

BONNYRIGG PRIMARY AND NURSERY PARENTS' GROUP

Tuesday 27th September

Present: Carole Sneddon, Susan Greig, Laura Chalmers, Nicola Donaghey, Megan Free, Angie Ogden, Lesley Burrell, Fiona Gardner, Cat McDermid, Angela Bowman, Caroline Findlay (DHT), Jennifer Allison (HT), Chiraz Sellami, Colin Wilkinson (chair)

Apologies: Sarah Stark (DHT), Hayley Harlick, Karen Wightman.

1. Intro from Chair (Colin Wilkinson)

Colin thanked the outgoing Chair (Louise Murray) and vice-chair (Susan Henderson) for their time and effort over the last few years.

Colin then introduced himself to the group and thanked everyone for turning up, while asking everyone to encourage others to come along in the future.

Colin confirmed that the parents should drive the agenda of these meetings and asked for agenda items, along with any ideas or concerns to be sent to the new Parent council email address – bonnyriggparentcouncil@hotmail.com

This process will give Mrs Allison an opportunity to prepare an answer for the meeting. Due to the infrequency of the meetings this is a better solution than waiting 6-8 weeks until the next meeting.

Ideally the email address should be our forum, not Facebook or Twitter – comments on these sites can cause damage to the reputation of the school

2. Confirmation of role bearers and available roles

Colin introduced the office bearers are follows:

Treasurer – Catriona McDermid

Secretary – Lesley Burrell and Fiona Gardner

Vice chair – still unfulfilled.

Jennifer Allison suggested it would be nice to have a volunteer for vice chair who is regularly in the playground so ideally a parent from the lower school.

Colin raised the idea that a representative for each year be appointed. Parents may feel more comfortable to approach someone they know from their child's year group with a query or suggestion. Jennifer mentioned this has been tried before. Parents at the meeting supported this idea.

Action -Colin to put this idea forward on the Bonnyrigg Primary and Nursery Parents' Group Facebook page to hopefully find a representative from each year.

3. School Improvement Plan

Jennifer spoke about the school improvement plan (SIP) which is on the website and is based on the 'How Good is Our School' document. Staff were asked to evaluate themselves and priorities for the year ahead were identified as Literacy, Numeracy and Learning & Teaching.

Louise Donaldson (PT) is heading up Numeracy

Sarah Stark (DHT) is heading up Literacy

Caroline Findlay (DHT) is heading up Learning & Teaching

Jennifer explained there are more challenging children coming through the school and they want to ensure they focus on getting it right for every child. Jennifer stated they hoped to have more success in involving parents in the SIP.

Jennifer has a new line manager this year – Craig Biddock. It is no longer Nicola McDowall.

Midlothian has also been looking at Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). This is where each child is ranked according to their postcode. In Bonnyrigg Primary School the majority of children are SIMD 9 or 10 which are the highest grades. Jennifer explained that as with all studies like this it is mainly a guide as they are aware there are families in the school who do struggle yet the study has ranked their postcode highly.

Angela Bowman asked if the improvement of the playground is still on the school's agenda and volunteered her time to help out if it is. Jennifer said there is a lack of staff time for moving this forward. The feeling amongst staff at the moment is that time is very precious. Mr Garwood has said he will continue his overview of the playground in his own time and Jennifer suggested Angela speak with him. Caroline Findlay said the school would be grateful for parent helpers who were available to take out and bring in loose materials from the outside container at break times. To enable all children to get a chance to use them, this would need to happen three days a week.

Parents asked if there was funding to improve the school playground and whether the fundraising group can choose something in particular to raise money for. There was a feeling that this approach may encourage involvement from a larger number of parents. Jennifer explained how invaluable the fundraising group has been. Last year they managed to buy ipads for the school but unfortunately there weren't many parents willing to take part in the group. There hasn't been a meeting since the previous Christmas Fair. Parents questioned whether there would be Halloween discos or a Christmas Fair this year. Colin reminded everyone there was a Fundraising meeting on Friday the 7th of October where all of these questions could be discussed.

Caroline asked if anyone was willing to coordinate organising the Christmas card orders and Cat volunteered to do this again.

Action – Colin to issue a message to parents re the current situation with the fundraising group

4. Midlothian Learner Statement

Caroline Findlay outlined a Midlothian working group she has been involved in which is focussed on helping children become better learners. Parents looked at a draft version of the new Midlothian poster which outlines entitlements and were asked for feedback.

Caroline explained that the school have developed garden characters which will become part of a toolkit, used to support children in their learning. Parents will get dictionaries explaining the terms used and there may be an opportunity to buy bookmarks of the characters.

5. Web communication

Kate Brandwood (P4) has taken on the job of updating the school website. Lots of information is now available such as school policies, newsletters as well as copies of letters issued home. Jennifer mentioned they are trying to improve communication following feedback in previous years.

6. Future meetings

Colin suggested the idea of having a main topic for each meeting . He offered suggestions such as finance, buildings and Education Scotland. He hoped this would encourage more people along to meetings. Colin suggested parents email him with any suggestions they had for meeting topics. Caroline Findlay suggested 'What's the school doing well v's What could we do better' based on the feedback received at parents' evening last year. This was agreed as the topic for the next meeting. Jennifer suggested a speaker from the Children's University for one meeting.

Action – Colin – next meeting topic 'What's the school doing better v's What could we do better'.
Finance meeting to be arranged for March/ April 2017.
Standards and Quality report to be shared at future meeting.

7. Close

Colin asked if anyone would like to attend Education Appeals Training next Thursday (6th October). Angie Ogden volunteered to attend.

Colin thanked everyone for coming and confirmed the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday the 8th of November at 6.45pm.