**APS Parent Council Meeting 6 October**

**Apologies**

Liz Belk

**Present**

Helena Ekerot, Carole Butler, Claire Whyte, Katya Helik, Emma MacCallum, Chenelle McMaster, Judith Thurlow, Nia Morrison, Lyssa McBean, Laura Cook, Laura Ross, Elena Garcia, Paul Jarvis, Fiona Green.

**Head Teacher Report**

The past year has been unprecedented in terms of change to all aspects of our lives due to the global pandemic of Covid 19 and in particular has forced great changes to Education and life at school. There have been huge challenges, most notably an extended period of school closure from March 23rd until August 11th. For many of our families there have been health, social and economic pressures as well as the challenges of home schooling during this time.

However I would like to focus on the positives which emerged from this situation. I am extremely proud of our school staff who adapted to a completely new way of working, literally over the course of a weekend. Teachers planned interactive and engaging lessons for their classes and provided feedback daily to motivate and sustain learners using Google Classroom and the G suite range of tools. We communicated initially as a staff and then with classes using online videos/video calls. We continued with virtual assemblies and whole school events as much as possible to promote and strengthen our school community at a time when it was most needed. Our children responded well to the change and shared their learning with us enthusiastically and our parents took on the role of teachers; juggling childcare and education with working from home or fulfilling keyworker duties in many cases. We were really proud of how our school community came together and engaged in activities such as ‘Illustrations of Hope’ to support the wider local community.

Prior to this we enjoyed lots of successes in school session 2019/20.

The three priorities in our School Improvement Plan last session were:

· Raising attainment in writing

· Building positive relationships

· Digital Learning

We engaged in staff training in Wraparound Spelling, Talk for Writing and Story Kitchen as well as Pivotal Positive Relationships to support these developments.

In literacy we celebrated Roald Dahl Day and World Book Day. We celebrated Book Week Scotland and distributed Bookbug gift bags to infant pupils. We also had author visits from Barbara Henderson and Nancy Chambers and started our own Authors lunchtime club.

We welcomed visits from Academy 9, Scottish Ballet and Roots and Shoots.

We celebrated Climate Change Day, Outdoor Classroom Day and received our Eco Flag.

Our four Houses continued with their Enterprises; Shoebox Appeal, Harvest Foodbank Collection, Children in Need and Red Nose Day. We also had a whole school Enterprise topic where classes planned and implemented different enterprise projects from a cafe at our open event to Christmas Crafts at our Fayre.

In nursery we started our outdoor learning journey with weekly trips to Milton woods for all children as well as starting an inter-generational project where our children visited the Glen Centre weekly to interact with the older members of our community. This was hugely beneficial for both groups. We also developed our STEM sacks to encourage children to participate in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths activities at home. At the other end of the school in P7 we continued both of these endeavours; our STEM journey learning how to create and broadcast a radio show in conjunction with Speysound Radio and strengthening our inter-generational links interviewing clients from the Glen Centre.

We had sporting successes from various pupils including silver medals for 4 children at SSSA Skiing Scottish Schools Finals in Glasgow and one of our pupils participating in the Ice Skating Brittania Cup as well as successes for our gymnasts, cheerleaders, dancers, running club and football and shinty teams.

We celebrated Christmas with a nursery performance of Christmas Eve and an infant performance of the Snow Queen supported by Drama specialist Lorraine Hemming. Later in the year P6/7 pupils entertained us by showing off their skills in Aviemore’s Got Talent. In March we were fortunate before school closed to be able to take part in the Music Festival with three classes and our choir competing and again bringing the Molyneux trophy back to school.

Returning to school in August was something we all looked forward to, although approached with apprehension. Extensive risk assessments took place as well as planning for a full time and part time return to school. Our first term back has seen many changes to how we usually operate. Children are largely confined to their class bubbles for work and play and we have not been able to welcome in visitors, neither parents/carers for assemblies/open events or specialists to enhance our learning and teaching. We have continued with online assemblies as we are not able to gather in large groups but without the singing as this is also not allowed in the present climate. However we have enjoyed being back together

as a school community. Our focus for term 1 has been rebuilding relationships and establishing new ones in our new classes as well as Health and Wellbeing for all. Our nursery has moved to a full outdoor provision which has been hugely successful and we have been so pleased to see how quickly children have made progress and how much they have learned in the natural environment. Feedback from staff and parents/carers has been fantastic and we are hopeful that we will be able to continue this approach, albeit to a lesser degree, when we move to an 1140 hours provision next term.

This session we have two simple priorities:

· Recovery from Covid closure (an improvement agenda item shared across Highland Council in all schools.)

· Raising attainment in literacy

Over the last year we have seen some staff changes. Mrs McMaster began her first year as our Depute Headteacher and has driven forward initiatives such as STEM, DYW, Rights Respecting School, ‘Swim the Water’ fundraiser and has now taken on the leadership of the nursery. Our new Principal Teachers Ms Eilidh Ross and Mrs Jess Creber also took on their new roles with enthusiasm leading Literacy development in school and nursery. Eilidh also supported learning and transition in our nursery and Jess took the lead on digital learning. Our long serving Clerical Assistant Jean Gordon retired in August and we have welcomed Clare Johnston to the post. With her previous training as Parent Council treasurer we know she will be well suited to the role! She is being supported by our nursery Clerical Kenny Rogan, who himself took up post in January. We have also welcomed a new teacher this session Ms Mhairi Martin replacing Mrs Jess Creber for her maternity leave. We have said goodbye to teachers Brian Lawrence, Kirsty Dudgeon, EYPS Sas Roberts, Sharon Curran and Maggie Carswell as well as PT ASN Sherrilee Kinsella and Childcare Manager Caroline Green. We wish them all well in their new posts.

I’d like to conclude by thanking the Parent Council for all the support given to school and nursery over the last year. Thank you for the fundraising that took place in the first part of the year before we were restricted in our event planning by Covid and thank you for all of your support in process of planning to reopen school. We are very lucky to have such a committed group of parents/carers on our Committee leading an increasingly larger group of parents/carers willing to devote their time to supporting our school and nursery

**Treasurers Report**

Parent Council have closed their RBS bank account and transferred all funds to a new account with Bank of Scotland. The total balance to date is £2499.84.

**Nursery Update : 1140 hours and Outdoor Learning**

The government’s promise to provide 1140 free hours to ELC children was due to be implemented in in August 2020 but it was pushed back. This has caused disappointment. This change caused staffing issues in August as the school was overstaffed. As a result staff were subsequently redeployed elsewhere which has caused understaffing issues. However Aviemore is now one of the first schools in the Highlands to move towards 1140 hours with the aim of doing so after the October holidays. There is a desire to create a dedicated out of school staff. Outdoor learning has been successful and the majority of staff and parents want it to continue but the barrier is staffing. The ratio of staff to children is 1:5 for outdoor learning (1:6 is possible) but in the nursery environment it is 1:8. Everyone is entitled to the full additional hours but they may not be able to get the hours that they want (9am-3pm is most popular). Outdoor sessions want to be continued but it may not be possible 5 days a week.

Emma confirmed the school does not have require funding imminently from the Parent Council.

**Parents’ Questions:**

Will the windows be open in the classroom throughout winter?

Government guidance on this is due to be released shortly. It is outwith the School’s control. The guidance as it stands is for children to be well clothed at school and to wear layers. Paul Jarvis asked if filter ventilation could be considered. Emma will make enquiries.

Why is playground equipment closed off when children are allowed to play in parks outwith school?

At school children are in bubbles. At APS each class is in a bubble and different bubbles can not share resources. The play equipment would have to be wiped down between use and this is not possible for the school to manage. The play equipment is the school’s responsibility but outwith the school parents must themselves decide if the playpark is suitable/safe for their children to play in.

The school is doing a great job with packed lunches but is there a possibility that hot lunches will return?

Yes, the full menu with resume after the October holidays and the children will be back to eating their lunch in the hall (in their bubbles)

Has ELC considered a long term plan for outdoor learning, setting up something similar to Wild Willows?

Staff are positive to increasing the amount of outdoor learning as are many parents. The main barrier is the staff to children ratio. Emma will pass on the positive feedback.

Has the school thought about how transitioning from nursery to primary 1 will look this year?

Nursery and School are two separate bubbles so it does make it difficult for nursery to visit the school and attend assemblies like they usually do. The school are looking into nursery children visiting the school playground.

Will PE continue outside over winter?

Guidelines are for PE to continue outside. If the weather is terrible the day of PE will change. The school is being creative whenever possible such as doing yoga in the classrooms.

Will any form of Parents Evening take place?

The school are waiting to hear from Highland council about this. The approach should be the same across the Highlands. There will be some form of feedback from teachers to parents in November.

**Fundraising Ideas for 2020/2021**

Funding from Asda – Carole reported that a specific project is required in order to apply for this funding. Emma will ask staff if they can come up with something.

Cauliflower cards (School fundraising project) – Carole is looking into setting this up as a way to raise money while buying our childrens’ Christmas cards. Timescales are tight but we are hoping to the use Christmas pictures that the children have already made at school.

Online Auction before Christmas – Our online auction last year was successful and while it’s not the ideal time to ask local businesses for prizes it is felt it is worth a try to send out some letters to gauge interest from businesses.

Your school lottery - Helena suggested setting up a school lottery using a website called Your School Lottery. No set up fees, little admin required, marketing tools available from Your School Lottery website to promote the lottery. The community can buy lottery tickets, 40p of every £1 ticket goes to the school. Weekly draws means money raised for the school thoughout the year (including during holidays). Supporters can win cash prizes and £25,000 jack pot.

**AOCB**

Lyssa mentioned Aviemore Community Foodshare is underused and urged people to use it more. There are lots of things available apart from food such as school uniform exchange. At the moment they are not accepting donations as not enough people are utilising it.

Emma mentioned that the school will receive funding to create an outdoor school in Milton wood.

Not mentioned at meeting but Parent Council AGM will take place on **Wednesday 4 November, 6-7pm.**