

**Grove Parent Council meeting minutes**  
08 November 2016

**1 Attendance**

- |                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Dawn Archibald, chairperson | 8. Julie Lynch      |
| 2. Laurie Bidwell              | 9. Duncan McIntosh  |
| 3. Andy Creamer                | 10. Fiona McIntosh  |
| 4. Lesley Elder                | 11. Deepa Narayanan |
| 5. Ken Guild                   | 12. Doreen Phillips |
| 6. Graham Hutton               | 13. Alice Turpie    |
| 7. Clare Jefferson, Clerk      |                     |

**2 Apologies**

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Kerry Bain      | 5. Mary Holligan |
| 2. Stephen Bain    | 6. Susan Kidd    |
| 3. Kevin Cordell   | 7. Jill Nicholls |
| 4. Marcelle Harper | 8. Sarah Simpson |

**3 Welcome**

Dawn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**4 Approval of the previous minutes**

There were three changes made to the minutes from the previous meeting from 13 September 2016. Following these changes, the minutes were adopted.

Proposed: Dawn Archibald  
Seconded: Deepa Narayanan

**5 Matters arising from previous minutes**

- a. Update on the Alternative Pathways: Andy Creamer, Deputy Head, provided an update on the progress made on ensuring that pupils that sought Alternative Pathways to future destinations were supported at Grove. He said that Grove Academy was making great strides in providing for Alternative Pathways for pupils. Some of the key developments since his last briefing to the Parent Council include the following:
- The school has held review meetings with all the participants in the apprenticeship pathway. As well as school progress, information from college and work placements was discussed with each student. All parents were invited for these meetings.
  - The school is discussing with staff from D&A college possible additional pathways in areas such as childcare and digital and creative industries
  - The Grove pupils enrolled in the two-year Higher National Certificate (HNC) Computing Course, which is the equivalent to an Advanced Higher. Pupils have provided favourable feedback.
  - There has been a high uptake of places in NPA courses in Cyber Security and Computer games Design. Pupils are working with

Abertay Students as mentors. The mentors discuss the course and their experiences which assists pupils in their career choices.

- S6 year biology students have an option to run some experiments in genetics using the Dundee College facilities. Initially Dundee College offered S6 pupils the HNC option to undertake genetics courses for those pupils that are considering a career in medicine or biological science. However, the course opportunity was only offered on a Thursday morning which clashed with S6 Biology.

During the discussion, Alice Turpie reminded the Grove that it had neglected for the past few years to enter teams in the annual Creative Space Challenge. The next opportunity for competing is on Wednesday 24 May 2017. The Creative Space Challenge aims to engage secondary pupils, and teacher, who are thinking of pursuing careers in fields such as interior design, architecture or construction. Refer to <http://www.creativespaceschallenge.net/> Andy Creamer says that he has spoken to departments about this opportunity.

- b. Teaching of English at Grove Academy: Graham Hutton provided a comprehensive overview of teaching English at Grove. Refer to annex 1. During this in-depth presentation, Graham outlined how English teaching is approached at Grove. The Department of English was shown to be one of the strongest departments at Grove during the Extended Review with regards to the quality of the teaching and learning.

Within the English class setting, pupils are encouraged to work as individuals, in pairs or groups. This promotes employability and emulates conditions within the workplace.

The Fresh Start Programme in English is an initiative to assist S1 pupils who need support in English learning – many with a reading age of less than 10 years. At Grove there are three Fresh Start English classes (40 pupils in total) which is linked to the *Read, Write, Inc.* programme offered at the primary school level.

- c. Report back on the Extended Review: The Extended Review of Grove gave an extremely positive report. Graham Hutton provided a copy of the Extended Review and discussed it in detail. Refer to annex 2. The challenge for Grove is to continue to build on our momentum as proven over the past five years. HMIE use a number of Quality Indicators from HGIOS?4 (How Good is Our school? 4). The Peer Review Team (and HMIE) concentrate on four and the Grove Senior Leadership Team (SLT) selected one additional QI, which in this case, was Curriculum). On a scale of one to six, whereby one is poor and six is excellent, Grove achieved the following results:

<i>Quality Indicator</i>	<i>Level</i>
Self-Evaluation for Self Improvement	4 (Good)
Leadership for Change	5 (very Good)
Curriculum	5 (very Good)
Learning, Teaching and Assessment	5 (very Good)
Raising Attainment and Achievement	5 (very Good)

As chair of the Parent Council, Dawn congratulated Grove on the outstanding performance. As parents she said it comes as no surprise that Grove is performing well. As a Parent Council we hope that we contribute to the school by keeping an eye on the progress of the school. Graham said that the results reflect five years of hard work during which time Grove implemented the new curriculum. Attainment at Grove is high and consistent. As a school our current focus is to make Grove more inclusive via developing the Alternative Pathways programme and to work to improve numeracy within Grove; a challenge shared across secondary education in Scotland.

- d. Discussion on the benches: This discussion will be held over to the next meeting.

## **6 Purpose of the Grove Parent Council**

Dawn provided an insightful review of the purpose of the Parent Council. Drawing on information from the Parent Council Toolkit, Dawn explained that the Parent Council represented the voice of parents and it works in support of the school management. The Parent Council aims to represent the full spectrum of the parental voice. Dawn raised a number of issues for discussion including: how do we move forward as a Parent Council. She asked us to think about how we can engage with the improvement agenda at Grove and that we think about how the Parent Council can help?

Members of the Parent Council said they felt it was useful to interact with the Senior Management Team at these meetings, and they believed that there was a direct correlation between parental involvement and pupil's attainment. Parents spoke about the general lack of parental attendees at meetings. Grove Academy will continue to host events to give parents opportunities to engage with the school. In recent times, parental involvement has been encouraged through events such as Internet Safety and the Teenage Brain Seminar. Grove intends to hold an event around Get it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) to continue to connect with parents and to get parents across the school threshold.

There were many suggestions to improve parental engagement and it was decided that this issue would be placed as a future agenda item.

## **7 Rector's Report**

Graham Hutton gave a report on various issues at Grove.

- a. PE Kits: Graham Hutton provided a summary on the uptake of PE kits at Grove Academy. There was generally positive feedback following the introduction of the voluntary PE kits at the start of the 2016/17 session, especially amongst the S1 and S2 pupils. Soccer Direct the official supplier of the PE Kit provides cash-back for all school related sales. Recently Grove received a £300 voucher from *SoccerDirect* which will be used to purchase additional PE Kits for school teams. In the future, there will be a Girls Fit Kit introduced. Furthermore, the

girl's netball team has recently purchased hoodies, personalised with their names, and school logo.

- b. Staffing: Graham provided an overview of current staffing at Grove as follows:
- The search for a new English teacher is at the interview stage. There are 3 candidates for interview.
  - The search for the new School Support Worker is at the application evaluation stage. There are 70 applicants for a school support worker.
  - There have been eight maternity leaves this financial year and at the moment two teachers on long-term sick leave.
- c. Achievements:
- iGEM: Three pupils from Grove and three pupils from St Paul's are working on a co-school project.
  - Niamh Harper would like the Grove Community to vote for her to win a prize as the best international junior sailor. You can cast your vote at: [www.musto.com/sailorsearch](http://www.musto.com/sailorsearch)
- d. Upcoming events:
- Tree of Knowledge, S2, which is about the Growth Mindset
  - Staff training session on the Tree of Knowledge programme
  - S4 programme with Tree of Knowledge on Laugh in the Face of Exams
  - Taste of Industry Career Day for S3 in January
  - Inset Day 10 November: Staff will attend a Business Breakfast with 60 employers in order to gain knowledge about what makes pupils employable. Grove aims to promote employability amongst pupils as part of their employment strategy. Following the breakfast, there will be workshops at which staff will obtain feedback from employers to better understand what will make Grove pupils employable, to identify 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and to develop a model for employability.
  - Inset Day 10 November: All teachers from Grove Academy will visit other secondary schools across Scotland with the purpose of looking outwards to see what is working in other schools. Some of the schools to be attended by Grove staff include Madras College in St Andrews, Royal High and Tynecastle Academy in Edinburgh, Wallace High School in Stirling and Inverness College.
- e. Ipads: Grove has resolved almost all obstacles to using the ipads. These devices will be brought into circulation in the next couple of weeks. 30 teachers are being trained to use the iteach curriculum which focuses on the use of ipads in teaching and learning. At both Royal High and Tynecastle Academy in Edinburgh ipads are used by all pupils at the senior phase. This has a huge efficiency and cost saving. For instance, there is no longer a need for photocopying material and it decreases the workload on teachers.
- f. School App: Grove has commissioned the development of an App for the school. The app is modelled on a similar app for St David's School. At St David's, there was a high uptake of the app and it has become a great system for getting information out to parents – even more successful than a bag drop.

The Grove School App will be used in conjunction with the school website, and it will be available for both iOS and android devices.

## 8 Correspondence/meetings attended

### a. Report back on meeting with Executive Director, Children and Families Service, and Convener of Education (27 October) (Doreen Phillips)

Doreen attended the meeting of the Chairs of Parent Councils with Michael Wood as well as the Heads of Primary and Secondary education on 27 October. Generally speaking, there was not too much information that related to secondary education in Dundee, with a focus on pre-school/nursery level.

The following key points were raised:

- There are changes to the assessment at the national 4 and national 5 levels being considered. These changes are linked with reducing the size of the work load placed on teacher. There is currently a system of continuous assessment at the national 4 level, the introduction of exams as a form of assessment maybe considered. There was a discussion which followed this which dealt with issues such as: what about pupils that do not perform well under exam conditions, or pupils who cannot cope with examples.
- Staffing: Across Dundee, the teacher numbers are much better and more stabilised. However, there is an on-going challenge of maternity cover.
- Attainment: Across Dundee, specifically within the 11 deprived areas, there is an Attainment Challenge, in conjunction with the Corner. In the discussion it was mentioned that Grove is concerned about the high level of referrals for mental health amongst girl pupils.
- Literacy and numeracy was mentioned as a city-wide priority.
- School estate and placement requests. A discussion was held around placements, and parents were reassured that there are sufficient places for pupils across the city. The level of placement requests ranged from 5%-60% depending on the school.

In the discussion, Graham mentioned that for pupils that do not respond well to exams, it should be borne in mind that the final exam result is accessed in conjunction with continuous assessment and portfolio work. Grove teachers are concerned that some of the exams do not relate to the course curriculum which as a result requires extra-teaching time to pass the National Assessment Bank (NABS).

A question was raised about how the city-wide attainment challenge feeds into Grove. Graham said that he will meet with Danny Webster and report back to the Parent Council on this issue.

### b. Report back on Friends of Grove's Doors Open Day (17 September) (Julie Lynch)

1. Doors Open Day: Julie Lynch provided a summary of the Doors Open Day which was held on 17 September. The day was well supported with 180

visitors to the school. Visitors were allowed to browse the school archive material. The FairTrade cafe provided refreshments. The pupils that travelled to Uganda in the summer operated an informative display. The prefects provided tours around the school – special mention was made of the excellence of the tours led by Michael Crighton. Julie felt that overall the day was a huge success. Friends of Grove received positive feedback. Some of the suggestions for future Doors Open Day included: 1) exploring the possibility of gaining access to the old Grove school building – Eastern Primary; 2) requesting that the times of the FairTrade Cafe be adjusted to cover the duration of the Doors Open Day. Graham Hutton thanked Friends of Grove for their effort in making the day a success.

2. Folders: Julie distributed copies of the folder that Friends of Grove produced as a fund-raising initiative. There are 3,000 units produced. The folders will be distributed during pupil contact evenings. In July 2017, FOG will receive a cheque for £1,500 from the company producing the folders, which is the excess revenue produced from the sale of advertising space. Julie has thanked each of the businesses who purchased advertising space in the folder.
3. Christmas Concert and Mystery Gift: The Christmas Concert is on 15 December. If you can help us on the night please contact Julie Lynch, Chair of Friends of Grove Academy at [julieannelynch@gmail.com](mailto:julieannelynch@gmail.com) for more information. Donations for mystery gifts are also welcomed. Please drop them at the school marked for the attention of The Friends of Grove Academy.

## 9 Any other current business

- a. Payparent: Payparent is now operational at Grove Academy. Parents expressed the convenience of the system, especially the ability of the cash top-up system accepting bank notes.
- b. Tea and coffee at Parent Council meetings: Parents felt that given the length of the parent council meeting, it would be lovely for refreshments such as tea and coffee to be made available at future meetings.
- c. Publicise school inset days and holidays: Parent Council to place Facebook notices as reminder to parents about these dates.

## 10 Items for next meeting

- a. EcoClub Report: A report on all the activities undertaken by the Sustainable Development Group since the last Parent Council meeting was submitted to the Parent Council. The report will be circulated with the minutes from the meeting. Refer to annex 3.
- b. Timetable: Alice Turpie asked for clarification of the way the school timetable was designed. Graham explained that the Seemis software was used to produce the timetable and it generated the timetable in a particular condensed

format. To circumvent this, pupils were asked to transcribe the individual Seemis timetable into template which had times for the start and finish of school as well as break and lunch times.

- c. NPF Survey: We received a survey to complete for the NPF. The survey asked for the views of the Parent Council as an entity, and it was due for 6 Nov. However, the Parent Council was unable to complete the survey within these time parameters due to the way the dates of the Grove Parent Council meeting are scheduled. In future, should the Parent Council receive a survey, we will circulate it to all parent council members to complete and submit a collated view of all the members

## **11 Dates of next meeting**

The dates of the next meetings are as follows:

- Tuesday 24 January 2017
- Tuesday 21 March 2017
- Tuesday 23 May 2017

## **Annex**

1. English teaching at Grove Academy
2. Extended review
3. Eco Club Report