



Community Connections

Issue 11/20, 27th January 2022

Hello from Mrs Gillespie

Welcome to this issue of Community Connections.

I wonder if like me, you sometimes feel that there are an increasing number of wariness days and focus weeks throughout the year in our society – and that's is not altogether a bad thing! It can become, however, almost impossible to mark or celebrate them all.

Next week, though, is National Story Telling Week. Now as someone who loves language, this is a week that fills me with happiness! I have fond memories of my parents telling me stories and my father has just written a fascinating story – his autobiography. What began as a lockdown project will, I am sure, become a much-loved story in our family. At the other end of the scale, I hear my eldest son reading stories to Oliver who gurgles away happily right through the process!

Stories are magical: they can make history come alive, they can transport us to galaxies far, far away, they can take us back in time, they can challenge us, fire our imaginations, make us think, smile, and even cry. All of this proves the power of words – power that can impact on the very core of who we are.

We are thinking about the power of words as we work to develop and improve our nursery and school and I would encourage you to read the item in this newsletter about Dialogic Teaching, which harnesses the power of words to enhance the learning process. It is a powerful tool.

We will let you know how it goes, but in the meantime, enjoy telling your stories!

Thank you all so much.

Take care and stay safe,

Alison Gillespie



Get to know our staff...

Mrs Laura Vass, Teacher



What I am grateful for

I am grateful for my family and friends. I am also grateful that I have a job I love

My Interests

I love any form of interior design. I also have a Cricut machine and enjoy making new designs with it.

My Favourite Food

I love Chinese food.

Places I would like to Visit

I am planning a trip to Florida, this Summer. I am looking forward to taking my two daughters to Walt Disney World. I would also love to visit Australia, in the future.

What I am learning

I am starting a course very soon about Child Development. It is something I can't wait to get stuck in to.

What I am reading and watching

My daughter and I are currently reading Harry Potter and the Philosophers Stone by J.K. Rowling. We are currently working our way through watching the Harry Potter movies.

Something quirky about me

I love to travel, some of my favourite places to visit are: Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Iceland, Bali, New York, Chicago, Mexico, France and Portugal.

Whole School Matters...

Our Curriculum Rationale

We are continuing to explore and clarify what is important to us as a collective learning community. If you have not yet had the opportunity to express your thoughts, then please complete our very short survey, to help us answer this question: 'What do we want for our children and how will we work together to achieve this?' You can find the survey here: <https://forms.office.com/r/e4uVrGcA4p>

Your responses, the thoughts and opinions of our staff team and the discussions we have with the children will all come together to help us as we develop our Curriculum Rationale.

Thank you all so much.

Rights Respecting School Status

Mrs Kaur

Last week was our Rights Respecting School Focus Week. The children had the opportunity to consider afresh what Children's Rights are and how they impact our everyday lives.

We had a competition to design a RRS school logo. The standard was so high we actually have two winners: Grace Barry and Millie Robertson – well done!

And well done to all who worked hard and submitted their ideas – we were spoiled for choice! We will now be working with an Art and Design teacher to look at the two designs with the aim of developing a final logo for our school. Watch this space!



The children also elected class representatives for our RRS Pupil Group. They are:

Lewis Connolly	Ellie Moffat
Orla Barry	Gracie-Leigh Cameron
Amber Sharp	Iona Wilson
Marina Cameron	Maci Storie
Aaron O'Neill	Aiden Bryce
Leo Kinsella	Millie Robertson
Harvey Weston	Carl Zielke

We continue to look forward to working together as we make further progress on our RRS journey.

Parent Partnership

Our Parent Partnership continue to support our school and nursery. Please remember that any parent can be involved in this group. If you would like more information, please contact the school, the Chair Person, Mrs Beth MacLeod or the Vice Chair Person, Mrs Linda Knox.

The next scheduled meeting of our Parent Partnership will take place on Tuesday 1st February 2022. This will be a virtual meeting, held on the Webex platform. Please let us know if you would like an invitation.

Contacting the School and Nursery

There are times when you may need to contact the school or nursery. This may be to report your child's absence, to inform us of an appointment, to raise a concern, to seek clarification or to ask something specific about your child and their wellbeing and / or learning. No matter what the reason, we would ask that you make contact through the school office please, and our clerical staff will ensure that the right person speaks to you or will pass on a message so that the best person to help you can get back to you. Thank you.

Learning Matters...

Dialogic Teaching

It has been very interesting to identify areas of learning that have impacted by our ongoing pandemic – both the positive and the not so good.

It is clear that our children are very much more aware of health and wellbeing matters, particularly mental and emotional health and this has opened the door to some really meaningful discussions, particularly with our older pupils.

An area of focus that is emerging is language development, more so in our younger children. We are therefore working hard to develop talk in our playrooms and classrooms. We call this **Dialogic Teaching** and it is a focus area on our School Improvement Plan. Dialogic teaching is more than just talking - and it doesn't mean we are talking all the time either! It harnesses the power of talk to engage interest, stimulate thinking, advance understanding, expand ideas, and build and evaluate arguments. It has social and emotional benefits too and it also helps teachers: by encouraging pupils to share their thinking it enables teachers to identify needs, devise learning tasks, enhance understanding, assess progress, and guide children through the challenges they encounter.

This approach is evidence based. Research shows that there is a direct relationship between dialogic teaching and improved individual and collective academic outcomes. A report published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) shows that spending more class time on meaningful dialogue that encourages pupils to reason, discuss, speculate, argue and explain, rather than simply give the expected answers can boost primary pupils' maths, science and English results.

As always, we would value your help! You can do this by working to increase your child's vocabulary through everyday household talk, reading together and discussing topical subjects such as current affairs or even the price of milk! These interactions all help children to express themselves – and that impacts on learning, yes, but also on emotional and mental health too. And as we continue to recover from the global pandemic, that's got to be a good thing.

If you are interested in this topic, you may like to look here for more information: <https://blog.irisconnect.com/uk/blog/developing-effective-dialogic-teaching-and-classroom-talk> or here: <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/dialogic-reading-effective-way-read-aloud-young-children>

Although not written specifically for parents, the articles contain a lot of information that is relevant for us all.

Transitions

Transitions can be challenging for some children and support is essential to ensure all children feel settled and confident about the next step in their learning journeys. We are already communicating with primary 1 teachers and with secondary schools to ensure all relevant information is shared. If you have any concerns about your child's transition to the next phase of their education, please get in touch.

A reminder to our Primary 7 families that in order to secure transport to secondary schools, a transport application form must be completed and then sent to Education Head Quarters by the end of April 2022. We sent a copy of the application form out to you earlier this week. It is also available on the Inverclyde Council website.

Health and Wellbeing Matters...

Mrs Cushnahan

What are Barriers to Learning?

In the last edition, I indicated that we would be taking a look at some of the more well-known potential barriers to learning. We will begin with **Dyslexia**.

Dyslexia - what is it?

The definition of dyslexia agreed by the Scottish Government is as follows:

“Dyslexia can be described as a continuum of difficulties in learning to read, write and/or spell, which persist despite the provision of appropriate learning opportunities. These difficulties often do not reflect an individual's cognitive abilities and may not be typical of performance in other areas.”

So what are some of the possible indicators of dyslexia?

Signs of dyslexia usually become apparent when a child begins to focus more on learning how to read and write as they progress through school.

A person with dyslexia may:

- read and write very slowly
- confuse the order of letters in words
- put letters the wrong way round (such as writing "b" instead of "d")
- have poor or inconsistent spelling
- understand information when told verbally, but have difficulty with information that is written down
- find it hard to carry out a sequence of instructions
- struggle with planning and organisation

However, people with dyslexia often have very good skills in other areas, such as creative thinking and problem solving.

If you are concerned about dyslexia, the first step is to speak to your child's teacher or to myself directly.

We will then take a closer look and put support in place which may vary depending on the individual child and their needs. This may be small group support in class or out, one to one support, visual aids or targeted interventions tailored specifically for the child. Throughout this time, the teacher will monitor and assess to ensure these interventions are working, as well as gathering evidence to show what the child is learning and any difficulties that are persisting.

This period of evidence building will conclude with a Literacy Consultation Meeting (LCM). Prior to this meeting the views of the parent, pupil and teacher are all collated in order to provide a deep understanding of the child and their learning. At this meeting, attended by the parents and myself, a confirmation of dyslexia will be agreed or not depending on the information gathered and the discussion based on the individual child. We also agree on action points for the future to ensure the child is supported in the best way possible.

It is important to remember that Dyslexia can be supported and children can be helped to develop strategies to access learning opportunities.

Finally, it may interest you to know that:

- 10% of the population are dyslexic
- 75% of people with dyslexia have above average skills in planning, making and game playing
- 71% of people with dyslexia have above average communication skills such as giving clear explanations to others and creating vivid stories or pictures
- 84% of people with dyslexia have above average imagining skills such as creating a new idea or giving ideas a new twist.

In other words, people with Dyslexia often have a different way of thinking which can have a positive impact. Think of Richard Branson, Sally Gardner, Orlando Bloom, Jamie Oliver and Holly Willoughby, all of whom have Dyslexia, and you will see what we mean!

If you have any concerns about your child and their learning, please don't hesitate to contact the school to discuss further. Thank you.

Nursery Matters...

Mrs Milligan

Hello!

Well, what a busy few weeks we have had! We have been celebrating Burns Day through singing Scottish songs, making tartan pictures, tasting Scottish foods and baking shortbread.

Other learning opportunities this month has been around the emergency services. We will be having a visit from PC George Ross, our community police officer, on Tue 1st February and we are awaiting a date for a visit from the local fire services. The children are very excited about this!

The bird feeders and the bird table which we made have encouraged lots of birds to the nursery. To tie in with The Big Garden Birdwatch this weekend we will be sending home some activities for you and your child to have fun with.

What is coming up?

Over the next couple of weeks we will be celebrating Chinese New Year with more tasting activities (3rd February).

We will be focusing on favourite stories and using puppets as we head into National Storytelling week (29th January -5th February) and we will be making soup and sending home soup packs to support further home learning.

We really appreciate your support with home learning activities – please remember to post some pictures on Twitter please, as we love to see what you all get up to! Thank you.

Family Matters...

Internet Safety

Online safety, as you know, is a very important part of children's learning. Safer Internet Day this year is on the 8th February and online safety will be a focus with children at school. We know from talking with some of you that it can be challenging to talk about online safety at home. Here are some ideas that may help: <https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/online-safety>. We will share more with you nearer the time.

Homework

We know that for some families, homework can be a challenge. We are evaluating our use of digital platforms for homework and we would welcome your opinion on their accessibility and effectiveness. The platforms provide rich data for us in terms of pupil learning and attainment, but only if they are used regularly. So what do you think? So traditional pencil and paper methods work better for you and your child? Or are the digital platforms more motivational? What works best? Please let us know. And, of course, if homework is an insurmountable task, please let us know so that we can help. Thank you.

Coming Up

01.02.2022	Parent Partnership Meeting
04.02.2022	Homework due in
07.02.2022	Spring Family Learning Challenge
08.02.2022	Safer Internet Day
10.02.2022	Community Connections Issue 12
14.02.2022	Holiday
15.02.2022	Holiday
16.02.2022	In-service Day
17.02.2022	School reopens to all pupils

Outgoing Correspondence

17.01.22	Reminder: P4/5 change of Outdoor Learning changed to Monday	text
21.01.22	WBPS Class Bulletins Jan 2022 letter to families	email
21.01.22	Letter to Parents - 21 st January 2022	email
25.01.22	P7 Parents - Transport to Secondary School and Application Form	email

Thank you all for your ongoing support - we couldn't do it without you!