

Brydekirk Primary School Newsletter

February 2017

School Improvement

Education Scotland has produced "Benchmarks" in draft form which Education Minister John Swinney is expected to publish in March 2017. Benchmarks for Literacy and Numeracy are expected first and teachers' unions are in discussion about the timing of the release of benchmarks for all other curricular areas.

Teachers in our school are currently using the draft benchmarks for Numeracy and Maths to plan assessments and gauge whether a pupil has achieved a level. Generally, most children will achieve Early Level by the end of P1, First Level by the end of P4 and Second Level by the end of P7.

The Inservice Training events in February will help familiarise staff with the use of benchmarks. An information evening for parents is planned for next term and we hope to provide parents with an understanding of the benchmarks as well as demonstrate some examples of learning and teaching within Mathematics.

A workshop for parents explaining synthetic phonics will be delivered by Miss Primrose on 28th February 2017 at 6.30pm in school. The target audience for this workshop is parents and carers of pupils in primary 1,2 and 3.

An Information Evening about Learning Journals is planned for Thursday 23rd February at 6pm in school. Parents and carers are invited to hear about the exciting project we will be trialing soon and to share views on the possible uses of an online resource for sharing your child's progress.

Safeguarding procedures have been updated and HMle expectations have been revised. We aim to have an information board for parents displayed in school very soon.

Celebration of Learning

A celebration of learning is an open invitation to parents, carers and grandparents to join the children in school as they showcase some of the key learning which has taken place during the term. This can include songs, readings and performances.

Brydekirk Primary School - Tuesday 28th March 1.45pm in the school hall

Mr McIntyre's P7 Challenge

I have always appreciated how our senior pupils assume additional responsibilities and contribute so effectively to the running of school life. In a short time they will become the "little ones" again as they enter S1 but as primary school teachers we have such high expectations. Mr McIntyre's P7 Challenge has been designed to build on this sense of independence and responsibility by inviting P7s to face some big challenges that will become lasting memories of their time in primary school.

The first P7 Challenge is to climb Criffel. On Wednesday 22nd February a bus will take the P7s from both St. Columba's and Brydekirk to the bottom of the hill where Outdoor Education staff will greet our group and lead the walk. We will be joined by Ling, who takes our after school sports club and also by Sandra Proudfoot, Active Schools Coordinator. Letters and medical forms will be sent out nearer the time.

The second challenge will be Mountain Biking for a day. Again, Outdoor Education Instructors will lead the session but in preparation for this challenge, Katie Robison, iBike Officer, will lead a couple of skills sessions within school grounds.

I am currently trying to organise a day of watersports for June - Challenge 3.

Cycle Friendly School

We aim to participate in this year's Big Pedal as part of our drive to have more children cycling to school. The Big Pedal is a National Event and begins 20th March for two weeks. During this period we will run a number of cycle and scooter related activities.

On Thursday 23rd March, Katie Robison will be back in school to lead a cycle skills session for children in Primaries 3,4 and 5. On this same day, from 3.10pm until 4.30pm Katie will run a session for parents and children known as "Ditch the Stabilisers". This is open to families from St. Columba's and Brydekirk. It will take place in the grounds of Brydekirk Primary.

On Friday 24th March a special skills event will be held for Primary 7 cyclists. This session is leading towards a Mountain Biking session later in April with the Outdoor Education team. Again this forms part of the P7 Challenge.

Brydekirk Tuesday 28th March

For those children who come to school with a bike, we will be offering a "cyclist's breakfast" from 8.30am onwards. Later that same day, children will take part in a puncture repair workshop.

Meeting Room and Head Teacher's Office

A temporary workspace was created at the back of the GP hall when I began in August. Architects drawings and costs are now available so that we can consider two options. The current screens are only temporary and a discrete conference space is required. However, the cost of any work to be undertaken exceeds school budgets and careful consideration of what we can afford to do should involve all staff and our Parent Council.

At the next Parent Council meeting the proposals will be discussed. This meeting is arranged for Tuesday 7th February 6.30pm.

Lockerbie Manor

Pupils, staff and parents were invited to an information evening regarding the residential trip to Lockerbie Manor, 8th to 10th February. For those families who did not attend, please note the 1.30pm finish time on Friday 10th. The children should be collected from the front car park of Lockerbie Manor at this time.

What to take, the groups and the activity programme are available upon request. Teachers will be sharing this in class over the next few days.

K'Nex Challenge

This cluster competition runs in conjunction with Glasgow Science Festival's Young Engineers Project. Two pupils will be selected from our school to compete in a cluster final on Thursday 23rd March at Newington Primary. Newington hosts as they were last year's winners. Parents are

welcome to spectate and the selected pupils will receive more information nearer the time. Pupils will be selected from P5 or P6.

Football Success

It was the first appearance of our new football strips at the Sands Centre 5-a-side competition on Saturday 28th January. Our team played exceptionally well and topped the group. In the quarter finals we won convincingly (7-0) with outstanding performances from every player. Then in the semi-final we were narrowly beaten by a single goal.

Our girls' team will compete in this same 5-a-side competition on Saturday 4th February. Players should meet me at 8.50am main entrance. Please note that I have a family celebration at 1pm and if the girls make it to the finals, parents will be expected to supervise their own child(ren).

Free School Meals

Government funding is being targeted at closing the attainment gap. A number of things are considered when funding is allocated to a school including Free Meal Entitlement. It is important that any child entitled to Free School Meals has registered this with the school even if the child has a packed lunch. The funding is said to be around £1,200 per pupil in each school. This is a significant funding boost to schools and if families do not register we miss out.

You can claim free school lunches for your children if you are receiving:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit, and your income is less than £16,105
- Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and your income is under £6,420
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit

Robert Burns

Following on from our Scots Night in the village hall, two pupils represented our school at the Solway Burns Club annual Burns Supper on Friday 27th January. This was an excellent evening and the recitations from the children were fabulous.

Our cluster Scots Language Contest will be held in Elmvale Primary School on Monday 6th February. Pupils have been learning Scots language, reciting poems and singing songs over the last few weeks. Two pupils will be entered into the cluster final. Parents are welcome to spectate from 9.30am onwards.

Other News

At the beginning of March our senior pupils will have the annual Fire Safety talk in school. This is delivered by Community Fire Safety Officers. Often, children go home after such an event with lots

of information and a plan to check smoke alarms and discuss the family fire safety plan. Please channel this enthusiasm and use it to check your safety measures.

Curling Wednesday 8th March

Rotary quiz Thursday 9th March 4pm at Elmvale

Cross country 15th March at Lochmaben 9am arrival time

February holiday Monday 13th, inservice training for staff 14th and 15th Pupils return 16th

Spring holiday begins Monday 3rd April to Monday 17th April.

Basketball 21st February 3.45pm – 5.30pm at Lockerbie Academy