

DCHS Parent Council Meeting at school and online via Teams
Tuesday 11 March 2025 from 6.30pm - 8pm

MINUTES

Next meeting will be AGM on Monday 12 May, 6.30-8pm

Attending

In person: Simon (Chair); Rachel (Treasurer); Abi (Secretary); Aman (left 7pm), Val, Ian, Rosalyn, Halyna (arrived 7pm), Naomi, Claire, Anne

Rachel Robertson (Head teacher), Tracy Urquhart (City of Edinburgh Council's teaching assessment team)

Jack Caldwell (Councillor)

Online: Jenni; Carol-Ann; Sandra, Julie, Yared (arrived 7.08pm), Patricia (arrived 7.20pm)

Roisin Bagnall McCrick (Head pupil)

AGENDA ITEM	COMMENTS
1. Notes from the last meeting and action points	<p>Action points from the last meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visuals for school signage redesign These have been circulated by Rachel.• Benches and lockers Parent Council is awaiting a funding application form from the PLT.• Computer science and other difficult to recruit teachers Rachel (Treasurer) will keep us updated on this.• Growing at the school Chloe Rutherford (a teacher at the school had attended the last parent council meeting to talk about sustainability at the school. Following this, there had been lots of leads for her from parents relating to funding and resources for this work. Simon had written to parent council members encouraging kids to join the Eco Club. Work would also be commencing soon in relation to the big planters (which had been relocated from Leith Walk to the school playground). Mrs Robertson noted that taking forward this work had not been a priority in recent weeks in the school, due to the focus on

	running formal SQA assessments for senior pupils. Parents will take this on for now.
2. Introduction	Those present in person and online introduced themselves.
3. School inspection report	<p>Mrs Robertson spoke to the parent council about the result of the recent school inspection. This was carried out by inspectors on behalf of independent, national body Education Scotland. Details of the inspection results are available on the Education Scotland website.</p> <p>Mrs Robertson spoke to the summary of findings (the second document on the website) as the most accessible explanation of the results. Key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspection was a full inspection, which had been an intense experience for staff. • Drummond was rated good for leadership of change, learning, teaching and assessment and raising attainment and achievement. It received a satisfactory rating for ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion. • Mrs Robertson noted that the satisfactory did not reflect where she thought the school was in this area, or previous assessments involving the council. This grading had, with the support of City of Edinburgh Council, been appealed. However, Education Scotland had maintained the grading. • Nevertheless, the inspection had recognised a number of the school's strengths. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ leadership across the school (so senior team, but also curriculum leaders and other teachers with leadership responsibilities and pupils) ○ the school vision and values ("nurturing big ambitions") was seen and felt in school ○ relationships were mutually respectful ○ digital technology was used creatively and effectively ○ a wide range of qualifications were on offer to support pupils to achieve. • Areas for improvement included a more joined up approach to supporting pupils with additional support needs; and better support for pupil well-being. On the last point, Mrs Robertson noted that the school put in a huge amount of work supporting well-being. However, this was not reflected in how pupils discussed issues themselves, so the school would be putting more work into this. <p>In terms of what happens next, Education Scotland was confident enough in Drummond's position to end their involvement. Instead, the school would get a post-inspection visit from City of Edinburgh Council assessors in a year's time. They would look at work on improvements following on from the</p>

	<p>inspection's findings. The school itself would take forward an action plan to address this.</p> <p>There would be opportunities to visit and learn from schools who were particularly successful in areas of the assessment. And Tracy Urquhart noted that staff from other schools would also visit Drummond in relation to Drummond's key strengths.</p> <p>Parents at the meeting raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work involved and likely impact on staff was noted. • Several parents commented that they did not think a "satisfactory" grade for wellbeing, equality and inclusion reflected their experience. Mrs Robertson noted that work would be taken forward in Personal and Social Education (PSE) to support wellbeing. Other activities around these recommendations were also being taken forward. • It was also noted that the inspectors had commented that some young people disengaged from learning in the classroom (page 3). Mrs Robertson outlined other work which was being taken forward to address this, including various teaching techniques which involve pupils and providing more challenging learning opportunities for some pupils. • The school does not get any extra resources or support to implement recommendations coming out of the inspection. However, City of Edinburgh Council has a team of assessors which work with schools on these issues all the time. <p>Anyone with any specific concerns in relation to the report and their child should get in touch with their pupil support teacher in the first instance.</p>
4. Head of School update	<p>Roisin updated the meeting on recent school activities, including the mental health awareness work, which culminated in a technology-free Friday.</p> <p>She also noted discussions with the pupil leadership team (pupil representatives from each year group) about the inspection and about proposal for the parent council to provide some lockers for use by students. The current thinking was that senior pupils would get priority for the lockers, but there was more work to be done.</p> <p>Action: Mrs Robertson to re-send the parent council funding application form to Roisin. It was emphasised that the parent council were supportive of funding the lockers but needed to be convinced that this was a good use of funds.</p>
5. Head teacher's update	<p>Mrs Robertson provided answers to questions submitted in advance by parents and carers:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1. For PE lessons at Meadowbank it takes almost half the lesson to get there and back so the children effectively miss half their lesson which is a terrible waste. The coaches will be costly too. How can this problem be addressed? Mrs Robertson noted that lots of PE takes place in school, but sometimes pupils do travel to use external resources. Part of the problem is that Warriston playing fields, which would traditionally be used by the school, had been closed for refurbishment for some time. This was not ideal. • Q2. The school inspection stated that 60% percent of students at Drummond have additional learning needs, almost 3 out of every 5 need additional help. What is the school doing about this? What extra support is Edinburgh Council providing? How do we compare with other secondary public schools? 58.9% of the school roll has additional support needs, covering a wide range of support needs (for instance, children at lots of points on the autism spectrum). It also includes pupils with English as an additional language, if this is a barrier to education. There are significant staff resources to support this – both to directly support pupils, and to support senior staff in relation to planning. Drummond is around the middle in comparison to other schools in Edinburgh. • Q3. Regarding the recent survey on senior phase assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of the 141 responses to the survey, what was the breakdown of "Yes" for returning to formal condensed prelims? (i.e. teachers/S4/S5/S6 pupils/parents) - With the increasing school roll & absence rates over winter - how would this support the increasing number of neurodiverse pupils who I feel have benefited from the spaced-out in-class assessments. - Other schools have also done a relaxed in-class assessment phase this winter - do other HS HT's find this has been helpful or will they also be returning to formal condensed prelims? <p>75% of pupils, teachers and support staff want to go back to the old system of a two-week programme of formal prelims. The split between parent responders to the survey was 18 supporting a return to the old system and 14 preferring the new one.</p> • Q5. Could we have an update on Duke of Edinburgh provision, bronze and silver? The outdoor learning team at City of Edinburgh Council has appointed a new member of staff who will be mainly supporting Drummond pupils with Duke of Edinburgh. Setting up opportunities for those currently enrolled in the bronze or silver award will be their
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	<p>first priority. They will then look at getting more pupils involved in the scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q6. Following the last Parent Council, what progress has the school made with onboarding S1 pupils for instrumental or voice lessons? Mrs Robertson provided a breakdown of pupils accessing music tuition in S2 to S6. She noted that the piano and keyboard instructor had been off work for some time, which was a difficulty. The priority at the moment was for those sitting SQA exams.
6. Chair's update	<p>The key points covered in the Chair's update were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for pupils with additional support needs (ASN)– Simon noted ongoing work to persuade the council to continue to fund holiday clubs for children with ASN. Carol-Ann was involved with this. Jack Caldwell (one of the councillors for the school's council ward) noted that £100,000 would go towards this. From his discussions with council staff, the biggest barrier was finding space for the clubs to use. There were issues to be addressed in relation to why some mainstream holiday clubs could not accommodate children with ASN (for example, a lack of accessible toilets might mean that children with ASN couldn't be included in days out). • Playground – antisocial behaviour at night meant that the school playground was being shut when the janitors finished their shifts (10pm weekdays and 5pm Saturday and Sunday). Previously, the playground had been available for use by the community 24hrs a day. Parents noted concerns around pupils being too scared to use the playground, and young people climbing over spikey fences to get in to the locked playground, putting themselves at additional risk. Mrs Robertson noted that she had been liaising with the police and Amey (the company that manages the school) on this issue. There was CCTV, but it didn't cover the whole playground. The janitors had been brilliant, both in dealing with litter and in challenging people who were in the playground when they shouldn't be. She appreciated that closing the grounds had an impact on the community and would keep the situation under review. However, the health and safety of pupils was her primary concern. • Tracking – the new system for tracking reports (which involved logging into a council interface) was still causing problems. There were issues with getting into the system and issues with understanding the reports. Simon had raised this at a locality meeting (for all parent councils in the local area). The council had provided a presentation on the system, but Simon found it as baffling as the system itself. Part of the problem appeared to be insufficient engagement

	<p>with parents. The council will set up a group to look at improving the system and Simon will join this group.</p> <p>Action: Naomi volunteered to attend this group. She also flagged other issues with tracking such as timing of the reports and inconsistency. Other issues highlighted included likely barriers for parents who did not speak English as a first language or lacked digital skills.</p> <p>Action: Jack Caldwell undertook to report comments back to his colleagues on the council Edinburgh Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events organised by pupils – these were not always communicated effectively to parents. Mrs Robertson noted that these were often organised by pupils doing a leadership award. The events were part of their assessment, so the school took a hands-off approach. However, she noted the issue. • Group email system – the school used a group email system to send communications out to parents. It was only possible to have one parent or carer contact on the system. This caused problems for situations where parents did not live together (and may not communicate with each other). Simon reported that lots of schools had highlighted this problem and were looking for action from the council. Mrs Robertson noted that it was possible to override the system, which the school would do when required. The default position was that emails went to the primary contact in the form parents filled in at the beginning of each school year.
7. Treasurer's update	Rachel had no updates on the position reported at the last parent council meeting.
8. Fundraising update	Simon reported that the fundraising group was continuing to develop ideas. In particular, several parents were working on a prize draw. Anyone who wanted to join the fundraising group should contact Simon.
8. Any other comments or questions	Planters in the playground – Viv and Rachel would co-ordinate with each other in relation to taking ideas for planting and involvement forward.

Parent Council Meeting – Headteacher's Update

11 March 2025

Questions from Parents and Carers:

- 1. For PE lessons at Meadowbank it takes almost half the lesson to get there and back so the children effectively miss half their lesson which is a terrible waste. The coaches will be costly too. How can this problem be addressed?**

Our on-site PE facilities include an indoor Games Hall, Dance Studio and Fitness Suite and outdoor tarmac basketball court and astroturf pitch. To accommodate travel to additional off-site facilities, PE lessons are timetabled as double periods to maximise learning time. We also currently use facilities at Wardie, Glenogle and The Meadows and the option for improving facilities at Warriston (which we have used in the past) is being explored with CEC as a very early proposal; this would allow pupils to walk to lessons (minimising travel time and cost).

- 2. The school inspection stated that 60% percent of students at Drummond have additional learning needs, almost 3 out of every 5 need additional help. What is the school doing about this? What extra support is Edinburgh Council due providing? How do we at Drummond compare with other secondary public schools in Edinburgh?**

At Drummond, we have an extensive team of school-based staff to meet the wide range of needs of our pupils. In addition to our class teachers and Curriculum Leaders, we employ a Support for Learning Leader, Support for Learning Teachers, Curriculum Leader Enhanced Support Provision, Curriculum Leader Wellbeing Hub, Pupil Support Officers, Pupil Support Assistants, School Counsellor and Youth Worker. We work in partnership CEC colleagues from the Additional Support for Learning Service, including our EAL Teacher and Bilingual Support Assistants; also with our Educational Psychologist; and with Enable, The Yard and other 3rd sector organisations.

Our classrooms, SFL Hubs, Wellbeing Hub, Nurture Hub and Enhanced Support Provision offer a variety of inclusive learning environments to pupils.

This session, all of our teachers have engaged in professional learning in the use of the CIRCLE resource to support Inclusive Learning and Collaborative Working and with whole school Autism and Neurodiversity training led by the Educational Psychology Service.

Staff have access to Individualised Education Plans, GIRFEC plans and pupil profiles in order to understand needs and strategies to support learners.

Secondary schools annual ASN figures – ASN Sept 2024:

Secondary School	No. pupils with ASN	Total no. pupils	% ASN
Balerno Community High School	415	883	47.0%
Boroughmuir High School	638	1558	40.9%
Broughton High School	786	1344	58.5%
Castlebrae Community Campus	368	553	66.5%
Craigmount High School	504	1364	37.0%
Craigroyston Community High School	582	764	76.2%
Currie Community High School	385	879	43.8%
Drummond Community High School	375	637	58.9%
Firrhill High School	483	1309	36.9%
Forrester High School	512	825	62.1%
Gracemount High School	437	658	66.4%
Holy Rood RC High School	545	1209	45.1%
James Gillespie's High School	798	1765	45.2%
Leith Academy	703	996	70.6%
Liberton High School	535	857	62.4%
Portobello High School	683	1456	46.9%
Queensferry Community High School	574	1205	47.6%
St Augustine's RC High School	650	1007	64.5%
St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School	450	800	56.3%
The Royal High School	713	1533	46.5%
Trinity Academy	482	1004	48.0%
Tynecastle High School	460	827	55.6%
Wester Hailes High School	303	395	76.7%
	12381	23828	52.0%

3. Regarding the recent survey on senior phase assessments:

- Of the 141 responses to the survey, what was the breakdown of "Yes" for returning to formal condensed prelim's? (ie teachers/S4/S5/S6 pupils/parents)

We received 2 late responses taking the total to 143; the breakdown of yes/no responses is shown below:

Respondent	Yes – return to condensed diet	No – retain spread
Teacher	23	7
Support staff	3	2
S4 pupil	20	7
S5 pupil	25	4
S6 pupil	17	3
Parents and carers	18	14
Total	106	37

- **With the increasing school roll & absence rates over winter - how would this support the increasing number of neurodiverse pupils who I feel have benefited from the spaced-out in-class assessments this winter.**

Any pupil who misses an assessment due to absence will have an opportunity to sit the paper(s) on their return; this would be true of either approach to assessments.

The increased roll requires us to carefully consider rooming for the prelims, but this is also true of the final exam diet and we have tried and tested experience of timetabling this.

Any pupil that is granted assessment arrangements due to their additional support needs will receive these; this would also be true of either approach.

- **Other schools have also done a relaxed in-class assessment phase this winter - do other HS HT's find this has been helpful or will they also be returning to formal condensed prelims?**

We have not consulted other schools about their assessment diets; our decisions have been based on our local context, namely the feedback from our own community about their experiences. The move to an extended assessment diet this year was based on feedback from pupils and teachers over the last 2 years. It is worth noting that all S5/6 respondents and their teachers have experienced both models of assessment and the majority have requested a return to previous arrangements.

4. The recent inspection report rated the school 'satisfactory' on Equality Diversity and Inclusion. From my experience, all staff and pupils work really hard to ensure the school is very inclusive to all pupils. Can you explain the reasons behind this outcome?

We will address this as a main agenda item at the meeting. Our Quality Improvement Manager, Tracy Urquhart will also be present for this discussion.

5. Could we have an update on Duke of Edinburgh provision, bronze and silver?

A new colleague, Helen McMahon, has accepted a role with the Outdoor Learning Unit to support our Drummond pupils to complete their Awards. Fraser Robertson (Outdoor Learning Development Officer: Achievement Awards) has met with Helen to review progress of all active participants within eDofE and Helen is meeting with Mr Barrie in school this month to sign off expedition information. Helen and Fraser will in direct contact with participants to confirm this.

6. Following the last Parent Council, what progress has the school made with onboarding S1 pupils for instrumental or voice lessons?

Please see below from our Instrumental Music Service Officer, Alix Knox:

- Please note that our Piano/Keyboard instructor was absent for an extended period of time with a broken limb and will be working with Ms Stroud (Curriculum Leader Expressive Arts) to fill lesson slots to capacity as soon as possible.
- While it is IMS' aspiration to recruit from S1, we must also balance this with support for SQA pupils and we work with CLs to ensure appropriate support for each school. Moving forward, we would like to see more pupils beginning their instrumental journey in S1 Jonathon Gawn is due to meet with Ms Stroud (CL) to discuss further this term.

Year Group	Guitar	Keyboard/Piano	Kit/Percussion	Voice
S1	0	0	0	0
S2	3	1	7	0
S3	6	0	7	0
S4	0	0	2	2
S5	3	1	2	5
S6	3	0	1	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>7</i>