



# Laurencekirk School Newsletter



<http://laurencekirk.aberdeenshire.sch.uk>

March 2017

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## World Book Day

by Mr Boyd

A massive thanks to our Pupil Council for planning this day. Promotion of the fancy dress, sending out letters and creating a quiz and book reviews all kept the children engaged in their literacy day.

Fantastic Mr Fox, Umpa Lumpas, Stickman and Harry Potter are only a few of the excellent costumes we saw at our World Book Day celebration on 2 March 2017.

Our day started with the great launch and all children showcasing their costumes to the full school. We had a special visitor Jill Reid from Mearns Library who also came in fancy dress. As well as reading one of her favourite stories (all about poo), she was our judge in the costumes. A very difficult decision!

After much deliberation the winner was Stick Man in P1 who has won an exciting and interesting experience for their class when visiting Mearns Library.

Mr Boyd also read his favourite story, The Gruffalo but had a twist about it

being in Scots. The children in the Nursery 2 class also heard this and kept Mr Boyd on the right track about the English version.

Favourite stories could be heard throughout the school and children were engaged in talking about characters, titles and plots.

Children should now have spent their voucher on a new book (sent home in bags) and we ask that you spend time reading to your children and discussing books with them.

Children are never too old to talk about books.



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# School Uniform

by Mr Boyd

Thank you to the children, staff, parents and the community for your feedback to the Parent Council about our school uniform.

We had over 100 responses from parents, every child and all staff. The community were also represented. There was an overwhelming agreement that School Uniform is important and more detailed results can be found on our website at <http://laurencekirk.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/policies>

A leaflet is also available on the agreed school uniform at <http://laurencekirk.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/parent/>

Uniform is a great way to promote our wonderful school, keep ethos high and reduce teasing and bullying. It is also affordable and stops fashionable clothes being ruined. This is a school community decision and as such we will be encouraging children to come in a school uniform each day.

Uniforms can be purchased online via our school website and there are some sample tops and t-shirts at the school office if you need to check a size.

Please remember that some parents can have support in purchasing uniform:

<http://laurencekirk.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/parent/>

are taught in class. In life, if you want to book a holiday, buy a car or watch a film, the first thing you do is go and find out more about it. This is you previewing what you will get.

James Nottingham, a well-respected educationalist, claims that if we ask questions to engage our children, they will become excited and enthused to learn about the subject and come to school ready to take it further.

## **So what do we ask of home?**

Teachers will prepare your child in their homework task and will send a note home via the Messenger system to your e-mail address. We ask that you "big up" the learning experience and get your child motivated.

An example might be – What is a fraction and what is the point of them?

We ask that you talk to your child about fractions in their life. Cutting up pizza, the birthday cake, talking about dividing up your wage etc.

With the children seeing this then when they get involved in class they have some prior knowledge and understanding.

This work at home will give your child an advantage in his/her learning.

Reading and spelling will continue.

# Homework – the point to it!

by Mr Boyd

Whether you love or hate it, homework is the talk of all children and all adults. It reflects on our learning and either creates a great opportunity for our children to work with their families or to argue about how things were done in "the olden days".

The staff have recently attended a course in developing Growth Mindset through all the children do.

The Scottish Education system is strongly linked to skills learning- after all in a day of technology we can shout on Siri or Google to help us find out information and grow our knowledge.

With this in mind, we have looked at research on how important homework is. Hattie, a statistician, looked at millions of teaching habits and found that homework, as it is traditionally taught, is not a deciding factor in a child's attainment. We want to change this and really challenge your child to learn.

With this in mind we are looking to change homework into Previews. Previews are opportunities for learners to find out knowledge before the skills



## **WATER BOTTLES**

We promote hydration in our classrooms but this should be through water and not juice. Juice has stained our carpets and marked the children's valuable work. We ask for your support in this matter.

Children with juice will be asked to put it in their bag and take home. They will then be offered the use of our water fountain for the rest of the day.

## **PLAYGROUND**

The children have worked with our Council Architect to design our new playground between the new extension and the Nursery.

Areas will include reflection and reading areas, football and playground equipment along with Jessica's memorial garden.

Quotes are being sought from our preferred supplier and we cannot wait to see it in full use by summer.

## **WINTER WEATHER**

The staff are dedicated to educating your child/ren during all times of the year. We have plans in place to provide a service in most weathers but respect your decision to send or not send your child to school if you deem their safety is at risk when travelling.

The school will contact parents via Text Message if the normal day will be interrupted. This includes before or during a school day. **It is important that telephone numbers are kept up to date.**

Information will also be available on Aberdeenshire Council's Website, <https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Apps/schools-closures/> The School Emergency Closure Line 0870 054 4999, PIN- 022060) and via our Parent Council FaceBook site.

It is always our priority to stay open and we will use a variety of methods to ensure this can happen:

1. Liaising with Mearns Academy
2. Making decisions to open later in the day, allowing the school and its local area to be cleared and assessed.

## HOT TOPICS

**STAFFING**

Mrs Irvine has left us for pastures new. A dedicated member of staff, she moved to be closer to home. Ms Pooley, who worked in Angus will work alongside Mrs Wilson after Easter. We look forward to welcoming her.

**CLASS STRUCTURE**

Laurencekirk is a very popular school and it is a requirement to be able to educate children in the catchment area. This can mean that classes may have to be restructured. This is always a last option but parents should be aware of this throughout the year.

We are now welcoming children into our full P2 class – this has forced us to make changes to our P1B class and make it P1/2. At this moment in time this will not affect the children in P1B in that their teacher will remain the same and P2 children/parents that are affected have been notified.

**PHONE NUMBER IS CHANGING**

**As part of Aberdeenshire Council's modernising telephone project, Laurencekirk will be changing their telephone number. Our new telephone number will be **01561 400 640** and will be active as of 1 April.**

**Please note that a voicemail system will also be available but THIS SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR TIME SENSITIVE ISSUES.**

**As part of the new telephony there will be an automated menu giving you the option to leave attendance messages 24 hours a day- through a messaging service.**

**The telephone lines will be open from 8.00 am – 4.00 pm.**

# Open Afternoon

by Mr Boyd

Our first learning afternoon with parents took place on Wednesday, 25 January when we created a community Tartan to display on our school walls. 75 people registered an interest in attending the day but over 200 people attended.

This is the beginning of our new reporting model where children and parents will be part of family learning and will engage in learning together. There may be some opportunity to share work but this will be focused on the task in hand.

Gone are the days when children sit and write in their jotter for 5 hours and instead a lot of active and discursive work takes place. The best way for parents and friends to see this is to be part of it.

Feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive with many enjoying working with their children.



We understand that not all parents can make it and that is why we opened it to family friends. We are also in the process of planning evenings and other occasions that parents who work during the day can come. Helping to get the balance of day workers, night workers and full time parents.

As we develop our growth mindset, the senior management team has enjoyed being challenged about how we can do this differently and comments on our Child Protection Stickers for checking your child out before 3.15 pm was valid. We may take your comments on board and ask that you wait for your child in the playground at the end of the day in the future.



## Growth Mindset

by Mr Boyd

*Do you ever feel that when you learn something new you are coming out of your comfort zone- may be a first time parent, a new job or even a new place?*

James Nottingham, a well-respected educationalist, calls this stepping into the pit.

In term 4, we will be referring to the pit to all of our children and using the language that they have used this year to climb out of it and continue to learn.

Please help us to encourage your child to take safe educational risks to help develop their resilience and to be even better than they are now.

This can work in day to day activities like taking things to school and losing them, in problem solving through play, maths and other life situations.

We continue to refer to the great job your child has done in being able to communicate, play and walk. They were not born that way, these are all learned skills. Why then do adults and children become less resilient as they grow older and are faced with other challenges?

Please help your child to be the best they can be – and then help them to be even better!



## Nursery Corner

by The Nursery Team

The nursery boys and girls are thoroughly enjoying their Forest School experience. The outdoors offer a fantastic extension to our learning environment and here at Laurencekirk we are lucky to have our own mini 'forest' which we can use to enhance our curriculum. The children have been developing their spoken vocabulary as well as their understanding of order and sequence through making mud pies. Thankfully nobody decided to sample these creations! The mathematical skills of counting and ordering were being consolidated through arranging cones, twigs and branches in ascending and descending order. As spring is upon us, as part of our learning in science, we have begun planting seeds and learning how to take care of plants. This helps us to become responsible citizens. We are growing potatoes and lavender in our garden and dinosaur cress heads inside. Dinosaurs have been hugely popular and we have been developing our counting skills as we dig for fossils and bones in the sand tray.

It is Fairtrade Fortnight and we are learning about some of the foods that are grown in faraway lands. We often look at print in the world around us to help us develop our early reading skills and as part of this work we have been looking for the Fairtrade symbol. We recently went to the COOP to see how many Fairtrade signs we could see. Please do encourage your child to look out for familiar words and symbols when they are out and about! The boys and girls purchased some bananas and these will be used to make a healthy banana loaf. The children will develop weighing, measuring and counting skills as they bake their loaves. As part of our work on developing environmental awareness, the children have been learning about recycling. They have been introduced to 'Michael Recycle' who has taught them all about what to recycle and how. To extend this further – ask your child to help you with this job at home. I am sure you will be impressed with their knowledge. We were all surprised to learn that paper comes from trees and watching a super video on this topic helped us to understand why recycling is important – it is so much better than chopping down more trees. Our work on letter, number and name identification is always ongoing. We look forward to working with our children to plan an exciting and educational term at nursery.



## Parent Council

by Nicola Campbell

The Parent Council has been working very hard over the past few months. It's been exciting to have new people join our ranks. We are sad to see Denise leave us, we wish her much love in her new adventures and look forward to welcoming her back in a year's time.

We would like to thank everyone who uses the clothes bin situated by the school. This is a great source of fundraising and helps us greatly and in turn the children.

We have been working closely with the school over the Uniform policy and look forward to its completion.

As always should you wish to contact us please email [laurencekirkppc@outlook.com](mailto:laurencekirkppc@outlook.com) or simply join our LPPC Facebook page.

We generally meet the first Monday of each month and all Parents/Guardians are welcome.



Use our Clothes Bin to help us raise money



Uniform Policy

## School Reporting

by Mr Boyd

Thank you to the parents that attended our Meet the Management workshops on changing the reporting structure.

Reporting to parents is a very important part of education and takes many forms. Until now a lot of reporting could be seen as repetitive with newsletters, assemblies, open afternoons, parents' evenings, learning journeys and of course the traditional end of year report.

Through discussion with parents, many ideas were put forward to make the reporting system more succinct and meaningful and included in the end of year school report will be a timetable that will highlight our way forward with reporting. This will start in August 2017 and careful planning will take place to ensure that you are aware of your child's progress in the curriculum.

Progress in school reports will mainly include their attitude to learning and the skills they are using. Content of learning will be included in the Curriculum Newsletters released by the class.

Furthermore we will offer opportunities via our Xpression App for you to have a say in what could be happening at Open events, helping you to work with us to personalize the reporting experience. Please note that some inputs will be driven by survey results and the individual experience remains as Parents' Evening and end of session reports.

As learning is very personal, we would welcome the input of your child at Parents' Evenings but will leave how much, if any, up to you.



## Diary Dates

Subject to change, addition and cancellation.

Date	Event	Times
Friday, 31 March	Easter Service at church, led by Pupil Council.	11.00 am
Friday, 31 March	Spring holiday	3.15 pm
Tuesday, 18 April	School returns	9.00 am
Monday, 1 May	Public Holiday – School Closed	
Wednesday, 3 May	Nursery Sponsored Walk	Normal nursery sessions.
Thursday, 4 May	Sponsored Walk for P1-7, parents and friends.	1.30 pm
Tuesday, 9 May	Sports Day P1- P7	All day
Wednesday, 10 May	Nursery Sports Day	Normal nursery sessions
Friday, 12 May	Primary 6 assembly and parental visit to class	11.00 am
Friday, 19 May	Primary 3 assembly and parental visit to class.	
Week Beginning 15 May	Parents' Evening (on request)	
Tuesday, 23 May	Sports Day P1 – P7 (back up only)	All day
Wednesday, 24 May	Nursery Sports Day (back up only)	Normal nursery sessions
Tuesday, 6 June – Friday, 9 June	P7s to Glenshee	
Monday, 19 June – Wednesday, 21 June	P7 Transition Days at Mearns Academy	
Friday, 30 June	Primary 7 leavers service at church	10.00 am
Friday, 30 June	Summer holidays	3.15pm
Monday, 21 August	Inservice Day- Staff only	
Tuesday, 22 August	School Returns	

Further dates will appear throughout the year.

Please also see your child's class newsletter for dates pertinent to their class.