

**Parent Council Meeting of Cults Academy  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018 7-9pm**

**Attendees** Anna Muirhead (AM) Head, Rick Sansom (Chair), Robert Brew (Secretary), Jim Gauld (JG), Vannin Bloch (VB), Daniel Verhamme (Treasurer, DV), Michelle Henderson (MH), Oma Okoliegbe, Gill Flett, Ros Harper, Sonya Angus (SA), Martin Barker, Julie Cooper, Kirsten Gove, Councillor Marie Boulton, Councillor M. Tauqeer Malik, Councillor Philip Bell

**Apologies:** Tahar Kouider, Tony Brady, David Barnett

Agenda items	<u>Updates and discussions</u>	Action
1.	<u>Introductions, welcome, apologies and confirmation of previous minutes.</u>	RS
2.	<p><u>Head Teacher Update</u></p> <p>AM provided a detailed overview of the SQA examination results from the Insight database showing comparison of Cults Academy results with its virtual comparator (i.e. adjusted for socio-economic background of pupils), with other schools in Aberdeen City and with the national picture. Cults Academy's performance was very strong in all the comparisons outstripping all by a considerable margin. The presentation included an analysis of performance by subject, although in some subjects the number of pupils sitting exams was not high enough to allow calculation of statistically meaningful conclusions. Similarly, an analysis of the performance of boys and girls was shown with no significant difference in performance between the two.</p> <p>Staffing – There is a Design and Technology vacancy. The Higher can be offered but graphic communication as an option may have to close. This option can be taken elsewhere with travel but is subject to high demand given the citywide staffing issues. A Computing vacancy arose but was filled. English is now fully staffed with Mr Foy on a long-term temporary contract, a new teacher on a one-year contract and a returnee from long-term sick. The school has asked for a probationer. The Headteacher has been relieved of English teaching duties. However, Advanced Higher English is not being run because of these staffing issues and the amalgamated English classes in S4 will not be re-divided. The new Headteacher appointment was made very quickly. The new Head was a Depute for two years at Cults Academy before taking the Headship at Buckie Academy and more recently Elgin Academy. The new Head has visited the school and done a tour of some of the classes which was well received.</p> <p>The Headteacher then went on to talk about more general staffing issues:</p>	<p>AM</p> <p>AM</p>
3.	<p><u>Staffing and Pupil Teacher Ratios:</u></p> <p>The Headteacher described the shortages at every school given the difficulty attracting teachers from the central belt to Aberdeen. This issue was compounded for certain subjects, such as Design and Technology, which was not available as a teacher training option at Aberdeen University.</p> <p>Cults Academy was able to attract teacher from other schools but had suffered from the historical staffing formula. The staffing formula had become increasingly complicated and its logic, such as a logic had existed, had become lost in time. Cults Academy's issues with the staffing formula had been raised repeatedly over the years with Sandy McPhee at the City Council.</p> <p>Other issues the included that previously the school had been able to accrue the budget savings that</p>	

	<p>arose from staff vacancies, but that these were now reclaimed by the Council. Additionally, it was very difficult to plan staffing for the school as the allocation of teaching staff changed repeatedly in the run up to each new academic year. Similarly, budgeting was subject to much uncertainty with errors in the calculation turning a surplus of £23k at the end of period 12 (March) into a debt of £8,800 in period 1 (April).</p> <p>The Tauqueer Malik and Marie Boulton then contributed to the discussion. Councillor Malik stated that he had met with Derek Samson who said that the current review of formula was at a very early stage and that the school and Parent Council would be part of the process. The work the Council was doing with the provision of key worker housing was described, as was the fact that Aberdeen City receives one of the lowest allocations of funding from the Scottish Government.</p> <p>The Headteacher described how the school had to operate with only three deputies rather than the five that would be typical for a school of similar size. New housing developments provided additional pressure on places with new pupils in S4 being turned away as the English classes were full.</p> <p>A recap was given of the presentation at the previous Parent Council. An analysis of pupil teacher ratios using data from the Scottish Government website showed that by any comparison Cults Academy is underallocated staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 339<sup>th</sup> out of 361 in Scotland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Equivalent to 10.5 missing teachers vs average (15%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 65<sup>th</sup> out of 66 versus similar sized schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Equivalent to 7.4 missing teachers (11%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 44<sup>th</sup> out of 50 versus Herald top 50 schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Equivalent to 7.0 missing teachers (10%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 10<sup>th</sup> out of 12 in Aberdeen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Equivalent to 10.7 missing teachers (15%)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>It was also noted that the Pupil Equity Fund would give additional staff to schools that already had a generous allocation of staff and that while there were often good reasons for different staff allocations, there was a “double whammy” effect to the detriment of Cults Academy.</p> <p>While the school performed well the impact on individuals could be significant and one pupil’s experience was described being that of spending one year without an English teacher, one year without a French teacher and one year without a Physics teacher.</p> <p>The point was made that Aberdeen City should examine the practice at other Local Authorities, especially as Councils such as East Renfrewshire exhibited excellent performance and less variation in staffing levels between schools.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Action:</b>  <b>PC to write to Angela Scott, Eleanor Sheppard and Education Convenor, John Wheeler, with a version of the letter previously sent to Derek Samson</b></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Action:</b>  <b>PC to write second letter to Derek Sansom to better understand timing of process and ask if additional allocated teachers could be provided to Cults Academy as an interim measure</b></p> </div>	
4.	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Action:</b>  <b>RS to arrange short pre-meeting with new head teacher ahead of next PC meeting to set agenda and provide brief overview of current activities</b></p> </div>	
5.	<p><u>DATE &amp; TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u>  <u>Next PC MEETINGS -</u>  <b>Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 Cults Academy Room 1.</b></p> <p><b>Outline agenda</b></p>	

**Welcome HT**  
**Progress on teacher numbers**

Any parent or guardian of a pupil at Cults Academy is welcome to attend any Parent Council meeting.

The Parent Council can be emailed at [PCCultsAcademy@aberdeen.npfs.org.uk](mailto:PCCultsAcademy@aberdeen.npfs.org.uk)



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