



February 2022

Dear Families,

I hope you all had a lovely long weekend. It's hard to believe we are hurtling through the term as we find ourselves already at the end of week seven! The weather has kept us on our toes...one minute it feels as though Spring has sprung, the next we are thrown back into an icy Winter blast. As ever, there's lots going on at Newmill Primary to keep us all busy....

Rugby Sessions-Active Schools

Amanda at Active Schools has managed to organise some rugby taster sessions. Huntly Rugby Club has a new Development Officer, Connor McWilliam, who is keen to offer some curriculum time rugby in the Keith ASG. He will be at Newmill **Mondays 28th and 7th March** 1.45-2.45pm. Children will need PE kits.

Transition

I was able to pop into the Loft on Friday night to see how our P7s are finding the sessions. It was a real bucket filler to see how much they enjoy the sessions. They were definitely confident individuals, mixing with children from other schools and participating fully in the activities. Thanks to families for ensuring they attend. They talk so enthusiastically about going. It is clearly making a difference.

Now that registration has passed, our thoughts also turn to P1 transition. We will confirm dates for transition events after Easter Holidays. However, we can tell you we have planned to hold 'transition week' on the last week of Term 4. Our P7s will be away enjoying their adventurous activity week, providing the opportunity for everyone else to 'move up' and experience a week with their 'new' class. They will participate in a variety of activities and learning experiences, focussing on Health and Wellbeing.



We will be inviting our new P1s to join the class for some of the week. It will be a great opportunity to build relationships with key adults and children, before starting in August. Lots to look forward to!

Cross Country

Thanks to everyone who has got back to us to confirm if their child can attend the Cross Country event. We will be registering children soon and need a designated adult from each category to act as the 'team captain' on the day (the person who collects and drops off info at the event registration table). Mrs Jamieson will be in touch via email to confirm arrangements. If you haven't already replied to confirm attendance, please speak to Mrs Jamieson as soon as possible.

School Improvement

This term, we have been evaluating the impact of our school improvement work. Class teachers have been participating in learning walks across the school to track learner engagement and provide whole school feedback, supporting our school improvement cycle. Overall, we can see that our newly developed spelling pathway is raising attainment, with evidence demonstrating higher levels of engagement across the school, as well as improved opportunities for support and challenge. The approach builds on 'Emerging Literacy' and 'Talkboost Approach', embedded within P1 curriculum, focusing on four key areas: oral language, concept of print, phonological awareness and pre handwriting skills. As ever, there is more we can do to further improve the approach further and this will continue to be a focus for the rest of the session. Next, we intend to monitor writing jotters across the school to analyse how well children apply what they have been learning within weekly writing lessons.

Parent Council Meeting

I'm very much looking forward to our next Parent Council meeting as some of our pupils would like to present on initiatives they have been involved in leading. Pupils from P6/7 would like to share two things: the impact of pen license on pupil motivation and presentation and a health and wellbeing leadership role they would like to develop...Wellbeing Ambassadors. The meeting will have to be within the school day for pupils to be included. Usually we would offer a choice of date and time to ensure maximum attendance. However, we are restricted by timetables as Mrs Wright and Miss Inkson would also like to attend. Therefore, a date of **Tuesday 29th March has been set at 10.00** for the meeting. A link will follow nearer the date.

Numeracy Support booklets

I've been delighted to hear that so many pupils have been setting themselves the challenge of working through their strategy books at home. We will definitely have more learners achieving an 'aspire' certificate at the end of this term. Time has also been available within Self Directed learning slots in P4/5 and P6/7 for children to consolidate numeracy concepts taught within term two. Mrs Mair has just finished the multiplication and division books at each level this week and we are in the process of copying them for next term. Mrs Jamieson is in the process of moving information to a new Glow website. We will make sure the support videos are included within the website for your use at home.

In P1/2/3 learners have been designing and constructing models, explaining their solutions as part of STEM lessons exploring forces. I was lucky enough to see our young engineers in action last week. They were most definitely displaying a 'Persevering Pete' attitude as they were constantly reviewing their structure and making predictions about how tall it would be, then testing for accuracy. It was wonderful to see learners so engaged and most definitely in 'flow'.



Change of entrance

Please note all learners will now enter via the side door near the playground. With the stormy weather, it has been a health and safety concern having both doors open within the school. On a practical note, please remember we do go out in all weather. We would very much appreciate your support to ensure all children have jackets and appropriate footwear at all times.

Final thought...

"Children are brilliant teachers. They notice the small details, the bugs and snowflakes, and invite us to slow down and enjoy each magical day."

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachael Smith'.

Rachael Smith

