

ARROCHAR PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Alison Palmer	Head Teacher	Joan Hodgkiss	Parent Representative
Jane McAloon	P7 Teacher	Andrea Murray	Parent Representative
Tim Kinvig	Chair	Vacant	Parent Representative
Jean Mustarde	Clerk/CC	Vacant	Doctor's Surgery

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 25 April 2019 in Arrochar Primary School

Present:

Alison Palmer	Head Teacher	Jean Mustarde	Clerk
Jane McAloon	P7 Teacher	Andrea Murray	Parent Representative
Tim Kinvig	Chair		

1. Apologies

Joan Hodgkiss.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

The Parent Council leaflet has been issued and also available on the website.

3. School Business

a. **A&BC Parental Engagement Strategy 2019-2021.** Argyll and Bute Council have issued a letter to all Head Teachers and Parent Councils introducing Simone McAdam as the new Area Education Officer. A&BC have also issued a draft Parental Engagement Strategy for consultation. The PC outlined the contents which did not cover anything new but does capture a number of policy strands into one document. The final strategy is due to go live post the consultation in May and a copy will be held both in the school and on the authority website.

b. **School Improvement Plan.** This years Improvement Plan included three priorities:

- **Moderation** – Mrs McAloon is the Assessment Moderation Facilitator for the school. In such a small school as ours, moderation is harder given the small numbers of pupils but sample assessments are taken from each class to agree the gradings for staff and work. Next year this moderation will be done in conjunction with other local primary schools to enable gradings to be set across a wider section of children and for across school moderation. At present all the children are tracked throughout their nursery and primary education by taking assessments: Developmental Milestones and baseline assessments in nursery to CfE tracking in the school. Scottish National Standard Assessments are also completed along side the other assessments but only at Primary 1, 4 and 7 and used by teachers to assess against their expectations on the progress of the pupils. One problem with the National Standard Assessments is that it is a computer based, multiple choice programme enabling 'lucky guesses' at answers. This can skew the overall

assessment of the pupil. Notes are put next to the assessment results if they look out of line with the scores from other assessments taken throughout the year and the teacher's professional judgement. Part of the moderation process this year has allowed interaction between pupils and teachers from local schools via a series of visits to our school and reciprocated in other schools completed under the Collaborative Action Research (CAR) Project.

- **Learning Intentions and Success Criteria** – Staff outline what learning intentions will be undertaken and why, plus what will be needed for this to be successful. This priority will include the updating of our Learning and Teaching Policy and this will be discussed at the next PC meeting. When finalised, this policy will be added to the school website.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – An education psychologist trained staff on PATHS - Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, to help promote better mental health and outline strategies for coping. Staff were also trained in Growth Mindset.

This year's Improvement Plan priorities will include:

- **Rights Respecting Schools** – This subject will promote the wide-ranging terms covering diversity and difference, promote inclusion of all differences and ensure there is a framework for all staff to promote diversity in the same way. Education Scotland highlight 7 protected characteristics that will be tied into this priority and the work the classes will do. There are three levels to this package which cost varying amounts for each level but the package comes with a large amount of resources to support this topic.
- **Transition** – This will be reviewed by our school, the other local primary schools, Hermitage Academy and the Education Authority to revise the use of the Hooked-on Hermitage work undertaken by P7s as part of their transition to secondary school. It will also include a review of the assessments of levels of ability in each subject which primary schools supply to the Academy for them to use in placement of pupils in learning groups. Our school will also look at transition when nursery children move into P1 and when transition happens within the school. This will be reviewed during the May In-Service day.

The PC agreed with the proposals and suggested that an outline of the Improvement Plan is added to the first and last newsletters of the year to outline what will happen and what has been achieved. The Improvement Plan will also be added to the website where it can also list any reasons by any part of the Plan has not been realised due to any funding difficulties or lack of support from the Education Authority.

c. **Staffing.** A&BC responded to the annual return on staffing requirements in an unexpected way by reducing the proposed staffing numbers from 5.23 to 4.1 – the loss of over one whole teacher. Mrs Palmer challenged the decision outlining a number of issues including the extracurricular union work undertaken and the preparation being made for the Early Years trial and the increase in the school roll. The Authority fortunately took these issues on board and agreed to keep the staff levels at 5.23 teachers with no changes to the support or visiting teaching staff. This means that with the current school role at 68 pupils the breakdown of classes for next year will be:

P 1 / 2 class of 15;
P 3 / 4 class of 14;
P 5 / 6 class of 25; and
P 7 class of 10

If any extra P5/6 pupils join before or over the summer then the classes may need to be reviewed but at the moment the above ratio of classes remains achievable.

Early enquiries have been put forward to extend the current P 3 / 4 classroom and the computer room out to join with the canteen to maximise space. Money is available for this proposal from 2020 and an architect will visit the school to draw up designs. It will also incorporate a door at the back of the nursery which will give access to the green space behind the building.

Lastly, the Early Years trial begins on Monday 29 April and will be discussed further at the next meeting.

d. **Pupil Equity Funding.** The school currently has six children eligible for equity funding yet the school is currently receiving none. Five children were not placed on the census in September, a census that happens once a year, which means that the funding for these five pupils will not be given to the school until next September. For the remaining pupil eligible, the lack of funding was queried with the Council and it became apparent that the Authority were unaware of this pupil's eligibility. The money will now be paid before the end of term.

The PC were appalled that it would take a full year for accounts to be rectified and offered to write and complain if required. This was not the first time this anomaly had been raised at a PC Meeting. Given the budget cuts the Council are looking to make, it would be ironic if the school without the pupils receives the funding our school should get and then the Authority cuts the equity budget, losing the money which should be rightfully given to our school. The PC were amazed that such a change could not be implemented within a month of the new term beginning or a new joiner eligible for the funding joining the school. The Council are quick to impose changes whenever money is owed to them. This issue will be watched closely.

4. **Any Other Business**

The PC expressed its thanks to Shauna for her participation in a number of meetings of the PC as she has now moved to Aberdeen. The PC also expressed its thanks to Jean for being the clerk.

It was agreed that a line would be added to the June and August newsletters to advertise for new members of the PC to join in September.

The Community Council are pursuing the potential pathway from the Tarbet car park to the back of the school but it's a slow process due to multiple landowners being approached. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

5. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next Parent Council meeting will take place, in the school, on Thursday 19 September 2019 at 6.30pm.