

**Comann nam Pàrant Secondary Group/ JGHS**  
**Meeting - Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

Present:

Donald Macdonald (HT JGHS), Seonaidh Charity (CL Gaelic JGHS), Lindsey Charnley (Teacher), Donna MacIver (Teacher)

Sarah Scott (Secondary Group Chair), Mary Duffy (Secondary Group member), Charlie Holt (Secondary Group member), Annabelle Harrison (Secondary Group member), Kevin Leetion (CnP Convener), Brian Thunder (former CnP Convener)

Apologies: Karl Stephen, Zoe Emmerson, Laura Young, Jake King

**Agenda and opening remarks**

The meeting had been arranged to allow the Secondary Group to become acquainted with school management and GME staff and their priorities/difficulties, both as a basis for future work and to reinforce the working relationship for the future. The following specific issues had been raised in advance as areas for discussion, both for this meeting and more generally for the future:

- Current plans for GME in 2019/20 – including year groups above the incoming S1
- P7/S1 transition
- Vision of evolving GME provision: subject areas, staffing and curriculum
- Use of temporary accommodation from 2019/20, including the Darroch building
- Building towards a 2024 transition, and thereafter
- Structure of future contact JGHS/parents

Donald Macdonald welcomed the group and acknowledged that importance of ongoing engagement between the school and parents in building towards the new school in 2024. Seonaidh Charity had prepared a presentation covering the main topics, and in particular arrangements for 2019/20. However, as these were large and evolving issues engagement on them must be considered as an ongoing process.

The report below is based on that presentation and issues raised in connection with it.

**Current plans for GME in 2019/20 (S1-S6)**

- 10 or 11 staff (both full- and part-time, and with different levels of fluency) will be delivering Gaelic at JGHS in 2019/20
- There will be a big expansion in the provision of GME at JGHS and the school is trying to make GME provision as broad as possible in S1/S2. However, a number of factors affect delivery, in particular:

- Timetabling/accommodation restrictions
    - JGHS is very pressed for classroom space, making timetabling challenging
    - Timetabling for practical classes, which are limited to 20, is particularly difficult
  - Staff professional development
    - all members of GME staff are currently involved in some specific education/training, both at university and other levels, including training in Additional Support for Learning, and also to allow additional subjects to be delivered through Gaelic.
    - staff developing fluency (e.g. after GIFT) also need time to teach EME classes at certificate level to maintain skills until able to teach those levels through Gaelic
  - Curriculum development
    - the significant increase in subject areas that will be taught through Gaelic requires considerable work on curriculum development
    - various areas of work are ongoing, including a project with Stòrlann to produce a GME History textbook.
  - A number of the staff delivering teaching through Gaelic are on part-time contracts
- The current intention is to offer teaching through Gaelic in 2019/20 as follows:
    - **S1:** Gaelic, Geography, Modern Studies, History, RME, Art, PE, Media/Drama
    - **S2:** Gaelic, Geography, Modern Studies, History, RME, Art
    - **S3:** Gaelic, History GM
    - **S4, 5, 6:** Gaelic

A Gaelic science class in S1, involving teaching/discussion through Gaelic but using English resources will also be introduced. This raises the difficulty of limits on the size of a practical class to 20 pupils, but with 26 incoming S1 pupils. The best approach to managing this problem was discussed. The school intends approaching parents to ask whether any would prefer to be taught through English. Otherwise an alternative strategy (such as rotating pupils into GME Science through the year) will be considered. It was noted that resources used for science teaching will be in English and that this will help support the transition of students into the full range of science classes in S3. The classing for practical subjects in particular within the current space constraints is likely to be an ongoing issue (see also below).

Timetabling all the Gaelic subjects for **S2** – such as RME and Art – has produced difficulties, meaning not all are being delivered through Gaelic at the moment. It is hoped that these difficulties can be ironed out over the summer.

## **P7/S1 transition**

- JGHS staff have been working at Taobh na Pàirce (TnP) since December 2018, focussing on Gaelic literacy. Feedback from pupils, parents and staff has been positive. This work has facilitated an enhanced transition process including detailed transition notes for each pupil, allowing their specific needs to be planned for. It is thought that this may be the most enriched P7/S1 transition programme in Edinburgh schools, and could form the model for other schools.
- JGHS teaching staff will continue to be involved in TnP in 2019/20 in the form of 1 full time equivalent teacher post
- Next year's Cl. 7 will be a double class of 44 with two teachers in a single classroom. One of the teachers will be Ms Hoy, with Gaelic input from Ms Charnley from JGHS and Ms Brown.

## **S1/S2 subjects, and planning for the future**

- This is a very large change in approach to GME teaching at JGHS and staff are having to work very hard, preparing, refining and auditing resources for the new S1 class.
- The school is also offering drop-in study support at lunchtime and after school as a support for learning
- Work is ongoing to timetable PE through Gaelic for S2. It is hoped it will be possible to sort this out in time for August 2019.
- Gaelic teaching methods at JGHS are evolving to support the broader GME curriculum, and in recognition of the fact that pupils are not receiving full-time Gaelic teaching in the upper primary. This includes subject specialist working on vocabulary banks which will be available to pupils and parents.
- The overall aim is to keep GME students together as much as possible for timetabling purposes, although still spending time in classes with non-GME pupils. A specific timetabling challenge is raised by the fact that GME pupils are in mixed registration groups, which are used as blocks for timetabling purposes. The make-up of registration groups is an issue that will have to be revisited in the future to allow the expansion of GME provision.

## **Accommodation**

- 6 temporary classrooms are being put up over the summer on JGHS campus to be in place from 2019-2021. These are like used for the Humanities faculty.
- The Darroch building should be available following refurbishment from 2021. The school hopes that there will be a significant GME focus in the Darroch to create a Gaelic space, though the building will also be used for English-medium classes.
- Not all subjects can be delivered at the Darroch as there will be, for example, no science classrooms, so travel to and from the main JGHS campus will be required. The school recognises this will place a particular travelling burden

on GME pupils; however, it is felt that the creation of a Gaelic grouping and Gaelic ethos in advance of the opening of a new school is a worthwhile objective.

- Currently the school envisages a continued need for the Darroch building as additional accommodation for JGHS into the foreseeable future. This may have an impact on the establishment of a GME primary at the Darroch as envisaged in the Council's plans for Gaelic expansion and this issue will need to be sorted out for the upcoming consultation process.

#### **Additional issues**

- Comann nam Pàrant spoke of the criteria document and questions which had been sent to the Council for consideration and response. It was agreed to send these on to Donald Macdonald.
- Donald Macdonald emphasised the importance of ensuring that there was continued funding for expanding the cohort of GME teaching staff during the transition period up to 2024, whilst JGHS was in effect operating a 'school within a school'.

#### **Structure of future contact JGHS/parents**

- It was agreed that the next meeting be organised for August/September.