

Comely Park Parent Council Meeting Notes 13/11/25

Attendees:

- Chris McCreath (Chair)
- Jaime Thomson (Headteacher)
- Nicola McAlpine
- Sarah Switzer
- Joanna Koszela
- Catherine Bradbrook
- Lauren O'Donnell

Apologies:

- Koyejo Olugbile (Clerk)

1. Transitions

Chris raised feedback regarding P1 transitions, noting that some parents felt unsure about the class composition process and the splitting of friendship groups from nursery.

- **Survey Feedback:** Jaime reported that surveys sent to Nursery and P1 parents received a response rate of approx. 33%. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive regarding the variety of events, the induction process, and timely communication.
- **Areas for Improvement:**
 - **Slides:** Feedback indicated font sizes on presentation slides were too small. The school will address this and continue emailing presentations/providing paper copies.
 - **Class Allocation:** The current practice involves revealing the teacher and class list at the induction event. The school will consider suitable alternatives to communicating class allocations to parents.
- **Class Composition Criteria:** Jaime clarified there is no specific Council policy for general class composition (only composite classes). Decisions are complex and based on age, physical/emotional development, sibling rivalry, gender balance, and peer relationships. With children arriving from 4–7 different partnership nurseries, the school cannot prioritize the school nursery cohort or specific friendship preferences over the educational needs of the wider group.
- **Action:** Jaime agreed to share the *criteria and considerations* used for forming classes with parents ahead of the transition to provide reassurance on how decisions are made.

2. Homework

- **Current Status:** The current focus is on reading and Sumdog.
- **Future Review:** A review of home learning is on the School Improvement Plan, with a view to potentially incorporating writing support/sentence structure in the future. However, due to concerns about decreasing engagement and busy family schedules, any changes will be consulted on first and will not happen before Christmas.

- **Feedback:** Parents suggested that when a child receives "Star Writer" or similar awards, a copy of the work should be sent home so parents can see it and celebrate it, as they often miss what is displayed on school walls. The school agreed this was a good idea.

3. Reading for Enjoyment

Sarah provided an update on the school's reading initiatives.

- **Initiatives:** The "Read Anywhere" challenge received 11 entries. The House Reading Challenge is ongoing; engagement is higher in P2/P4 but lower in P3 and P6/P7. House Captains will promote this in upcoming assemblies.
- **Library Survey:** 72 responses received. Barriers identified included lack of time or having sufficient books at home.
- **School Library:** A refresh is underway with support from Learning Resource Service librarians and parent helpers to weed out old stock and identify gaps (genres/authors).
- **Assessments:** The school has purchased the PIRA (standardised reading assessment). It has been administered to P2–P7 (P1 to follow in summer). This will support teacher judgment and identify gaps in learning.
- **Action:** The school will do a "bag drop" of library membership forms for all P1 families to encourage public library use.

4. Woodlands Update

- **Pitch:** The replacement of the football surface is progressing well (5–6 weeks from start).
- **Facilities:** Jaime met with the Falkirk Football Foundation. Issues regarding footwear (flat shoes vs. boots) and children playing on the slopes were discussed. The heating temperature is set to Health & Safety minimums, which is safe but can feel cool.
- **Community:** Opportunities for intergenerational projects with the Foundation were identified.

5. Enhanced Provision Proposal

- Chris noted the ongoing consultation regarding Enhanced Provision.
- **Discussion:** It was agreed that a collective Parent Council response was not required at this stage. Parents are encouraged to respond individually via the consultation channels/Participate Plus if they wish. The school is also awaiting further guidance on the outcome.

6. Recruitment Update

Jaime provided an update on staffing changes:

- **Departures/Returns:** Mrs. Johnson returns from maternity leave next Tuesday (joining P6). Consequently, Miss Walker's last day is Monday. Mrs. Young (PT) is taking a two-year career break.
- **Vacancies:**
 - **Principal Teacher:** An internal advert for an Acting PT (until June) is imminent.

- **Senior ELC:** Mrs. Faulds is reducing hours; a permanent part-time Senior post is advertised.
- **Depute Head:** A permanent Depute post will be advertised. The timeline is likely January, following the recruitment of Head Teachers across the authority.
- **Extensions:** Contracts for Sarah and Nicola have been extended/secured until June 2026, providing stability.

7. AOB

- **Parents Portal:** Parents raised queries about the use of the Parents Portal. Jaime confirmed it is live and can be used for absences/appointments, though it creates administrative workload and some find it "clunky."
 - **Action:** The school will send a follow-up communication to remind parents that the Portal is available as an option.
- **Event Fatigue:** Parents noted a high volume of "dress down" days and events recently (Gold Accreditation, Children in Need, Christmas events), leading to fatigue and logistical confusion. Jaime acknowledged this and noted the difficulty in balancing national events with school celebrations.
- **Uniform:**
 - **P7:** Clarification was given that P7s do not have a separate non-uniform policy despite some pupils presenting differently.
 - **Shorts:** Concerns were raised about the length of shorts (e.g., Nike Pro style) being worn by girls, which are not part of the official uniform policy and are causing concerns regarding warmth and appropriateness.
 - **Action:** The school will include a reminder of the uniform policy (dark tracksuit bottoms/leggings/shorts) in the next newsletter.

8. Headteachers Update

- **Parents Evenings**
 - 94% of parents made an appointment to attend.
 - Awaiting confirmation from staff % of parents who did not attend scheduled appointment.
- **RRSA Gold Accreditation**
 - Fantastic achievement for us as a school. UNICEF compliant.
- **Resilience Training**
 - Safeguarding and planning for emergencies. Contingency planning for loss of premises. Evacuation and lockdown processes.
- **Attendance**
 - Monthly process

- Less than 90%
- Updates to TBC
- Late coming (3 per month)
- Standardised letters – term time holidays (authorised / unauthorised).
- An authorised absence still impacts overall %.
- **PVG**
 - Changes to legislation April 2025 / implications
 - Awaiting further guidance from Authority