

St Thomas Primary School



Determination

Respect

Faith

Winter Term Update 2025

Our school roll continues to grow steadily and we now have 46 pupils in school and 8 nursery. School and nursery registration for August 2026 will take place in January. We will keep you updated when the online registration opens.

As the weather has turned colder, please be reminded that suitable outdoor clothing is required for outdoor play/learning. We do have a small stock of hats and gloves if needed. Please also remember to label clothing with your child's name.

During spells of adverse weather, if a decision to close the school is made, the following information points are available to you:

- In the first instance you will receive a text message/email/notification via Xpressions App.
- Information on closures can also be found at <https://secure.moray.gov.uk/mcalerts/portal/>
- You may also receive an email alert message if you are registered with mygovscot <https://online.moray.gov.uk/site/wss/home>
- Announcements for all closures may be made on local and national radio (Moray Firth Radio and BBC Radio Scotland).

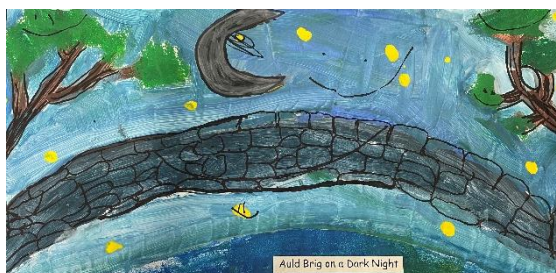
The children have enjoyed the lunchtime dance sessions with Lauren, organised through Active Schools. Also the dance sessions with Sharon Henderson have also been great – the whole school has enjoyed these weekly sessions which were funded by PEF.

Practicing our dance moves with Lauren



The festive season is fast approaching and we have been busy preparing for our annual performance in St Thomas Church on Tuesday 16th December at 6pm. Pupils should arrive at school for costume change at 5.40pm. The Parent Council will be selling raffles at the event and they will also be providing teas in the hall following the performance. Additionally there will be a Carol Concert on Friday 19th December at 10.15am to which all are also invited.

You will see further dates for parties etc listed at the end of the newsletter.



Pupils may wear Christmas jumpers at school any day in Advent (from 1st December until the end of term - Friday 19th December). The school have been gifted some Christmas Jumpers so we have a "lending bank" of jumpers. If any families have jumpers outgrown from last year, please donate to our Christmas Jumper Bank. The Parent Council are also funding T-shirts for pupils to decorate and can be worn to the Christmas parties.

We are also looking forward to a pantomime performance "Rick Whittington" which will take place on Thursday 4th December in St Thomas Church hall. We will be joined by Newmill Primary and Rothiemay Primary Schools. The performance will be funded by PEF.



Tarnash Class have been enjoying weekly visits to the swimming pool in Keith, developing life and fitness skills.



P1-4 enjoyed a visit from a local police officer for their safety topic. He led some fun activities like making our own police badges and fingerprinting. He then swore us in as police officers. Thank you to Officer Lewin for visiting!



Conker activities in Tarnash Class



Some of our Bikeability Achievers



Outfit Moray Adventures for P6-7 pupils in September

P1-4 News

This term we have been super lucky to welcome student teacher, Miss Cameron, into our class. The children have loved having her as their teacher and have enjoyed the activities she has planned. We have started implementing our new CYPIC scheme and have already seen an improvement in our writing. Children are trying hard to include conjunctions in their sentences. In amongst all this we have been practicing for our nativity. We can't wait for you all to see it! *Mrs Ironside*

P5-7 News

We have been very active this term and thoroughly enjoyed participating in Bikeability sessions. There is no doubt that the skills and lessons they learned will impact them in their everyday life to bike safely and to be aware of other road users. The instructors from Bikeability were amazing and the children were delighted to participate, successfully achieving their certificates at the end of the week. We have also participated in 2 workshops: A STEM (coding) workshop and a Bridge building workshop. The children benefited hugely and also learned a lot in terms of coding and engineering. In class we have now introduced CYPIC writing, which they have nicknamed "Side-kick writing". Although quite intense, they seemed to have enjoyed the challenge and look forward to plotting their success on the "Run Chart" so they can see how well they are achieving as a class. We are now also beginning to prepare with Mrs Dawson for our annual nativity, with many children volunteering to narrate our Christmas Story. Three weeks to go and lots to look forward to! *Mrs Magee*

Parents Portal & Groupcall

We would like to encourage parents to register for Groupcall Xpressions app as this compliments the existing email and text communications via Groupcall. The app can easily be downloaded to iOS/Android mobile phone/tablet through the usual channels.

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. **This is also useful for getting updates on school closures due to adverse weather.** 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>

ATTENDANCE

Habits of good regular attendance are important for your child's educational development, social skills and future positive pathways. However, we do understand that absence due to illness is unavoidable and should this be long term we will aim to support parents/carers in any way we can. In line with Moray Council guidelines absences will be monitored and we will contact parents/carers if absences rates are causing concern.

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 guidelines:

- 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/5613/2025/03/12112153/Reporting-A-Pupil-Absence.pdf>
- **ROAD SAFETY MARKINGS AT THE SCHOOL GATE**

Please be reminded that you **should not be stopping or parking on the yellow zig-zag lines outside the car park gate, particularly at dropping off and picking up times.** We understand that stopping or parking on Chapel

Street can be challenging and that you want your child to get out of the car as near to the school as possible, however there is a very important reason for these lines and that is to protect children who are coming round the corner and also children crossing the road to school. Due to their size they may not always be visible to a driver. Please do not drive into the school staff carpark to drop children off. The safety of our children is a top priority and your help with this is appreciated.

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.
- We do encourage pupils to change into a PE kit for PE lessons. Boys and girls are offered separate changing areas. For pupils who do not have a PE kit from home, we offer a new PE kit (shorts and t-shirt) for them to wear and keep at school. Please send your child to school with suitable footwear for PE, it is not easy to do PE in heavy boots, slippers or wellies.
- 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/polo shirts. 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.

School Website

Please check out our website, see the link below.

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

School Uniform Suppliers

Our online uniform suppliers are www.myclothing.com

We also have a range of good quality recycled school clothing in our School Clothes Bank (see information above)

Parent Council

An EGM meeting was held on 8th October and the following Office Bearers were elected:

Chairperson – Siobhan Perrin

Treasurer – Caitlin Paige

Secretary – Tegan McGarry

It was encouraging to see so many of you turn up at the recent meeting held on Tuesday 18th November. The support from the Parent Council to the school is invaluable and any help that you can provide through the Parent Council is appreciated. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing committee members for all their hard work and continuing support of the Parent Council.

T-shirts for decorating are being funded by the Parent Council along with class Christmas gifts. A selection box is also being purchased for each child in the school and nursery.

A calendar has also been produced which has pupils' artwork depicting landmarks in Keith and is available at various locations throughout the town and in school.

The Parent Council also support the annual "Nativity" performance in St Thomas Church (Tuesday 16th December at 6pm) by providing the refreshments following the performance. There will also be raffles available to purchase.



Canteen

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

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file147882.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

On Thursday 11th December there will be the school Christmas Lunch. See menu opposite.

Canteen Christmas Lunch

Thursday 11th December

Menu

Turkey and all the Trimmings

Veggie Filo Tart

Turkey Sandwich



Chocolate Ice Cream Roll

Fresh Fruit Salad

Shortbread Stars



Chicken Noodle Soup

Dates for your Diary

Thursday	4 th December	Pantomime Performance – Rick Whittington for all pupils including Newmill and Rothiemay Primary Schools.	P5-7 Lunchtime session
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Thursday	11 th December	Canteen Christmas Lunch (see menu below)	Whole school including nursery (details to follow)
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Tuesday	16 th December	Nativity in Church Followed by refreshments in church hall	6pm. Pupils to arrive at school at 5.40pm.
Wednesday	17 th December	P5-7 Christmas Party	Afternoon
Thursday	18 th December	P1-4 Christmas Party	Afternoon
Friday	19 th December	Carol Concert in St Thomas Church, Keith	10.15am

Christmas Holiday – Monday 22nd December 2025 to Friday 2nd January 2026.

School commences for Spring Term on Monday 5th January 2026

