



Community Connections

Issue 1/20, 26th August 2021

Hello from Mrs Gillespie

Hello – and welcome to session 2021/22! The children and staff are all excited to be back in the building together and are ready for a year of learning, challenge and fun!

I hope that you all managed to have time to rest and enjoy the summer. I did – and feel so much better for it. The highlight was definitely the birth of our grandson, Oliver Clyde Gillespie, who arrived a little bit earlier than expected on 10th July. Now I admit that I am biased, but he is gorgeous and this Grandma is already smitten! Now we are just waiting for the USA borders to open for non-essential travel so that we can meet him in person – I hope that is soon.



As I look at him, I wonder what his future holds. What skills and talents will he develop? What will he be interested in? What will he feel passionate about? How will he make an impact in his world? What will be challenging for him? What will make him smile? The list of questions is almost endless. He is a beautiful little bundle of as yet unknown potential.

Michelangelo attempted 44 sculptures in his lifetime. He completed only 14. Those he didn't complete are intriguing - one chunk of marble has an elbow sculpted out of the stone and that is it. Another has a thigh, another a foot. The rest of the sculpture is locked inside the marble, potential unrealised.

This new school session is, like Ollie and like Michelangelo's unfinished sculptures, full of potential. I look forward to us all working together to ensure we realise that potential in the coming school year.

Exciting days ahead!

Alison Gillespie

Get to know our staff...

Miss Stephanie McCreadie, Teacher



What I am grateful for

I'm grateful for my family and friends - I am lucky to have so many special people in my life!

Interests

I love to read and go swimming (although I don't do either as much as I'd like to)

Favourite Food

My favourite food is all things spicy, especially Nando's chicken!

Places to Visit

My favourite cities are Barcelona and Venice. I'd love to visit Santorini and Rome.

What I'm learning

I have recently finished a masters module based on improving classroom practice. I am looking forward to learning more about play pedagogy this year.

What I'm watching

I have just finished Your Honor and I'm now on the hunt for a new TV series to start.

Something quirky about me

I lived in Manchester for the majority of my childhood. I moved back to Scotland when I was 14.

Whole School Matters...

School Staffing

We are pleased to inform you that Mrs Julie Carswell has been successful in obtaining a secondment to the local authority as a Coaching and Modelling Officer, with a focus on Play Pedagogy in Primary 1.

Mr Michael Pollock will assume the role of class teacher for Primary 1. Mr Pollock has been supporting in Primary 1 since the children started so he is known to them and Mr Pollock knows each of the children, meaning relationships are already established, which is very positive. Within her new role, however, Mrs Carswell will initially work very closely with Mr Pollock and our Primary 1 children to establish a refreshed play environment for Primary 1 pupils, so she isn't disappearing just yet!

We are delighted that Mrs Carswell has the opportunity to be involved in the leadership of this local authority educational priority, and we wish her well.

Mrs Antonia Carter has joined our teaching staff team and she will be providing recovery and learning support as well as teaching Primary 5 on Thursday afternoons and Fridays. Mrs Carter joins us from Gourrock Primary School.

Mr Stephen McDade has come to join our staffing team as a Pupil Support Assistant. Mr McDade has a background in IT and sport and is a welcome addition to our team.

We are currently recruiting a Senior Early Years Education and Childcare Officer and a 0.5 teacher.

Consent Form and Annual Data Check

At the beginning of every session, we are required to carry out a Data Check and to update all consent forms. These have been sent home to you and many of you have already returned them – thank you. Please ensure all forms are returned by Monday 30th August. This will allow us to get on with aspects of our curriculum delivery such as Outdoor Learning and ICT. Thank you.

Contacting School and Nursery Staff

During the periods of lockdown, many of you contacted class teachers and nursery staff through the Microsoft Teams facility or via direct email. Now that we are back in the nursery and school buildings, please revert to contacting us through the main school and nursery office, and Mrs Gallacher or Mrs Brady will direct the call to the relevant staff. You can call us on 01475 715976, or send an email to INWemyssBay@glowscotland.onmicrosoft.com. Remember that our website is regularly updated too: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/in/wemyssbayps/>. Thank you.

Attendance

Please remember that attendance at school is vital in order for your child to benefit fully from learning experiences. It is also important for our nursery children, though attendance at nursery is not mandatory. We understand however, that there are days when attendance may not be possible, and indeed, there are times when a child should not come to school or nursery – when they are suffering from sickness and diarrhoea, for example. If your child is going to be absent – from nursery or school – it is vital that you let us know. This is primarily so that we can be sure all children are safe and accounted for. We will be sending an updated attendance leaflet out to you very soon but in the meantime, please remember to call the school before 9.30am if your child will not be attending school or nursery. If we do not hear from you, we will text and / or call you. If we cannot reach you or an emergency contact by 11.30am then we will follow further local authority procedures to ensure your child is safe. It is only right to say that our attendance statistics remain very good and this is simply a reminder of the absence procedure. Thank you for supporting good and regular attendance – it does make a difference.

Parent Partnership

Our Parent Partnership is an important branch of our school community. The practical and financial support that they give has a huge impact on the experiences of our pupils. All parents are welcome to be part of this partnership. There is a core group and a fundraising sub-group. If you would like to find out more, please let us know and we will put you in touch with either Beth MacLeod, our Parent Partnership Chairperson, or Linda Knox, the Vice Chairperson. The date of the first meeting will be confirmed very soon. This will be a virtual meeting, hosted on Webex. If you would be interested in attending, please contact the school and so that we can send you an invitation. Thank you.

Learning Matters...

Base Line Assessments

It is very important that we have a sound understanding of where children are in their learning journey Pupils in Primary 2 – 7 will be undertaking baseline assessments this week and next to inform that understanding.

Homework

Homework will continue to be issued on a fortnightly basis, via Microsoft Teams. This includes tasks on educational platforms. Please be assured that these tasks are not randomly allocated but are both designed and selected to complement and reinforce classroom learning. These platforms also support our assessment data gathering which in turn informs our teaching and learning programmes to ensure we are meeting the learning needs of children. If you have any trouble accessing these platforms, please let us know and we will do our best to help you. Please let us know too, if your child has no access to a device. Thank you.

School Improvement Plan

Our School Improvement Plan is now available on our website. In the light of the news about Mrs Carswell, some changes to improvement leads will be required. We will let you know when this has been reviewed.

Health and Wellbeing Matters...

Mrs Cushnahan

Maintaining positive wellbeing in school

It has been great to see everyone back at school and ready to learn over the past week. The children have been full of lots of exciting stories about their summer holidays. It has been lovely to hear about the fun they have experienced as our country has been able to open up more fully following the Covid restrictions.

I am sure you are all aware, however, that Covid is still very much in the news and that the Government are looking very closely at data as the country has been slowly opening up. In our school some of our mitigations will remain; we have, however, been able to make some changes since re-opening this month.

As a school, we are no longer required to keep the children in class bubbles in the way we did before. Different classes are now allowed to mix with each other with control measures, which has been a huge hit out in the playground! We are also able to mix in school and hope to restart initiatives such as paired reading, very soon.

All pupils and staff will continue to use hand sanitiser as they enter and leave the building and hand washing is enforced before eating at playtime and lunchtime and when moving between spaces in the school. Any shared spaces will also be wiped down after use and adults are wearing masks as they walk around the building or are unable to keep a safe distance. We will continue to keep in person meetings to essential meetings only, but hope this may be relaxed over time. Classroom windows are always opened to

ensure air flow and new CO2 monitors are being fitted in all classrooms to ensure we have adequate ventilation all day.

There may still be positive Covid cases. As a parent, you will be informed if there is a positive Covid case within your child's class but your child will not need to self-isolate unless you are contacted directly by track and trace.

We will continue to keep you updated with any further changes and how they will affect our school. Please contact the school office if you have any concerns at all.

Nursery Matters...

Hello!

Welcome back and hello to our boys and girls. All our returning children have settled back so quickly, and the staff are delighted to see them again. We will be sending home some paperwork to let you know how your child has settled in or settled back into nursery, followed by a phone call with the keyworker during the week beginning 7th September. This will be an opportunity for us to have a general chat and to update care plans. If you have a preferred day or time, please speak to your child's keyworker so we can accommodate this. Thank you.

PATHS - Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

Barnardo's is working in partnership with us to support our delivery of the PATHS® Programme for Schools. Our children will participate in PATHS® sessions which are designed to meet the statutory guidelines for the Health and Wellbeing curriculum. The PATHS® Programme aims to develop children's social and emotional skills and is delivered by our staff as part of the pre-school day. The goal of the PATHS program is to lay the foundation for lifelong social-emotional understanding – increasingly important as we navigate these post-covid days.

We will have sent out some information electronically. If you have any questions, just ask.

Staffing

We have just advertised for another member of staff. The successful candidate will become the senior EYECO, and will be the keyworker for the orange group. We hope to have someone in place after the October holidays. Watch this space!

Reminders

Please...

- bring back your child's wetsuit and wellies
- ensure children have sun cream and hats in their bag
- label clothes, shoes, water bottles and packed lunch boxes / bags
- wear face coverings at pick up and drop off unless exempt
- provide only water in water bottles

Thank you!

Family Matters...

Website

If you haven't had a look yet, then please do! <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/in/wemysbayps/>

We welcome your feedback so please let us know if you think of anything else that would enrich this resource. Thank you.

Consultation: historic links to slavery

Inverclyde Council is currently examining the historical connections between Inverclyde and the transatlantic slave trade. As part of this work the council would like to find out what the public thinks is the best way to tell the story of this relationship. While living individuals are in no way implicated in the abuses inflicted by their ancestors, it is important for us to consider how historical figures are understood and remembered.

The consultation launched on 23 August (the International Day of Remembrance of the Slave Trade) and will run until 10 September. The link to the consultation can be found here:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/your-council-your-say/inverclyde-s-historic-links-to-slavery-2021>.

The consultation is very short (3 questions) and shouldn't take any more than a few minutes of your time to fill in. Please do take a moment to share your views.

Coming Up

01.09.2021	Primary 1 information session via WeBex. Invitations will follow
03.09.2021	Class Bulletins shared with families
06.09.2021	Local Holiday – school and nursery closed
09.09.2021	Community Connections Issue 2/20.

Outgoing Correspondence

17.08.2021	Information letter to all parents	emailed
23.08.2021	Annual Data Check; Consent Form etc	paper copies
23.08.2021	Information letter to Primary Parents	paper copy

Thank you all for your ongoing support.