



26 October 2018

Dear Families

I hope you all had a good October break and enjoyed the sunny Autumnal weather.

The staff returned to Sciennes on Monday and we had our third in service day of this school session. It was a busy day. We had a staff meeting covering many current issues. We thought about our own individual vision for Sciennes primary, how we might achieve this and what barriers we may have to overcome to achieve it. We had an input on Nurture and we looked at a recent inspection report from Education Scotland and compared it to what we do at Sciennes. This enabled us to have some really useful professional dialogue together...something that is very difficult to do when the school is full of children! In the afternoon, the staff split up in to their Improvement Groups and worked on our school priorities.

It was great to welcome the children back on Tuesday. They seemed very eager and happy coming back to school so that is a good sign! Primary seven visited James Gillespie's High School on Tuesday to begin their rehearsals for the Usher Hall Christmas concert. The children were amazing - a 2 hour rehearsal of three new songs. Only two songs have been learned in previous years so this was a first to learn three and it was all because the P7's were so focussed, motivated and enthusiastic. I won't tell what the songs are, as I don't want to spoil the surprise for the big event! But if parents want to hear, more they will need to buy a ticket for the concert on 18th December! Ms Gallagher was the latest member of staff to attend the writing conference hosted by James Clements. He is a highly engaging and renowned Literacy consultant who promotes research-based strategies designed to raise attainment in Writing. Many city staff have recently attended sessions with him, including Ms Gallagher, Miss Rogerson, Ms French and colleagues from James Gillespie's High School Cluster schools. Edinburgh's new 'Strategy for Writing' is based upon many of his recommendations which this year we will begin piloting, both in school and within the Cluster. Staying on the Literacy theme, I saw The National Theatre's production of Macbeth (my favourite play) at The Festival Theatre on Tuesday evening and it was superb. It is on until Saturday so there is still time to get a ticket!

On Wednesday, P5A had an amazing time going round Old Edinburgh with Mr Howie to reinforce their social studies work. It is fantastic that we have the resource of the city on our doorstep. The other P5 classes are going next week. I want to say a big thank you to Mr Howie for organising and leading this brilliant experience for our children. Our fire inspection finally took place in school on Wednesday, (it had been cancelled twice before!) and we look forward to seeing the report in due course. I attended the second Head Teacher cluster meeting at James Gillespie's where we agreed our cluster work on moderation of writing. Sciennes will lead this piece of work for the cluster. Mr McDonald the Head Teacher also shared with us the fantastic exam results at James Gillespie's. I am sure you will be pleased to hear how well current pupils are doing. An information session for parents on the P6 Health Curriculum was held in Sciennes on Wednesday. Parents/carers had an opportunity to find out about the forthcoming P6 Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education Programme, which runs for about 6 weeks. We had a super turn out of parents and the evening was led by Ms Gallagher and the P6 team of Miss McGrouther, Mr Hutchison and Mr Mitchell.

Mrs Reid and I interviewed for two Pupil Support Assistant positions on Thursday morning and we were able to nominate two preferred candidates. Further information will follow once the pre-employment checks have been done. The Events and Fundraising group met on Thursday evening and Fran Armour has asked if I can let you know the following news from the meeting.

This year's Winter Fair promises to be an exciting one. The planning group met last night to discuss the format of the fair and all of the exciting activities that will be available on the day. The minutes will be available soon.

Our fundraising aim for the fair is to enrich our children's literacy provision at school. This includes supplying the school with a new PA system to help the children's performances and providing vital literacy materials for all children in the school. This ranges from those to who need some additional support to readers who need to be challenged. Our target is to raise £7000 at the fair and we believe that with your support we can achieve this.

As part of the event we will be holding a raffle to help raise much needed funds. We are calling on the entire Sciennes parent body to think about links you might have to businesses that could donate fantastic raffle prizes. This could be anything from an experience, to a haircut, spa day, dining experiences etc. If you can donate something that would be a wonderful contribution to the fair. Please email LJ Stewart, our Vice Chair who is leading the raffle, with your donation at [eljayd@hotmail.com](mailto:eljayd@hotmail.com). We look forward to hearing from you.

This week all the Primary 2 classes were visited by Jim Marshall, who looks after street lighting for the City of Edinburgh Council. As part of P2's *The Street* study, some of the pupils asked how streetlights come on at night and so P2A emailed the council to ask. Jim kindly came along and showed P2 how the new LED lights in the city work, with little computer cells sensing when the sun goes down and comes up. Well done Primary 2 by displaying such curiosity.

It is great to tell you about an exciting event that two of our pupils took part in. Both Anjalie P5B and Akalya P5A had a wonderful and busy break preparing for and performing at the Studio at Festival Theatre on October 19th. The show was called Inspire and appeared in the Evening news. It was a lovely showcase of local young talents and the children had a wonderful time learning and showing off their skills in dancing.

Today was our last family Cycle to School Day before we stop for winter. It was again so well supported by families and it was great to see so many children with lights on their bikes. Lights are essential for the dark winter months. Don't forget bright clothing too!

At Friday's P4-7 Assembly, we heard an update from the P7 Gender Equality Group and were invited to join UNICEF's UK wide Toxic Air campaign, which heavily features Sciennes pupils. Look out for ways that you can get involved! The Primary Seven team's Clean Air Campaign in June last year was hugely successful in promoting our ongoing campaign to increase Active Travel and drive forward our ambitions to extend the playground by closing Sciennes Road. Kirstin Unger from the Parent Council ECO Group provided an update on progress

It is Halloween on Wednesday and children may wear a Halloween accessory or an inexpensive ( homemade is best!) outfit to school if they wish.

Finally, I have some exciting news for you. Ms Mackintosh has had her baby. She had a little boy called Tommy weighing in at 8lbs and 3 oz. All are well!

I hope the weekend is an enjoyable one for you all. My plan is to build the new desk that is currently in boxes in my hall. I hope it makes it to my study looking reasonably like the pictures in the book!

Andrew

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