

Note of a meeting of the Dounby Community School Parent Group held on 4th March 2010

Present: Kay Morgan Lorraine Cormack
Georgie Clark (Clerk) Isla Dougall
Alastair Forsyth Katrina Gray
Emma Grieve Michelle Hill
Andrea Price Margaret Sinclair

1. Welcome and Apologies

Kay welcomed all to the meeting, including Andrea Price, her first meeting as a co-opted member.

Apologies were received from Corina Taylor

2. Approval of minute of last meeting

The minute of the meeting held on 26th November was approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

- 3.1 Texting Service: Alastair updated that he had reviewed the information since the previous meeting. Text messages were originally suggested for use in relation to snow closures. Alastair highlighted that although he is aware this method is used in other schools, he prefers to make contact with parents. This is to ensure when children are sent home there will be someone to meet them off the transport.

The School website contains closure information and up to date weather reports. There is also a “twitter” feed on OIC website which, once registered, can inform parents of any closure information.

During winter weather, the school is in contact with the conveyors and will open if the conveyors are happy to drive in snowy/icy conditions. Parents can then make the decision if they wish for their child to travel on the transport.

- 3.2 Behaviour: this is continuing to be addressed. Children have been spoken to in Classes and any child that continues with bad behaviour or language will be given a warning, then next steps will be to inform parents. It is regularly made clear to children what language isn't tolerated.
- 3.3 Supervision of Pre-School Children at Break Times: There has been discussion with staff. Although this has been stepped up – this will tail off as children move closer to starting P1.
- 3.4 Nursery Parking: Alastair had discussions with staff and had inspected / investigated the situation. Following discussion with parents, they were happy for the area to be closed off and pilot for a period of time. Alastair is not unhappy about parents walking nursing children through the school, however some teachers thought this would be disruptive to the classes that will be

affected by the through traffic. He highlighted that he had also contacted the local authority to seek advice and investigate the situation.

- 3.5 School Lending Library: A request was sent out to parents asking for books to stock the library. Some books were received, but not as many to get a lending library started. Some attention had been paid to finding a suitable area to site the library. It was important to note that this was a lending library, which wouldn't have a dedicated area for a quiet library. This would require finding a suitable area within the school. It was suggested that events could be held to raise money for new books, or even to use FODs money.

Another notice would be sent to parents requesting any books, either out grown or no longer read. Good quality picture books for Primary 1 to 3 or any novel books for the older children would be ideal.

4. Appointment of Vice Chair

Kay updated members of the vacancy that had arisen following Barbara's departure.

She highlighted that the term of office would be for two years. Kay had nearly served two years as chair and the vice chair would be asked to step up when she steps down in September.

The duties of the chair included Chairing meetings of the Parent Group, attending a yearly meeting of Local Parent Group Chair persons, liaising with the school as a point of contact on Parent Group matters and interviewing for staff appointments.

Michelle Hill was proposed by Katrina Gray and seconded by Isla Dougall. Michelle accepted this proposal.

5. Correspondence Received by Chair

- 5.1 Parent Council newsletter – copies were circulated to members and available from Kay Morgan if necessary.
- 5.2 Letter from Lorraine Sander highlighting useful pointers on what Parent Councils should be considering as schools move forward with Curriculum for Excellence.

There was discussion on how far Dounby School is with implementing Curriculum for Excellence. Mini guides and tool kits have been recently issued to help with the transition and explain the processes involved.

Alastair explained that it was proposed to hold meetings with parents to go over these tool kits. These meetings are likely to be looked into further once the School Inspection has been completed.

- 5.3 HMIe School Inspection

Kay, as Chair of Parent Council, will be interviewed as part of the School Inspection process. Parents received a questionnaire to complete and return. Questions that will be presented to Kay were highlighted in a letter that was sent to her.

Kay asked if there was anything helpful that members could provide in relation to the questions asked, especially with question 3.

1. How well the school works with parents in partnership
2. Involvement of Parents in School Improvement Plan
3. Examples of how parents work with the school to support children and young people's learning and
4. How well the school consults with the Parent Council and parents.

Currently there are opportunities with Book Packs sent home with P1's, story sacks in Preschool and parents with expertise in specialist fields visiting the school. Homework was also felt to fit in with this category.

6. Update from Head Teacher

- 6.1 Arrangements within classes from next school year: Currently the school is running with a full time teacher in classes 1-7. There is currently a part time teacher in pre-school and an Early Years Worker acting up in Nursery.

It is proposed that a full time teacher will cover both Nursery and Pre-School classes. With the sizes of the current Pre School and P1 classes, composite classes are out of the question. From August the following teacher allocation is proposed:

Nursery and Pre-School:	Full time teacher	
P1:	Teacher	
P2:	Teacher	
P3 / P4:	Composite	Class 4 Pupils will be split according to age
P4 / P5:	Composite	
P6:	Teacher	
P7:	Teacher	

Composite classes should be no more than 2. These two composite classes will have 24 and 25 children respectively. If any further children join these composite classes the authority will put in support. If numbers rise too much then classes would be returned to a teacher per class.

This arrangement will be assessed each year. Any child with individual learning needs within the composite classes where their age affects which composite they would be assigned to, their needs will be discussed with parents before placing child.

Alastair highlighted that the school may well get another probationer in the next school year.

There is currently a vacancy for a permanent full time post in P5. This has been filled recently on a temporary basis on the requirement of the local authority. This post is likely to be filled from the redeployment list. This list has young teachers who have been covering maternity or temporary posts for just over year etc. The school will have some say in who is appointed.

Rachel Garson has been appointed to the P5 position on a temporary basis until the end of the Summer Term.

- 6.2 Alastair informed members that the school inspection is being undertaken during the week commencing 15th March.

The inspection will involve speaking to Staff and also meeting and interviewing the children in classes.

A DVD of what to expect during the inspection was shown.

There will be a feedback session on 19th March with the full report expected to be completed and published approximately 9 weeks later.

7. Any Other Business

- 7.1 Lunches: Alastair was asked how the lunch times were managed. The classes are organised so that some children are out playing at the beginning of lunchtime, then as the first groups of children are seated the other classes are called in from the playground. There is a rota to make this fair, although the youngest two classes always eat first.

Some children had asked for more time and Alastair had met with the school council where this was discussed. The School Council was given two options: either leave the lunch arrangements as it was or, make the school day longer to incorporate the extra time at lunch. It was decided to keep the school day as it currently was! Alastair highlighted that it was important for children to have a play / run around at lunchtime.

- 7.2 Safety in Car Park: There was some discussion over the safety in the car parks when Disco's are held. There was some discussion over the use of the Zebra crossing during these arranged evenings, following a very near miss at the recent disco. This obviously isn't an issue during the summer months.

After discussion it was decided that precautions on the dangers in the car park in winter months would be highlighted and re-iterated in event notices. Alastair would also speak with the local authority in updating the signage – regarding speed and precaution of children around.

Concern was also expressed about the volume of the music at the disco. The volume was more acceptable at the recent disco. All future disco's will be discussed with the disco provider and an acceptable level agreed.

8. Date of Next Meeting

This was set for 27th May 2010 at 7pm