Make stronger links with Primary feeder schools and Parent Councils to help the transition for incoming pupils.

Smaller Issues and Frequently Asked Questions

- Parent Evenings very early in year with no later feedback from teachers. Solution difficult because of the contractual hours required from teachers already taken up with monitoring and tracking. Therefore, two parent evenings are not feasible.
- Schedule/Calendar of events and upcoming tests for each year group to go on website.
- Email alerts pointing to new material on website i.e. newsletters, PC minutes, schedules, etc.

7. PUPIL COUNCIL REPORT

Rebecca explained the issue of locker availability. There are 900 lockers to cover all pupils though not all choose to have a locker. Juniors can share. The problem is that those who do want a locker are unable to get keys early on due to these not being returned. Therefore it has been proposed that a locker be kept over two years with pupils returning the keys before the holidays after the second year. S5s were the priority and S6 leavers would return the keys before study leave. Notice would be given for allocation dates on the website and via email.

8. DATES OF FUTURE PARENT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Thursday 1st October 2015
Monday 23rd November 2015
Tuesday 2nd February 2016
Wednesday 13th April 2016
Monday 30th May 2016

All meetings will be held at 7.00pm in the Conference Room, Linlithgow Academy unless notified otherwise. Parents and Carers are very welcome to come along to these meetings.