



## RESPECT INCLUSION TEAMWORK EFFORT

24 January 2020

It has been a busy and exciting first two full weeks at Sciennes.

### **Monday 13 January – Friday 17 January**

On Monday 13 January our P6 netball team completed enthusiastically and had a great time at the Oriam. Thank you very much to parents who supported and to coaches Lisa Green and Ms Gladstone. Spanish trainee teachers from Madrid University, Patricia Galindo and Elena Alvarez began their month-long internship with us. I aim to improve my Spanish so it is less Spanglish!

On Tuesday, I attended the Edinburgh Primary Schools Head Teacher meeting. It was a very full day covering school and teacher Empowerment, Anti Bullying, Teaching and Learning, Modern Languages, Additional Support for Learning and Teacher Recruitment. We are keen to keep developing Teacher Empowerment at Sciennes. We shall also be updating our Behaviour Anti Bullying and Equalities Policy this term. We will be setting up a parent focus group to help us with this. I will be in touch about this after the February break.

On Wednesday, all teachers watched a Fire Safety Video with a focus on schools. We are required to watch this each year.

Primary 7 pupils commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day on Thursday with a visit to the Filmhouse to see the moving film 'Hana's Suitcase'. The film deals with the difficult topic of the Holocaust sensitively. It also supports our values of Inclusion and Respect and the P7 study of conflict.

All Primary Six pupils from James Gillespie's Cluster attended a Catherine Wheels Theatre show 'Life Boat' hosted at the High School and everyone agreed it was a high quality and highly engaging production.

*"Lifeboat" is the extraordinary true story of Bess Walder and Beth Cummings. Set in World War II, it is a story of courage, a story of survival and a story of enduring friendship. On Friday 13 September 1940, a ship, The City of Benares, set sail from Liverpool for Canada. On board were 90 evacuees escaping the relentless bombing and dangers of war-torn*

*Britain. Four days into the crossing, the ship was torpedoed and sank. Only eleven of the evacuees survived. Two fifteen-year-old girls, Bess Walder and Beth Cummings, spent 19 terrifying hours in the water on an upturned lifeboat. They willed each other to survive. "Lifeboat" tells their story.*

On Friday, the P3 Dance Show took place. It was absolutely amazing! The children performed dances from music from Grease, Mama Mia, Annie, The Greatest Showman and Michael Jackson's Thriller. Amy our Dance teacher did a fantastic job and the children were superb! Our P3 families loved it and were justifiably proud of their children. A huge well done to the P3 children, staff and Ms Anstruther. I liked that I knew all the songs!

### **Monday 20 January – Friday 24 January**

We had our second Fire Drill of the session on Monday. It was a very successful evacuation. The weather was also kind at 8 degrees with a light wind. P1-P2 were back in school within five minutes and P3-P7 within ten minutes.

I attended the first day of the Edinburgh Head Teacher Conference on Tuesday. The keynote speech was from Lorna Sweeney, Schools and Lifelong Learning Service Manager. Our ecological and digital future featured hugely in her speech. I attended three workshops on Lesson Study (an approach where three teachers plan a lesson: one delivers it, all three suggest improvements, the next teacher delivers it, further improvements are suggested and the final teacher in the trio delivers it). This has proved to be a very effective model in improving teaching and learning and we will take forward this approach in session 2020/21.

I also attended a workshop on developing a learning community. Teacher Empowerment is a focus at Sciennes so this was a useful workshop. The final one was on Learner Participation and this is an ever evolving and integral part of our learners' life at Sciennes.

On Tuesday after school we had a teacher training session with a focus on Reporting. As I have previously mentioned this has been one of our School Improvement Group priorities and Ms Sellar, Ms Dodds, Ms Ferguson, Mr Mitchell, Mr Armstrong and I have been reviewing our approach with parents, staff and pupils this year. On Tuesday afternoon, children in Tantallon met to give their views on Reporting at Sciennes. Mr Armstrong led the training session for staff. There will be some changes to Reporting this school session with further development in session 2020/2021. I will send you the up-to-date position on Reporting next week.

All of our pupils from P2 – P7 met at a House gathering on Tuesday to feedback ideas on the School Improvement group they are assigned to:

Grange – Home learning.

Lauder – Literacy

Sienna – Reporting

Tantallon – Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

I met with our Junior Leadership Team on Thursday and we had some useful discussion on how they can support the school in the playground and in the school buildings. We are going to try and meet on a weekly or two weekly basis.

We welcomed Marie Lyon, Quality Improvement and Education Office (QIEO) to Sciennes today. She was given a tour of the school by some members of our Junior Leadership Team and met with several other pupil groups. Friday's P4-7 Assembly had a Citizenship theme

with a focus on pupils taking on roles of responsibility on school as well as a celebration of Chinese New Year. We were delighted to be able to play a specially recorded message to the children from Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, thanking them for their seven-word rights stories. Some of these will feature in a book later in the year and we are very grateful to Bruce for his inspiration and support.

We also had some parents helping us today to clear the raised bed area at the back of the school. This area is used by the children to grow vegetables. It is also used by classes as an outdoor learning space when it is in good shape! Thank you so much to our keen green fingered helpers!

I would also like to say big thank you to our Fruit Group parents who do an amazing job every week preparing, chopping and providing our children with a super fruit snack.

As you can see, a lot has happened in school over the last two weeks and this is just a snapshot!

This afternoon I am off to the Black Ivy for a Cluster celebratory lunch to mark the retirement of Maureen Allan who is Head Teacher at Preston Street Primary.

I have known Maureen for many years and she will be a much-missed colleague. However, I'm sure she won't think about us too much once she has left! Her successor at Preston Street will be Mr Danny Hoyle who is currently Depute Head Teacher at James Gillespie's Primary.

Have a super weekend and look out for those wild haggis although I suspect they may be in hiding this weekend. Happy Chinese New Year to all our families celebrating.

Andrew

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