



15 November 2019

Diary Dates:

Saturday 30 November	Winter Fair
Friday 6 December	Primary 1 Nativity Friday 6 December P1a and P1b 9.30am. P1c and P1d 11am. P3 – P7 go to The Lyceum Theatre to see A Christmas Carol.
Tuesday 10 December	P2 Winter Show Tuesday 10 December 11am – 12 o'clock.

Dear Families

I hope you have all had a good week.

Steve Davies, our new Business Manager started on Monday and we were delighted to welcome him. Steve will work every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. He will spend the next few weeks getting to know the school and start to familiarise himself with the tasks involved with the job. Arlene Davison from Business Support and Angela Christie (who you will know as a previous excellent Sciennes Business Manager) have been in school to help Steve. It is a very demanding role, but Steve is very much up for the challenge!

Jenni McGrouther also started as Principal Teacher and we are all really happy to have Jenni on board in this role. We know she will be great!

On Monday we were joined by Catriona Iley, Depute Head teacher at Carrick Knowe Primary and Alison Brown, Depute Head Teacher at Gracemount Primary. They shared in our learning across the school. All classes were visited by either me, Ms Gallagher and Mrs Iley, or Ms Anstruther and Ms Brown. The focus of our visits was to look at differentiation in learning. The feedback we received will help us improve our learning experiences for the children.

I attended a Head Teacher Conference on Tuesday at Craigroyston High School. The focus of the conference was Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion. Cllr Alison Dickie opened the event. We heard inspirational presentations from Clare Langley, Head Teacher at Castlevie Primary about how they support all children to be included in school and from Sharon McGhee, Head Teacher at Flora Stevenson's Primary about Care Experienced children and how schools can make a huge difference to the lives of children who are Care Experienced. Both presentations were delivered with passion and empathy and I felt a little emotional listening to them.

Our school photographer was in on Tuesday and Wednesday taking photographs of individual children and family groups too. You should have received the proofs by now. There is of course no obligation to purchase these.

Primary 6 had a wonderful time at Edinburgh Zoo, learning about Life Cycles. They took part in fantastic workshops, learning about the life cycles of penguins, gibbons, rhinos and so much more. A huge thank you to the wonderful staff at the zoo and our helpers.

Early Years staff along with some other teachers attended Up Up and Away training after school. Even though it was an intensive two-hour session, staff reported that it will help them support children in the class and school environment. Thanks to our Educational Psychologist Nicola Keith and Fiona Jack from Speech and Language Therapy for leading the session.

On Wednesday, Ms Anstruther, Ms Gallagher and I met to discuss attainment and achievement across the school. We focused on what further interventions were needed, how we track wider achievement and how we are gathering all this information. We are keen to ensure consistency across the school.

Ms Gallagher and Ms Anstruther attended the Depute Head Teacher version of the conference I went to on Tuesday. They were equally moved by the presentations.

I met with Slim Gueddana, a P1 parent who is leading the Sciennes Road Closure initiative along with Kasper Schwartz from Sustrans to catch up on the status of the project. It is great that this is still a priority for us although timescales are flexible due to The Sick Kids still being in the Sciennes Road building. I can assure you that Slim and the rest of the group are continuing to drive this forward. Excuse the 'drive' pun!

The Parent Council met on Thursday evening and it was another really enjoyable meeting. There was lots of discussion in a really open and welcoming environment. One of the key areas was the status of our library but I will update you on that in a separate email.

Today, Mr Howie led the P4-P7 assembly on kindness and charity with a link to Children in Need.

Primary 4 enjoyed welcoming parents and guests to their Roman Feast celebration as part of their study of The Romans. The children made their own bread and dips yesterday. It all looked very tasty and I enjoyed popping in to each class.

Adoption Week Scotland kicks off this Saturday 16th November when AdoptionUK take over Tumbles Soft Play in Portobello from 9-11am. The event is free for adopted, fostered and kinship families <https://www.facebook.com/events/391369001562450/?ti=icl>. Normal age restrictions do not apply. There are a range of events planned for the week. More information can be found at <https://www.adoptionuk.org/adoption-week-scotland>.

This afternoon all the teachers in our cluster are away to James Gillespie's Primary for a training session on Assessment and Moderation in Mathematics. This session will be led by Simon McLean, Depute Head Teacher at Preston Street Primary and Paul Cummings from James Gillespie's High School. I am really looking forward to this and it will be a great way to end the working week.

I hope you have a good weekend.

Andrew

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