



Woodlands' News Update



Angus Council

2024

Our Vision: Believe and Achieve

Hello from Woodlands!

It has been a very quick term 2. With the October holidays being later this year, December seemed to be upon us in the blink of an eye and before we knew it we had our Bookbug event for P1-3 then we were straight into Christmas shows. As I'm sure you will all agree the shows were amazing again this year. The staff and children all work incredibly hard to ensure not only is it an amazing event, but that the children gain from participating. Thank you to all our staff for all the hard work they put into ensuring every child had a part to play and a voice in our school that is valued.

In terms of voice, thank you to you, our parent forum, for your feedback on school aims, values and vision and how involved and informed you feel about your child's learning. I have collated, analysed and shared the information with staff and as you will read in this newsletter it has helped inform our next steps.

To enhance learning opportunities we have continued to make links with partners, with Bookbug visiting P1-3, librarians visiting P5, classes visiting the library, Active Schools supporting groups in school through sport, CHS linking with P4 to implement paired reading as well as start P7 transition. In addition, Stephen Graham visited school to further build on teacher's professional learning in writing, The Wellgood Team supported P7's health curriculum focused on substance abuse, P5-7 have been attending Mandarin lessons, the Red Cross have supported P7's learning in relation to refugees and we have had parents in classes sharing their skills with children. It has indeed been a busy term!

I hope you enjoy reading more about what we have been doing in this newsletter.

Enjoy the holidays!

Suzanne Smith, Head Teacher

School Sports Council

Woodlands Primary School Sports Council have been working hard each year to ensure that we provide the best sports opportunities in school. Last month we were awarded the Sports Scotland Gold Award for 2024-2026 which is a fabulous achievement.

The Sports Council have representatives from Primary 1—7 and continue to meet on a regular basis to work on new and exciting opportunities linked to our action plan. The Sports Council have recently set up a Yoga club for P1-4 and are also running a Table Tennis Club for P3 at lunchtimes.



End of Term Thank you for supporting our end of term service. The church collection was £54.01 which will go to Andysmanclub in memory of a former pupil, Anthony Lindsay.

Please note term ends this Friday at 3pm. Friday will be a dress as you please day.

News across the school...

Our School Improvement Plan

At Woodlands, we are committed to improving outcomes for all learners, with a particular focus on supporting diverse learners. Recently, we have been trialling the Read&Write extension on Chromebooks, a tool that has proven especially beneficial for pupils experiencing literacy difficulties, offering features such as text-to-speech, word prediction, and screen masking. In addition, staff have been engaging in professional development, including completing Microsoft's Dyslexia training modules, to better understand and support students who are dyslexic/being profiled for dyslexia. Moving forward, Woodlands will continue to explore the use of assistive technology to enhance learning experiences. Furthermore, we will be engaging in further training in Autism during term three provided by the local authority Autism team.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving children's writing, staff have continued to engage with the Explicitly Teaching Writing Model. Over the past term, we have worked closely as a school and cluster to moderate learning linked to Information Reports, ensuring consistency and depth of learning. Moving forward, we will be focusing on Response Texts, with staff excited to apply the model's strategies to this new genre. Teachers are already noticing significant improvements in pupil's writing, particularly in the structure of their pieces, as well as a heightened awareness of grammar rules and a greater use of descriptive language. In November, Stephen Graham, the founder of the Explicitly Teaching Writing program, visited our school to deliver professional development for staff. During his visit, he also had the opportunity to deliver a lesson in the P2, P4, and P6 classrooms and was extremely impressed by the progress our learners have made since his last visit in January. We look forward to continuing this journey and further enhancing writing skills

Eco Council

The Eco council have met several times this year and have been working on ways to help the school become more 'eco-conscious'. They set up a pen recycling scheme so that old pens and glue sticks don't end up in land fill. They have also completed a litter pick around the playground and House Grounds, and made posters to remind people to pick up their dog's poo and not drop litter.

School Funds

A big thank you to everyone who handed in chocolate for our tombola which raised a grand total of £174.00 at our Christmas shows. As in previous years, our shows sold out, (thank you for your support) helping us raise a further £600 for our school fund. In addition, we have raised £568 from the Asda Rewards.

To date we have £5166.56 in our school fund which we have been saving so we can respond to the children's request to create an outdoor reading area in the playground. Whilst we aim to use most of this money for this purpose, school funds also pay for Christmas parties, enable us to add to our playground equipment and support the cost of special treats across the year. Thank you to everyone for supporting our fundraising.

Parent Council

To date this session, we have raised nearly £300 from our school disco and around £400 from our Christmas raffle. This money will go towards supporting our families at Christmas; providing vouchers for families and by subsidising the cost of the P1-7 visit to the pantomime by covering the cost of the buses. Thank you to everyone who has supported us either by helping at the disco or supporting through your child attending and/or buying raffle tickets—thank you.

We are looking for more parents to join the council—if interested please contact us through our Facebook page or via school office.

News from the classes...

Nursery This term we have been learning all about numbers, adding on and taking away, recognising numbers in the nursery and counting up to ten and back down again. We have been learning the difference between fact books and fiction books; we have been learning about characters and events in books and acting out our favourite stories using puppets and toys and helicopter stories. We even made our own hand puppets of our favourite characters. We celebrated Halloween in nursery with dressing up and party games. The following week we learned about Diwali and made some Diva lamps using recycled glass and a lot of jewels! The children also learned about Remembrance Day and did really well at sitting in silence. We have explored the Carnoustie House Grounds to see the changes of Autumn and have recently enjoyed learning about ice in the nursery garden. We are getting ready for Christmas, with daily nativity performances and a visit to a local care home to sing some Christmas songs!

Primary 1 We have been lucky to have had Mr Ross a student from Aberdeen University working with us and Miss Robertson from D & A College. We have also had visits from Jane, the librarian, to read us stories and set a Lego challenge and Dr Ferguson to show us some medical equipment and explain the role of a doctor as we have a hospital set up in our role play area. Our topic is dinosaurs; we have had lots of fun learning across the curriculum. We have also taken part in a Museums Live Dinosaur event. We were very excited to host our Book Bug afternoon celebrating reading with our families and selling clay hedgehogs for our enterprise learning and raising money for Children in Need. Christmas will soon be here, the glitter is out and we have just completed our nativity shows—we worked so hard and did so well! It has been a busy but fun term.

Primary 2 We have had a jam packed term learning all about Dinosaurs liked to our Bookbug books. We also loved creating our own books with our P7 Reading Buddies and sharing these with our families at the Bookbug afternoon. We have also visited Carnoustie library with our reading buddies and loved the scavenger hunt we did. We also loved our visit from Carnoustie library when they came to our class and did a lego challenge with us where we made lego dinosaurs. We have now completed our Nativity shows which were great—we couldn't wait for you to see us as we had worked so hard! In literacy, we have been learning how to write 4 and 5 sound words using our sound lines to help. We are also learning to write an information report to share information about a specific topic. In maths we have been learning to estimate and measure length, weight and volume. We are now going to look at different units of measure. We thank you for your continued support and hope you all have a fantastic Christmas and New Year when it comes!

Primary 3 have had an incredibly busy term two, with lots of fun and engaging learning taking place. Our focus for Numeracy has been addition and subtraction. We have been using Numicon and Base ten to construct number bonds and develop different strategies for tackling addition and subtraction problems. Our other focus has been 2D and 3D shape, we have been learning their names and to describe the shapes properties. As part of our topic The World of Work we set up a small business and made a Christmas product which we sold to our families at our recent Bookbug event. Through the Bookbug books we have been learning about maps, continents, the solar system and speed. Our current focus for writing has been Information Reports and the key features of these. In class we have been co-creating Information reports about animals, ensuring that we use the description bubble to support and make the text exciting. Through a Lego challenge we looked at inclusive play and created accessible and sustainable play areas for children. Each week at PE we are enjoying central net games, we have been working hard to improve our striking skills through badminton, tennis and pickleball. We wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

News from the classes...

Primary 4

We have had a busy term in Primary 4. We have been reading our class novel 'The Giants and the Joneses' by Julia Donaldson and we are enjoying making predictions about the novel. We have been focusing on all aspects of Place Value to deepen our understanding and in Maths we have started to learn about money. We are becoming more independent with Daily 5 in class. Primary 4 are enjoying working with Active Schools on a Monday and a Friday to enhance various skills such as teamwork. We are linking with Braehill Lodge, giving them our homemade Christmas cards and hope to re-arrange a visit.

Primary 5

The class has settled into Primary 5 really well. As in every term, they have been working hard and learning lots. They finished the class novel, Kensuke's Kingdom, and went on to learn about some of the similarities and differences between Scotland and Japan. The class are now finding out about Festivals from Other World Religions. Their writing focus has been on Information Reports and how to structure them. They have enjoyed using EPIC books and the internet for their research and are tasked with creating their own reports during Daily 5. The class really enjoyed having the Library Staff visit with some Lego challenges and are able to access Lego and K-nex in the classroom to develop their imagination further. The lead up to Christmas is busy, as always, and the class have been excited about sharing their songs and art with you.

Primary 6

Primary 6 have been working extremely hard on improving their writing and have made excellent progress linked to writing information reports. We are very excited to have Stephen Graham in the other week to teach a lesson all about response texts so have been building our vocabulary linked to judgement words and how to structure a response. We have been learning about place value in maths and some groups were able to work up to millions. We were very interested to learn about the massive pay cheques some celebrities earn through using place value in word problems. Before Christmas we are excited to start our ESports topic which will allow us to learn about how digital technology is being included into the world of work. We have enjoyed using Book Creator on the ipads to produce a story for P4 and we have also linked with the library for an input on lego stories.

Primary 7

We have had a very busy start in Primary 7. We have enjoyed learning about all the different natural disasters through our topic, undergoing experiments and making predications. We have also looked at climate change, and why this is happening. In writing we have been focusing on information reports, and have really enjoyed learning about the different Scottish Castles. We are currently writing our information reports all about natural disasters, and have been learning about different writing skills and sentence techniques to help with this. We are almost finished our class novel 'Running Wild' which has been a rollercoaster of emotions, we are looking forward to finding out about what happens at the end. In numeracy we have been looking at all aspects of place value and addition and subtraction strategies. We had an amazing time at the Science centre and have enjoyed linking with the Wellgood Team and Red Cross to enhance our learning.

Feedback:

Thank you for completing our survey on our school vision, values and aims and how school informs and supports you to engage with your child's learning. Analysis of the results informed us almost all parents identified parent evenings support their knowledge and understanding of their child's progress, whilst most felt invites into school events eg soft start, curricular pm, assemblies also supported their involvement in their child's learning. Most parents shared the learning logs and termly newsletter was informative of their children's learning, with 12% identifying somewhat. Whilst 84% felt homework was supportive, almost half felt this was somewhat supportive, with comments including inconsistencies in approach across the classes. As a result of this feedback we identified a focus on homework with a view to establishing a parent and teacher homework group who would review our policy. We then linked with our Parent Council who agreed this approach would be beneficial and appropriate. The homework policy review group would meet during term 3. Should you wish to be part of this group of 6 (to include 2 teachers) we would greatly appreciate it—please contact the school office.

Every 3-4 years we review our school vision, values and aims to ensure they remain appropriate. Parental feedback informed most parents feel they are appropriate, with the remaining 16% saying somewhat. Whilst the majority of parents shared they know our vision, values and aims, 28% said somewhat and 8% did not know them. This feedback, coupled with our pupil and staff feedback, led to us identifying we need to look at improved communication of our vision, values and aims with parents. In addition some younger children were mixing them with our 3 school rules so we are going to merge our aims and rules to reduce this confusion, with teachers then focusing on further embedding them into our school culture and ethos.

Useful Links

Parent Portal - <https://parentsportal.scot/pportal/>

Parent Pay (School Lunches) - <https://www.parentpay.com/>

School Reports—<https://woodlands.pupiltracking.com/>

Clothing Grants—https://www.angus.gov.uk/schools_and_young_people/free_school_meals_and_school_clothing_grants

Change of Address Form—https://www.angus.gov.uk/schools_and_young_people/schools/advise_a_change_of_address_schools_and_early_learning_and_childcare

Dates for the Diary



December	18	P1-P7 to Panto in Arbroath
	20	Term 2 Ends—dress as you please & 3pm finish for everyone
January	6	Term 3 Starts for all pupils
February	13	In Service Day—school closed to pupils
	14	Mid Term— school closed
	17	Mid Term—school closed
April	4	Term 3 Ends
	22	Term 4 starts for all pupils
May	5	May Holiday—School Closed
	26	In Service Day—School closed to pupils
June	27	Term 3 Ends