**Parent Council Meeting 19th November 2018**

**Head Teacher Report**

**Staffing**

As we are mid-way through the session there is less staffing news than at the start of term. Nevertheless, we have had some movement of staff.

* Ms Butler Robson, PT Pastoral for Iona House, started her maternity leave in January and Mr Kennedy from Renfrew High School has joined us as Acting PT Iona House.
* Mr Bryce has joined the English team on a permanent basis
* Mrs McIntyre (Modern Languages) is here on supply 3 days per week
* Ms Dimitroulaki (History) has also come in to support us on a supply basis.
* Mrs Sparkes (ICT) has come in on a supply basis
* Finally, Mrs Robertson has taken on the role of Acting Faculty Head of Social Subjects and RE.

We are currently running with long term absences/vacancies in a number of subject areas:

* + ICT faculty (permanent job went up in November – no applicants)
  + Biology (temp job went up in January – no GTCS registered applicants)
  + Modern Languages
  + English
  + Social Subjects

I will take any questions on how we are managing this at the full PC meeting.

**School Life – Pupils**

For a detailed account of school life in Johnstone High, I would like to take this opportunity to direct parents to the winter newsletter, which, at time of writing, is being edited and should be on the website soon; we also have the school twitter feed.

However, here are some of the most memorable things that have happened in school in In terms of events and achievements. Our seniors, supported by Mr Brookes, have been taking part in Young Enterprise and had a successful show of their products at the Braehead trade fayre in December. Roll on the finals! Rachel and Connor (Head girl and boy) have carried out their duties impeccably all session and last week were the JHS representatives at the Holocaust Memorial Event in East Renfrewshire. We have had a football trip, run by Mr Stevenson, off to see Man City vs Everton on a very cold and snowy weekend in December. We have also had success in Art competitions and particular mention to Heather whose beautiful photography work represents May in the Renfrewshire Council calendar for 2019. Finally, three of our S3 beat off almost 80 competitors to make it to the West of Scotland final of the Subway Sandwich competition – they came an incredibly impressive 2nd place to Dunoon Grammar, and share £500 of Amazon vouchers between them.

Our charitable fundraising keeps going at a pace. The S6 put in a great effort for Children in Need with dressing up in PJs for the day, shaving heads and waxing legs, raising over £300. We have also had coffee mornings, a non-uniform day and S1 disco for our four house charities. Plans are now underway for Comic Relief in March. Finally, as a school staff group we are supportive of local charity ‘Lisa’s Gift’ that exists to help Renfrewshire school pupils who need financial assistance to access aspects of school life. Last year a group of staff did the Kilt Walk for Lisa’s Gift, and slightly less taxing was a recent Ladies Day at David Lloyd that saw many staff in attendance. Miss Brown, PT Nurture, has been heavily involved with this charity and is planning another staff/pupil Kilt Walk that we hope will be as equally well supported.

Of special note, of course, must be the Sleep in the Park charity event that took place in December, in association with Social Bite. An intrepid bunch of S6 and staff, led by Mr Munro, braved the cold and wet to sleep rough for a night in Kelvingrove Park to raise funds and awareness of homelessness. The friends and families of JHS raised a massive £2000+.

This led us nicely into the Christmas festivities within JHS. We try to make Christmas special and good fun for the young people to help encourage high attendance throughout the month. From the real tree in the assembly hall, to dances, positive behaviour reward events, the Parent Council Christmas fayre and charity work, school shows and the interhouse games, there is a buzz about the school and a warm sense of community spirit. It is also a time of year when the S6 come into their own. From Sleep in the Park, the S6 then went on to organise the Christmas parcel collection for the school and Johnstone was buzzing on the day when they hit the high street to deliver parcels to local elderly residents. We have received some lovely notes from local residents about this. The S6 also organised their first ‘Snowball’ Christmas dance in the Bowfield that was a brilliant night and a great practice for prom later in the year. The Christmas concert took place on the last week of term and displayed an increasingly large number of pupils’ talents in singing, dancing and instrumental skill. We witnessed some strong individual and group performances and I am delighted to see the growing confidence and self-belief of our children who take to the stage.

Finally, our Christmas festivities wound up on the last day of term with our Christmas Service for S1, the inter-house games and then Christmas Karaoke in the afternoon. The inter-house games this year was won by Arran house. Games this year included The Penguin, Identify the Food, Hankies out the Box, Candy Cane Hook and my favourite, Wrap the First Year. Our attendance on the last day of term is holding up well due to our efforts to entice pupils in on this day. For your information, I ask all staff to continue with academic work right up until the last day of term when we put all of our efforts into a programme of fun events for the pupils.

In terms of sport, our young people continue to impress with their hard work, skills and talents in a range of sporting areas, both individual and team based. We have had representation at District and Scottish schools events, and some of our pupils are even competing at an international level. Well done to Katie who played China in a friendly Ice Hockey fixture and Leon who has been selected for Sarajevo 2019 for the Youth Olympics (Snowboarding).

A major focus for our school is career planning and options. We are really proud that 94% of our pupils leave to go to a positive, sustained post-school destination, but we are always trying to get this as near to 100% as possible. On our twitter feed parents and pupils will see lots of information about opportunities in the local area; apprenticeships, training, courses and jobs. Mrs Carlin (employability lead in the school) has been working tirelessly to support Christmas S5 leavers and is now focusing on the pupils who want to leave in summer at the end of S4. She has also organised the recent careers fayre that was well attended by local providers, employers and the college. Dr Costello, the following week, had the STEM careers fayre in the school that was also a great source of information for our young people. This is all building up to the options process for S2-5 and this year Mr Menzies is overseeing it within his remit area of timetabling and curriculum.

At time of writing we have just finished prelims and DHTs and PTs are working together to look at how we continue to support our pupils in S4-6 to maximise their attainment. We have hosted two academic review days in February for S4-6 pupils who are ‘off track’. This involved inviting in parents in to discuss next steps in their child’s learning. We have also approached staff about delivering a programme of paid ‘booster classes’ (please note that this is separate to supported study drop-in sessions that are entirely at the goodwill of staff). We will be in touch with parents in due course about this, and I would encourage parents to discuss this and encourage the young people to take up this facility. In the meantime, pupils should be actively using show my homework and scholar as a means to support homework and revision.

In the last HT report I discussed my concern about behaviour and young people not living up to our school values. I noted that we had put in place a programme of ‘every lesson, every day’ walk rounds to support staff and pupils get on with the learning and teaching. I am happy to report that I have noticed an improvement in overall behaviour amongst our pupils and we continue to be committed to doing all we can to ensure your children learn in a happy and productive working environment. Pupils remain very clear about our expectations of them, from coats/hoodies and headphones being removed in class, to good manners. Moreover, for the very small number of high tariff pupils who require intensive support packages, we continue to work closely with Renfrewshire Council Children’s Services and our multi agency partners. Finally, we have had independent consultant Brian Donnelly (formerly head of the National organisation, RespectMe) come in to deliver behaviour management and de-escalation strategies to teachers, PTs and DHTs at twilight training sessions.

**School life – Parents**

We are continually grateful to our supportive parents and Parent Council. The Christmas Fayre on 28 November was a great success and raised funds for the school and the Parent Council grounds refurbishment. My thanks to all who supported this.

Since the last PC meeting we have had parents’ evening for S5/6 in November, S3 in December and S2 in January. The only year group who are still to have a parents’ evening is S1, hence the S1 settling in parent appointment offer in October. Our S2-5 options information evening was on the 31st of January and was very busy. I hope that pupils and parents alike now have more information about future pathways. As was discussed at the presentation, there will be an opportunity for S2-5 parents to attend an options interview later in the term to make sure we are all working in partnership. *(Please note that in previous PC meeting, we agreed not to schedule parents’ evenings during prelims or exams as the hall would be out of commission – unfortunately the S1 meeting is on the 24th of April, which is the day the newly brought forward SQA exam diet starts – my apologies. We will do our best to work around this.)*

You may have noticed at recent parent evenings that we have been giving you a copy of your child’s attendance to correct and annotate. This is a measure we have taken to get as accurate a picture as possible and to convert any ‘unauthorised’ absences (i.e. no note received) into authorised ones.

Finally, we have been approached by an independent organisation about fully funded online modules for staff on either mental health for young people or autism. The commitment for this is approx. 2 hours per week for around 12 weeks, and results in a level 2 nationally accredited qualification (and college certificate). I have been told that some schools have got parents involved in this, therefore I will include this as an agenda item to discuss at the PC meeting.

**School Improvement Agenda**

Our new counselling service, Place2Be, is now in place and is beginning to embed with the pupils. Run by Maggie Payne, there are a limited number of places for youngsters who need regular, intensive support, alongside a more informal drop-in that all students can access out with class time. There are posters about Place2Be all around the school giving pupils the information they need.

I have become increasingly concerned over the past few months about the level of littering in and around the school building and local areas. As a school, we have supported the ‘Team Up’ campaign run by the council, however we are looking at ways we can develop this at school level. I am keen to organise a litter-picking programme with volunteer pupils, and will be in touch with parents in due course about this. Any ideas or suggestions from parents on this will be most gratefully welcomed.

We continue to be well supported by the local authority and we work closely with our link Education Manager, Maureen Sneddon. Maureen has recently been in school to discuss our attainment, and will be visiting us again in April about learning and teaching. This is a planned series of visits that take place in all schools across Renfrewshire.

In the month of November, the SMT and the Art department joined up to carry out a ‘closer look’ review of the department. Over the course of the week, a number of classroom visits took place, alongside pupil focus groups and professional dialogue sessions with each member of the Art team. The result was a very strong report highlighting the strengths of the department, alongside a small number of suggested areas to support the department moving forward.

Finally, my thanks to the parents who took the time to contribute to the survey put out by Brian Donnelly (see above), the consultant the Renfrewshire Council have brought in to support schools further develop their anti-bullying policies and procedures. We have had a number of meetings with Brian who has helped us bring our Respect for All policy in line with the local authority position. Your comments and suggestions, alongside a range of pupil focus groups, were vital in helping us get it right for our young people.

**Updates on building improvement**

‘Screamers’ have been fitted on all the fire alarms in the school. Since then, we have had no malicious activations!

The grounds improvement project is nearing the end stage with Glasgow Wood Recycling being in a position to deliver the tables and outdoor classroom any time now. We will get a more detailed update on this at the PC meeting. Again, my ongoing thanks to all of those involved particularly Diane Spence and Mick Fulton.

**Press**

We have had recent positive press about Sleep in the Park, our Christmas activities and parcels for the local elderly, and the girls taking part in the Subway Sandwich competition.