



# Laurencekirk School Newsletter



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June 2015

POTTED SPORTS, FLAT RACES, MARATHON AND THE CUP WINNERS.

IN THIS ISSUE

## Sports Day was a massive success

by Mrs Millard

The children and adults had a fantastic day on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May. The sun was shining, parents were cheering and the children were excited competing against their friends. The staff had worked hard preparing their classes for the challenges that lay ahead practicing events and setting up heats.

### Marathon

“Try your hardest, that’s all that matters,” was Maria’s (P6/7) opinion of the marathon and this was a sentiment that was echoed by all our competitors. Every child was determined to complete the course and was helped along with all the cheering and encouragement from the crowds; everyone achieved this goal.

### Field Events

On the field the races were designed to test speed and agility. “The atmosphere was great with the crowds cheering for everyone,” Corrine (P5) reported. It was with great enthusiasm that the pupils raced along the field in hoops, sacks, balancing balls and eggs to cries of delight from their families and friends.

### Potted Sports

The course was designed to challenge the children’s skills of balance, throwing, and controlling a ball using various items of sports equipment. Lewis from P2/3 told us, “I loved everything.”

### Nursery

Nursery held their Sports Day on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May. Again there was a fabulous crowd cheering the children along. This was followed with a picnic on the front lawn. One parent told us, “The children are having so much fun, they know what they are doing and are so confident.”

### Winning House

Congratulations to Mrs Clark and the Yellow House for winning Sports Day for the second year running. The scores were very close with Green 5<sup>th</sup>, Blue 4<sup>th</sup>, Black 3<sup>rd</sup> and Red 2<sup>nd</sup> and each house was only separated by a few points.

A big thank you to everyone who helped make the day a great success and we can’t forget our ex pupils from Mearns Academy who gave up their time to help us run the events – thank you.



### Meet the new Head Teacher

Starting in April 2015, Mr Boyd is excited to be part of the Laurencekirk family.

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### How we are doing with our Improvement Plan

Taking time to reflect on our achievements is all part of succeeding but how are we doing and how can we move forward?

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## Vision and Aims

by Mr Boyd

It is with great pride and affection that I write to you as your new Head Teacher. I am so excited about the passion that the children have for their learning, the staff have regarding working with children to be the best they can be and meeting parents who want the best for the children and the community.

### About me

Brought up in a village similar to the size of Laurencekirk, South Lanarkshire, I completed my primary schooling in the village school. As we were not lucky enough to have a secondary school on our door step, we were bused to school in the neighbouring village. After six years at secondary school, I moved on to complete my teacher training at Jordanhill Campus, Strathclyde University where I later returned to complete a Postgraduate qualification in Enterprise and Business in Education.

Moving to the North East was a giant leap but one that I have never regretted, and both my wife and I decided to bring our child up in the area. We have a happy little boy called Campbell, who is 9 months old.

Although always passionate about the children in school and working to get the best from them both academically and socially, I am now even more driven by the delight I have in raising my own child.

### My History

I have taught in two other Local Authorities, Angus and Dundee. The latter being where I developed my management skills in meeting children's needs, engaging with parents as partners and providing a positive but robust atmosphere in Quality Assurance amongst staff and stakeholders.

### So what does this mean?

My goal is to provide an ever reflective school, with all staff valued by the whole community, the community feeling valued by us and more importantly the children feeling valued by all. Before anything can happen, relationships need to be built and we need to look closely at what is going well

before we change anything that we, as a community, think can be even better.

I look forward to working with you as we meet the challenges ahead.



### ABSENCE PROCEDURES

It is important that your child is safe no matter where he/she is. It is your responsibility to contact the school between 8.40 am & 9.10 am if they are not attending school.

Text messages will be sent out to alert you if your child has not come to school and you have not informed us.

## Keeping in touch in the digital age

by Mr Boyd

With the increased use of Social Media and handheld devices and with our Eco-School hats on, we recently consulted **your** Parent Council on communicating more effectively with parents.

Aberdeenshire Council are working hard on developing an integrated communication system that will use our current database of parents/carers and send information to them via Text(SMS) and/or e-mail. It is hoped this system will be rolled out next session and we are excited about using it to increase our reach out to you.

This will be available from Nursery to P7 and will give us the ability to target the letters to specific classes or groups. All letters requiring return slips will still go home in bags, although we may decide to send a copy to you via e-mail just in case!

For this service to work we rely on up to date e-mail and mobile numbers as soon as they change. As we prepare for this service we will send our annual data review forms to you and **ask that you check all details**. This will be sent to you in August.

### Absence notification

In the same way, we need to use technology to reduce the 30 + minutes of phone calls our office staff make to children's homes when we do not know why they are not at school. **It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to make the school aware of absence before 9.10 am.**

After this time we will now send a Text message home. This allows us to alert all parents within minutes of our registers being completed. **We then ask that parents/carers phone the school with a reason. Return texts will not be read.**



*Saving paper, reducing spend and making sure letters get to you quickly, Laurencekirk will move to E-news in August 2015*

## BOYS' CHOIR



## Singing for Success

by Mrs Allen

A group of boys from the upper stages of the school have volunteered to take part in a school choir run by Miss Robertson, our music specialist. This occurs every Wednesday.

The boys recently performed a medley of songs at our Easter assembly and are rehearsing hard for the leavers' service at the end of term.

A range of songs have been performed including sea shanties and nostalgic songs from World War 1, as well as rousing Scottish anthems. They were absolutely fantastic and we were all so proud of how well they sang.

At the moment the boys are practising songs from Les Miserables and are clearly committed to taking part in a very special end of year service. It looks set to be a real tear jerker!

Mrs Robertson is currently in discussion with Brechin Arts Festival for entry in to the singing competition. We will let you know when we have more details about this exciting event.

### Medication

We are all responsible for providing children with a positive and healthy lifestyle. It is important that we know about your child's medical needs but stress that we are **unable** to administer medication if it is not prescribed by a health professional and carries a pharmacy dispensing label.

We are more than happy to provide a space for parents to administer their child's medication if they wish to do this or if they wish to give "over the counter" drugs but Aberdeenshire Council's policy no longer permits us to do this for you.

Please support us in this Policy. If your child is too ill to come to school we will support you if you keep them at home.



## Improvement Planning

by Mrs Clark

### Where we are now...

This year saw the school move ahead in the following areas.

### Vision, Values and Aims

Thank you to all members of our school community who helped construct our new Vision Statement reflecting what we believe to be central to ensuring our learners are given the opportunities to be the best that they can be.

### Sustainable Education

Glowing reports supplemented the Awards achieved by our school from all assessors when assessing Laurencekirk for its first Eco Schools Green Flag and Rights Respecting School Level 1 Award. Our pupils were observed as being "excellent ambassadors" and that our school had "sustainable education embedded in our school culture."

### Staff Development

All staff participated in a two day training dealing with responding to and understanding Challenging Behaviours.

Teaching Staff have been developing their higher order questioning to improve learning through Tapestry Learning Community.

### Where we are going next....

Pupils, staff and parents have been actively involved by completing on-line questionnaires seeking thoughts, views and opinions to help establish our new priorities for 2015-2016.

Thank you to all for your support.

## HOT TOPICS



### STAFFING

We are pleased to announce that Miss Honeybone will remain at Laurencekirk School after successfully securing a permanent contract.

Miss Neilson has chosen to apply for jobs nearer her home area of Glasgow and we wish her well.

We await to find out who has been appointed for P3, covering a variety of staff who are already on leave. We are excited to be welcoming another teacher to our friendly school.

Mrs Keith has given birth in late May to a baby girl named Amy. We wish them both good health.

### CLASS STRUCTURE

The consultation period for parental input to class structures has now passed and we have formed and allocated them to teachers. From this point forward, we will be unable to make any changes requested by parents/carers and hope you have felt valued in this very difficult process. As always, external factors may force us to change classes.

## DIARY DATES

10-11 June Sponsored Walk (see individual letter)

15-17 June – P7 to Mearns Academy

3 July- P7 Leavers Assembly

4 July 2015 -Summer holidays begin

18 August – New session begins (for children)

## Nursery Corner

by The Nursery Team

At the moment we have lots of interest in tadpoles, insects and creepy crawlies. It is great to hear stories coming from home about the children talking about the learning that is happening.

The outside area is looking great and we are all having so much fun outside. The children have helped to establish a sensory garden and are in the process of creating a bean tunnel. There are onions, beetroot and potatoes in the large vegetable planters. We have been talking about parts of a plant and what they need to grow well. So they are experiencing the whole life cycle of different plants and animals. We are exploring letters and their sounds. Please encourage your child to help with writing lists, birthday cards and so on at home.

Children are looking for letters on posters and adverts.

There has been lots of Maths happening too with sorting of objects into groups especially with the insects/creepy crawlies – those with wings, antennae, by number of legs and so on. Graphs have been made by the children providing information about how they travel to nursery.



N1 Nursery Sports.



N2 Nursery Sports



## Named Person

by Mr Boyd

The Scottish Government has adopted a Named Person Approach for all children from conception to the age of 18. This involves everyone being responsible for the upbringing of Scotland's children. In the large scheme of things, the Named Person will be responsible for working with parents and other agencies to provide the best support for your child. This may not be required for all children but the service will still be there.

### So who is my child's Named Person? From pre-birth to 14 days old-

Your Midwife

### From 14 days old until start of school-

Your child's Health Visitor.

**School age-** The named person service is overseen by the Head Teacher who will attend some meetings but key contact for you will be:

Green House- Mr Boyd  
Blue House- Mrs Allen  
Yellow House- Mrs Clark  
Red House- Mrs Millard

### What about the Black house?

We will be moving the Black house into the other houses to make four houses. This will happen in August- until then Mrs Millard will be responsible for the Black House and Mrs Cuthill for the Red House.

### So who do I contact if I have a worry?

Your child's class teacher is always the first point of contact but if a meeting is arranged, please don't be surprised if your key contact attends. If you feel that you want to speak to a member of the management team, please speak to your key contact who will be able to help you.

### I don't know what house my child is in?

All children in the same family are in the same house.

In August all children will be given a badge to wear at all times in school – this will be part of their uniform. This badge will be the colour of their house. The Key Contact will also wear the same colour of badge but in the shape of a star.

Finally, we are proud to say that all our staff will be part of a house, helping to promote the community spirit. Staff houses will change from year to year to help the children get to know more staff.

## Child Protection

by Mrs Allen



### Child Protection Officer – Mr Boyd Depute Protection Officer – Mrs Allen

Keeping our children safe continues to be a priority for Laurencekirk School.

Using the Getting It Right For Every Child approach to Child Protection promotes action to improve the well-being of all children in 8 areas;

### Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

Parents/carers have the ultimate responsibility in safeguarding, supporting and promoting the well-being of their child.

All staff that work with children have a role to play in ensuring that a child's needs are met, and work in partnership with other agencies to ensure the protection of children.

If you have any concerns regarding the safety and well-being of a child please contact myself, Mr Boyd or the local Social Work office.

Please refer to the school handbook and website or Aberdeenshire Council website for more details about Child Protection in Aberdeenshire.

At Laurencekirk we will always put the child first and would ask for your support if we have to verify situations that have been disclosed to us, no matter how sensitive.

### Attendance issues

Part of our responsibility is also to ensure children attend school. We will be adopting a text and letter service if children's attendance becomes a cause for concern and inviting parents to meetings to support them in increasing their child's attendance. Any attendance that is below 90% needs to be reported to the Education Department.