

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

I can't quite believe we have reached the October break already. The children have had a very settled start to the new academic session and I wish to express sincere thanks for the warm welcome I have received over the last couple of months.

Meet the Teacher

We are delighted that Meet the Teacher on Thursday 31st August was well attended and we hope that you found the session(s) worthwhile. As you know, we asked for parental feedback to support us in planning future events of a similar nature. A response was submitted for 17 pupils. An overview of feedback is provided below.

How helpful did you find tonight's session? **Average response of 8.89/10**
How helpful did you find Meet the Head Teacher? **Average response of 8.8/10**

Most beneficial aspects

- Very informative
- Seeing the learning environment
- Insight into the daily timetable
- Meeting the teacher
- Overview of curriculum/class topics
- Information about homework
- Explanation of teaching approaches

Suggestions

- More detail on each subject area
- Guidance on online platforms
- Seeing some examples of classwork



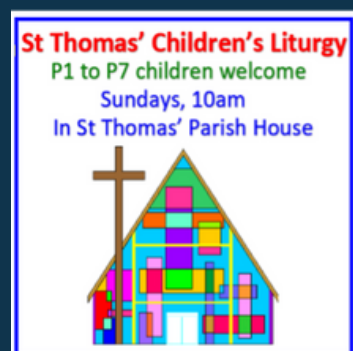
Religious Education

Class Masses and First Friday Mass

It has been wonderful to invite parents and family members to our Primary 6 and Primary 7 Class Masses during September and October. We look forward to celebrating the Primary 5 Class Mass on 9th November. Likewise, we have enjoyed First Friday Masses at the church with Primary 5 attending in September and Primary 4 in October for the Mass for the Missions. As October is also Mission Month, we encourage the children to consider how they can be missionaries and spread the Good News in their own lives.

St. Thomas' Parish Children's Liturgy

We continue to support our parish Children's Liturgy Group by encouraging our pupils to attend. Please take your children along if you can.



Primary 7 Mass for Confirmandi - St Mirin's Cathedral

On Thursday 14th September, our Primary 7 children joined Primary 7 pupils from other schools in the Diocese at St Mirin's Cathedral, Paisley, for the annual Vocations Mass which was celebrated by Bishop John Keenan. The Mass began the children's journey of preparation for their Mass of Commitment in December, before receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation in April.

All Saints Day

Wednesday 1st November is All Saints Day and is a holy day of obligation. All classes in the school will walk over to St Thomas' church to celebrate Mass together at 10am. Parents/carers and family members are welcome to join us.



October, Month of the Holy Rosary

October is one of the months dedicated to the Holy Rosary. Paisley Diocese provides guidance on sharing the Mysteries of the Rosary with our pupils as follows:

- Primary 2 - The Joyful Mysteries
- Primary 3 - The Sorrowful Mysteries
- Primary 4 - The Glorious Mysteries
- Primary 5 - The Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries
- Primary 6 - The Luminous Mysteries
- Primary 7 - All

Our lunchtime Rosary Group meets during the month of October on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. It is a very popular group with many children wishing to spend time praying together. We use these prayers to pray for all those in need and for peace in the world.

Archbishop Tartaglia Football Tournament

Some of our Primary 6 and 7 pupils had a great day at the Archbishop Tartaglia Football Tournament on Sunday 1st October. They were excellent ambassadors for our school and we are very proud of them. Thank you to all parents/carers who attended and supported throughout the day. A special thank you is extended to Neil Guy and Paul Lappin for helping to coach the children.



World Mental Health Day

On Tuesday 10th October, we were raising awareness of the importance of looking after our mental wellbeing through celebrating 'World Mental Health Day.' The theme this year was 'mental health is a universal human right.' Throughout the day, children took part in activities which supported them to discuss their rights and to learn strategies to support their mental wellbeing.

The article we focused on across the school was Article 24: 'Every child has the right to the best possible health care.' In class, children discussed what this article meant and how this applied to mental health. They spoke about the health care support that exists for them if they are struggling with their mental health and how they can access this. They also learned some strategies to support their mental health such as mediation, listening to music, talking to an adult, taking part in physical exercise, playing with friends and mindfulness activities.

The younger children read the book 'The Colour Monster.' They discussed their emotions and strategies to help them to cope when they feel sad, angry or nervous. Primary 6 and 7 took part in a 'Tea and Talk' morning. They had a 'cuppa' and took part in a discussion about mental health in order to help minimise the stigma around it. Here are a few pictures of children taking part in activities throughout the day.



The House System

We have had a great start to the House System this session. To start their campaign to become House Captains, Primary 7 explained the different reasons why they felt they would be suitable and created posters to display around the school. They independently created and delivered PowerPoints to the whole school at assembly. All children then voted for the successful candidates. Well done to all who were involved; everyone showed lots of bravery and resilience throughout! The newly appointed Captains and Vice-Captains are hard at work thinking about different events and competitions for the year ahead and are looking through our suggestion box to see what ideas the classes have come up with too.

New House Badges

Miss Palmer held a whole-school competition to design new badges for each house. Here are the winning entries:

St Andrew



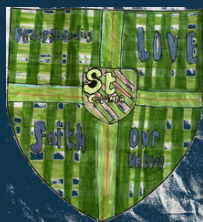
Designed by Sara, Primary 3

St Oda



Designed by Joseph, Primary 4

St Columba



Designed by Caila, Primary 6

St Margaret



Designed by Flynn, Primary 7



Meet the House Captains and Vice-Captains



After a close whole-school vote following impressive presentations, we are delighted to share the successful House Captains and Vice-Captains for Session 2023-2024.



St Andrew

Captain Vice-Captain



St Oda

Captain Vice-Captain



St Columba

Captain Vice-Captain



St Margaret

Captain Vice-Captain

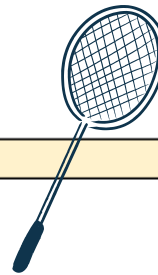
I am sure they will be excellent role models and will rise to the challenges ahead. Well done everyone!



Extra-Curricular Activities

Our after school activity programme will begin after the October holiday. All of our clubs are free and are provided by class teachers. All age groups will be given the opportunity to attend a club at some point across the school year. To sign up for a club, please fill out this FORM by Friday 20th October. There are a limited number of spaces available and these will be allocated equitably. Confirmation of a place for clubs will be sent to you via email on Tuesday 24th October.

Time	Activity	Open to	Dates
Monday			
3.05pm-4.00pm	Homework Club Miss Black	P4-7	6 th Nov, 13 th Nov, 20 th Nov, 27 th Nov, 4 th Dec
Monday			
3.05pm-4.00pm	Stay and Read Club (Parents welcome to come along) Mrs Eagers-Hardie	P1-3	30 th October, 6 th Nov, 13 th Nov, 20 th Nov, 27 th Nov. 4 th Dec.
Thursday			
3.05pm-4.00pm	Badminton Club Miss Leeson	P6-7	26 th Oct, 2 nd Nov, 9 th Nov, 16 th Nov, 23 rd Nov, 30 th Nov



ERC PE Code of Practice

The ERC Code of Practice for PE states that no items of jewellery, including earrings, can be worn during PE lessons. This is to avoid the increased risk of items becoming caught on clothing or equipment and causing injury to the wearer or to a fellow participant.



Taping of jewellery is not permitted as it can create a perception of safety but can easily come off, therefore not reducing the risk of a compression injury.

Any pupil who is unable to remove an item of jewellery by themselves should be discouraged from wearing it to school.

Attendance and Late-Coming

As I am sure you will agree, your child's regular attendance at school is extremely important. Below is an indication of the correlation between the number of days missed and attendance percentages for each child. Target attendance for each child is 96%.

Number of days missed	Attendance Percentage
0	100%
10	95%
19	90%
29	85%
38	80%
47	75%



We understand that personal circumstances can result in poor attendance or regular late-coming and we are sympathetic to this. If this is the case, please don't hesitate to contact us and we will work together with you in the best interest of your child.

Since our return in August there has been an increase in the number of children going on holiday during term time. Whilst I appreciate that there can be extenuating circumstances that contribute to the decision to remove children from school, I ask that you are mindful of the length of holiday and the regularity of removing your child(ren) for this reason.

Attendance Protocols

If your child will not be attending school, it is imperative that you notify the school office at the beginning of the day. If we do not hear from you, and cannot make contact with you, it may be necessary to conduct a home visit to check that your child is safe.

Monthly analysis of attendance data leads to the identification of any child(ren) whose attendance falls below 90%. In this instance, **Attendance Letter 1** will be issued. This letter requests that contact is made with the school in order to discuss the reasons for absence and any supports that can be put in place for attendance to increase.

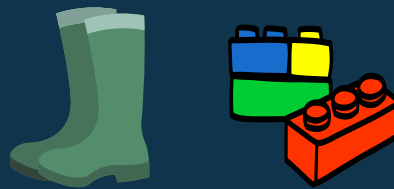
If there is no improvement, **Attendance Letter 2** will be issued. This includes a request for a face-to-face meeting to discuss measures that can be put in place.

Failing any progress following Steps 1 and 2, an individual support plan may need to be put in place. At every step, your child's wellbeing and education are at the heart of all dialogue and subsequent actions.

Sustainability

Pupils across the school regularly participate in outdoor learning sessions and we would therefore be grateful to receive donations of any spare wellies or waterproofs that are no longer required. Thank you to those of you who have already made donations this term - it is greatly appreciated.

We also use Lego in school for various STEM activities and wouldn't refuse donations of any Lego that is no longer used at home!



Take, Swap, Donate Uniform Bank

As Laudato Si' Ambassadors, our pupils continue to show their commitment to help the environment, and in particular, to promote 'Simple Lifestyles'. We shall once again be setting up our 'Pre-loved Uniform Stall' which will be made available to parents on the last Thursday of each month in the playground from 2.45pm, just before school pick up. Our P7 Laudato Si' Ambassadors will be overseeing this. A selection of pre-loved school uniforms, fancy dress costumes and Christmas jumpers will be available to take and/or swap. We are always looking for items in good condition, so please hand them in to the school office or bring them along to our clothes deposit box at the stall.

Dates
Thursday 30 th November
Thursday 21 st December
Thursday 25 th January
Thursday 29 th February
Thursday 28 th March
Thursday 30 th May
Thursday 20 th June



Reading Schools

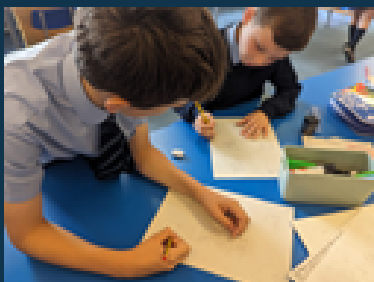


Research proves that reading is central in supporting wellbeing, positively impacting learners' attainment across the curriculum, critical thinking, creativity, empathy and resilience. We are committed to building a reading culture within St Thomas' and last year achieved our Core Reading School accreditation. We are hoping to build on this as we work towards the Reading Schools Silver accreditation. We were delighted to welcome Author Martin Stewart to P5-7 on Tuesday 10th October and are looking forward to our 'Read Together' after school club for parents and children which will run after the October break. This is a chance for parents and guardians to spend time reading with their child in a supportive and nurturing environment.



Rights Respecting Schools

This year, we are working towards achieving the GOLD Rights Respecting Schools award. The RRS Committee, Mrs Kearney and Mrs Fulton have been working very hard to create ideas and plans that involve our whole school community. Each class has agreed articles that are important to them to help create their Class Charters and the RRS Committee are using these articles to design a whole school charter displaying the rights we feel are most celebrated in St. Thomas'. Each class will also be assigned an 'Article of the Week' to help them further their understanding as well as showcasing their learning of this at Assembly. St. Thomas' will also be participating in several fundraising and campaigning events to help promote our Right Respecting journey. We hope to encourage involvement from our parents, families and the Neilston community. Please look out for future correspondence on this!



CLASS NEWS

Class updates focus on Literacy

Primary 1

Primary 1 have had a fabulous start to their literacy learning - from learning new sounds in phonics, to creating their own story endings using their prediction skills. In phonics, P1 love to sing their sounds and have been learning how to blend sounds together to create words by 'chewing out the word.' P1 like practising their independent writing through creating cards for family members. They have also enjoyed using imagination in writing and have explored how to make a prediction of a story's ending using context clues and their prior knowledge. They have also been exploring how to retell stories through story maps. It has been fantastic to see their creativity flourish through writing. They love learning about characterisation and sequencing of stories as well as investigating what makes a story engaging and fun to tell and to listen to. We are so excited to continue to expand our knowledge in literacy and can't wait to become more independent learners as our confidence grows.



CLASS NEWS

Class updates focus on Literacy

• Primary 2 •

Primary 2 have been working very hard on our fluency and expression within reading and have really enjoyed our carousel tasks. We have continued using the StoryWorld resource and have been developing our skills in comprehension and grammar based on these books. In grammar, we have been working on sentence building by ensuring we use capital letters and full stops. WAGOLLS and WABOLLS have been helping us to identify where we have been successful and where we can improve. Primary 2 have shown great interest in creating our own books. We have included this in our creative writing. The children have been very engaged and led this task independently. We have also really enjoyed sharing our creative texts with each other. These have linked to our Term 1 topic - Round the World.



CLASS NEWS

Class updates focus on Literacy

Primary 3

The new school year has witnessed Primary 3 continue to develop their literacy skills in grammar, reading and comprehension, spelling and writing. Our reading fluency has been developed by undertaking Reciprocal Reading tasks and reading together through the choral strategy. We have continued accessing the school resource, StoryWorld, in class and this has formed the basis for some of our reading comprehension. In grammar, we have concentrated on sentence building and punctuation, specifically broadening our understanding of the constituents of a sentence and what represents a 'good' sentence. During writing focused lessons, the children have been learning how to create narrative writing pieces with a focus on setting, alongside developing their understanding of functional writing. The children have thoroughly enjoyed listening to our Class text, 'The Ancient Egypt Sleepover' which is linked to our IDL Topic, Ancient Egypt.



CLASS NEWS

Class updates focus on Literacy

• Primary 4 •

This term, Primary 4 have been developing our understanding of narrative writing and have been exploring some exciting figurative language techniques. We have worked hard to create exciting character and setting descriptions and are building on our understanding of story mapping. We have worked in reciprocal groups to explore our reading skills including clarifying, summarising, questioning and predicting to help us to demonstrate our understanding of unfamiliar texts. Through our IDL topic, we have been able to record information in a variety of different ways and have been able to use an atlas to pinpoint key facts. We are continuing to build on our dictionary skills and alphabetical order as part of our grammar focus.



CLASS NEWS

Class updates focus on Literacy

• Primary 5 •

This term, Primary 5 have been focusing on reading skills including Inference, questioning, clarifying and summarising. We have worked in co-operative learning groups to apply these reading skills before, during and after we read to help make the meaning of a text clear. We have been excellent literacy detectives and inferred meaning from a range of short films. We have been inquisitive interviewers when creating open and closed questions to question a fictional character. Primary 5 have also been developing our descriptive language through narrative writing. We have used adjectives and similes to describe contrasting fictional characters. Our detailed descriptions have allowed us to visualise our learning partner's characters so well that we have been able to produce excellent drawings of them. We have explored the five senses and used these to describe a variety of settings including the interior of the magnificent Titanic - our new IDL topic. In grammar we have been focusing on antonyms and synonyms to further develop our vocabulary for use in writing.

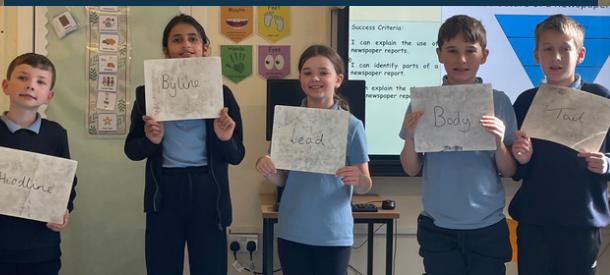


CLASS NEWS

Class updates focus on Literacy

Primary 6

Primary 6 have been developing our reading and comprehension skills through group reading sessions and our class novel 'Wonder.' We have carried out a variety of activities to develop our questioning, clarifying, predicting, summarising and visualising skills. We have explored how the text relates to ourselves, other texts and the wider world. During reading and writing sessions, we have made links to our grammar focuses for the term: parts of speech, verb tenses and simple and continuous tenses. Primary 6 have been developing our descriptive language through narrative writing. We created a text using our senses to describe the spookiest place we could imagine and have written character descriptions based on characters from fictional movies. We have made excellent use of adjectives, metaphors, similes, onomatopoeia and alliteration to make our writing more attractive to the reader. Primary 6 have created a 'debate of the week' folder which we will use to spark discussion and demonstrate our debating skills.



CLASS NEWS

Class updates focus on Literacy

Primary 7

Primary 7 have been focusing on reciprocal reading strategies during reading: making predictions, clarifying unfamiliar words (using context clues), creating inferential and literal questions and writing short summaries using only the key events of the story. Last week, we furthered our understanding of texts through learning about word choice. Primary 7 have since challenged ourselves by rephrasing what the author has written. Collectively, we changed 'twisted wreck' to 'broken mess' and 'drove at a deadly pace' to 'raced at a dangerously high speed.' During writing time, P7 have been focusing on the features of 'DADWAVERS' (Description, Action, Dialogue, Where, Adverb, Verb, Estimation of Time, Rhetorical Question and Similes, Metaphors, Exclamation Marks & Onomatopoeia) when completing writing activities. Recently, we were given a short text to read and were then challenged to highlight all of the features mentioned above. These skills have helped us to improve our writing and overall attention to detail.





Winter Emergency School Closure



During severe winter weather, schools and services can be affected for a variety of reasons, such as those noted below:

- **The access road is not on a priority or severe weather route and is therefore untreated**
- **Insufficient staff are able to reach their place of work to maintain minimum ratios**
- **Pupils are unable to reach school safely**
- **School buses stop operating and public transport is severely disrupted**
- **Problems with the heating supply**
- **Water supply is compromised resulting in disruption to sanitation services and**
- **Access routes around the establishment are considered hazardous or are blocked by snow and ice**

Whilst every effort is made to keep schools open, there may be occasions when emergencies make it necessary for pupils to be sent home prematurely. The decision to close a school rests with the Director of Education and parents will be notified through our school website and via email and text message. Please ensure all contact details are up to date. For those of you who live or work some distance away it would be beneficial, where possible, to have a contact close to the school for situations such as heavy snow fall.



• Parent Council •

Huge thanks to all the parents/carers and members of the local community who came along to support and vote for us at the recent Nicer Neilston event in the Glen Halls. It was great to see so much support for our school. We were delighted to win our full amount of £2696.91 to purchase Outdoor and Road Safety equipment for the children to enjoy. Great news! We will keep you posted when we are able to start ordering the new resources. We have our Halloween disco coming up on 26th October for all children. Thanks for the fantastic response for parent helpers on our Facebook page. We aren't able to hold events without volunteers so your help is always hugely appreciated! If you aren't already on our Facebook page then just drop Karen Lappin or Nicola Cameron a message and we'll get you added in.



Office Bearers

Chairs: Karen Lappin, Nicola Cameron

Vice-Chair: Caroline Morrison

Secretary: Janice MacKenzie

Treasurer: Karen Lappin

Thank You

A note of thanks is owed to all parents and carers for your ongoing support of the school in the many forms that takes.

School Improvement Plan

Here is an outline of the areas of focus within our School Improvement Plan this session



How Good is Our School?

Leadership and Management

Smooth and coherent transition from current establishment to new shared learning campus

Positive experience for learners, staff, parents and partners

Increased confidence and consistency in teacher Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) judgements

Effective use of data analysis to assist with the identification of next steps in learning and teaching

We Value Love, Faith and Understanding

How Good is Our School?

Learning Provision

consistency in learning and teaching practice across the school community

Focus on the development of Playful Pedagogy to enhance and extend learning experiences

Stretch aims linked to raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

Shared understanding of standards and expectations in meeting learners' needs across the school community

We Value Love, Faith and Understanding

How Good is Our School?

Successes and Achievements

Maintenance and upholding of our Catholic Identity as we transition to our new learning environment

Increased awareness of the role of prayer and worship within daily practice

Bespoke health and wellbeing provision for identified learners through staff, parent and learner consultation

Advance towards the Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award

We Value Love, Faith and Understanding

How Good is Our School?

Ensuring Equality, Wellbeing and Inclusion

Introduce Individual Pupil Profiles to support identification of appropriate interventions before progressing to mapping progress over time

Increase attendance for identified learners to ensure it stays above 90%

Track progress within Literacy and increase attainment by 5%

We Value Love, Faith and Understanding

I wish you all a lovely October break with your families. A reminder that Monday 23rd October is an In-service Day. We look forward to welcoming the children back to school on Tuesday 24th October.

Kind Regards,
Marie Kane
Head Teacher