

Minutes of MEPC Meeting 9 October 2013 7pm Staff Room Mile End School

Present: Luke Halliday (LH), Angela Bowyer (ABowyer), Frank Wahedally (FW), Jenny Laing (JL), Freddie Stephens (FS)(for PTA), Jonathan Scott, Abbe Brown, Moira Maciver (MM), Janet McRoberts (JR), Eleanor Sheppard (ES).

1. Welcome and Apologies

LH welcomed everyone to the meeting. LH apologized for short notice re agenda, and noted that details of all meetings are posted on the website and in the minutes from last time.

Apologies have been received from Julie Malhan, Mike Allfeck, Bill Cormie, Euan Esslemont and Ian Carroll. JL passed on apologies from Fraser Forsyth.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

These were approved and will go on the website. Proposed: LH. Seconded: ABowyer. Motion carried.

Action: LH

3. Head Teachers report

Named person

There was a discussion in advance of the meeting in respect of the named persons consultation which has been sent to MEPC by the Scottish Patent Teacher Council. ES and MM noted that this arrangement has been in place for some time. ABowyer will follow up to establish the issue which is being pursued and this can be revisited as appropriate.

Action: ABowyer

Staffing

This is the biggest challenge. There is a national shortage of teachers (one advert by Mile End for a full time position did not lead to an appointment), there have been cuts in the supply pay and the high cost of living in the North East mean that the school is under a great deal of pressure. This is being considered by the local authority and nationally, and COSLA are involved. New approaches, such as incentives, have been introduced, with £5000 offered to teaching staff who relocate to Aberdeen. ES very keen to maintain the high quality of staff. Because of illnesses, training and unanticipated personal events, often the management team are involved in classroom delivery. This can mean that on occasion there is unavoidable delay in arranging meetings, responding to parents etc. ES asked for support and tolerance and indicated that she felt the situation was likely to continue in this way for some time.

Technology and teaching

Staff have been working with *Accelerated Reader*, which focused on comprehension rather than word attack. There has been a great deal of training and testing, and this leads to books and assessments being suggested which are appropriate to each pupil. It is being used

across year groups. 200 licences (to cover 200 pupils) have been obtained, valid for 3 years, at a cost of £5000. This has been very successful and to build on this, ES is considering purchasing an ebook subscription (£700 for c600 books) to complement the strong holdings in the hard copy library. Pupils can read this on School Kindles, and possibly home devices. Manga High is being trialled for work with younger pupils in addition to its use further up the school.

Events

30 pupils from p5-7 are involved in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to be performed on 10 October. Pupils have enjoyed working with the Royal Shakespeare Company and the project (cost £1000) has been a great success. St Joseph's and a Fraserburgh school are also involved. The *Macmillan* event raised over £500, Donnie Scott had a key role.

Surveys, consultations, policies

On the *car park*, ES, MM and Alex Nicoll had met and ES has been working with some pupils who have developed a Survey Money consultation and a hard copy flier which will come out in schoolbags after the October holiday.

Nursery hours consultation was on school website, has closed, results will be reported. Some small changes are being considered, to the *behaviour policy*, including building on workshops with the developer of "Circle Time". Proposals will be shared with parents, possibly through Survey Monkey if this approach works well with car park survey.

Local Authority Reviews/visits

Local authority has reviewed *sport provision* throughout the City and the level of support a school needs to continue to improve. Mile End has been awarded "universal", the best category out of 3, and will continue with its present arrangements. Regarding the *inclusion review*, ES has met with two experts brought in by the local authority, they will visit Mile End after the October holidays.

ASN opportunities

Aberdeen Football Club and *City Moves* are working with upper stage ASN pupils. Reports being prepared for *transition review*. This lengthy process must be completed for first week after October holidays. An improved means of *tracking academic progress* is being developed for ASN pupils, working with Service Manager and some proposals developed by Durham.

Other

SMILE awards have been revamped. *Booster Cushion* theatre visited early years which was a great success. *House captains* have been appointed and are working very well and proactively, including plans for tree climbing guidance. Mile End working with *ASG on science* push. Discussion about notice boards, which have been explored in the past, and the extent to which this might detract from the website. ES, LH, p7 and possibly Council to liaise regarding possible preparation of an app and ensuring that it is of appropriate quality to work with say Android. Jenny Watson, who had developed the *Apardian* app, was suggested as a useful contact.

Action ES and LH (app)

4. Car Park

See above

5. Treasurer's Report

LH reported information provide by Euan Milne. £1000 has been received from Aberdeen City Council, bringing the balance to £1692. FW said that £1000 has also been recently provided from the Community Council. LH to clarify status. MM suggested that the funds provided by the Council could be usefully and properly be used to fund a multiple response purchase of Survey Money. It was agreed this would be very helpful.

Actions LH and ES

6. MEPC AGM and Office Bearers

The minutes of the AGM have been finalized and LH will make these available. Continuing appointments had been confirmed, LH as Chair, ABowyer as Vice-Chair, Euan Milne as Treasurer. For the time being, there will be no Secretary. LH will prepare agenda and deal with cascade; members of MEPC will rotate responsibility for the taking and preparing of minutes. Volunteers for secretary are still very welcome.

Action: LH

7. Events Updates

Book swap

Agree that this will be held in school on Thursday 28 November, from afternoon (ES to timetable pupil attendance) until 5pm. Pupils and adults can bring books to school a few days in advance, will be issued with a ticket noting the number of books, and then they can swap on the day. Teas and Coffees available.

Action ABowyer and ES

Careers Fair

MM has a list of careers in which p7 have expressed an interest. This will be send round MEPC and cascaded round the parents, with a call for volunteers. Event to be held in May 2014.

Action: MM

Science Event

Julie Malham is leading this, to be discussed in due course.

Global Citizenship

FW reported this will have several strands, and will start with education. FW to visit school 2 days a month, and share his educational experiences in Mauritius, and build a greater awareness of the Commonwealth (leading into the 2014 Games). FW also suggested fund raising events to help those closer to home, such as through the Cyrenians, projects such as "send by Friend to School", and a survey to learn about the breadth of cultures represented in Mile End. ES said the curriculum committee has many ideas to support this, including, as with the Olympics, a school wide Interdisciplinary Learning project and a special breakfast. JR and FW noted that there are local elite athletes aspiring to compete in the Commonwealth Games, and it would be excellent if visits could be arranged ES confirmed that the school has now sponsored a little girl, through an Aberdeen organization 321 and that P7 are supporting Foodbank through selling stationery.

Everyone thanked FW for his excellent commitment and contribution.

Action FW, JR

8. Floodlights Update

JL reported that as part of the Council's Leisure Asset Review (report due in January 2014), it is suggested floodlights are put on all the pitches. This is likely to be phased in, so some fundraising activities might be helpful, but probably not necessary. JL believed that Alex Nicoll has been in touch with Jo Conlan about this.

9. PTA Report

FS (PTA Treasurer) reported on ongoing preparation and signing off accounts, and comparison with bank balance. A meeting of the new PTA was held last week.

FS and Fiona Daniel have been in touch with Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations. They have been discussing the position of PTA office holders are trustees of a charity (as the PTA is a charity). Questions arose in the context of this, and the draft new constitution, of the extent to which the PTA as a charity can be a sub committee of MEPC. Both of these have been the longstanding position at Mile End (and possibly at other schools) since PCs were introduced. A Bowyer to raise this point with Sheila Watson at the City wide MEPC next week. PTA has purchased its insurance for events and MEPC will continue to purchase its insurance. FS pointed out the benefits of the PTA continuing to be a charity. It was also noted by FS and others that there is a strong value is having links between the PTA and the MEPC,

Action: A Bowyer

10. MEPC Constitution

LH has received no comments on the draft constitution made available at the AGM. LH proposed that the new constitution be adopted, MM seconded. Motion carried. It was noted that if further revision is required in the light of points raised under 9, this can be done in due course. New constitution to be placed on MEPC website. Alex Nicoll's important contribution was noted.

Action: LH

11. Communications to Parent Body

The valuable and significant contribution of parents to many different parts of the school community were noted (eg sorting library books, lost property, football, car wash, open day, parent teaching meetings). More details of this to be shared with the parents, building on a survey done before the summer – including the number of hours spent by “Invisible Helpers”. To assist in this, school office will be asked to keep an informal log for a couple of weeks.

It was noted that at some of the more formal curriculum based events there has been less interest, and it was noted that there are now many different ways of sharing this information, including through the website (and over the internet more generally) and also through informal meetings as appropriate. There has been much higher interest in events relating to specific issue or year group, and it will be interested to note how possible events on eg sex education or behaviour policy are received.

Action: ES, ABowyer

12. Friends of Victoria Park

JL reported that a steering group has been set up and details will be shared of possible areas of improvement.

13. AOCB

None

Meeting ended 8.40pm

Next meeting 27 November 7pm