



August 2025



Dear Families,

I trust you all had an enjoyable summer break and were able to spend quality time with your children. We are very pleased to welcome you back to Newmill for Session 2025/26. Our staff team are committed to supporting our learners as they continue their journey up the tower of learning together. We look forward to working in partnership with you throughout the year to ensure the very best outcomes for all our children.

Interdisciplinary Learning – Play Pedagogy



At Newmill, we believe that play is powerful. Through play-based learning, our children explore, create, and make sense of the world around them. Whether it's building with blocks, role-playing in the home corner, or investigating the outdoors, play helps

develop critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills—all while having fun! Our classrooms provide playful opportunities that support each child's curiosity and growth.



Last term children designed their own role play area as part of IDL. Through role-playing in the submarine, the children have developed teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills while deepening their understanding of marine science and ocean exploration.

Curriculum – Isabella's Footsteps: A Sci-Arts Celebration of Marine Science and Creativity

This term, our P3-5 classes are excited to take part in Isabella's Footsteps, a unique Sci-Arts project that brings together science and sound to celebrate the life and work of pioneering marine biologist Isabella Gordon. This initiative highlights women in science, sparks curiosity and creativity, and offers an inspiring way to learn through innovative, shared experiences.

Who was Isabella Gordon?

Born in Keith in 1901, Isabella Gordon was a trailblazing scientist who studied at Aberdeen University before becoming an internationally renowned carcinologist (a specialist in crustaceans) at the Natural History Museum in London. Honoured with an O.B.E. and recognised by the Carcinological Society of Japan, her groundbreaking research continues to help scientists protect our oceans today.

What is Isabella's Footsteps?

This project celebrates Isabella's incredible legacy by combining music and science. Working closely with the Natural History Museum London and the Electric Voice Theatre, our students will explore Isabella's work with marine biologist Miranda Lowe. They will then collaborate with Frances Lynch, a singer, composer, and Artistic Director of Electric Voice Theatre, to create and record their own song inspired by Isabella's story.

You are all invited to see how our students bring science to life through this creative journey on **Thursday 2nd October at 2 pm.**

Phonics Information Session for Parents

To support our Primary 1 pupils and their families, we will be hosting an Information Session on Phonics. This session is designed to provide parents and carers with a clear understanding of the phonics programme, the strategies we use in class, and how you can effectively support your child's early reading and spelling development at home. The session will take place on Thursday 25th September at 2.30 pm.

We encourage all parents and carers of Primary 1 pupils to attend this valuable session. It will include practical tips, demonstrations, and a Q&A to ensure you feel confident in helping your child with their phonics homework and reading journey.

IDL- Diving into our Ocean Topic

This term in IDL, our pupils have been diving deep into the fascinating world of the ocean! They've been exploring the rich and ever-changing diversity of marine life, developing their understanding of how living things are connected both locally and globally. As part of their exciting learning journey, the children have been exploring the fascinating world of marine life. They've been investigating the lifecycles of sea creatures, discovering how food chains work in the ocean, and gaining insight into the important work of marine biologists.

Opportunities for Personal Achievement- Bikeability Success!

We are incredibly proud of all our pupils for showing a fantastic 'Have a Go, Jo' Growth Mindset during last week's **Bikeability** sessions.

Our Primary 6-7 pupils took to the roads and learned how to navigate traffic safely, gaining valuable skills to help them cycle confidently and responsibly in a range of environments.



Meanwhile, our Primary 1-5 children focused on mastering their basic cycling skills, including balance, control, and safe riding in off-road settings — a great foundation for future cycling adventures!

Overall, the children had a brilliant time, and the skills they developed go far beyond cycling. From building resilience and focus to strengthening problem-solving abilities, Bikeability has helped support our learners both on and off their bikes.

Well done to everyone who took part!

Curriculum – Homework: A focus on Reading

At Newmill Primary School, we are committed to fostering a balanced approach to learning that supports both academic progress and pupil well-being. With this in mind, we have chosen to keep formal homework to a minimum, placing emphasis instead on the importance of regular reading at home.

Daily reading plays a vital role in developing language skills, enhancing concentration, and encouraging a lifelong appreciation for literature. Whether pupils are reading independently or sharing a book with family, these experiences contribute significantly to their educational development.

By limiting additional homework tasks, we aim to provide pupils with the time and space to rest, pursue personal interests, and enjoy quality time with their families—while still maintaining high standards for learning and achievement.

It is important to note that Primary 1 pupils will receive phonics homework to support early reading and spelling development. These short, focused tasks are designed to reinforce the sounds and skills introduced in class and to build a strong foundation for literacy.

For those pupils who wish to engage in additional practice, we encourage the use of Sumdog, an educational platform that offers enjoyable activities in literacy and numeracy, allowing children to learn through play.



Warm regards

S. Chalmers.

Stacey Chalmers
Acting HT

DIARY DATES

- Thursday 25th September - P1 Information Session at 2.30 pm
- Thursday 2nd October - P3-5 Isabella's Footsteps performance at 2 pm - all welcome
- Monday 6th October - Macduff Aquarium visit all classes
- Friday 10th October- Tempest Photography/Term ends
- Monday 27th October- Term 2 starts
- Monday 10th November and Tuesday 11th November- In Service Closure