

LOW PORT PRIMARY SCHOOL
PARENT COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE MEETING
9th March, 2016

Attendees

Guests:

Stephen Yarwood - Chair of the Low Port Out of School Club Committee
 Emma Donaldson – Manager of OOSC
 Emily Bingham – Representative of OOSC
 Jennifer MacIntyre – Parent

PC Members:

Jeremy Fuller – Chair
 Jennifer Ovenstone-O'Donnell - Secretary
 Alice Buckley
 Richard Payne
 Rebecca Holmes
 Susan Saunders
 Andy McGowan
 Fiona Maxwell

Co-opted Members:

Jane Livingston – Head Teacher
 Mrs Johnston – P5 Teacher
 Lauren Smith - P6 teacher
 Stephen Blake – St Michael's Church

Apologies

Stephen Blake
 Tom Conn - Councillor
 Tom Kerr – Provost
 Carla Bisht
 Judith Paley
 Lynne Lamont – Trust Fund Treasurer

1. Welcome – (7:00, 5 mins)

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising: 20 January 2016 – (7:05, 10 mins)

AREA FOR ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	Outcome
Collaborate on the creation and update of the composite class report document. Submit for review at the next Parent Council meeting	Susan Saunders, Judith Paley, Jane Livingston	Done
Draft Guidance information on CEM testing Mrs Livingston	Jane Livingston	Done See Head Teachers report (Annex A)
Investigate the role of CEM data in the wider quality assurance process within WLC.	Richard Payne	CEM process clear. Focus modified to general quality assurance aspects.
Circulate an audit tool from SPTC for next parent forum survey	Richard Payne	Done

3. After school care provision at Low Port – Prime: (TBD) - Open discussion (7:40, 20 mins)

Context: Demand for after school care at Low Port is outstripping the supply at the LPPS Out of School Club (OOSC). Suitable available space in the school is a key factor in limiting numbers. An attempt will be made to gather the facts and assess the potential opportunities for improving the situation.

Discussion: OOSC had had significant demand in the last 2 years across all year groups. Only a few P7s would be moving on to release spaces. There were 22 children on the current waiting list which was an unprecedented number in OOSC's history. It was not known the exact reason for the build up, but it was thought that more parents were going back to work and that there had been an increase in the Linlithgow demographic. Kingfisher afterschool club was also experiencing a long waiting list even with a capacity of 80 pupils.

Other factors that were seen to contribute to the issue were the closing of Donaldson School aftercare, as an alternative to onsite care, as well as Oakwell aftercare limiting its intake to under 8's. Queen Margaret Hall had a capacity of 40 children but was also found to be fully booked.

The question of more people moving in to the area led to concern that the issue might be worse down the line if a solution was not planned for now. OOSC hoped that the Parent Council would be able to help inform the parent community of the wider issue.

In term time, the Out of School Club had a maximum permissible capacity of 40 children set by the space guaranteed to be available every day during term time, namely, the Zone and the G.P Room (formerly known as the Library). As movement had been slow, OOSC could not guarantee places for new P1s coming in to the school. There had also been no limit as to how far in advance parents were able to apply.

OOSC, in conjunction with the childcare governing body responsible, Care Inspectorate, had investigated options to expand within the school, but found that certain spaces were required to remain open for staff workshops, school events, and extra curricular activities at any given time, ie. the school Hall. Classrooms were workspaces, which needed preserving as such. Hence, the solution to the space issue would need to come from outside the physical school building.

A suggestion for a structure to be built on the school grounds, ie. a 'port o cabin' with amenities, was made, but this was considered quite problematic to deliver.

There was no current requirement for the school to provide an afterschool club. This issue could be investigated with the Council.

OOSC had also explored the use of potential venues in the surrounding area, including the Low Port Centre. Unfortunately, this venue had just been determined as unavailable, due to block bookings and residents' regular use of the only suitable room. No other local venue had been found.

It was commented that a business opportunity was available to anyone interested in providing a venue and/or facility. In all cases, a larger or additional space would require some storage, and a food preparation area to make it viable.

OOSC was run as a charity, and bound by its existing remit to provide onsite child care at Low Port Primary. A significant issue with an offsite location would be transporting the children, though it was mentioned this had been achieved in the past.

A key aspect to the discussion was that a new facility would not happen right away and parents needed to be informed of this. It was anticipated that OOSC would not be taking any new P1s. Another issue that might affect families was the cost of seeking private child minders.

The Parent Council opted to use its connections with the council to raise awareness of the issue. There had been

no engagement with the council so far. Representatives from OOSC could reach out to Oakwell to see if there was a bigger issue that could be brought to the council's attention. Aftercare facilities such as Kingfisher, Springfield, and Oakwell could be brought on board to highlight the issue of demand exceeding capability. Kingfisher was believed to be council-run; an umbrella organization covering Torpichen, Linlithgow Primary, and St. Joseph's.

It was noted that staff recruitment was a challenge, due to the specific working hours and the need for ongoing training.

OOSC's main priority was the smooth running of the club and not necessarily addressing the issue of excess demand.

It was proposed that an email be sent to parents informing them of the difficulty in providing places. OOSC expressed some hesitation to say the list was closed as movement was always possible. However, there were over 20 children on the waiting list with only a small number of P7s moving out. There were currently no S1s or S2s in the club, though OOSC's constitution included accommodating children up to this age group. As a charity, changing this constitution was a non-trivial activity.

Outcome: It was decided that the Parent Council would send out a parent mail providing a context for OOSC to add additional information later. The PC would highlight the effect of Donaldson's aftercare closing and the wider issues relating to capacity in Linlithgow. Parents would need to make independent arrangements in the short term. Timescales: 1 week or so for the PC to send the message with the aim of a transparent clarification of the issue.

4. Head Teacher update – Mrs Livingston (7:15, 10 mins). See annex A.

5. Composite class structure sub-team wrap up (II)– Primes: Susan Saunders, Judith Paley, Richard Payne (7:25, 15 mins)

Context: After the January 2016 Parent Council meeting a summary document on composite classes was revised. As a way of concluding this activity, the new version of the document would be put forward for review and endorsement by the committee.

Discussion: A choice was needed to decide on whether additional suggestion should be added to the document or whether the focus should be on closing the activity. The Chair expressed his support for the document and wish to make the information accessible. This could be as an appendix to the minutes or as a separate document under the Parent Council area of the school website, or both.

Different views were expressed on how to distribute the report and the need to make some final updates.

The issue of ability and placement in particular classes was briefly discussed. This approach was not used. Mrs Livingston highlighted that any issues relating to difficulty with school work in a composite, or any class should be brought to the attention of the teacher or herself. A spectrum of ability was encountered in all classes whether they were in a straight year group or a composite class.

Outcome: The composite class summary document had been reviewed and deemed as a good step forward in providing transparent information for new parents coming in to the school. It was decided that the document would be attached as annex B to the PC Minutes. Further consideration would be given to minor changes to the document and enhancing visible.

6. Quality Improvement Work stream activity – Prime Jane Livingston (8:00, 15 mins)

Context: A known issue with "School Improvement Plans", is that they can be long, detailed and contain jargon, which may mean something in Education cycles, but for the general masses, this jargon could be problematic. In an attempt to address some of these issues, the Parent Council was asked to provide early feedback on a proposed short template for an improvement report.

Discussion postponed due to a lack of time

Outcome: Parent Council members were asked to provide feedback to Mrs Livingston on the proposed template by Friday 11th March.

7. Quality assurance process Prime: Jane Livingston, Richard Payne (8:15, 5 mins)

Context: There will be a kick-off discussion on how to maintain a healthy focus on continual improvement. A number of questions will be identified, e.g: will there be another Validated Self Evaluation (VSE), or some other process to validate the continued enhancements the school is making?

Discussion postponed due to a lack of time

Outcome: Mrs Livingston volunteered to arrange for representation from WLC to attend the next Parent Council meeting to talk about CEM and quality assurance.

8. SPTC audit regarding partnerships – Prime: Open discussion (8:20, 10 mins)

Context: The Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) provides guidance and training for Parent Councils. The objective of this agenda item is to use one of the SPTC's audit tools to identify positive feedback on existing school activities and potentially identify new areas that would benefit from further investigation.

Discussion postponed due to a lack of time

9. PTA update – Prime Rebecca Holmes (8:30, 5 mins)

Context: Update on PTA activities.

Discussion postponed due to a lack of time

10. Rose Garden Development – Primes: Alice Buckley, Tom Conn, Tom Kerr (8:35, 3 mins)

Context: The target for doing the work on the Rose Garden during the Easter holidays has slipped. It appears more likely now that it will occur during the summer holidays. This will minimise disruption in terms of access to the school. A further update will be provided if additional information is available.

Discussion postponed due to a lack of time

11. Update on training with Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) – Primes Jeremy Fuller, Jennifer Ovenstone-O'Donnell, Richard Payne (8:38, 2 mins)

Context: Update on SPTC training event hosted at Low Port.

Discussion postponed due to a lack of time

12. SCHOOL GROUND UPDATE – Prime anyone with information (8:40, 2 mins)

Context: Update on activities related to the school grounds.

Discussion postponed due to a lack of time

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (8:42, 3 mins)

Context: Council's Recruitment Training Course – **Tuesdays 15th March & 10th May 2016** - 5.15pm to 6.15pm in Livingston

Discussion postponed due to a lack of time

Next meeting date: Wednesday 27th April 7pm in GP Room

AREA FOR ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Groupcall mail to be prepared and distributed to Parent Forum highlighting the broad issues relating to provision of after school care at Low Port School.	Jeremy Fuller
Out of School Club (OOSC) have also offered to prepare a Groupcall mail providing information on the situation from their perspective	OOSC
Arrange for a representative from WLC to attend the next Parent Council meeting to talk about CEM and quality assurance.	Mrs Livingston
Draft a proposal to refine the composite class report. Suggest guidance on its use and distribution.	Rebecca Holmes

Annex A – Head Teacher Report for Parent Council Meeting 9 March 2016

Staffing

We are hoping to have a Clerical post and Principal Teacher post to be advertised around Easter.

SIP [School Improvement Plan]

GIRFEC [Getting it Right For Every Child] training at cluster level was well attended and useful for all staff. Named Person information issued to all parents from WLC with the February newsletter.

We had a very useful best practice visit linked to Active Literacy in another authority. And have purchased this resource in advance of cluster training. We plan to implement this approach next session.

Composite Class Sub Group

Work on this document has been completed and is now ready for sharing with Parent Council as a final document. Thank you to all those parents and carers involved.

Car Park

Low Port centre have been in touch about the car parking situation which prompted the item in the newsletter - *Both Low Port Centre and Low Port Primary School would like to heighten awareness with the parent body of the importance of considerate parking and careful driving around the school grounds. Low Port Centre Staff as well as our own have raised concerns about the speed of some cars coming into the shared car parks as well as the number of cars, which is impacting on staff from both sites being able to park at their work place. It is also having a negative impact on adults attending training courses and activities in Low Port Centre. If parking to walk your child into the grounds, then you should park at Tesco and cross safely at the crossing patrol. You should not park in the Low Port Centre car parking areas. The lower car park area only is for OOSC drop off where the timing is generally much earlier than the start of the school day. The lower car park should not be used for drop off close to the school day as taxis and buses need access at these times, as well as Low Port Centre and school staff.*

We plan to regularly raise this issue with the wider parent body for the safety of the children. Junior Road Safety Officers will be made aware of the issue and plan some kind of poster competition that we could laminate and put outside.

Any further ideas welcome on how best to manage this.

Standards and Quality report changes

We have been asked to gather comments and feedback to a consistent parent friendly version of the Standards and Quality report via our Parent Councils for changes taking place.

CEM [Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring] Parent Communication

As agreed at the last meeting I have prepared something about the timing of CEM feedback to share with parents/carers:-

In West Lothian primary schools an annual programme of adaptive assessment, sometimes called CEM testing, is carried out. Further information about this assessment is available from our school website.

The timescales for the assessment taking place run throughout the summer term, well into June. The school then needs time for the data to be analysed, discussed with the current class teacher and compared to the wide range of other assessment information gathered alongside how the individual performs on a day to day basis with any next steps planned for. As a matter of routine, this data along with any other assessment information is passed on to the new class teacher and informs the initial Planning and Tracking meeting between the teacher and the Senior Management Team.

Given the time taken for this process, at Low Port we plan that the sharing of CEM data be in discussion with the parents/carers as part of the October Parent Consultation. This ensures this one assessment is put in context alongside the other data we gather and any proposed next steps for your child are based on this holistic overview. The Head Teacher will contact you as a matter of course if any concerns about your child's learning emerge from the testing.

Financial Plan for Each session

Last session I prepared a document outlining key costs including camps and experiences for upper school. I've added a section about whole school charity fundraising so that this is more of a financial plan.

Annex B

Composite Class Implementation Report of LPPS PC Sub-committee

(January 2016 – Version 1.0)

Composite classes have long been required at Low Port Primary in the infant stages to allow adequate intake whilst accommodating national class size restrictions. More recently Low Port has been challenged by a large year-group intake, necessitating composite class structure throughout all seven years. During the infant years, where smaller class sizes are required, this forced composite class structures with very small numbers of children (<4) from one year-group. Whilst this is within WLC guidelines, both the school and WLC accept that this situation is not ideal and should be avoided wherever possible.

As a result of this experience, work was carried out by the Head Teacher, class teachers, parents and a sub-committee of the Low Port Parent Council to ensure the school is sensitive to the issues that composite classes, especially very small composite classes, raise for children from both an educational and social perspective. Consideration is given to the need to balance a composite as a class and as a year group.

In the formation and planning of composite classes at Low Port Primary School the following are considered.

1. **Composite Class Structure** – Allowing for last minute pupil number changes, anticipated numbers and class structures may be shared with PC Chairperson/members where appropriate prior to this information being shared with the parent body to allow supportive discussion. This is particularly relevant where very small composite classes are proposed.
2. **Entry/Departure point** – The school considers which door is most appropriate for children to use for entry/departure from school to allow them to socialize, lunch and line up with their peers. This is particularly relevant for very small composite classes where children may join their year group rather than their class, and where children are moving up from the infant stage of the school.
3. **Pegs** – The school considers where children hang their coats to reflect point 2. This is dependent on space and number of pegs available.
4. **Meeting new Teachers** – Children in composite classes may join their year group for some aspects of the curriculum and where this is the case, they will be given the opportunity to meet relevant teaching staff at the earliest opportunity. Children will be integrated with their own stage early in the school year.
5. **Homework** – Where homework is allocated by the year-group teacher, they will ensure children in composite classes are allocated their homework tasks on every occasion.
6. **Communication** – Teachers of composite classes will communicate effectively with parents in an accurate and sensitive way. Where information may be year specific both written information and class blog updates will be specific to allow parents to understand this. While it may not be feasible to have additional parent consultation appointments on the allocated evening, parents may speak to any teacher about their child's learning at another organised time.
7. **Supergrounds/Astro-Pitch Allocation** – The school considers how best to allocate playtime on these specific areas to ensure social inclusion of composite class children with their peers.
8. **Integration across years** – The school encourages integration between school years regularly, for example golden time in infant classes where children of different classes share choices of activity, and Vertical Learning Group work.
9. **Class talks, class assembly, educational trips** – The school will ensure appropriate challenge, peer review and positive experience for all pupils regardless of their class setting.

10. **PE** – The school considers the most appropriate pupil distribution for PE to allow composite children to be suitably challenged and to ensure they are included in their year group cluster events and sports festivals.