

Head Teacher Report Parent Council 29/01/18

Staffing

We are looking at the timetable for 2018/19 and recruiting staff with a view to this. Recruiting a physics teacher remains a priority.

Estimate Examinations

The Estimate Examination two week diet is now complete. The exams ran very smoothly. Staff are currently marking scripts and will be providing feedback and advice to senior pupils on their next steps. We will be encouraging our pupils to make best use of this specific advice and use this to plan their individual revision work.

Library/study spaces

Our Canadian FPs ran a fundraising campaign for the Library and have just issued us with a cheque for £2,800. This will be used to complete the final purchases for the senior study area.

Due to the requirement for the use of computers to research and produce assignments and dissertations from National 5 through to Advanced Higher, our young people are still asking for more IT provision. It is challenging to do this within existing budgets but we do have an idea about the classroom we use for physical education theory work. We are costing the possibility of adding 16 computer spaces around the walls. There will still be desk space in the main part of the room.

Parental engagement

Our parental engagement strategy centres on involving parents in their child's learning and progress. For example, the Planning for Success events concentrate on approaches to learning and study. We are also running a series of Learner Pathways events which concentrate on making informed decisions and take forward our work on Developing the Young Workforce (DyW). On 11 January we held our S3 Learner Pathways event where employers, recruitment agencies, North East Scotland College (NESCol) and the University of Aberdeen were present. Representatives from subject areas were also on hand to provide advice. We organised this in advance of the S3 Parents' Meeting and the completion of the S3 course choice forms. The aim being to provide information to inform the course choice process. It was a very busy evening and the feedback from providers was that they were asked lots of questions on skills and qualifications. We have a further evening scheduled for 28th February to support current S4 and S5 pupils as they consider course choice.

The employment landscape has changed and it is important that our knowledge is current and that we share this. As such, we are adding in another learner pathways event for S1 parents (7pm 19th February). Here, we will discuss skills, occupations and introduce our work on Developing the Young Workforce. There will also be a practical session from Mr Martin (Depute Head Teacher) and myself on the S2/3 curriculum and progression from this into the national qualifications.

Road Safety

Within school we are raising the profile of the importance of using the crossings and staying safe in a busy City Centre location. This has been discussed during tutor time and will be raised again at assemblies. It is also covered in the Personal and Social Education (PSE) S1 Curriculum. A safe line of sight is also being blocked by cars parking on yellow lines outside the front gates to pick up young people. Following discussion with the Parent Council it was agreed that we should issue a reminder to parents about discussing road safety with their child and arranging pick up points away from entry/exit points. We have also alerted the City Wardens to these safety issues.

Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)

Miss Bruce (History Teacher) has been appointed as Principal Teacher Project (Pupil Equity Fund). She will be working on the whole area of reducing the impact of poverty as a barrier to achieving success.

At the moment we are developing a tool to track the impact of any interventions we put in place in terms of attendance, exclusions, achievement, attainment and participation. Running alongside this work is the creation of a toolkit of supports. This will be a sustainable resource which can be used by House Teams for all young people. A generic letter on PEF will be issued to all parents. We are also looking at the cost of the school day and considering how we address this. There is an Aberdeen City Council working group working on advice to schools on this area.

Inspection Work Feedback

Typically, I work as an Associate Assessor (AA) twice a year. This involves working as part of an Education Scotland Team as they inspect a school. In doing this, I gain a significant insight into current thinking and high quality work across Scotland. The reason I do this is to use this experience to benefit our school and the learning experience we offer. A direct impact of my recent inspection work has been to revisit our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. One suggestion is that the Parent Council may wish to take this policy and issue a parent friendly version. Moreover, we use advice and challenge questions from How Good is Our School 4 (HGIOS 4) in our class visits, staff meetings and training across the Associated Schools Group (ASG).

Calendar change

Due to a change of dates with the World Challenge Expeditions we have had to move the Prize Giving dates. An updated calendar will be placed on the website and include the following changes:

Wednesday 13 June Senior Prize Giving

Thursday 14 June Junior Prize Giving

School Improvement Plan (SIP) Update

Much of the SIP has been discussed above but we are looking to seek parental views on our current curriculum structure. At the moment we have a degree of personalisation and choice at the end of S1 and this leads onto an S2/3 curriculum. We then have a rolled up S4/5/6 curriculum where our young people gain their national qualifications from National 4/5 through to Higher and Advanced Higher. This will be discussed initially with the Parent Council but any parent keen to be on a working group on this theme, please telephone me through the school office. This work will tip into our 2018/19 SIP but I am keen to start this conversation with parents. Our attainment is strong and in our discussions we must balance any risk to this. Any change must have a clear rationale, purpose and outcome.

Ms Murison

Head Teacher