

Castlehill Primary School Parent Council Meeting 28 April 2021

Virtual meeting 28/04/21 at 7:15.

Attendees: Alice Hall (Clerk), Kirsty KachKach (DHT), Lesley McLean (DHT), Rosy Marshall-Mcrae, Deborah McQuaid, Sarah Merrick, Caroline Miller (Chair), Dave Nettleship, Mandy Thompson (HT), Katie Reid.

1. Attendance and Apologies: Elaine Sibbald, Gail Hunter, Lynsey Haggarty, Hatice Kizil. Alastair Muir, Karen Leigh-Robertson. The meeting also welcomed Rosy Marshall-Mcrae who was joining for the first time.
2. Update from Head Teacher.
 - The HT noted that, with the return of the P7s on 15 March, all children were formally back in school full-time. Unfortunately, a positive case the following week had led to the P7s needing to isolate. However there had been no further positive cases since Easter, and incidents of staff and children isolating had also been coming down. With the shift to level 3, staff who had been shielding and pregnant staff in the EYC were able to return with appropriate risk assessments in place. Visits from education psychologists and other specialist staff were also now possible. On the administrative side the school was currently short-staffed as two staff members were off sick and unlikely to return; recruitment for their replacements was underway.
 - Staff had been focusing in the run-up to Easter on assessing children's wellbeing and social skills, as well as formative and summative assessments – with some children in a positive place and others struggling. These assessments had then been used to plan for the summer term. As there had been no reports for parents the previous term, the plan was to provide a snapshot report in May followed by a full report at the end of the school year.
 - On inclusion and literacy, the HT said the school was in the process of updating its policies and would send these to the Parent Council before sharing with the wider parent body.
 - Plans were also being drawn up for the school Sports Day and would be shared once finalised. Classes would not be able to mix, but one idea was for all the different year groups to be split into two teams that would compete on a class by class basis.
 - The focus of the upcoming in-day would be on self-evaluation. The school and EYR would be reviewing progress against the recovery plan which would feed into the following year's school improvement plan. Assessments to date had shown that literacy had suffered the most during lockdown and so there would be a specific session on moderating writing.
 - For the EYC, the focus would be on reviewing and developing a new action plan following the recent inspection, with a detailed public standards and quality report planned to show the improvements that had been made. After an initial focus on literacy, attention was now shifting to numeracy, with sessions planned to upskill the early years workers in this area.
3. Classes for next year

- The HT said the school was waiting for confirmation of the class structure and staffing for the next year (expected mid-May) and then planning could start. The plan was for two small P1 classes and one class in each of the other year groups, although there was a risk EDC would not approve this given the size of the current P2 class. It was agreed that the HT would follow up with the Parent Council if she needed support in the discussions with EDC. The school was also weighing up whether to bid for a probationer to provide extra support to teachers (with the outcome of the bid not known until June) or to work with the current full staffing complement and start providing the best possible transition from end May – including for example a day for all children in their new class.

4. P7 leavers and P1 new starts/nursery graduation

- On P7 transition, the HT explained that this was led by Bearsden Academy. In normal times, secondary school pupils would be at home revising at this time freeing up the teachers for transition activity. However, this year was different – and it was also not possible for the P7s to be in the school building. A transition website had been set up with optional activities to help children get to know the staff and subjects – this would be flagged to the P7s at school so they knew what was there - and there was a separate team in place for those who needed enhanced transition. There was also some discussion of a possible outdoor activity.
- From a Castlehill perspective, the school was doing their best to give the P7s a special year, involving them in the plans as far as possible. The class had made a specific request to visit the ski centre to go tubing, and were also keen to plant a special tree in the school grounds with a plaque and time capsule to commemorate their unique experience. They were able to pay for some of this through funds raised from their enterprise shop, but had asked if the Parent Council would agree to fund the outstanding balance (£400). In discussion Council members were supportive of the proposals but noted that it would also be good to support activities for the other year groups, given they had also been affected by the pandemic. It was agreed that the school would pull together a comprehensive proposal to submit to the Parent Council support (**Action: HT/DHT**).
- Separately, the school was considering running a P7 Outward Bound experience, with instructors coming out and delivering a series of adventures/activities in the school grounds/local area. This would be a bespoke programme and was very heavily subsidised. Council members discussed whether the Parent Council should fund this session, and agreed that support should be provided for those families who most needed it (**Action: HT/DHT to provide further advice**). The school was also exploring the possibility of an overnight excursion such as camping in Mugdock Park.
- For new P1s, Lesley said the school would be writing out to all new parents with key information and to ask if they had any questions. Zoom meetings would then be offered following the write-out and in June. An optional weekly story telling session led by key staff members (the HT, the P1 teachers) would be sent out for the children. There would be an option for small group visits to the school, and the children would receive a postcard from the current P6 class over the summer welcoming them to Castlehill.
- The P1 teachers were currently unable to make an inside visit to the EYC, but there were plans for them to meet the children in outdoor learning sessions. The EYC and current P1 children would be working on a joint project to be displayed in the school corridor so new starts would see their work when they first arrived – and over the

summer period activities would be arranged so the children became familiar with the school building and playground. Separate arrangements would be put in place for the very small number of children who would not be joining the school from the EYC. A further idea was to organise a community treasure hunt where households with children at the school would display the school badge in their windows.

- On the nursery graduation, Kirsty said it would not be possible to repeat the previous year's doorstep visits as staff were now back working in the Centre. However they were planning an outdoor ceremony which parents could attend, followed by a small party for the children.

5. Parent Council roles for next year

- The Chair noted that this would be her last year in the role, and Council members thanked her for all she had done both for the Council and the school. Katie said she would be willing to consider taking up the role, but would greatly prefer to do it in partnership with someone else (**Action:** Council members to consider whether they would be willing to take up the role of co-Chair).
- All the Parent Council roles would be reviewed at the September Annual General Meeting.

6. Healthy eating

- The HT noted that the school needed to do more work on its health policy, including clarifying policy around sweets in the classroom. The school could not tell parents what to include in snacks or packed lunches, but it had an important role to play in encouraging healthy choices. The children-led Healthy Eating Group also had an important role in promoting peer pressure – its' activities had been curtailed this year, but hopefully could start again in the new school year.

7. Any Other Competent Business

- Council members put on record their great thanks for all the work the school had done over the previous year.
- It was agreed that the membership list and contact details for the Council should be updated given there had been a number of new members (**Action:** Clerk)