

St Thomas Primary School



Autumn Term 2024

It was great to welcome everyone back following the summer holidays. As always this term has proven to be a very busy term and as we approach the last few weeks of this term, sadly we are preparing to say a fond farewell to Mrs Byrne who will be retiring at the end of the term. As a celebration of her contribution to the school an Afternoon Tea/Concert has been planned for Thursday 3rd October at 1.30pm in the church hall. All welcome to attend.

Our new P4-7 teacher, Mrs Magee who came to us from Inverness, has settled in well and you will have the chance to meet her and Mrs Ironside (P1-4 class) on Wednesday 25th September when we will be hosting a "Meet the Teacher" evening session for all parents to attend. This will start at 6.30pm and finish at 7.30pm. Please feel free to drop in any time during that hour.

Teacher, Mrs Gillian Watt, also comes in on a Tuesday for cover when teachers have time out of class for lesson planning. She brings her music, craft and French language skills to share with our pupils and will continue to cover this until the end of the year.

The Head Teacher post for St Thomas', which will also be a joint headship with St Peters', is currently going through the processes required for advertisement/appointment and we will be in touch if and when a new Head Teacher is appointed. In the meantime (from the start of the new term), Mrs McCann and Mrs Macgee will share the post of Acting Principal Teacher and they will be supported by QIO, Audrey Buchanan, from Education department in Elgin. Therefore Mrs McCann/Mrs Magee will be the first point of contact should you have any issues/concerns. Mrs McCann can be contacted Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesday mornings, Mrs Magee days will be Wednesday afternoons, Thursdays and Fridays.

We are delighted to have our volunteer Musical Director, Mrs Joyce Dawson, returning and she is busy practicing with the pupils for our concert. Mr Jack, musical director with the Diocese has also made a welcome return and Mr Gray also visits to teach Brass introductory sessions on a Monday to P5 pupils.

Flu vaccinations took place on Monday 23rd September, if your child was absent on that day and wish your child to be vaccinated you can contact the vaccination centre in Elgin (01343 567100) to arrange an appointment.

Childsmile – P1-4 pupils take part in a supervised toothbrushing programme. Information was sent out regarding this. If you wish to find out more see the following link www.childsmile.nhs.scot

As we are weeks into the new term, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of a few general health and safety reminders:

- Children should not come to school too early but should aim to arrive as close to the bell as possible. Children will be met in the playground by a member of staff and shown where to line up.
- In the morning if you wish to speak to a teacher or Mrs Byrne please call to make an appointment or you can pass on a message via the office.
- If your child is unable to attend school you should contact the school advising them of the reason for absence on each and every day your child is absent from school. Please do not send your child to school if they have covid type symptoms such as a high temperature/cough/loss of taste or smell. Please also note that if your child had been vomiting or has had diarrhoea they should not attend school and should remain absent for 48 hours since their last bout of vomiting/diarrhoea.
- For safety reasons, it is really important that the yellow zig zag lines on the road outside the school are kept clear. PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF YOUR CHILD/PARK ON THESE LINES. ALSO NO TURNING AT THE SCHOOL ENTRANCE.

Cost of the School Day

Talking about money can be challenging. When struggling with costs, you may feel unable to talk about money, however, it could mean that you are missing out on help available and it may also be affecting how young people feel at school. At St Thomas', we want every family to know that support is available to reduce the cost of the school day and we are here to help families maximise income.

We are an inclusive school, where everyone belongs and can take part in everything we offer, without any barriers. We believe we offer high-quality experiences for all children and we then offer additional experiences or materials for those that require them, ensuring equity of opportunity. There are lots of ways we break down the barriers associated with poverty and here are just a few:

- Building a culture of dignity and respect, where we all care for each other and give support when it is needed.
- Having a thoughtful approach to how donations are given, eg. 'chuck it in a bucket' with no obligation to donate.
- Carefully considering how to take part in special days such as World Book Day with minimal costs to families.
- Providing recycled school clothing free of charge to anyone that requires it.
- Never charging for materials or experiences that take place during the school day.
- Having a 'No Child Left Behind Approach' for residential trips, funded (partly or in full, depending on circumstances) by our enterprise projects, local grants and support from the Parent Council.
- Working with the Parent Council to provide low-cost or free social events.
- Asking for donations from the Parent Council. They have previously funded a whole-school set of class novels, buses for school trips and play equipment and so on.

Useful links:

[Talking about the cost of the school day](#)

[Child Poverty Action Group](#)

[Moray Council Website- Need Help with Money](#)

[Benefits Services](#)

[Help with Council Tax](#)

[Benefits Services- Help with Rent](#)

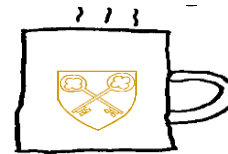
[Citizens Advice Scotland](#)

[Moray Food Bank Plus](#)

[MFR Cash for Kids](#)

[Scottish Child Payment](#)

Chill 'n' Spill



The first Chill "n" Spill session was held in the afternoon of Monday 26th August with 4 parents attending. After introductions we chatted about the first week back, asked questions (newest menu on Expressions, DoJo, Mobile phone policy, Breakfast Club) and then had a descriptive account of the Outfit Moray days by volunteer P7 Noah. He described the fun adventures had and answered questions from the parents.

Our next session is Monday 30th September at 2.30pm. Please come along for a natter and a coffee. We are going to discuss a day for the first morning Chill n Spill to take place at drop off time.

Your child will be invited to attend the last part of the session when you are there.

We look forward to seeing you then.



It was an exciting day for Kyle when David, Development Officer for Re Cycles Project delivered this smart Viper Extreme to school. The donation also included a helmet, lock and lights. Kyle had the chance to thank him and will be practising pedalling in school.



Parents Portal

We are encouraging parents to register for the Parents Portal. Some parents already use this and find it useful for reporting absences, accessing ipay (for school meals), viewing the school calendar etc. Once all parents have registered we aim to invite online booking for parents' evenings and use the permission slip facility. Check out the link below which has useful guides to help with registration:

<https://online.moray.gov.uk/site/wss/request/ParentsPortalLink>

P1-4

We have been super busy this term! They have been learning all about single sounds and digraphs in literacy. Our P1's are beginning to blend these sounds together to make words, we are super proud of them. Some of our older boys in the class have written a story based on their favourite song: Pete the Cat. The stories have turned out fantastic!

In number we have been working hard on number recognition and ordering. Some of our older pupils have been learning about hundreds, tens and ones. We are also learning about time with Mrs Watt. Specifically about o'clock, half past and quarter to.

We have been busy learning about space this term too. We have enjoyed some of the art aspects of this such as painting our planets. The children have already been planning their next topic idea with many of them excited to learn about the human body.

In between all of this we have been enjoying music with Mrs Dawson and choir with Mr Jacks, as well as starting our tooth brushing routine again! *Mrs Ironside*

P4-7

"I am delighted to have been appointed P4-7 teacher at St Thomas R.C. Primary School and am looking forward to getting to know you and your wonderful children. We have had a great start to the year, and it has been heart-warming to see how the pupils have reconnected with each other after their summer holidays. They have so many stories and experiences to share and have thoroughly enjoyed coming back to school. I look forward to meeting you at an informal "Meet the Teacher" evening session". *Mrs Magee*

School Website

Please check out our website, see the link below. Our twitter feeds into our website so even if you don't have twitter you can keep up to date with what's going on in school

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/my/stthomaspskeith/>

School Uniform Suppliers

Our online uniform suppliers are www.myclothing.com

School Clothes Bank

To support the Cost of the School Day, the school has a bank of recycled sweatshirts/cardigans/jackets. These are free to anyone and can either be collected or sent home with your child on request. Parents are welcome to come into school to view or can phone the school with their requests.

All donations of good condition school uniform items are gratefully received. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Parent Council

The Annual General Meeting of the Parent Council was held on Monday 16th September at 6.30pm. Committee elected for 2024/25 are as follows:

Chairperson – Mrs Janette Lewin
Depute Chairperson(s) – Mrs Charlene Tasker/Michael Newlands
Treasurer – Ms Lucy Greatholder
Secretary – Mrs Tania Kalia
Advisor to the Council – Head Teacher
School Representative – Mrs Clare McCann
Church Representative – Mr Graeme Morrison

HALLOWEEN DISCO

The Parent Council are organising a Halloween Disco on Friday 1st November at 6pm-7.30pm. An email has been sent with further details. **Please reply to the email to confirm if your child will be attending.**

Canteen

All children are eligible for free school meals until they reach P6. From P6 the cost of a school meal is £2.45. Payment for this can be made through Ipay. If you are not registered but would like to register, please contact the school for a code.

Canteen menu can be accessed here from the school website under parent information:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/my/public/stthomaspskeith/uploads/sites/5613/2024/06/14081110/Canteen-Menu-wef-15-April-2024.pdf>

The Catering Department have a number of vacancies for Relief Catering Assistants. Please visit:

https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/councils/moray-council/jobs?parent_cat=2090

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 25th September – “Meet the Teacher” in school classrooms 6.30--7.30pm

Monday 30th September – Chill n Spill 2.30pm in Room 4. All welcome to attend

Thursday 3rd October – Afternoon Tea/Concert 1.30pm in the Church Hall

Friday 4th October – End of Autumn Term

Monday 7th October to Friday 18th October (inclusive) – Autumn Holiday

Monday 21st October – Winter Term starts

Friday 1st November – Halloween Disco, St Thomas Church Hall, 6.30pm-7.30pm (email sent to confirm numbers attending)