

Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Meeting



Wednesday 15 January 2025 at 6:30pm

Present: Judith McCaughey (Chair), Margaret Maciver (Secretary), Susan Forsyth (Treasurer), Margaret Anne Arnott (Minute Taker), George Docherty (Head Teacher).

Council Members: Carolyn Jamieson, Gail Whyte, Amy Griffiths, Alison Braddock, Katherine Self, Mr Kenny Bell, Cllr Bob Pollock

Forum Members: Thomas Jenkins, Connie Smith and Darcey Burnham

Apologies: Lynda Hardman, Rhoda Braddick

1. Welcome and apologies

Judith welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. Action Review

- No actions to review

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 December 2024 were approved by Alison Braddock and seconded by Margaret Maciver.

4. Captains Report

Connie Smith and Darcey Burnham gave an excellent and informative presentation. This consisted of an overview of the fantastic work that the Captains are achieving. They are:

- Great news to hear that there was a 6% increase in attendance in December. They believe this was due to spreading the Christmas Dances over every day in one week, the changes to the stigma of prelims, more classroom assessments and spread over a longer period of time.
- Lots of end of term activities took place and some great fun was had during the process.
- Free toast Friday, Litter lotto coming along nicely with a few pupils winning money with one S1 pupil winning £100. Well done to everyone taking part in keeping our streets litter free.
- The newsletter is now up and running.

- They are hosting a Burns Supper to raise funds for their prom. Dates TBC. Likely 26 February 2025???. Keep your eye out for this event. Set to be a good one.
- Well done to the House Captains who are absolutely smashing their role and forging a new pathway for future House Captains. Phenomenal achievements and fantastic enthusiasm... Keep up the great work.

5. **Head Teachers Report**

Mr Docherty gave a presentation on HT Report, here are some of the key points:-

- **Students** – Christmas Dances were fantastic and very well attended. It was great to see every pupil on the dance floor joining in with social dancing. Thanks to the PE department for leading the recent block of social dancing and to staff and pupils who volunteered to help.
- Marr won the litter lotto by a margin. Well done
- Supported study – Still running and very targeted to specific pupils. Looking at extending to a Saturday morning study café
- School uniform – Most students have returned in full uniform. Well done
- Congratulations to our Rugby Teams who have won consecutive West A conference titles. A fantastic achievement and we are very proud of all our players, coaches and volunteers. There will be a special presentation assembly in February.
- **Staff** - Mr Anderson covering for Mr McElnea, whilst he is away on a career break has fitted in incredibly well.
- Currently 0.7 fte understaffed. Hoping to fill with a temporary post.
- **School Improvement Plan** – Still on going with regular meetings with Captains and Student council. Adaptive Teaching approaches continue with workshops on supporting more able learners occurring in February. All staff will participate in authority led training on de-escalation strategies to support positive behaviour and relationships.
- Thank you to the Parent Council members who supported the annual Christmas Concert. The evening was a sell out and feedback received was excellent. Great event and a great way to end the year.
- Dundonald Castle has provided Marr College with our young learners to attend work experience activities there and the pupils can attain National 5 Travel and Tourism. Mr Harris to be thanked for organising this. They are the biggest employer in Dundonald and the 4th busiest tourist attraction in the category. They have made impressive changes in the area regarding anti-social behaviour and working with young people. The focus is to break down barriers with pupils. Another fantastic opportunity.
- Judith passed on the Parent Council condolences for the death of Mr Barraclough.

6. **Adaptive Teaching (Mr Kenny Bell)**

Mr Bell gave a very informative presentation on the great work around adaptive teaching. This is a pilot programme for South Ayrshire and they are hoping to roll this out throughout all of the council area. There has been a steep rise in additional support needs for our young learners which has

created a higher demand for different approaches in learning. Teachers will be trained up to ensure that all young learners needs can be met.

What is Adaptive Teaching - Adaptive teaching involves adjusting instructions and teaching materials for children, based on how their needs present in the moment. It is based on the premise that students with additional needs don't benefit from being handed out segregated worksheets and tasks. Instead, the whole class is encouraged to engage with the same learning objectives and broadly the same (or very similar) content.

The adaptive approach recognises that:

- There are different starting points and ways into a topic
- Some children might need greater support or scaffolds to access learning
- Every child's learning pathway can look slightly different.

Pupils – Some examples of changes are more opportunities for group work, more choice in their learning, more access to digital devices, incentives to complete their work.

Staff – Pupils are more engaged, will learn more, self esteem will increase, buy in benefits outweigh barriers.

So far there has been buy in from all teachers, Adaptive learning is backed up by research.

The physical environment – Better organised class, young learners know where everything is and they have responsibility for maintaining this, better seating plans going on the needs of the young learner.

Art and Design department have further explored with the sensory aspect – the olfactory aspects. Such as lavender smells throughout the class to try promote a more calming environment.

Geography – At the moment they have 4 classes and only 3 classrooms – solution – continue with classroom organising, set the seats so that young learners know where to go etc.

Where we are at just now – Focussing sessions on challenging our most able learners. May 2025 - touch base with the same learners.

A general discussion occurred around the Adaptive teaching theme which was very positive, and Parent Council members are looking forward to seeing how things develop.

Mr Bell will feed back to South Ayrshire Council and Education Scotland with a view to it being rolled out over South Ayrshire.

Thank you to Mr Bell for presenting this to the Parent Council.

A general discussion occurred around the use of mobile phones. Mr Docherty and Mr Bell concurred that there were no real issues around this. They were quite satisfied that it was working well. Only a small percentage of young learners' hand in their phone in the morning. This could be for various reasons such as they don't lose their phone or the young learner knows that it is a disruption for them.

7. Update from communications group

No update at this meeting

8. Next Month's agenda

- Communications Group update

9. A.O.C.B

- Alison asked if we could all reach out to companies/people that could participate in the careers event on the morning of 7 February 2025 for S2 – S4. General discussion surrounding this event.
- Cllr Bob Pollock raised that the rugby synthetic pitches will be replaced week beginning 29 January 2025 and it will take 6 weeks to complete. SFA are funding the replacement.
- Carolyn Jamieson raised the use of AI in school – Universities seem to be using this. Mr Docherty has attended seminars and signed up to Dan Fitzpatrick's, a lead in AI, resources so that an AI action plan can be rolled out.
- Carolyn Jamieson asked about Sex Education teaching in school – Mr Docherty showed the variety of resources that PSE teachers pull from to cover all aspects of this subject.
- Susan Forsyth gave an update on the Marr Parent Council funds – currently £1900 to contribute to relevant events. Have a think about what we could use the money for. The Christmas concert made £340 but we still need more raffle prizes and the teas and coffee money were only £180, which is half that of last year.

10. Date of next Meeting

- **This will take place at Marr College – Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 6:30pm**