

Madras College Parent Council

Meeting Minute

Wednesday 3rd September 2014

Kilrymont Road 7.15pm

Present: Paul Brown (Chair); David McClure (Rector); Jane Pettegree (Secretary); Dawn Waddell (Treasurer); Other members: Lorna Angus; Karen Barnett; Catriona Connelly; Debbie Cummings; Fiona Day; Charlotte Kirby; Georgique Mazilu; Callum Macleod; Faizil Muhamad; Andy Primmer; Lisa Scott; Susan Simpson; Rebecca Trengove; Scott Wilson. Staff: Hugh Watson; Councillors: Brian Thomson.

Apologies: Lynn Christie; Vicky Louchran; Rachel Naismith; Carol Urquhart. Councillors: Tim Brett; Bill Connor; Keith McCartney; Dorothea Morrison;

1. Chair's Opening Remarks. The Chair welcomed those present and urged any other parents interested to come to future meetings. Communication with the general parent body is currently not happening easily; there have been some problems with the Parent Council website which we should work towards resolving.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Accepted.

2.1. Action points arising and resolved.

- Silt in the Kilrymont Burn. David McClure reported that work had taken place over the summer and that this was significantly better than it had been.
- N5 post-Easter 2nd science prelim. David McClure reported that the timing of this would be reviewed with the PT Science, as this had taken place too late to provide useful feedback to pupils.

2.2. Action points carried forward

- Parent Council Website – currently not really functional (no update for a year). Action: not clear – Secretary will investigate handover notes.
- Higher to Advanced Higher progression. It is not clear how those sitting old syllabus Highers will be able to progress to Advanced Higher in 2016.
Action: David McClure will investigate this with subject heads as a matter of urgency.

3. Rector's Report.

3.1. Attainment statistics from 2014 Exams

- S5 and S6 results (Highers and Advanced Highers. These were reported using the comparative data from past years 2010-14, and looked at (1+. 3+ and 5+ A to C Higher

passes) and (1+ Advanced Higher Passes). The tables showed an approximate 2% rise in attainment overall on 2013. The sixth year in particular showed the highest historic score for 5+ Highers.

- S4 results (new CfE exams). No comparative analysis with past years is possible as the new exams use different reporting criteria. Moreover, the Rector explained that the data for S4 results is henceforth to be collated internally by schools rather than made available by Fife Education Services for the whole region: this means that comparison with other schools will not be possible for the foreseeable future. The different approaches to implementation of CfE across schools in Scotland also make comparative analysis before S5/S6 impossible. A new data analysis tool ('INSIGHT') will be available for schools to carry out their own year-on-year analysis, but this package is not yet implemented.

Notwithstanding these qualifications the Rector presented findings as follows.

N5s: 45% of the S4 cohort was presented for 5 or more N5s (max possible 6), with 100% success rate amongst this group. (Comparative figure for 2013: 46% 5+ Standard Grades from a max. possible 8). The comparative figure is statistically inexact but suggests a better success rate.

Middle attainment: 4 or more/6 N5s – 56% of the S4 cohort. Looks better than 2013 for same strata.

Most pupils were 'double entered' in reports to the SQA for both N5s and for safety net 'value added' N4 units, except in 3 subjects (2 of the sciences and 1 social science) where syllabus pressures made this difficult. Those without the necessary N4 'value added' units were to have been taught this after the exams so that the N4 could be reported. (6 pupils in biology; 7 in chemistry; 5 in social science). The Rector explained that this full reporting strategy had incurred a significant cost for the school, and that the preferred strategy for 2014/5 would be that these fall-back N4 units would be 'banked' internally, and reported to the SQA only after the exam results confirmed they were necessary to secure an N4 rather than the originally intended N5 qualification.

Queries received about possible gaps in SQA reporting: extra value Business Studies units not appearing alongside Business Studies N5s; Scottish Studies N4.

N4s: 5 or more N4s: 92% success rate (compared with 87% of 5+/8 General Standard Grades for 2013) – suggests better attainment.

Overall: 5/6 National Awards at S4 – 96% (compared with 97% 5 or more from 8)

This suggests the outcomes for S4 are at least as high if not slightly better than past years. The end results also reflect an improvement against the prelim results.

Action Points:

- Rector to check with subject heads that those pupils needing the fall-back N4 value-added units were taught these and were reported; also that value added N4 units in Business Studies had been lodged with the SQA, and all possible Scottish Studies N4 qualifications had been assessed and reported.
- Rector to present the data analysis outputs from the INSIGHT toolkit to the Parent Council once this is available.

3.2. Complaint Investigation for Higher History

The school had received complaints that one of the three classes had not been adequately prepared for one of the examined topics. The Rector presented his findings from the detailed statistical analysis he had undertaken of the History results compared with the outcomes of other subjects taken by individuals in the class in question and also as compared with the total cohort who took Higher History. Out of the 3 classes presented for the exam, there were only 5 'negative' results (i.e. worse than expected for the individuals concerned) and these were not all in the class in question. The Rector was satisfied that the Higher results showed that the pupils in the History class in question had not been disadvantaged in their preparation for their Higher exam.

Action point:

- The Rector has introduced the same process of detailed exam results analysis for all departments. This will help to identify the relative accuracy of predicted grades in future. Exam preparation advice given to students needs to be re-examined, in order to ensure that the pupils fully understand what they are being told.

3.3. Reporting Within Levels CfE S1-3

The Rector distributed a sheet which would be distributed to staff, pupils and parents surveying the terms that might helpfully be used to report on progress within each S1; the current terms for beginning, working on and completing levels were not felt to be very informative. Parents were asked to return the sheet with any preferences.

Action point: PC members please return sheets with preferences

3.4. Reporting Calendar and QA Calendar – tabled.

The Reporting Calendar schedules prelim and main exams, the distribution of pupil reports home and parent nights. The QA calendar sets in place a schedule of monitoring meetings between school management with pupils, parents and staff. The Rector thanked the Parent Focus Group for working with the school to assist with the coordination of these two schedules, which are now more systematic in linking internal reviews and meetings with home reporting.

3.5. Visit of HMI

This is scheduled for the week commencing 15th September. The school's main areas of emphasis will be attainment and extra-curricular activities. Parent and pupil surveys have been distributed to a sample of both constituencies.

4. New Madras Update

Andy Primmer reported that the forward planning application hearing had been delayed to October as the drainage survey had had to be modified; that STEPAL had applied for a judicial review based on procedural irregularity and that this was to be given a first hearing on 3rd December, at which meeting it would be determined whether or not there was a case to answer. Fife Council in theory could proceed with work while the outcome of any review was pending, but in practice would be more likely to delay until the outcome was known.

5. Chairman's Report – already given in AGM (see AGM minutes).

6. Treasurer's Report – already given in full in AGM (see AGM minutes).

Opening balance: £3,159.95

7. Secretary's Report

Request for emails and past circulation list.

Action point

- Handover needed for this post. Charlotte Kirby/Jane Pettegree

8. Parents' Focus Group

Convenor: Susan Simpson.

This group had meet several times in the year and had involved both parents formally on the parent council and others co-opted. It will continue for the coming year, and will attempt in particular to involve parents in the S1 to 4 year groups.

Action:

- Susan Simpson to email PC to invite new members to contact her, and to contact Rector to set up first meeting date, before October if possible.

AOCB

- Rebecca Trengove asked whether a schedule of careers advice for S5 pupils was in place e.g. feedback from exam results, building CV experience, etc. The Rector reported that feedback on exams prioritised those who needed to adjust course choice based on their results; that parent nights were already scheduled but there might be a place to build in more; and that the first senior school UCAS night was scheduled for Wed 17th September.

Action point: Rector to follow these suggestions up with the Guidance Team.

- Jane Pettegree asked if the Calendar of Important Dates had definitely been distributed as it wasn't currently on the school website.

Action point: Rector to follow up distribution of Calendar to parents.

- Dates for parent council meetings 2014-15: not set.

Action point: Secretary to extrapolate these from 2013-14, confirm with Chair and Rector and circulate with minutes.