

St Thomas Primary School



Winter Term End 2024

This term has flown past and the children have enjoyed preparing for the Nativity, which will be held on Tuesday 17th December at 6.30pm. Children should arrive at the pupil entrance in school at 6.10pm for their costume change. The Parent Council will be fundraising and they will also be providing refreshments in the church hall following the nativity. We look forward to seeing you there.

The small school Christmas Carol Concert will be on Friday 20th December at 9.30am in St Thomas Church where we will be joined by pupils from Botriphnie and Newmill Primaries. Please come along and support this event if you can.

As advised Breakfast Club is continuing as it is, 3 mornings per week and starts at 8.20am. Mrs McGregor is now supported by our Relief Breakfast Club Support Worker, Miss Anderson, who will be providing cover until the post has been filled.

The Head Teacher post for St Thomas' has now been advertised separately from St Peters' Primary. We will keep you updated regarding the progress of this. In the meantime, the school will continue to be supported by Ms Susan Buchan (Interim Head Teacher) and Principal Teachers Mrs Clare McCann and Mrs Leigh-Anne Magee.

Our annual Book Fair took place recently and sales totalled £343.02 and this earned £85.76 of rewards for the school to spend on books for the school. Thank you to all who supported the event and we hope the books were enjoyed! An email has been sent for your views regarding booking the Book Fair for next year.

There are lots of transition events planned for P7 pupils moving on to Keith Grammar School (in August). Last week P7s enjoyed a whole morning at Keith Grammar School together with all other P7s from other schools. There was social dance, team building Christmas activities and a quiz. They also enjoyed purchasing snacks in the canteen and joining their peers for lunch before returning to school. Information was also emailed to P7 parents with details of an Information Evening to be held on Wednesday 15th January at Keith Grammar School (a response to the letter is required).

Parents Portal & Groupcall

In order to streamline communications between ourselves and home, the messaging facility within Dojo is not now in use. We would like to encourage parents to register for Groupcall Xpressions app (an email has been sent with details) as this compliments the existing email and text communications via Groupcall.

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>

Please be aware that if your child has vomited/had diarrhoea they should not attend school and should remain absent for 48 hours since their last bout of vomiting/diarrhoea. This is particularly important to minimise the spread and to keep the school open.

Please be reminded of our general health and safety:

- Children should not come to school too early but should aim to arrive as close to the bell as possible.
- Mornings tend to be busy for staff, so if you wish to speak to a teacher, 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. Details regarding how you can advise the school of your child's absence are available here:
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/my/public/stthomaspskeith/uploads/sites/5613/2021/03/05104804/Reporting-A-Pupil-Absence.pdf>
- 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](#)

To support the Cost of the School Day, the school has a bank of recycled and new sweatshirts/cardigans/jackets/trousers/pinafores/poloshirts. 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.

Change of clothes – we have a small stock of clothes that are used when pupils' own clothes have gotten wet/muddy. Please remember to return these items to school for use or alternatively you can include a spare set of clothes in your child's bag if you think that it may be required.

Class News

P1-4

P1-4 can't believe how quickly the term has gone. We have been working so hard and can't believe that Christmas has crept up on us so quick. The children have shown some huge progress this term – particularly in literacy. I am so proud of their reading and writing. As part of our Rights Respecting School Award, P1-4 have been learning lots about their rights from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Ask your children about these at home, they should have lots to tell you! We also welcomed a visit from local man Bruce Cruikshank and his guide dog Obie this term. As part of our topic about the Human Body, Bruce helped us learn about our senses and talked lots about losing his sense of sight. The children were fascinated!

With Christmas fast approaching, we have started lots of different Christmas crafts this week. We have also been busy practicing our Nativity with Mr Jack and Mrs Dawson. We can't wait to share our production with you on the 17th!

P4-7

We have been actively engaged in their learning. Last Thursday they were able to showcase their learning and skills with parents and carers at an assembly about Human Rights. The speakers were able to communicate effectively when reading and speaking in front of an audience. They projected their voices, made some eye contact and articulated clearly. It was evident that the children enjoyed learning about this topic. The effort they made in designing their posters in small groups, learning a poem (as a whole class) and helping create the Power Point reinforced their learning and helped develop many skills for work and life, conflict resolution and co-operative learning to mention just two.

In Numeracy we have completed a block of learning on 3-D shapes and learned about properties of shape. The children also traced the nets and made their own 3-D shapes from cardboard. Learning about shape is a prelude to learning all about angles. In Literacy they have learnt about onomatopoeia, ellipsis and similes and metaphors and how they can incorporate this in their writing, to further engage their reader. In RME we are reading the Jesse tree stories that explain the "family tree" and History of Jesus in the build up to celebrating His birth at Christmas. In Art we are exploring pointillism and creating our own pictures. With our "Nativity concert" around the corner, we have been practising lots of songs. Some children will be playing musical instruments, some have solo voice parts and others are narrating. All in all we are having a very busy and happy time at school.



Chill 'n' Spill

@ St Thomas'



We were lucky enough to have a group of enthusiastic parents join us in school for the November Chill and Spill where we heard from Jacquie and Ishbel from Exchange.

Exchange work in partnership in Moray Council with individual children (age 10+), groups and now with parents and carers. They offer a range of free workshops and wellbeing Discussions. For more information please go to www.exchange-counselling.com

Please come and join us for the next Chill and Spill on Monday 27th January at 2.30pm.

If you have any ideas for topics to discuss or people to invite please contact school with your ideas.

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

Parent Council

Next meeting is on Thursday 23rd January at 6.30pm.

Canteen

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 canteen Christmas lunch is on Tuesday 10th December (12-1pm). The menu for that day has been emailed and pupils will be able to choose on the day.

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

Tuesday 10th December

Tuesday 17th December

Wednesday 18th December

Thursday 19th December

Friday 20th December

Monday 6th January

Wednesday 15th January

Thursday 23rd January

Canteen Christmas Lunch (12-1pm)

Nativity in Church (2pm for Dress Rehearsal and 6.30pm for full performance - pupils should arrive 6.10pm at school for costume change).

Early lunch 12-1pm.

P4-7 Christmas Party (1.30pm).

P1-4 Christmas Party (1.30pm).

Small School Carol Service in St Thomas Church (9.30-10.30am). All welcome to attend.

End of Term

Spring Term Commences

P7 Parents Info Evening at Keith Grammar

Parent Council Meeting 6.30pm

Canteen Christmas Lunch

Tuesday 10th December

Menu

Turkey and all the Trimmings
Roasted Vegetable & Cheese Parcel

Egg Sandwich



Chocolate Ice Cream Roll

Fresh Fruit Salad

Shortbread Star



Yellow Pea Soup