

# *St Cyrus School Newsletter*

## *October 2017*

As the term draws to a close I would like to thank pupils, parents/carers and staff for all their efforts. We have had a very productive term which has been super fun. Below, firstly, are some of the events that have been held or activities carried out -

### NEW CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

We were treated to a new agility trail when we returned after the school holidays. This trail was extended using the money from 'Your voice, your choice'. A huge thank you to both our Pupil and Parent Councils who working in partnership succeeded with this bid. As you can imagine, the children are having a ball!



### THE BIG CONVERSATION

Many thanks to those parents, carers and grandparents who either joined us for our 'Big Conversation' or completed the survey to submit to the council.

The "Big Conversation" is an Aberdeenshire wide engagement exercise that asks all Head Teachers and Service Managers to undertake a series of conversations with their parents and carers to identify how well we are engaging with them. This will then inform the development of an Aberdeenshire Parents' Charter to make clear what parents can expect from us as a service and what we can expect of them. In addition, a refreshed Parental Engagement Strategy will be written.



## MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING



Well done to our Primary 3 class and Mrs Brand who held a super coffee morning on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September in aid of Macmillan. Massive thanks also go to the WRI who supported them serving teas and coffees; to all those who donated cakes and biscuits; and of course to everyone who came along to enjoy a cuppy and cake and help us to raise some money for a great charity.

Primary 3 are delighted to report that having counted up all monies from the coffee morning, 'Guess the baby' competition and tuck shop sales, the grand total was - £422.96



## READING INFORMATION EVENING

Teaching Staff, alongside Jill Reid (Mearns Librarian) and Natalie Cooper (Senior Community Learning Development Officer) enjoyed the opportunity to share with parents/carers how we teach/support children with reading and how you can help at home. The powerpoint which was used on the evening is available to watch on the school website, it also contains useful website links. Reading booklets which were also distributed during the evening are available in the school foyer.

## BOOK BUG SESSIONS – P1

Jill and Diane from Mearns library have been leading Bookbug sessions with our Primary 1 class in story and rhyme sessions on a Friday morning. We are delighted that some parents have been able to join this group. These sessions will end on Friday with each P1 child being presented with a bookbug bag containing books and activities.

Jill has also visited the nursery for a couple of storytelling sessions and participated in an assembly this term.

## ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Mark, our Active Schools Coordinator has organised a number of events for our pupils and families this term.

Nursery pupils are enjoying taking home activity bags to share with parents/carers – we hope you are having fun with them.

P5 welcomed James from Stonehaven Rugby Club and P6 and 7 welcomed Montrose Rugby Club earlier this term. Both clubs delivered super sessions to the classes.

P5, 6 and 7 also enjoyed the opportunity to try out basketball last week when the 'Panthers' visited us and delivered a trial training session.

P7 are to be assessed on their play leader training this week – we wish all our pupils well with this and look forward to your assistance in the playground next term.

Mark has also organised the yoga which runs every Tuesday morning and the Johnshaven Cluster Club. These should continue next term – look out for the booking forms which will be handed out at the beginning of the term.



## MUSICAL INSTRUCTION

Mr Bruce Wallace is now visiting us each week to give pupils in P6 and 7 the opportunity to learn a brass instrument. We are delighted some pupils have taken up this fantastic opportunity.

Mrs Ruth Kalitski continues to instruct a number of our pupils in violin also.

We are extremely pleased to announce that we have received confirmation this term that pupils in P5 and 6 will have the opportunity to take part in taster sessions on the chanter in March of next year.

## WHOLE SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH

This was taken last Friday, when we were blessed with good weather, to commemorate 150 years of St Cyrus School. Copies of this will be available to purchase shortly.

## VOLUNTEERS

Following our request for volunteers to help within the school, we now have a number of parents/carers working with us. Thank you so much for your help! If you are waiting to hear back from us, please bear with us. To enable your application to be PVG'd we have to put your application to the Council. Once returned we then have to get written references for you. As you can imagine, this can take a little while. We will be in touch as soon as all boxes have been ticked!!

## IMPROVEMENT PLANNING TO DATE

Our Improvement Plan is on track for this session. Notes below indicate what we have carried out this term. Remember, should you want to have a look at our Improvement Plan in full, this is available on our school website and in hard copy in the school foyer.

### **1. How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?**

- Pupils, Parents and Staff continue to evaluate the life and work of our school. Action points are acted upon/added to our Improvement Planning Report. Parents have had opportunities this term through our 'Big Conversation' and Reading Information evening.
- Learners are involved in regular dialogue with teachers and share this with Parents/Carers through PLPs
- Nursery staff have been issued with the new care standards and are becoming familiar with them. Quality Assurance activities are also carried out in nursery each week .
- Teaching staff have engaged with the Highland Literacy Project, through staff dialogue and reading. Staff have identified aspects from the project (or the North Lanarkshire – Active Literacy project) they will be trying in the coming term.
- A Community Café held for Macmillan was organised and run by P3, along with support from WRI.
- A number of parents are now volunteering within classes.

### **2. How good is the quality of care and education we offer?**

- Nature Nursery has begun again – Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday. Nursery have also been out on a community walk, as well as held a sponsored bike ride.
- Tracking of pupil's progress has been recorded for this term (in line with school procedure) following discussions between Class teachers , Management team and Support for Learning teacher.
- Our Child Protection guidelines/policy were shared and discussed with all staff during August In-service.

### **3. How good are we at improving outcomes for all our learners?**

- Mrs Mann and Miss Murray have attended 2 Northern Alliance (Emerging Literacy) meetings to date. All initial assessment/data has been submitted for analysis.
- A staff collegiate session, led by Mrs McWhinnie focussed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year of 1 plus 2 (French) power language platform.

#### STAFFING UPDATE

Last week Mrs MCWhinnie and I interviewed for a class teacher who will cover P5 on a Wednesday when Mrs Balmer leaves us to begin her maternity leave. Unfortunately we were unable to appoint a suitable candidate and have therefore re-advertised this position. In the meantime, Mrs Keith (our core teacher) has agreed to cover a Wednesday to ensure continuity for our pupils.

Mrs McWhinnie and I also interviewed for an Early Years Practitioner for our nursery. This position is the post Lisa held until she left earlier this term. On this occasion we were successful in appointing. Ms Amber Gerraghty will join us from Lathallan Nursery early next term. We look forward to welcoming her to St Cyrus.

Ms Sheila Robertson, our Visiting Music Specialist retires in the October holidays. She has served with Aberdeenshire Council for 25 years and I am sure you will join me in thanking her for sharing her wealth of experience and talents with us. Until Ms Robertson's position can be filled, Mrs Gatherum, our art specialist has agreed to work an additional day for us.

#### COMMUNICATION

In a bid to keep you all as informed as possible we use a variety of methods to communicate with you:

A school newsletter is issued at the beginning and end of each term. A class newsletter is included in your child's PLP (green folder) at the beginning of each term also.

Our school website (<http://st-cyrus.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/>) is updated regularly and contains lots of useful information as well as photographs of recent events/class work.

Groupcall is used to send brief reminders/information to you via e-mail or text. These messages are extremely brief, due to the amount of characters we are restricted to. If you have not already done so, please inform the school office of your e-mail address. Please also let us know if your contact details change.

To enhance communication even further we have created a St Cyrus School Facebook page. Our Parent Council already have one and post event information and other useful items to support parents. The school page will provide information on what is happening within the school. This is a closed group for parents/carers of current pupils only.

## BEAVERS/CUBS AND SCOUTS

We have been asked to bring these organisations to your attention. There are places available within each group just now. If you are interested, please pop along to the Scout Hall on Monday (6-7pm for Beavers and 7-8pm for Cubs).

## CAN YOU HELP?

Transport - As you know we are planning to host a whole school Christmas show this year. Kinneff School have kindly agreed to lend us their staging but we would require for it to be transported here and then returned afterwards. A trailer or van would be all that would be needed. Ideally, the staging would be picked up from Kinneff (9 miles south of Stonehaven) on either Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November or Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December and returned after 14<sup>th</sup> December but before the end of term. If you are able to help, please contact the school office. Thank you!

Choir – As Ms Robertson retires shortly, we are now looking for somebody to take over the running of the choir. This would be on a voluntary basis and would ideally be a 30-40 minute session once a week. It could be run at lunch time or during the school day. Children in P5-7 all have the option to join and the sessions tend to be great fun. If you would interested in leading this, again please get in touch with the school office.

Reading Benches – We have 4 or 5 of these within the school. These are used to store books but all have padded tops, which also provide super seating for our pupils at story time. Unfortunately there are now a few which are in need of re-covering/upholstering. If you have such a skill and would be able to make these beautiful once more, could you please once again, contact the school office.



One of our reading benches

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October - Term ends

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October at 9am – School begins

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October – Booking Forms go up in foyer for Parents Evenings

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November – Parent Council Meeting in school at 7pm

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November – Parents Evening 6.30 – 8.30pm

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November – Parents Evening 3.45 – 5.45pm

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November – SCHOOL CLOSED (In-service day)

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November – SCHOOL CLOSED (In-service day)

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November – P5 led coffee morning in the school hall (10.45 am)

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December – Christmas Fair held in school hall (organised by Parent Council)

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Show - matinee (details to follow)

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Show – evening (details to follow)

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas show – evening (details to follow)

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December – Term ends

And finally! As I write this letter, a wormery has been delivered to our P2 class



Doesn't it look fantastic? One of our parents made this for the class. What wonderful support we have – thank you!

Wishing you all a lovely break

Mrs I Mann (Head teacher)

