

# MINUTES

## St Thomas of Aquin's Parent Council

Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018

### **PRESENT:**

Jo Kennedy (JK) – Chair  
Fiona Bradley (FB) – Vice Chair  
Dee Armstrong (DA) – Secretary

### **Staff:**

Christopher Santini (CS) – Acting Headteacher

### **Parents**

Jo Beech Brandt, Kitty Bruce Gardyne, Tamasin Gray, Jason King, Colleen McCrone, Andrea Manning, Jonathan Midgley, Stephanie O'Donohoe, Montserrat Santandreu, Lindi Smith, Hilda Stiven,

### **Apologies:**

	<b>ACTION:</b>
<p><b>1. Welcome ... and things to celebrate</b></p> <p>JK welcomed everyone and suggested that as parents introduced themselves, it would be nice to articulate something that they felt was going well at school and that they would like to celebrate. Parents present agreed this was a good idea and the following things were mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The upcoming RMPS trip to the National Art Gallery and Christmas market</li><li>• S6 pupils feeling independent in their studies, lots of support in this from school and the recent Modern Studies work on prisons</li><li>• The fabulous ski trips organised by Mr Green</li><li>• Enjoyable science assignments</li><li>• Support from the SLT for individual pupils</li><li>• Text messages from school, especially a positive one praising a pupil's recent efforts</li><li>• "Happy kids, enjoying school" – mentioned by several parents</li><li>• The exciting Costa Rica trip</li><li>• Work experience at Edinburgh University and the help from school to organise it</li><li>• Transition from primary school well organised – good welcome for pupils</li><li>• The Biology department and a recent taxing but good assignment</li><li>• Good Geography project</li><li>• Stimulating RMPS classes</li><li>• Stimulating teaching at Higher level in Sciences and Maths</li><li>• Duke of Edinburgh awards opportunities</li><li>• The Parent Council's efforts to improve morale and be reflective</li><li>• Pupils are proud to be here</li><li>• Postcards home from school trip</li><li>• Good interactions with pupil support leaders and Support for Learning Dept</li></ul>	

- Pride in staff and pupils
- Exclusions ↓ and attendance ↑

## **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

### Matters arising:

2.1 CS said that Dr Wilson (Science) was currently trialling a new homework app.

2.2 CS had met with Cluny Sheeler (Parent) to discuss a software package that looks at the pastoral experience from another school.

2.3 The school website had been updated with attainment data, calendar updates, PE department page update, old material removed. CS was arranging training on the use of the website to enable easier updates in future.

2.4 The ICT working group would be including a mobile phone policy in their remit. A parent had come forward to help CS work on this group and any other parents with an interest in ICT are invited to join.

2.5 CS had approved study spaces in the chaplaincy at times when the library was full.

## **3. Treasurer's Report**

3.1 TG reported that the Parent Council's bank balance currently stood at £3000. £1000 is on loan to S6 to help with the organisation of their end of year prom. £900 income had been received from the Council, £480 had been made at the Fireworks Event, and £50 from Easyfundraising and the 50:50 club.

3.2 Small bid applications would be invited from departments in the New Year with a deadline of February half term. Funds would be allocated, keeping £1000 in reserve. £500 a year is allocated to the Hardship Fund.

## **4. Parent Council Access / Inclusion**

FB raised the issue of access to and inclusion in the Parent Council – in other words, does the membership of the PC reflect the membership of the school? We are concerned as a Parent Council that we should be as representative as possible and need to think whether there are ways of actively diversifying the membership. The multicultural event had been a good start and was thought that this could be built into an annual event and aligned with the school's existing world languages event. It was noted that parents we have met at such events have not come to subsequent PC meetings and we need to think about why that might be. Our attendance records show that 96 different parents have attended PC meetings since May 2016 but this is a relatively small proportion of the whole parent body. Having a presence providing refreshments at parent:teacher evenings seemed to be going well and was a good opportunity to meet new parents. It was agreed that a text message would be sent out to all parents a week before Parent Council meetings in future. Another suggestion was that instead of formal minutes we produce a more user friendly summary of our

meetings – in addition it was suggested that the name ‘Parent Council’ was off-putting to some people . Given that 80% of parents attend parents evenings, it was suggested that we have a ‘surgery’ table at the parents evening meetings so that parents could come and discuss any concerns with a member of the PC – this might be difficult, however, given how busy and rushed parents evening is. CS commented that School already uses Survey Monkey to survey parents after parents evenings. It was agreed that a more proactive invitation to the next Parent Council would be arranged. It was also suggested that the venue of the meetings could change so that they are not always at St Thomas’s giving parents from the other side of the City an easier journey. This will be investigated. It was agreed to keep this item on the agenda and that JK and FB would start to formulate an inclusion plan.

**FB**

**DA**

**JK / FB**

## **5. Feedback from sub groups**

### Attainment / outcomes sub-group

5.1 The curriculum group that has been re-formulated as the attainment & outcomes group now that the curriculum work is finished. The new curriculum policy is available on the school website. The group will be looking at issues including leaver destinations; how does the curriculum address the needs of ALL pupils? how can IT be used to support learning? asking pupils, ‘are we getting it right at St Thomas’s?’ This sub-group needs to broaden its membership and welcomes new members – please get in touch via [stthomasofaquinpc@gmail.com](mailto:stthomasofaquinpc@gmail.com) if you are interested. There is not a huge time commitment in terms of meetings.

### Fundraising / events sub-group

5.2 The multicultural event had been a success and had engaged some new attenders. Many thanks to Alice Musamba & the team for their hard work in organising it and especially to the drummers! It was agreed it would be a good idea to run the event again next year to tie in with the school languages event.

5.3 The next fundraising event is the Beer & Wine Tasting Evening in February.

5.4 Members of the PC will be putting on lunch for the staff on the inset day at the start of the new term after Christmas

5.5 The PC will be catering the chess event again in the Easter holidays and helpers are needed for this.

5.6 Any new ideas for fundraising are welcome.

### Health and wellbeing sub-group

5.7 There is a lot of work going on in this area eg the happiness survey, work being done by IJP on vision and values, and more, that needs to be consolidated together under the banner of health and wellbeing and tied into the school improvement plan. JK said that at the moment the work that was being done was ‘mapping the landscape’ and other parents are welcome to join this group.

5.8 Alexia from Place2Be will come to the next PC meeting to talk about her team’s work.

5.9 The issue of coaching for sports clubs was raised. A parent had suggested

various coaches that could help with clubs and this needed to be taken forward. It might be possible to use PC funds to fund some coaching, it was suggested.

#### **6. SLT Report**

The SLT report is attached in full at Appendix 1.

#### **7. Meeting with Archdiocese**

JK, FB and Denise Simpson from the Faith Sub-Group would be meeting with representatives from the Archdiocese on 14<sup>th</sup> December to discuss the Catholic approval process for new teachers.

#### **8. Meeting start times**

It was agreed to start PC meetings at 6pm in future.

#### **9. Date of meetings for the rest of the year**

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019

# APPENDIX 1

## Senior leadership team report December 2018 Parent Council – 3 action point areas.

### 1. Staffing:

- Depute Head Teacher October interview was postponed due to 2 out of the 4 candidates having to pull out from the process.
- Curricular Leader of Performing Arts interview will take place on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> of December.
- Acting Pupil Support Leader of St Margaret's is in place (Mrs Stark) due to Ms Taylor's maternity leave. Interviews for a fixed-term Geography teacher will take place on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> of December. At present we have a Geography supply teacher in place.
- There is a long-term absence in Expressive Arts (Graphic Communication Teacher). I have written to parents whose pupils have been affected and a plan is in place to support the teaching of SQA courses.
- The temporary Modern Language Teacher Ms Bianchini will take up a new temporary post in January. An advert will close on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> of December. Interviews will take place the following week.
- The senior leadership team remain in acting positions apart from the Business Manager.

Christopher, please express to your PC my continued support of you and your team as you lead the school. Although the roles are fulfilled on an acting basis, the impact of your work shows the commitment you all have to the school and in my view, the community is being served very well.

I am disappointed that I could not confirm the timing of the next steps we discussed previously - discussions are ongoing and should be reaching a conclusion soon. As you know I am very keen that everyone's needs are met, but things take the time they take, and I have no influence to bear which would expedite matters, nor does anyone else, I may add.

Lorna Sweeney

### 2. Pupil Equity Funding: 2018-19 plan

- **3 coaches in place with extended remits on**

#### **Communication role:**

Staff to be aware of all S1-3 PEF pupils.  
Monthly updates collated on the coaching spreadsheet  
A reminder to staff of PEF pupils not being coached

#### **Analysis role:**

A reminder of what the 2018-19 plan on a termly basis  
What is the impact of the plan? How are pupils progressing?  
What other initiatives is the school take part in?

#### **Curriculum role:**

Liaise with staff to develop & create National 3/National 4 materials for learning and nurture hub. All materials placed on PEF nurture base folder  
Materials need to be independent pieces of work for pupils to work through either at home or in the learning & nurture hub.

Coaches have an allocation of 6 pupils they mentor throughout the year. Coaches have access to funds to support individual and group projects including support with uniform, fieldtrips, and materials to develop and enhance pupils' attainment and achievement.

- **Pupil Support Officer Candidate: Mrs R Murray.**

St Thomas' supports all pupils in accessing their entitlement to a successful, engaging and nurturing education. Most pupils will access their education in mainstream classes, however, there will be pupils who will access their education through a compliment of mainstream classes and specifically timetabled small group work, nurture group work, and 1:1 subject support work. The rationale for the school's learning and nurture hub is to support the flexible 1: 1 subject support work. The 1:1 work could be:

- To support a pupil who needs a short-term flexible alternative timetable due to absence from school
- To support a pupil's transition into St Thomas of Aquin's
- To support a pupil who have been identified by SLT who is at risk of exclusion
- The Support for Learning Faculty will continue to support the variety of small group and nurture group work that already is in place through collaboration with Speech and Language and EAL services. The Pupil Equity Funding coaches will also have access to the Nurture Learning Hub to support their work with S1-S3 pupils.
- The Pupil Support Officer will be leading the development of the project.
- Daily breakfast club – planned and implemented by Vivian Hunter
- Curricular Leaders invited to submit bids for curricular funding – 2 Faculties have had their bids accepted and funding in place.

### 3. **St Thomas of Aquin's 2017-18 Attainment Report:**

A document produced by all secondary HTs for the beginning of November. The attainment reports support CEC providing Edinburgh Council with an overview of secondary school attainment. The report analyses and evaluates the school in the areas of:

- Attendance, Absence, and exclusion
- S3 attainment in literacy and numeracy
- S4 Literacy and Numeracy levels
- S4, S5, and S5 attainment for all compared to the school Virtual Comparator
- S4, S5, and S6 closing the attainment gap

#### **Terminology used in the Attainment report:**

**Insight:** is a computer system which helps secondary schools identify areas of S4-6 attainment success and where improvements can be made.

**Each school is compared to a Virtual Comparator school:** For each St Thomas' school pupil, ten matching school pupils are selected based on gender, additional support needs, stage of leaving school and the social context in which they live. Not CEC pupils. St Thomas' is then compared to this virtual school.

**Tariff score:** All subject courses & individual units are awarded tariff points. The number of tariff points awarded depends on: the level of the course or unit; whether the full course has been undertaken and assessed; and the

grade achieved for the course. Av Ad Higher B =440 points. Av Higher B = 180 points. Av National A = 84 points)

**The average complimentary tariff point** is a measure which helps compare pupils in different schools who undertake differing numbers of qualifications in S4-S6 due to the school curriculum model.

### **Attendance, Absence, and exclusion:**

Attendance remains above the CEC average – St Thomas’ averages 93.14% S1-S6 attendance.

Exclusions have decreased by over 50% to 10 pupils for the 2017-19 session. 23 in 2016-17

Free school meal entitlement is 9% - around 10th in the 22 CEC secondary school estate.

### **S3 Literacy and Numeracy levels:**

99% of pupils achieve L3 Numeracy, 81% of pupils achieve Level 4 Numeracy. Both above CEC average.

In Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking the school outperforms the CEC averages. The average R/W/L/T stats are 90% average for Level 3 and 84% average for Level 4.

### **S4 Literacy and Numeracy levels:**

St Ts outperforms the virtual comparator at Level 3 Literacy (95% + pupils achieve L3L). Increased % stats in Level 3 from 2016-17

The virtual comparator outperforms St Ts at Level 4 and 5 Literacy. Slight decrease in % stats in Level 4 (90% Pupils achieving) and the same % stats in Level 5 (75%) from 2016-17.

St Ts outperforms the virtual comparator at level 3, 4 and 5 Numeracy. Slight decrease in % stats in Level 4 (90%+ achieve L4) and Level 5 ( 60% + achieve Level 5) from 2016-17.

### **S4-S6 attainment for all:**

**Each school is compared to a Virtual Comparator school:** For each St Thomas’ school pupil, ten matching school pupils are selected based on gender, additional support needs, stage of leaving school and the social context in which they live. St Thomas’ is then compared to this virtual school.

**S4 (129 pupils):** The school outperforms the virtual comparator, CEC schools, and national comparators in S4 for the middle 60% and Highest 20% of pupils. For the lowest 20% the school is outperformed by the VC, CEC, and National stats.

The 5 National 5 examinations statistic is 2nd highest % of pupils achieving this over the last 5 years since the start of the new qualifications.

**S5 (120 pupils):** The school outperforms the virtual comparator, CEC schools, and national comparators in S5 for the middle 60% and Highest 20% of pupils and the lowest 20% of pupils (apart from the VC).

The 5 Higher in 1 sitting is the 2nd highest % of pupils achieving 5 this over the last 5 years since the start of the new qualifications.

**S6 (109 pupils) :** The school outperforms the virtual comparator, CEC schools and national comparators in S6 for the middle 60% and Highest 20% of pupils and the lowest 20% of pupils (apart from the VC)

Action point: continued focus on lowest 20% of pupils' attainment in S4 and coursing in S6.

### **S4, S5, and S6 closing the attainment gap:**

**The average complimentary tariff point** is a measure which helps compare pupils in different schools who undertake differing numbers of qualifications in S4-S6 due to the school curriculum model. The best 5 National qualifications are taken as this measure. Please remember the points that different course have in terms of grades and levels.

**The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)** ranks small areas (called data zones) from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). SIMD provides information to help improve the understanding about the outcomes and circumstances of people living in the most deprived areas in Scotland

St Thomas' is closing the attainment gap in S4 when comparing the cohort's attainment versus the virtual comparator (using complementary tariff scores, by SIMD). 40% of the cohort reside in SIMD 9 and 10 and the high attainment of these two deciles has a significant pull factor on the rest of the cohort.

Pupils in SIMD 1 (5 pupils) were averaging 300 points to those in SIMD 10(23) who were averaging 350. Whilst the VC SIMD 1 pupils averaged 250 (ish) and the VC SIMD 10 pupils averaged 350.

In S5, the graph has a more complicated look, however the school is closing the attainment gap in S5 compared to the virtual comparator (using complementary tariff scores, by SIMD). There is a difference of 400 tariff points between the pupils in decile 1 and 2 with pupils residing in SIMD 9 and 10. Whilst the virtual comparator has a slightly greater difference between the virtual SIMD 1 and 10 pupils.

In S6, the school narrows the gap between SIMD 1 and 10 compared to the school's virtual comparator. There are fluctuations in SIMD 1-6. Our understanding of the historical nature of S6 is pupils wishing to sit Advanced Highers when maybe the exam level is not needed for a positive destination and for pupils and parents wishing to experience only 3 subjects in S6. The school's recommendation is to study 3 subjects if they are all at Advanced Higher.