

Minutes of Parent Council meeting of 18 September 2019

Location St. Thomas of Aquin High School (STAM) Room 2.08

Time 6-8pm

Next meeting 21 November 2019 Time TBA

Executive summary

A positive meeting with several action outcomes:

Programs proposed are Mr. Santini's (CS's) 4-year plan to move the school from a 4+ (good) to 5 (very good) status.

One more teaching appointment will make all staff permanent, and interviews are taking place.

Exam results were excellent with STAM coming around 3rd in Edinburgh/Scottish schools by some academic measures; there are also positive measures for less academic pupils who are more technical.

The Parent Council propose: (1) an FAQ for new parents (CS has an example), and (2) a program to support school leavers with life skills (banking, cooking, how life feels beyond school, etc.) starting out with proposals from the Attainment and Health/Wellbeing subgroups.

A fashion and information show highlighting sustainability and conditions will be on 3rd October.

A teachers' lunch is requested (CS) during half term (22 October).

The Green party attempted to close the route for church representatives to influence educational matters pertaining to the Catholic curriculum with a vote on 23 August, but the council have decided to consult faith groups and report back on 21 November. PC decided to find out more, inform parents with facts and a route to feed back to their counsellor on the issue.

The website will soon be responsive for updates so that PC pages are up to date.

Our community police officer resigned in August and an appointment is pending

Present:

Lesley Broadwood (Chair), Andrew Gillies (Vice Chair), Tamasin Grey (Treasurer), Helen Field (Clerk/Secretary), Christopher Santini (Headmaster), Andrea Manning, Catherine Midgeley, Emma Quinn, Gareth Stewart, Martin Clarke, Robert Marshall, James Boardman, Lindi Smith, Fiona Bradley, Denise Simpson, Jule Dewar, Lesley Russell, Jason King, Alice Musanta Purves, Dee Armstrong, Jo Phillips (21).

Apologies:

Jo Beech-Brandt, Shona O'Brien

Minutes

1. Welcome from Lesley at 6.05pm, with a round of names and pupil year.
2. Minutes of meeting from 30 May 2019 were approved without dissent.
3. Matters arising: the STAM community police officer was to be invited to this meeting, but he has resigned! Parents wished to ask about illicit drug control. The role of the officer is addressing S1-S3 on health and safety issues around bonfires, buses, and issues in the community (complaints about behaviour); they attend child planning meetings if necessary. CS is in the processing of contacting 'Link' to push for a new appointee.

ACTION (LB): It would be helpful to have a letter from parents (via PC) to state that it would be useful to have a shared appointment with one other school nearby (currently there is one officer for 3 schools as we share with Gillespie and Boroughmuir) so that the officer knows the local problems and can spend a productive 2 days per week with STAM. Previous appointee covered STAM and Craigmount, which is too far away.

4. Subgroup updates (1): the Health and Wellbeing subgroup sent a report which Andrew spoke to (Appendix 1). Pupil use of Place2Be and key adults is being monitored, working with Isabelle Jean Pierre (Depute Head S1-3). Areas for 'conversation' are being identified as pupils design a questionnaire. CS is meeting the S5s to see what they like and want more of at school, their personal values to be taken into assemblies with examples.

ACTION (AG): James raised the point that a survey had previously been organised so it was decided to join up the previous questions with the new.

5. Senior Leadership Report: CS spoke to this (Appendix 2).

5.1 Staffing. With the next appointment all staff will be permanent. LB is recruitment trained and recently worked with CS;

ACTION (LB): CS is looking for one parent with whom he has previously worked for the short leet (shortlist) interviews.

5.2 STAM attainment. Besides the SQA results table (sent to parents) CS provided the following information: 86/137 S4 pupils 5 or more National 5 A-C passes; 78/128 S5 pupils got 1+ Highers, with 41 getting 5+ Highers; in S6, (126 pupils) 53 obtained one (3rd best achievement in Edinburgh state schools), while 18 pupils gained 3+ Advanced Highers. In Scotland, only *Edinburgh* state school offer 8 National 5's in S4, as does STAMs (including RME/PSE). Insight data is a 25 page report prepared for the council by CS, and includes pupils who are academic and those who are not, comparing like for like across all backgrounds. This report will be discussed with the Attainment subgroup. Exam results compared to local and national averages will be posted on the STAM website, and shows that all faculties are performing above and beyond expectations, even in faculties where new staff are teaching Highers. Graphic communications is not offered *this year* due to staffing and the evidence of poor results. Jenny Nicholson (Social subjects), Susanne Turner (Business studies) and the English faculty were praised. Christian Taylor and Ashleigh Quigley were promoted from social subjects to Pupil Support, leaving that department understaffed. Fiona pointed out that staffing issues in S5 last year led to some pupils instructed to do self-directed study. Helen suggested it might be optimal for the teacher to present what should be taught, on feedback from a pupil (S4 History). It takes 4 years to change a curriculum model, with 3 years of evidence required. Andrew passed our thanks to the staff for the excellent results.

5.3 Plan to get to status 5 (Very Good): CS is using the 'How Good is Our School v.4' as a toolkit to progress the school upward. In 2019-20, learning and engagement will be tackled, followed in subsequent years by Quality of teaching, Effective assessment, Planning and tracking, using best practice from good schools (St Ninians) and schools like ours. There is a budget allowing teachers time off to go and learn how good schools operate, to bring best practice to STAMs. This was to include a trip for CS to Hong Kong, now cancelled. Inspections may now take place in performing schools and will be welcome. 3 teachers who taught in London where attainment improved markedly were able to present their views. Tamasin asked whether the Inspectorate share good practice (they do, and attainment data is shared with Head teachers). STAM had a 4 hour inspection on pupil equity funding with very good feedback (CS). Pupils without qualifications are now being covered by the Attainment subgroup (which now meets only 3 times a year) and addressed in the Insight report prepared by CS. James said that the Attainment group is capturing leaver destinations across the entire school. It was pointed out that Gap Year should not be a negative destination; leavers are followed for several years (up to age 21). STAMs has no Alumnus

program so has no route to follow ex-pupils further. Some Universities feed back to STAM.

ACTION (CS): Insight report discussion with Attainment subgroup

6. The Green party attempted to end voting rights on Edinburgh Council, the route for church representatives to influence educational matters pertaining to the Catholic curriculum in schools. There was a vote on 23 August, but Ian Perry (Convenor) communicated that the council have decided to consult *faith groups* and report back to the Council on 21 November. No consensus was found among the PC members on this issue, based on an email flurry close to the August vote, so individuals contacted Ian Perry or their local councillor privately. There will be no attempt to create a consensus. Denise had prepared a letter for the PC to send to the Council but PC members mostly did not support it: she did not mind but had intended to get the ball rolling as she felt it important to acknowledge that the issue could impact the school and/or that we (the PC and parent forum) are aware. Dee suggested that sex education might be affected but this is PSE not religion, so unaffected; it is things like the number of RE lessons, and maintaining the values and ethos of the catholic charter, about which there is no contention. It was felt that we should consider what might happen if the voice (vote of church reps) was not there. PC decided to find out more, inform parents with facts and a route to feed back to their counsellor on the issue, as it was felt that the PC has a duty to the parent forum to inform on this issue, since their children are in fact at a Catholic school. Dee said we must act quickly if we want to find out more.

ACTION (LB): See if we can invite someone, from Council or church, to see what the role of the church voters is and why it is proposed to remove such votes; (while this affects Catholic schools there are other types of religious school).

ACTION (?, HF): Draft an information post for parent forum (see above). Send to all parents via Karen Statham (email to all parents) NOT via CS weekly updates.

7. Fashion show on 3rd October (publicity has gone out to all parents, PC sent to its subscribers). There will be presentations, as videos and speakers and a catwalk; pupils are designing the program and costumes. Clothing sales will be organised during and subsequent to the event; perhaps leftovers can be offered to homeless charities. Remode Collective (Leith) is offering upcycled clothing (they help disadvantaged communities). Please continue to donate any clothes without being shy: it is surprising what pupils choose. Tamasin said that the St Thomas fundraising email should be used to request

tickets or they can be purchased at school. Sadly, the Edinburgh College of Art did not send helpers (but should be nudged).

There will be a musical, so clothing might be of use to the drama department.

ACTION (CS): post directions to the school App, for news and CS tweets.

STAM website will shortly be more easily updated, so news can go out on that.

ACTION (LB, HF, TG, AG): list updates to PC section of the website, to pass back to CS for page updates. Some listings date back to 2016....

8. Areas of focus in 2019-20. LB opened this question to all present and the following were proposed:

FAQ for S1: Lesley said that at Bonaly, a parent engagement group had created an FAQ for new parents (in the parent pack, on the website).

ACTION (CS -> LB): pass back example from another school (Earlstone) as template FAQ

Preparing students for leaving. Lesley said Further/Higher education is concerned about growing mental health issues among students. Issues to address are: creating a personal statement for a UCAS application or a curriculum vitae; having ex-pupils come back to share how to do this and share other experiences (parents please help, CS says this feedback is like gold dust); shopping for 1 (on a budget); cooking as now Universities offer no catering; budgeting (banks can be invited to speak). Claire McKye has offered help. CS said staff can help with the UCAS applications but have no bandwidth to help with the other areas: this is for the PC to organise.

ACTION (Attainment subgroup, Wellbeing subgroup): put together ideas for a program after seeing what is needed or desirable; this should be for all pupils leaving home/school.

ICT (computer resources) at school CS is "close to a Gate 1 meeting" with the City of Edinburgh (CS is a Council officer) for a refresh of 92% of the PCs (personal computers) in the school. Currently every PC is being assigned to a faculty/person. Jo Ritchie (Business Manager), the 2 Deputies and two curricular leaders will form a committee for a transparent process. They will audit good practice for PCs, use of iPads. A parent on the ICT working group has met with CS and Lauren (new head of computing faculty).

9. Time of next meeting may be 6.30. To be decided. 6pm too early for some working but 6.30 is not too late for teachers (CS pointed out there are only 5 meetings in the year).

ACTION (LB): time for next meeting - arrange by email

10. AOB

Teachers' lunch 22/10: CS thanked PC for the successful lunch organised at the start of term and requested a teachers wellbeing day lunch on 22 October

ACTION (CG,FB): organise lunch 22 October Tuesday - note HF is away that week

Hong Kong students are coming very soon: we should find one other parent to offer a room (of their own) for 6 days, S1-S4 on 3rd November for 6 days, Sunday to Friday. This is an exchange visit but visits to Hong Kong are uncertain.

ACTION (DS): wording for a text to send to all parents (Karen Statham email). Also advertise the 50:50 club!

11. Time of next meeting may be 6.30. To be decided. 6pm too early for some working but 6.30 is not too late for teachers (CS pointed out there are only 5 meetings in the year).

ACTION (LB): time for next meeting - arrange by email

Appendix 1

Parent Council Health and Wellbeing Report

The Parent Council set up a sub group to focus on Health and Wellbeing in late 2018.

The aim of the subgroup is to:

- Support emotional wellbeing and happiness by connecting with Place2Be
- Understand how the school and the local authority measures health and wellbeing and make the results of that accessible to parents
- Promote physical activity in the school – using parents as volunteers to provide more opportunities for this
- Promote inclusion in the school and understand how the school is already working towards being an inclusive school
- Support a pupil led initiative to test out the vision and values statement in the school

In February 2019, Alexia Gaitanou spoke to the Parent Council about the impressive work of PlacetoBe explaining the support it offers and giving us an indication of how that support is used by both pupils and teachers.

Since then we have had meetings with Isabelle Jean Pierre and Alexia seeking to understand how wellbeing is measured in the school.

What we have found out is that there is a lot going on.

The Framework is Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Within that there are a set of Edinburgh Wellbeing Outcomes which are used by every school.

The school completes an annual self-evaluation detailing activity relating to health and wellbeing which it submits to CEC.

In the past year it has been surveying all pupils using the Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI) indicators.

It is also undertaking Key Adult Reviews (again using the SHANARRI indicators) of every pupil asking:

- What is going well at the moment
- What do I need to improve on
- How will I achieve this
- What are my friendship groups like
- Anything else I want to mention

Any concerns are passed to the Deputy Head for action.

Staff Wellbeing is also being addressed and there is a staff wellbeing day scheduled for an in-service day in January 2020.

The School Improvement Plan for 2019 – 2020 identifies that the Parent Council to audit pupil wellbeing through the use of the school values. We are working with Alexia and Isabelle to develop a process for getting started on this.

September 2019

Appendix 2

Senior leadership team report September 2019 Parent Council – action point areas.

1. Staffing:

St Andrew's Pupil Support Leader: Mrs Stark is the successful candidate. Mr Whyte continue in his Acting PSL role until further notice.

Mrs Winders completes her Acting PSL remit at the beginning of the October break when Ms Taylor (permanent PSL) returns to St Thomas'.

Curricular Leader of Modern Languages interviews (Long leet) will take place on Monday 23rd of September. Short Leet interviews will take place on Tuesday 1st of October.

2. 2018-19 St Thomas' attainment – the below table has already been sent out to parents

The chart below provides the percentage of pupils achieving National Qualifications in S4, S5, and S6. The percentages of all year groups and levels are always based on the number of pupils who sit their first National Qualifications in S4.

2017-18 SQA results	St T of A	St T of A	St T of A	City of Edinburgh Average
St Thomas' pupils at the end of S4	2017	2018	2019	2019
Pupils gaining 5+ National 5 exams passes	60% (No of S4 pupils = 134)	58% (No of S4 pupils = 128)	63% (no of S4 pupils = 137)	43%
St Thomas' pupils at the end of S5				
Pupils gaining 5 Higher exam passes	28% (No of S4 pupils = 129)	37% (No of S4 pupils = 134)	32% (No of S4 pupils in S4 = 128)	20%
St Thomas' pupils By the end of S6				
Pupils gaining 5 Higher exam passes	48%	37% (No of S4 pupils = 129)	46% (No of S4 pupils = 134)	36%
Pupils gaining 1 Advanced Higher exam pass	48%	37% (No of S4 pupils = 129)	43% (No of S4 pupils = 134)	27%

The postive destinations of 2018-19 pupils leaving St Thomas will be updated in February 2020.

Insight has gone live and I hope to meet with the attainment and outcomes sub-group to look at attainment in more depth – a date needs to be identified.

2018-19 St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School Exam results									
Faculty + Subject	N5 A-C passes	H A-C passes	AH A-C passes	Entry Nos			National A-C %		
				N5	H	AH	N5	H	AH
Art and Technology									
Art & Design	97% A-C passes. 53% As	86% A-C passes. 41%As	100% A-C passes 56%As	32	22	9	87	81	91
Design & Manufacture	100% A-C passes.	33% A-C passes.		4	6		70	54	
Graphic Communication	62% A-C passes. 12% As	50% A-C passes.		8	8		72	75	
Practical Cookery	100% A-C passes. 23%As			17			83		
Computing Science									
Computing Science	89% A-C passes. 67% As	92% A-C passes. 38% As	71% A-C passes. 14%As	27	13	7	75	64	65
English & Literacy									
English	91% A-C passes. 44% As	84% A-C passes. 41% As	62% A-C passes.	127	96	8	86	73	75
Maths & Numeracy									
Lifeskills									
Maths	81% A-C passes. 50% As	84% A-C passes. 48% As	89% A-C passes. 44%As	121	62	18	65	72	75
Modern Languages									
French	97%A-C passes. 53% As	92% A-C passes. 42% As	100% A-C passes. 43%As	32	12	7	85	87	77
Spanish	90% A-C passes. 72%As	75% A-C passes. 56% As	100% A-C passes. 50%As	20	16	2	87	83	78
Peforming Arts									
Drama	100% A-C passes. 67% As	80 % A-C passes. 20% As		21	5		93	79	
Music	100% A-C passes. 85%As	100% A-C passes. 50%As	100 A-C passes. 100%As	7	8	4	94	92	92
Music Tech	100% A-C passes.			2			85	89	90
Physical Education									
Dance									
Physical Education	100% A-C passes. 78%As	94% A-C passes. 39%As	91% A-C passes. 54% As	46	18	11	94	88	76
Science									
Biology	83% A-C passes. 51% As	75% A-C passes. 33%As	82% A-C passes. 14%As	75	36	22	70	73	74
Human Biology		78% A-C passes. 28%As		18			69	90	
Chemistry	81% A-C passes. 35% As	81% A-C passes. 44%As	82% A-C passes. 35%As	68	32	17	77	75	82
Physics	94% A-C passes. 46%As	78% A-C passes. 43%As	100% A-C passes. 28%As	35	23	7	75	75	79
Social Subjects									
Admin and IT									
Business Management	86% A-C passes. 47%As	80% A-C passes. 31%As		15	25		78	76	
Geography	79% A-C passes. 37% As	83% A-C passes. 39% As	100 % A-C passes. 33%As	48	23	3	72	76	85
History	100% A-C passes. 78%As	95% A-C passes. 74%As.	89% A-C passes. 11%As	18	19	9	77	73	80
Modern Studies	76% A-C passes. 24%As	96% A-C passes. 43%As	72% A-C passes.	50	23	7	73	76	76
Religious Education									
RMPS	85% A-C passes. 45% As	83% A-C passes. 44%As		68	18		68	69	

3. Learning and Teaching 4 year plan

The March 2019 2.3 Quality Indicator CEC return places St Thomas' at a HMIe grade of 4 out of 6 (Good)

How have we improved our delivery of learning and teaching?

- Faculties sharing S1-S3 assessment timelines with parents via the Faculty pages on the school website
- Revisited Assessment is for Learning and Co-operative good practice for all staff
- Use of what makes an excellent lesson posters
- Getting back on track and staged intervention systems – Brblbb posters
- Learning conversations and restorative behaviour good practice

► How do we get to a 5 (Very Good)?

A root and branch analysis, evaluation, sharing of good practice, and then identification of areas for improvement of 2.3 quality indicator:

2019-20: Learning and engagement

2020-21: Quality of teaching

2021-22: Effective use of assessment

2022-23: Planning, tracking, and monitoring



The Rene Descartes method of gaining knowledge by decreasing the doubt one has for any chosen topic – the barrel of apples analogy.

How?

For 2019...

1. SLT September 2019 visits will focus on identifying 2.3 learning and engagement good practice
2. The learning and teaching working group will collate good practice on learning and engagement from within and out with the school
3. The May 2.3 Leadership returns will solely focus on the learning and engagement area identifying good practice within faculties which will include pupil surveys and sharing classroom experience
4. The collegiate “give and take” May sharing good practice to focus on Learning and Engagement
2019-20: Learning and engagement – by the end of June 2020 we should have acquired enough knowledge in this area to identify ourselves as a Very Good – a 5!
2020-21: We use the same analytical process for Quality of teaching
2021-22: We use the same analytical process for Effective use of assessment
2022-23: We use the same analytical process for Planning, tracking, and monitoring