



February 2025



Dear Families,

February is passing in a flash. The days are stretching and the temperature looks set to rise towards the end of the week...signs of Spring! It has been another busy month for our Newmill Ninjas with learning superpowers in action across the school. Let's take a look at what we have been up to....

Life and Work of the School as a Community- Reading Schools

Things have been pretty hectic on the Reading Schools front. All our learners have been able to engage with authors and illustrate through attending 'Authors Live' Events across the school. We had an extremely successful joint school reading morning exploring the theme of 'Empathy'. It is always a real bucket filler for me to see the mix of blue and green jumpers together with Botriphnie joining us for the morning. Here's what some of our pupils had to say...

"Today Botriphnie and Newmill did 'Empathy' day. First we got split up into groups. Next we went to Mrs Watt to read 'The Suitcase'. After that we went to Miss Smith. We read 'Between Tick and Tock'. I played football with the boys. After snack we went to Mrs Mair to read 'Odd Dog Out'. We read these books because it was empathy day. My favourite book was the suitcase. I felt happy. It was awesome. Empathy is like when you feel someone's feelings. I felt like a Curious Carly."



"Today, Botriphnie came for World Empathy Day. We listened to 4 books relating to empathy. The four books that we listened to were: Odd Dog Out, Between Tick and Tock, The Suitcase and Lubna and Pebble. My favourite book was Odd Dog Out. We had to do tasks after we listened to the book. The task for 'The Suitcase' was to pick a country we wanted to visit. I picked Japan."

My favourite part was seeing everyone and listening to the books. I already knew about empathy but I think celebrating it helped me know a bit more."

"The author of 'Tick Tock' used great literacy devices. There were short sentences, onomatopoeia, alliteration, rhyming and repetition of words."

After our event, I headed to Ordiquhill Primary School to deliver a professional development session for staff, sharing information about Reading Schools and how the focus has

supported our literacy attainment journey. Working with other schools and leading professional development sessions are part of the mandatory actions within the action plan.



Learners are thoroughly enjoying their class novel. Teachers have been working on written reports this term and I've really enjoyed reading them. Our older pupils have included their own comments, sharing their perspective on how they are progressing and what helps them learn. Analysis of pupil comments, tell me class novels are definitely a motivator, supporting progress in reading.

"On Monday, we read our new novel 'The Letter with the Golden Stamp' We have figured out a girl called Audrey is in a police station for a reason we don't know. She's only nine and looks after her brother, sister and mum. She figures out there is a spy who lives across the road from her. I am really hooked and I am enjoying this book already."

Next, we look to gather more data to monitor the impact of our Reading Schools focus. As a result, we would appreciate if as many families as possible could take five minutes to complete the questionnaire below.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=oyzTzM4Wj0KVQTctawUZKYyV6gCVKHpGkX4Ie_YxkWIURDVaR0tKR083WU9MVDNNE02NVZQN1VTUC4u

IDL- The Cultural Classroom

Our IDL study continues this term and we have arranged for some language experts to visit us over the coming weeks. We have Miss Begou from KGS and Debbie McKay has kindly agreed to come back and lead some Gaelic sessions.

"On Thursday, I sampled some food from Scotland and France. I really liked the haggis, shortbread and baguette. This was my favourite day this week. This was all for IDL, which is our cultural classroom.



IDL is one of my favourite subjects, second only to literacy. This week was fantastic and I hope we do this again." Logan, P6

Life and Work of the School as a Community- School Improvement Agenda

Our focus during the recent In service day was twofold: we continued to develop our approach to writing, tracking progress between 'cold' and 'hot' assessments, as well as, some input in the afternoon about how to support us as we embark on a journey to begin digital

profiling. We have a long way to go. However, a member of the LearnTech Team in Moray supported us to move from zero to two in the learning pit. We are going to start with a focus on our p5 and P6 learners.

I was delighted when Lucas shared with me his reflection following his feedforward after his 'cold' assessment focusing on learning to write recounts. It's a bucket filler to hear the clarity around what he needs to do to improve.

"On Wednesday, Mrs Mair gave us our cold recount assessments and we looked at our feedforward and I have to work on an orientation, time connectives and a final paragraph. I'm going to take a 'Have a go Jo' attitude to try and fix those things in my next piece of writing." Lucas, P6

Life and Work of the School as a Community-Transitions

P1 transition- It was a real bucket filler visiting Newmill Nursery last week to meet our new P1 group. With many siblings moving up to the 'big school,' it was easy to recognise some...I am off to a great start remembering names.

Our transition timeline has been created with a range of experiences included to support a smooth transition to Newmill Primary School.

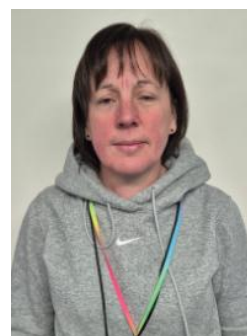
P7 transition- The next event is a swimming gala on Wednesday 5th March. A bus will be organised for this event and permission slips went home in bags today.



Life and Work of the School as a Community-Staffing Update

Some of you may be aware there has been a 'new' PE teacher in school. I am delighted to welcome Mrs Laura Simmers to team Newmill. Mrs Simmers has been teaching two days a week covering teachers' non-contact time delivering PE and music sessions.

Mrs Wright will be moving to P1-3 next session. In order to support the transition process, she will start teaching in P1-3 after Easter and Mrs Watt has very kindly agreed to support P3-6 until we have a replacement arranged. All our learners know both Mrs Watt and Mrs Wright well and we are currently working out what a weekly timetable will look like across both classes to provide continuity and progression for our learners.



Life and Work of the School as a Community-Reporting

Annual reports will be in reflection jotters on Friday. There will also be an opportunity to meet with teachers later in the term to discuss the report. A letter providing an option for a phone call or face to face meeting will be in reflection jotters alongside reports. Please

complete and return to school by **Thursday 27th February** to allow teachers time to work out times to suit all families.

Life and Work of the School as a Community- Opportunities for Personal Achievement

As part of the Rights Leaders improvement agenda, they have started two lunchtime clubs:

- P1-4 K'Nex and Lego club on Monday lunchtime
- P5-7 Coding Club on Tuesday lunchtime

Both are well attended and I am delighted with the 'Persevering Pete' mind-set of the Rights Leaders to provide this opportunity. Lucas has even taken a Microbit home to practise so that he can lead lessons in school! An over and above certificate is most definitely on its way to him.



Life and Work of the School as a Community- Parent Council Meeting

Thanks to everyone who came along to our last meeting and to everyone who filled in the questionnaire following the meeting. The results are clear. Almost all parents filling in the questionnaire opted to support a class trip. As a result, teachers are planning a STEM focus for our IDL next term, with a Science trip as part of learning focus. More information will follow in due course. It was great to see some ideas from parents to explore at our next meeting as the following suggestions were made: Panto at Christmas, Updating Ipads and other tools for learning, ASN resources and equipment. We can discuss this at our next meeting.

Please remember minutes can be found in our Newmill Primary School Blog.

Looking forward to meeting you all over the coming weeks to discuss how we can work together to ensure our children continue to climb the tower of learning!

DIARY DATES

- **Wednesday 5th March-** P7 transition event- swimming gala
- **Wednesday 12th March-** Whole Day Right Respecting School Workshop
- **Thursday 13th March-** Rotary Quiz at Keith Primary School at 1.30pm
- **Monday 17th March-** Mrs Watt parental meetings
- **Tuesday 18th March-** Mrs Mair parental meetings
- **Friday 21st March-** Mrs Wright Parental meetings
- **Monday 24th and Tuesday 25th March-** provisional P7 biking dates- Fochabers Winding Walks - to be confirmed
- **Friday 28 March 2025-** Last day of Term 3 -Easter Holidays begin
- **Monday 14 April 2025-** Summer Term begins
- **Monday 26th May 2025-** Scottish Opera at Keith Primary School for P6 and P7 pupils