

Perth Academy Parent Council

Minute of Meeting on Wednesday 2 November 2022

1 Welcome, introductions, apologies

Rebecca Mackay, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Attendees (in person)

- Elaine Adams
- Sarah Braithwaite
- Lindsay Davidson (Vice-Chair)
- Rose Habicht
- Gail Jack
- Lesley Joyce (Minute Clerk)
- Eleanor Kelleher
- Stuart Letford (Developing Young Workforce)
- Mrs MacGregor (Principal Teacher of Guidance with responsibility for UCAS)
- Rebecca Mackay (Chair)
- Vivienne Mackinnon
- George Mailer
- Eleanor Paul (Head Teacher)
- Mr Bain (Depute Head Teacher on secondment from Kinross High School)
- Irene Robertson
- Janet Ross
- Sarah Sloan (Treasurer)
- Eleanor Stamp
- Mary Stanger
- Elaine Wallace

Attendees (online)

- Stacey Dornan
- Iona Johnston
- Cllr Iain MacPherson
- Lyn Manzie
- Alan Thomson

Apologies

- Archie van Aswegen (Head Prefect)
- Cllr Liz Barrett
- Lesley Dent
- Catherine Escott
- Madelaine Gorton
- Cllr Sheila McCole
- Jennifer McGregor
- Gail Murray (Depute Head Teacher)
- Charlotte Tulley (Head Prefect)
- Fiona Tulley

2 Focus on Inspiring Learning

Learning Walks

Mr Bain, Deputy Head Teacher at Kinross High School who is on secondment, delivered a presentation about Learning Walks in Perth Academy as an approach to self-evaluation. This process which aims to capture learner experiences and to support and challenge the quality of provision of learning and teaching and outcomes for learners. A key area for development from the recent Validated Self Evaluation visit (VSE) was that the school should prioritise the consistency of high quality learning and teaching.

Many lessons have been visited with strengths and areas for improvement identified and shared each week. Next steps in improving approaches to learning & teaching include developing and agreeing a shared understanding of what high quality learning and teaching looks like, providing professional learning opportunities to staff and reviewing the impact as part of the self-evaluation approaches (eg self-evaluate own faculty, inspection reports, learning from others, including key aspects from VSE into practice).

Opportunity to ask Mr Bain questions was given.

Curriculum/Curricular Model

Mrs Paul advised that various timetable models have been tried at Perth Academy. The current model results in different timings on Mondays and Fridays, which can cause confusion.

The proposed new model comprises 35 periods each week with all timings on all days being the same. The proposed new model would enable S1-S4 to receive an additional period of Maths & English and for S1 a period of STEM (science, technology, maths & engineering) and a period of citizenship & sustainability. S2 will receive a period of STEM and a period of Enterprise each week. S5/6 will have increased time in PE to meet Scottish Government recommendations and they will also have an opportunity to increased time in personal development such as additional study, volunteering or work experience.

With regard to English, the school is planning to focus on listening and talking, including presenting skills, which the school recognises as important skills for young people moving into the world of work to possess. Feedback from parents about the changes to curriculum have been very positive.

Study Support

Mrs Paul advised that everyone has received the Study timetable and that an Easter Study Fund is provided by the PKC and teachers are currently working on how best to use the resource available. Mrs Paul advised that the immersion timetable, which provides opportunities for focused study immediately prior to examinations, worked well for young people last year and generated positive feedback so this will be available again this year.

3. Opportunity to ask Mrs Paul questions was given
4. Focus on DYW (Developing the Young Workforce)

Mr Letford informed attenders that DYW focuses on pupils achieving positive destinations and giving experiences in school to learn about different jobs and sectors. The work experience programme is resulting in helpful experiences for the young people involved. The DYW programme also provides CV workshops, mock interviews with employers involved and departmental audits of all school faculties to identify what can be done to collaborate with companies and employers to contribute to the curriculum in relevant and meaningful ways. Mr Letford informed attenders of some of the successes for young people involved in the programme who have enjoyed and benefitted from work experience arranged by the school. Mr Letford asked attenders to get in touch if they know of any company that may be willing to contribute.

One attender advised that work she has been involved in with Perth College resulted in renewed awareness that some young people enjoy and benefit from group interview experiences. Mr Letford advised that the young people involved are prepared in a group situation before they undergo one-to-one interviews.

UCAS (University and College Admissions Service) application process

Mrs McGregor informed attenders of the detailed and time-consuming nature of the UCAS process which is introduced to young people through PSE (Personal Social Education) lessons with students applying to UCAS in one class and those students not applying to university in another. Guidance staff deliver the lessons, working with SDS (Skills Development Scotland) to teach young people how to complete the UCAS application including, importantly, the personal statement. The programme is introduced in August aiming to get applications off to UCAS by the end of December. The time imperative starting in August was acknowledged and Mrs MacGregor advised that work could start in June or possibly earlier for some pupils. The programme focusses on young people in S6, however young people in S5 can also attend. The school receives a significant amount of information from universities which is shared with young people on a regular basis and a meeting with parents/carers is being planned for this year. There was a discussion on apprenticeships and available information for pupils and parents. The need for the school to ensure a more comprehensive support for those doing early UCAS applications (dentistry, medicine and veterinary medicine) was acknowledged.

5. Head Prefect Space: No report as Head Prefects were absent and sent apologies.
6. Update from Treasurer and Fund Raising

Sarah Sloan recorded gratitude for the £5k funds received from the Forteviot Charitable Trust which has resulted in additional books for the maths department on top of the 1k from Parent Council funds. £1k of Parent Council funds has also been invested in books for the English Department with £752 being raised from the initiative on parent pay to donate a book. The £4k that the Parent Council was given from the Corra Foundation Hardship Fund has been used to buy vouchers for Perth Academy Families.

With the current unspent funds amounting to around £1,300. Lindsay Davidson advised that there is a strong desire to raise more funds. Lyndsey appealed to anyone interested to get in touch with her.

7 Head Teacher Space

Mrs Paul recorded thanks for fundraising for text books and for applications for hardship fund for which vouchers are ready to go out to parents and families that will make a difference in practical terms to those struggling with the cost of living. Mrs Paul also reported that the past week had been a week of winning with the school boys team winning the Scottish Schools curling championships, successes with the school orchestra and the Well Read Quiz as well as involvement in an interesting new project around equality & diversity with Scottish Ballet. Mrs Paul also announced that the Breakfast Club had celebrated the serving of its 25,000th breakfast.

In relation to concerns raised about staff absence, Mrs Paul advised that all sectors, not just education, are continuing to experience higher level of absence in workplaces, this is attributed to the continuing impact of the pandemic. The school makes every effort to secure subject specialist supply teachers to cover any absence and, if not available, to arrange for another teacher in the department to cover classes.

Mrs Paul answered questions.

8 Update from the Chair

Rebecca Mackay advised that the school library would like to fund a Perth and Kinross book award which would cost £150 and attenders supported this proposal. A card had been sent to the Breakfast Club to acknowledge the achievement of serving 25,000 breakfasts. The Breakfast club has a shortage of £350 this year and the Parent Council agreed to offer £200 at the moment.

Attenders were informed that a written report from the traffic co-ordinator has been asked for.

The next meeting will be the AGM on the 26th April where more time for discussion will be available. Rebecca also advised that if any parent/carers are interested in becoming a member of the Parent Council they should get in touch for more information.

Rebecca thanked everyone for attending the meeting (in person and online).