

Associated Schools Group Parent Council

18.09.18 – 7.35pm Durness Primary School

In attendance – Christine Corbett, Christine MacKenzie, Richard Flannery, Denise MacDonald, Selena Campbell, Roma Corbett, Sarah Lockhart, Amanda Amos, Audrey Morrison, Anna MacPherson

Graeme Smart (Head Teacher), Katy Lee (Depute)

Apologies – Aileen MacDonald (Depute), Jacqui Ann Munro, Carol Anne Forsyth, Julie MacKay, Tanya Morrison, Stefanie Breckenridge, Tracy MacKay, Julie Allen, Anne Morrison, Leanne McKee.

Minutes of last meeting – Approved R Flannery, Seconded C Corbett

Matters Arising – Minutes of previous meeting were not circulated to all parents. G Smart will investigate why and also make sure they are available on the school website.

Kinlochbervie Primary Inspection – Inspectors will return within the next 9 months. No allowance will be made for the school being part of a group and sharing resources despite representations to the Inspectorate to explain the situation. G Smart was confident that staff would be prepared for the follow-up inspection.

Sex Education – Workshops for parents were offered at parents request in Scourie and Durness where Highland Council guidelines were explained and the resources were available for parents to look at.

Head Teacher's Report – attached. This was circulated to all present.

Matters Arising from Head Teacher's Report – Attendance levels especially in the High School are causing concern. Anything below 95% is seen as problematic and equates to 1 day a fortnight. Below 80%, unless pupil is ill, will trigger Social Work involvement. There was much discussion as to the reasons, was it lack of motivation, related to the staffing issues or subjects on offer. It was agreed that a general letter be sent to all parents explaining the absence policy. Those pupils whose attendance caused the most concern would be invited to a meeting along with their parents to discuss the issue. There would also be some work done with pupils as a whole to understand why they weren't attending and to explore ways to motivate them.

Staffing Issues – High School Modern Languages- this post will be advertised again this week. Meantime John Fisher will be in school 2 days a week to teach French and Spanish. There will be Chrome Books issued to pupils to allow them access to remote learning. Use of the Highland Council Virtual Academy will be explored. Parents asked if staff from other schools (Farr, Ullapool) would be able to help and this will also be investigated.

Maths – The maths teacher is signed off until 24.9.18, he is expected back in school then. He has made no contact so far as to the possibility of being signed off for a further period. Whether or not he is fit to return a supply teacher will be in place from 1.10.18 for 3 days a week. There other teachers in the school qualified to teach maths, so while the situation is far from ideal, pupils will be able to keep on track and the curriculum be covered.

Primary Schools – Durness – Wednesdays are causing some concern with especially younger pupils reluctant to go to Kinlochbervie for the day. Katy Lee assured parents that during class time the pupils from the various schools mixed well and benefited from the larger class sizes. Parents felt that at break times that pupils stayed in their school groups and didn't tend to play together. KLB has most pupils and as the home school perhaps the pupils from other schools felt like "outsiders".

Scourie had no parents in attendance. There are days planned – Science and Fair Trade in Durness and Scourie which might help. Also a "Wednesday" sweatshirt in a neutral colour to promote the one school ethos.

Kinlochbervie – concerns were raised about the disrepair of the boy's toilets. The floor covering is not watertight and smells strongly. A chemical has been sourced which neutralises the odour and it is hoped that Highland Council will find money to repair the floor as soon as possible.

Treasurer's Report – In the absence of a treasurer no report was available.

Cape Wrath Challenge Fundraising – It was felt that it is too good a fundraising opportunity to miss. If all the schools went together and shared the money raised there would be a bigger pool of helpers available. It will be discussed further at the next Parent Council meeting in November and a sub committee meeting will be arranged nearer the time to sort out the detail.

Correspondence - None

AOB – as mentioned in the Head Teacher's Report it is proposed to refer to the group of schools as North West Sutherland Schools rather than Kinlochbervie 3 – 18 ASG. A competition to design a logo will be held – open to anyone interested not just pupils.

Trophies – it was asked what had happened to trophies such as the Marion Rookes Trophy or Gregory Trophy as they were no longer presented. It was thought they were full or that other smaller shields that pupils could keep had replaced them. Enquiries will be made as to the whereabouts of the trophies and what to do with them.

Date for next meeting – Tuesday 27th November 2018 7pm
Venue – Scourie Primary School

Meeting closed at 9.15pm

North West Sutherland Schools

Head Teacher's report to Parent Council September 2018

Staffing:

We are delighted that Mrs Katie MacFarlane has started with us this session as PT Primary in Durness Primary School. Katie was formerly a Principal Teacher at Balfron primary in Stirlingshire and has already made a big impact in Durness.

John wood and Sian Curley have both started as full time teachers in Kinlochbervie Primary and Scourie Primary respectively.

The early years/P1 class in Scourie continues this year and is proving very popular with pupils, parents and staff.

Our ASN budget for this year has been cut but not by as much as we feared and by using the Pupil Equity Funding and by using a small surplus from last year we are able to maintain our PSA allocation at the same level as last year albeit with a bit of adjusting where the hours are allocated.

We took part in a pilot scheme to review Admin and Clerical staff management and I am pleased that Paula MacLeod has been appointed to a permanent post as Admin Team Leader. Paula will now be line manager for all clerical staff across the schools.

The Modern Languages post which is vacant at present had been filled but the teacher we appointed withdrew at the last minute. The post will be re-advertised but in the meantime John Fisher, a former Depute in the High School will cover the certificate classes and Miss Lockhart will teach Spanish to the junior classes.

Mr Mounfield is off sick at the moment and his classes are having to be covered by supply teachers. We hope to see him back at work soon but in the meantime I will offer some Maths support during elective time and between Mr keitany and myself we should be able to ensure that classes remain on course.

Vision, Values and Aims:

We have registered all four schools with the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award programme, this aims to embed the rights of the child in our curriculum and in the daily life of the school. It is an exciting and challenging programme and more detail will be coming home over the coming weeks and months.

London:

We had a very successful trip to London earlier this month with a fascinating visit to the houses of parliament with our MP Jamie Stone buying us all a coke on the member's terrace. We also took in all the sights of London, saw The Lion King at the Lyceum Theatre and visited Greenwich Market, the Royal Observatory and the Cutty Sark. The trip was rounded off with a visit to the Harry Potter Studios before we flew home. Well done to all the pupils whose conduct throughout the trip was a

credit to them and the school. Thanks also to Paula, Keith, Anne and Jo for all the supervision and to Paula and Keith for the planning in advance.

Wednesdays:

We continue to bring all pupils in the ASG together on Wednesdays this session, this has been a real success last year and we will continue to use some of our Pupil Equity Funding to cover the transport costs.

New High School Timetable:

A few changes have been made to the structure of the school day. A letter has been sent to all parents outlining these changes but essentially lunch will now be at 1.25pm, the day will start at 8.50 and end at 3.50 except that on Friday we will finish at 1.25 with transport leaving at 1.40. Lunch will continue to be served at 1.25.

Internet Safety:

A presentation by the NSPCC on internet safety will be given on Wednesday at 3.30 in Kinlochbervie Primary School. All parents from all four schools are welcome to attend.

New Name:

Following a positive response to our consultation we have decided that the schools will now be known collectively as North West Sutherland Schools. In the near future we will ask the pupils and the community to assist in the design of an appropriate logo. We are of course retaining the individual identities of each of the four schools but we needed a collective name which was better than Kinlochbervie 3-18 ASG.

Attendance:

This is slipping again, particularly in the high school and we need to have a good level of attendance to allow continuity in classes and to ensure that all our pupils achieve their full potential. We understand that some absence is unavoidable but I would ask parents to ensure that their children are at school unless there is a very good reason for absence.