

Present :

Hilary Snaith (acting co-chair), Tiziana Basciani (acting co-chair) Liz Hilton (acting vice-chair), Kirstin Leighton (Treasurer), Padraic Kinsella (acting secretary), Christiane Kerlen (acting secretary), i, Neil McCallum - NM (HT), Deirdre O'Brien - DOB (DHT), Laura Bird, Cllr. Tom Pogson, Aileen Nimmo, Sarah Scott, Jo Lockenlitz, Penny Tarsia, Bruce Crawford, Fiona Dow, Mary Ross, Barbara Mole, Ulrike Peter, Carissa Barenblat, Alex Taylor, Bec Phipps, Paulina Sandberg, Alison Preston, Ros Ingle, Caroline Meadows, Mark Paterson

Apologies :

### **1. Brief report on activities from the Parent Council**

HS welcomed everyone, special welcome to DHT Deirdre O'Brien, HT Neil McCallum, and Active Schools Coordinator Elliot Ambrose.

Office Bearers: As a number of office bearer posts were left unfilled after the previous meeting a number of people have come forward subsequently and agreed to take on acting roles. They are

- Acting co-chair – Hilary Snaith
- Acting co-chair – Tiziana Basciani
- Acting vice-chair – Liz Hilton
- Treasurer – Kirstin Leighton
- Acting co-secretary – Christiane Kerlen
- Acting co-secretary – Padraic Kinsella
- Refreshments – Aileen Nimmo
- Acting comms officer – Kate Pinault

Proposed Education Budget Cuts: The City of Edinburgh Council is seeking to make savings across their overall budget to help with an overall deficit of £50.2m.

As part of this the Council officers have proposed budget cuts to the Education Budget of £8.2m.

Various Parent Councils coordinated a deputation to this proposed cut expressing that they considered the cuts to be ill-advised. JGHS PC co-signed a deputation submitted by Stockbridge Primary School.

Subsequently a decision was taken at the Education, Children, and Families (ECF) Committee meeting on not to approve the proposed cuts in that meeting, but deferred the decision to the budget setting process at Full Council.

Cllr. Tim Pogson, Southside Newington ward, provided his view. Cllr. Poison is not a member of the ECF Committee and reiterated that the decision on education budget cuts has been deferred to a meeting of "Full Council" and the budget setting process.

Cllr. Pogson reflected on the quality of the deputations, and recommended that parents and carers reiterate their position in time for the full council meeting. All party groups will propose their budgetary motions on the 22nd of February at Full Council.

Cllr. Pogson indicated that the savings of 4% are required in the overall budget, and that these will need to come from different areas.

[HS] Stated that we could continue to work with other Parent Councils across the city to respond to the cuts.

Other Topics the PC has been considering

Communications. The PC has agreed it will provide input on areas of focus it would like included in the School Experience Survey. Rising rolls and space including space for S6 in terms of study spaces, Vaping. Mobile Phone use in classrooms.

The final in-person meeting of the PC is scheduled for the 5th of June.

## **2. PC Finance**

The grant from the City of Edinburgh Council, which covers running costs of the Parent Council, has not been paid yet. As a result the PC account reflects a small balance of £450.57.

Refreshments raised £113, and it was mentioned that there won't be a significant amount due to the absence of a festive fundraiser. Kirstin Leighton has fundraising activities planned for the month of February.

The approach for refreshments in future will involve adding a donation to ticket prices purchased via parent pay, supporting the Small Sums fund. This addresses difficulties in taking payments within school buildings due to the lack of mobile phone signal.

## **3. JGHS Trust Report**

Vikki Plant provided a report of the Trust's activities - this is summarised in slides presented in appendix 1.

Jean Knox has retired, and Vikki has taken up the role of Trust Administrator vacated by Jean. The Trust has agreed to fund various projects, including mobile basketball equipment for Darroch and support for pupils' to attend at the S1 residential. The A+ Group's report by Zaki El-Salahi is expected at the next PC meeting. Additionally, it was noted that the Trust's accounts have been independently audited.

## **4. Minutes of the last in person meeting**

Minutes are only available for in-person meetings, as recordings are available for online meetings. Copies of the minute of the AGM were distributed for review.

#### **5. Active Schools Update - Elliot Ambrose [EA]**

[EA] began with an update on finance, highlighting the success of the donation approach through Parent Pay. An overview of income and expenditure was provided.

[EA] discussed the positive impact of volunteer-driven initiatives involving new teachers, parents, carers, and pupils. Pupils are participating as table officials and referees. The success of these volunteering efforts was noted for the skill development opportunities they provide. There were improvements in female participation, with teachers leading girls' strength and Latin dance clubs. An awareness week aligned with the Scottish Government's initiatives to encourage women and girls in sports is planned.

High participation was reported in basketball, skiing competitions, hockey festivals. There are future plans for badminton. Outside school activities included volleyball ambassadors, gymnastics heats, and the Individual Development Programme. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and targeted swimming projects, aimed at identifying young people benefiting from additional support in swimming lessons, were also mentioned.

Challenges included high demand for bookings, exceeding supply, with a request to remind young people, parents and carers to notify [EA] and Active Schools if a pupil has dropped a particular activity.

Sustaining participation of girls in sport and strategies to support this were discussed. There is no data available for female/male participation in active schools. Historically JGHS had a higher female participation than other schools though it is closer to 60:40 than 50:50.

A parent expressed their gratitude for the Sports Management programme organised by [EA], noting its positive impact on her daughter's confidence and the opportunities provided through Hearts Football Club and Meadowbank Sports Centre.

#### **6. School Improvement Plan - Neil McCallum [NM], Head Teacher**

[NM] provided an update on the School Improvement Plan (SIP) which can be found on the relaunched JGHS website under Information.

[NM] discussed the use of "How Good Is Our School 4" (HGIOS4) framework in creating the improvement plan.

A Supported Self Evaluation (SSE) occurred in November 2022, involving council staff visits and observations of practice in classes and meetings with parents, teachers, and pupils.

[NM] described how the SIP is focussed on five key priority areas and provided a high level overview of what each area entails and some of the actions in the plan.

Leadership of Change (QI 1.3): This includes Embedding the UNCRC, promoting the school's Vision and Values, focusing on equity, and staff continuous professional development.

Curriculum (QI 2.1): Developing access to subjects and progression pathways for all pupils.

Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (QI 2.3): Empowered Learning, appropriate planning, tracking, and monitoring. Supported by regular school improvement meetings.

Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion (QI 3.1): Focusing on "Rainbow Sheets" for individual needs and values.

Raising Attainment (QI 3.2): Focusing on attainment patterns and taking a data-led approach to understanding attainment levels. Priority actions focused on. S3-S5. Ensuring that teachers are data literate.

[NM] discussed each focus area, linking them to relevant Quality Indicators (QIs) and how they would be tracked. Plans to involve parents and pupils in School Improvement Teams (SITs) aligned to the focus areas were mentioned.

Questions and discussions included the origin and purpose of "Rainbow Sheets", parental input, the SIP template accessibility and jargon, and the need for tangible specific actions in the school improvement plan. The importance of ongoing pupil and parent/carer surveys to understand what is working and what needs improvement was highlighted.

Concerns about the duration between inspections were addressed, the last inspection was in 2010. [NM] explained the impact of COVID on the inspection schedule. [NM] described the duration and format of inspections undertaken by Education Scotland, referencing the experience of other schools in the local authority and how this is shared. While the school will not know in advance, an inspection of JGHS is to be expected this or next academic year.

Club engagement and future plans to gather data on club attendance were also discussed.

## **7. Curriculum and Coursing - Deirdre O'Brien, Depute Head Teacher**

Deirdre O'Brien provided an engaging presentation on curriculum and coursing, emphasising individualised pathways for diverse student needs and aspirations.

Determining the best pathway for each young person is a collaborative effort. School is supported in this by colleagues from Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and Skills Development Scotland.

The Scottish Government's "Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC) principles supports exploration of pathways with young people.

[DOB] provided an overview of the Curriculum for Excellence and the 2-2-2 model implemented at JGHS. focusing on holistic development, attainment, developing critical understanding skills ultimately required for success in work. Schools work towards benchmarks and levels, with different stages emphasising qualifications.

A variety of pathways beyond the more traditional routes were emphasised, including partnerships with Edinburgh College, apprenticeships, and modern apprenticeships. [DOB] detailed several different pathway options and their relationship to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

The importance of early research into pathways and destinations was stressed by [DOB], and a reminder that Skills Development Scotland with reference to university open days and programmes like LEAPS Transition course for successful transition from school into university. A broad array of pathways, including further education options was also discussed.

New courses, such as tourism, have been introduced to the curriculum, and ongoing curriculum development is informed by discussions with pupils. [DOB] is working with partner schools exploring options to offer curriculum options in construction, mechanics and health and beauty.

Questions and discussions arose regarding feedback in S1/S2, tracking and monitoring systems, and the need for more insightful reporting on how young people are achieving during in-class tests and assessments. Concerns were raised about young people not sharing poor performance, and the meeting addressed the misconception of minimum test results being required to qualify for certain coursing choices.

Further questions arose about the possibility to have more interactions between the teachers and the parents of pupils with additional support needs.

The importance of parent involvement and insights into their child's education and attainment was acknowledged as was the need for collaboration, transparency, and understanding among parents, educators, and students.

[DOB] shared a number of different resources and signposted the Curriculum resources which are now available on the JGHS website.

Parents acknowledged the significant work which has gone in to develop the curriculum booklet and also specific efforts [DOB] had undertaken to find the right options for their children in the past.

## **8. Head Teachers's Report**

Due to lack of time in the meeting [NM] provided his report in written form after the meeting. Added as appendix 2.

## **9. Motion to add signatories to the PC Bank Account**

[HS] Approval sought to add Liz Hilton (Acting vice-chair) and Padraic Kinsella (acting secretary) to the Parent Council bank account as signatories. Motion was passed.