



Chairperson's Report – Session 2023/2024

Kevin Smith

23rd August 2024

This report will provide a summary of the work of the parent council & chairperson in previous academic year 2023/2024.

OVERVIEW

The objectives of the Parent Council are:

- To promote partnership between the school, its pupils, all parents and the Catholic Church to ensure that pupils develop their full potential;
- To work in partnership with the school to contribute to the Catholic ethos and create a welcoming community which is inclusive for all parents;
- To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils;
- To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils.

(SJB Parent council Constitution 2023.)

Session 2023 / 2024 has been a busy and active session for the parent council.

Three significant events occurred during this academic year:

1. Retirement of Head Teacher Marie Beacom
2. Recruitment and arrival of Mrs Currie
3. School Inspection by HMIE

The Parent council bid farewell to Mrs Beacom in September 2023 and welcomed Mrs McNulty in her temporary role as acting Head Teacher. The process of permanent Head Teacher recruitment began. I was contacted by South Lanarkshire

Education services to take part in the recruitment process in my capacity as Chairperson.

I took the opportunity to include parent council members to develop a focus around the attributes we would be looking for as representatives of the parent network and held a special meeting of the parent council for parent members only. This influenced the offer and style of questions we shared with education officers who then set up the interview panel. Myself, Fr Ivan Boyle & Vice chair John Devitt were part of the short listing panel and then final interview panel with Education officers & Head of Service. A substantive decision led to the appointment of Mrs Currie in November 2023.

Mrs Currie was notified of a full School inspection by HMIE, with exception of nursery class, in December 2023. The inspection commenced in January 2024 & report published in June 2024.

Parental questionnaires were issued across the school community and parents from the parent council and across the School community were involved in focus group discussions with inspectors. As Chair I was invited to meet with one the inspection team and conveyed the strong partnership relationships, range of parental involvement and work of the parent council positively. The report makes very welcome reading, highlighting a very welcoming and nurturing School with particular strength in pupil wellbeing & highlights parental partnership. Mrs Currie will speak to the report at the Parent council AGM & discuss how this influences School action plans and parent consultation going forward. I would like to acknowledge and thank Mrs Currie, Mrs McNulty, Mrs Clark and all of the staff team who went above and beyond, sacrificing a lot of their own Christmas holidays to ensure the School was represented fully prepared when inspectors arrived in January 2024.

Items of Focus for Parent council discussion in 2023/ 2024:

Cost of the School day

South Lanarkshire council have developed a new Policy on the cost of the school day and published this in the last session. Mrs Currie has advised that she will lead on developing a specific policy for SJB Primary and discuss aspects of this with parents in a variety of way to ensure parental consultation including the parent council through session 2024 / 2025. This area of discussion has featured during my time as chair since 2022 / 2023 and before during my membership of the parent Council., It is clear that SJB School and parent council are committed to this area and are conscious of this when making decisions and planning activities. There is a fine balance between the expectation of activity and the rising costs involved in many things that were once incidental costs such as transport etc. Areas considered

over the past 2 sessions include cost and model of school photographer, School trips, use of fundraising, review of opportunity / expectation of spending money for school activities and trips. Examples of things that have changed include, spending in gift shops on school trip no longer pursued unless agreed on specific trip, review of pricing and packages available from photographer, free child entry at school fundraisers hosted by parent council including fete.

Parent Council have promoted the use of the pre loved uniforms across the School with success and worked with the School management team in the last term of 2024 to introduce a competitively priced & local School uniform provider of logo School uniform.

Parent Council Fundraising

The parent council have raised a significant amount of additional funding for use across the School as detailed in the treasurers report attached. The past 2 years summer fetes have provided approximately £9000 worth of funding to the School. We have seen the impact of this and other fundraising activity in the purchase of C-touches for each classroom, new and improved playground equipment and other activities as appropriately identified by the headteacher and management team. The family fundraiser in January each year and then the summer fete have both proved to be very popular with a high level of participation across the School and wider School community. These are 2 activities that parents across the School community have expressed that they would like to see return in 2025. Easy Fundraising – through online purchasing has been a steady stream of income with minimum administration beyond promotion.

Communication and interface with wider parent forum

Out with the parent council membership meetings the parent council elected positions and other parent members engage with the wider parent group to hear views and opinions and include them in activities. The parent Council feature at each parents night with a stall in the waiting area with other School initiatives, communication is effective via the Parent Council Facebook page, Parent portal managed by the School and School website where details re membership & minutes of parent council meetings are published. The Parent council email address is - parentcouncilstjohnbaptist@gmail.com & is published on the School website.

School improvements

Improvements to the nursery portacabin, upgrade of the sports MUGGA pitch, school extension, kitchen upgrade and general improvements across the School have been discussed at each meeting with an update given from head teacher, concern has been raised re lack of progress from south Lanarkshire Council in some

areas with delays persistent. Consideration of the parent council contacting South Lanarkshire Council to discuss the school building improvement plan have been considered and I suggest should be discussed again in 2024/ 2025 session.

Finance Report

Please refer to attached finance report compiled by Treasurer Kelly Weir.

We successfully converted the bank account to an online banking account allowing much more flexibility of use & oversight.

As Chair, I have held the principle not to hold large sums of money in parent council accounts and instead transfer funds directly to the School with confidence in the ongoing partnership discussions re use but also for ease of access when required to support the work of the school.

We will now identify an auditor to undertake the annual review of Parent council accounts.

Role of Chair going forward

I conclude my 2nd term as chair with this report and in keeping with the constitution intend to offer to stand for a third and final session in 2024/ 2025. As my son is now in P7 this will also be my last year as a member of the Parent Council as he leaves for High School in June 2025. I highlight that 2 other long standing and active parent council members will also leave in 2025, Kelly Weir, Treasurer, and Craig Wilson who significantly lead & support the work of the parent council. We will work to promote further membership and understanding of roles of the parent council throughout 2024/ 2025.

I look forward to another year of positive and successful partnership working across the parent forum, parent council, staff and School community.



Kevin Smith

Chairperson

Sessions: 2022/2023 & 2023/ 2024