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MASTERTON NEWS

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Well, that's the term nearly finished. It has just flown past! One minute we were just back after the Summer Holidays and now it's October. I've begun to measure time using the houses being built next to us. It is amazing how quickly they are going up. I used to joke with some of the kids that when the ball is kicked over the fence it won't be in the field any more it will be in someone's garden. I think that 'joke' will become true before the end of this session.

In the School

As usual we have a snapshot of some of the things each class has been doing this term.

My thanks to Ella Gracie and Niamh Harrower (both P7a) for writing the next part of this newsletter.



P1a have been learning about how to be a good friend and how to respect each other. In Maths they have learnt how to order numbers from 1-10 and are also using sounds to read and build words.

P1b's topic is "People Who Help Us". They have learned about Doctors, Fire-Fighters, Nurses and even people who might be in their family. They also had a visit from an Ambulance Technician. They have been learning numbers from one to ten and how to subtract and add from 10. They are also learning their sounds.

P1/2 have been working hard learning their sounds and blending them to make words. Primary 2 have also been working hard on their common words and new spelling rules with words that start with 'sl'.

In numeracy they have been learning to identify and show the value of a number in various ways. The Primary 2's have been learning to partition a number into tens and ones and how to use think boards to share the value of a number.

The class have also been learning how to complete some of their classroom routines using French phrases.

P2a have been working on partitioning numbers as well as learning about 2D and 3D shapes. They have also been very busy making friends for Barry (their imaginary friend) and also writing a story about him too. Their topic is the "Senses" and they have done a lot of work on "Sound and Hearing". This has involved lots of time listening to different sounds especially in the music room.

P2b have been learning about their "Senses" and about "Friendships". They have also been learning about numberwork specifically counting in tens. They have learned how to bond different numbers in their work. In PE they have been practising racquet skills in both tennis and badminton.

P3a have been learning how to touch type in I.C.T. Their topic is "Castles". They are learning about the different types of castles. They have also been learning about fact and opinions. In Maths they have learned about 3D shapes as well as doing vertical sums. In P.E they have been doing tennis and badminton.

P3b have been learning about Scottish castles. They have also been bonding numbers in their Maths. Also, they have been working on how to get a growth mindset and learning how to order numbers in the correct way.

P3/4 have been learning about "Micro-organisms" in experiments. For their writing they have been learning how to use descriptive writing based on their novel. In French they have been learning about greetings and numbers.

P4 have been working on their art using different charcoals. In Maths they have been learning the greater and less than symbols. In PE they have been doing football and basketball. Their topic this term is Earth and Space.



In the School (cont'd)

P5 have been learning lots about their writing. They have been using lots of WOW words and VCOP. They have also been learning about "Natural Disasters" such as earthquakes and volcanoes.

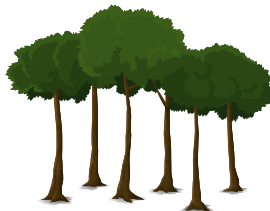
P5/6 have been learning about "Our Dynamic Earth" including natural features such as volcanoes, earthquakes and more. In Maths they have been learning how to measure. Their reading book is 'Red Fever'. They have been learning about addition and subtraction too as well as learning how to be safe on the internet.

P6 have also been learning about "Our Dynamic Earth" and "Natural Events". They have also been learning to tell the time in all its different ways including digital and analogue. Once a week they have also been helping P2 with their reading. They've enjoyed reading their class novel 'Red Fever'.

P7a have been learning about "World War II" as well as the "Battle of Britain". They have also been making identity cards. As part of the music curriculum they have been learning how to play the ukulele. They also enjoyed Ardroy and learned how to tie different kinds of knots.



P7b have had lots of fun at Ardroy carrying out lots of different activities such as the Splosh, Jacobs Ladder and Abseiling. People who did not get to Ardroy were very busy too - planting, making marble runs, cooking and going to the forest.



Ardroy

As noted above P7 recently attended a field week at Ardroy Outdoor Education centre and had a great time. Ardroy is a great place for outdoor learning and for the pupils to really thrive in a completely different environment. It is one of these things which they will remember after they have left school. They may not remember that great maths lesson but they will remember the time they spent at Ardroy.

My thanks to Mrs Saxton, Mr Tollick, Mrs Robinson and Mrs Mitchell who attended the centre. Without them volunteering we would be unable to send the pupils to Ardroy. A special thank you to Mrs Saxton for doing all the preparation so thoroughly. This is something extra along with her normal day to day job of running half the school.

SHARED START

Other Activities

We had our first Shared Start since 2020 this month. It was undoubtedly the busiest we have ever had. Just before it started I walked down the corridor and looked out the window. The queue was right around the building from the front door and ended up in the infant playground.

I was quite taken aback at how many people had turned up. However, it was really fantastic to see so many people in the building visiting classes. I think it is important that parents have these opportunities even just to see what the classroom looks like and it was something which was seriously missing during Covid.

P7 had a visit from Barnardo's focussing upon drugs education. Barnardo's have done this every year for a number of years and provide a strong educational programme.

P6 had a visit from the police to learn about 'Internet Safety'. Internet safety is one of these areas which becomes more and more important every year. Although I consider myself relatively up to date with most internet related developments, things move on so quickly that it is necessary to keep up to date on what is going on in order to keep everyone safe.

Attendance

All schools in Fife have been asked to have a big focus upon attendance this session. Attendance has dropped over the last couple of years, undoubtedly due to Covid, and now that things are in a much better place we need to try to get our attendance back to where it was.

Last session pupil attendance was 94%. This was down from 97% the previous session. However, with so many pupils absent with Covid from November '21 through to around March '22 then it is easy to understand why there was a fall. Many schools across Fife had a much more substantial fall in attendance than us but nevertheless we want to ensure that pupils are at school as much as possible.

With regards to attendance I check in with the office every day and look at the absences.

Usually there are very few but sometimes, when for example a bug is in the school, you can see numbers rising sometimes across the school or sometimes concentrated in one or two classes. Even though we are looking to improve our attendance if pupils are ill then they should not be at school.

With regards to term time holidays these should be avoided where possible as they will almost always be recorded as 'Unauthorised'. There are some exceptions to this which are; Police, Armed Forces, Coastguard and Fire-Fighters - but generally they are unauthorised.

Finally, what I would say is that our attendance is very good and so I appreciate the effort that parents make in getting their children to school. Fingers crossed we get through a normal year and pupils attend school as much as possible.

House Captains

As is usual at this time of year we had our House Captain elections. The criteria set out were very strict with the focus being upon the message and what the House Captains could offer in their roles. All pupils who entered spoke very well and with conviction making it an exceptionally difficult choice for the pupils who voted to choose their House Captains.

Congratulations to our new House Captains and Vice Captains!

Wallace

House Captain - Poppy Turnbull
Vice-Captain - Cameron Steele

Carnegie

House Captain - Izzy Breach
Vice-Captain - Christopher Masson

Canmore

House Captain - Macey Conner
Vice-Captain - Ellie Barnett

Bruce

House Captain - Ruby Murphy
Vice-Captain - Lucy Final



School Improvement Plan 2022 2023 / Standards and Quality Report 2021 2022

Every year we have to produce a School Improvement Plan outlining the priorities for the school. Our School Improvement Plan is now on our website and available for everyone to see. I try to update the plan as we progress throughout the year. I have outlined a summary of areas below which we intend to tackle this year.

1+2 Modern Languages: This is a national priority. Currently we teach French at all stages across the school. During the year we will introduce some Spanish from P5 upwards. All schools in the Dunfermline High School cluster are doing both languages. So far this session we have updated our French plans and vocabulary lists and have an overview of learning from P1 to P7. Staff have also been attending training courses. Our next step is to do the same with Spanish although that will run from P5 upwards. We are linking closely with Dunfermline High School languages department to ensure that all the work we do links in with their Modern Languages Curriculum.

ICT: Digital School Award – Prior to the advent of Covid we had carried out a lot of work towards the Digital Schools Award Scotland. This is an award which demonstrates a high level of competence in the use of ICT across the school. There is also now an award linked to this called The Digital Wellbeing Awards for Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety. Both awards are externally verified. We are hoping to continue our development of ICT across the school and be able to apply for this award during the session. Although we do have good programmes in place and a high level of skill we need to ensure that this is in place at all stages across the school.

Learning and Teaching – Over the last 3 years we have carried out a huge amount of work into improving the standard of learning and teaching across the school. During this time, we have researched different teaching styles, tried out different techniques and ended up creating a profiling format to record ways in which pupils learn. This session we are aiming to update our learning and teaching policy bringing the work of the last 3 years together.

Using data to improve learning and teaching across the school – Over the last few years schools have become more data rich places. We are constantly receiving a wide and complex amount of information which can really help us to understand the pupils in the school and how we can help them learn. We are looking at spending some time looking more closely at this information to see what it tells us and how this impacts the pupils in the school. As an example of this 20% of the pupils at Masterton may have a second language apart from English spoken at home. This is a significant piece of information which can impact upon how pupils learn. There are many other pieces of information, like the link between attendance and attainment, which we will analyse and use to develop our learning and teaching in our growing catchment.

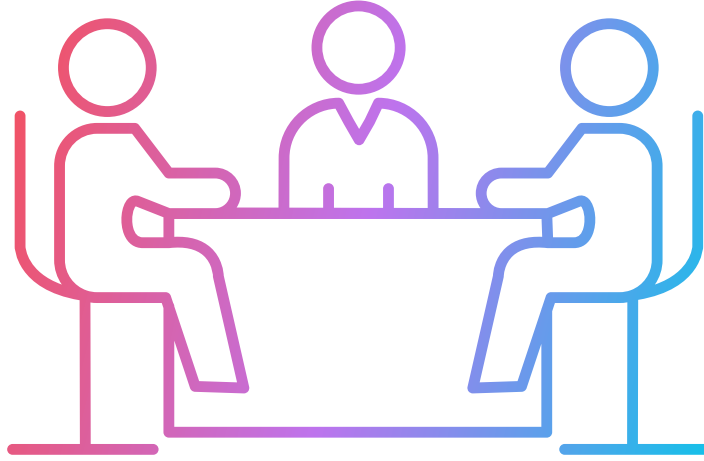
Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) – We receive £17,000 funding from the Scottish Government to help reduce the poverty gap. Whilst £17,000 is a fraction of the school budget we always look to spend it wisely. We have focussed upon improving writing across the school as our attainment in numeracy and reading is always better than writing. We are currently employing Mrs Simpson one day a week to focus upon writing. We were also given some additional budget so Miss Roy is also focussing upon writing two days a week. We will be looking at the progress made so far after the October holidays and making alterations as appropriate. It is also hoped that we will be able to employ another PSA (Pupil Support Assistant) to help in this area.

Whilst these areas outlined are our priorities, we have other areas we are currently looking at. We are looking to update our reading scheme and a number of teachers have been out visiting other schools to see what they use as well as hearing their thoughts. Whilst there is nothing fundamentally wrong with our current scheme (apart from being unable to get new copies of reading books as they are mostly out of print) it is time for a refresh. It's one of these things which we have to get right as it is costly (around £10,000 – £12,000) and will be in the school for the next 10 – 15 years.

The Standards and Quality Report 2021 2022 is also on the website. This summarises the work we carried out last session and the outcomes from it. Both can be found under the Learning and Teaching bar at the top of the website.

Parent Council

The AGM for the Parent Council takes place on **Tuesday 25th October at 6.30 pm** in the drama hall. As it is the AGM all parents are invited to take part. The meeting will begin with normal business before proceeding onto the AGM part.



PARENT COUNCIL AGM

And finally.....

As this term draws to a close and the October Holidays approach I would like to thank everyone for their support this term. It's been a really positive term with us being able to get back to most of the normal things which we do as a school. I hope it stays this way and we can continue like this.

Enjoy the holidays and I look forward to seeing everyone back on Monday 24th October.

Regards

S Humphries
Headmaster

HAPPY
Holidays

