

Orphir Community School

Friday 7 November 2025

News

Welcome Back

We are well into the swing of term two now and with the nights drawing in it can only mean one thing - my favourite term of the school year! However, even for me it is too soon to get excited about the guy with the white beard and red suit so I will try my best to contain my excitement until December. This term we welcome Jacob to the P1-3 class and what a welcome to Orphir by winning the pumpkin competition at the Halloween party (see attached photos of all the winners at the end of the newsletter). We also welcome Kassie into the Nursery and look forward to seeing her enjoy all that Nursery has to offer.

Staffing Update

Sandra Munro has joined us in the Nursery in replace of Jenna and has slotted in wonderfully to the team here at Orphir. We are all waiting patiently to hear of Jenna's news! Matthew Mellor also joins us as our Music teacher for the remainder of the year in replace of Elaine Bain.

Pupil Voice Groups

Our Pupil Voice Groups have met regularly during term one and have been very busy. Our Media and News Group would like to share a peedie update of what they have observed each group driving forward and how important each group has been for our school.

Gardening Group

This term our gardening group have successfully planted grass seed in our school and have made a new Daily Mile route. This group is important because it makes our school a tidier place. Danny has been raking leaves whilst Wolfy held the bag to collect them. Calum was getting the pieces of dirt Mr D was digging and Jacob was getting all the work done.

Reported by Ernest P4, James P6 & Kammy P1.

Wellbeing Group

This term our wellbeing group have invited a road safety officer and Tayla Patterson in to speak. This will make a difference to our school as our roads will be made safer and we will be encouraged to be more active. All members of the group were learning road safety laws.

Reported by Harry P7, Donald P3 and Elara P2.

Library Group

This term our library group have made a video of the library, sorted out the books and made a Harvest display. This group is important so that our library is improved and has a better space to regulate. Today Stanley was sorting books, Jonah was communicating with the rest of the group and Aria was stacking the books.

Reported by Luke P7 and Ellie D P1.

Rights respecting Schools & Media Group

This term our rights respecting schools/media & news group have made a new pupil voice board, new rights respecting schools board, analysed data from the whole school rights respecting schools survey, interviewed other groups and reviewed our school charter. We hope that our group will teach others important messages about children's rights and keep improving our school by using our pupil voice. Today James was turning our survey data into percentages, everyone else was writing their newsletter reports.

Reported by Luke P7.

Hi Viz Season

In these darker mornings and evenings it is essential that all children arrive to school and leave wearing a Hi Viz waistcoat from nursery right through to P7. This is non-negotiable in terms of safety and we supply these and have plenty of spares. All we ask is that if you are collecting spares at home is that you kindly send them back in. For those that like to purchase their own this is of course fine but there is no expectation to do so.

For those parents walking along the road too in the darker times, I would encourage you to lead by example and make sure you wear something highly visible too. The road is a fast one and it's good to be seen and show the children it's good to be seen too.

Four Contexts

Please find our Four Contexts posters for term one attached. Please also refer to the Term 1 Newsletter for a reminder of what the Four Contexts are and how these form part of our Curriculum Rationale and are a national expectation.

Pupil Equity Funding

This year we have been allocated a Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) budget of £2400. PEF funding is money allocated by the Scottish Government to help close attainment gaps. This term our PEF funding is going to be used to employ Christine Tulloch, two days a week, for four weeks, to release Mr Dearness. Mr Dearness will then co-ordinate and facilitate a range of literacy and numeracy interventions across the school with a range of pupils. Mrs Tulloch is no stranger to the school or P4-7 class so this little transition will be smooth and seamless.

Term 1 Attendance Percentage

Our school attendance percentage for term one sat at 92%. Where this falls 3% short of our 95% target I am hopeful this bumps up over the next term.

Parent Forum

I would like to say a MASSIVE thank you to the Parent Forum for supplying and facilitating the hot dogs and ice cream at the Halloween party. These were very warmly received by the children (and adults) and is definitely the way forward. I also heard on the grapevine that there have been some requests (from pupils) for French mustard and onions next year and sprinkles for the ice cream! Please feel free to come along to the next meeting of the Parent Forum on 12 November, 6pm at the school.

Pupil Engagement Team

Last term we were offered the chance for the OIC Pupil Engagement Team to come into school and work with our P6/7 pupils. As this was an offer with no associated costs I jumped at the chance. Gavin Inness will be working with the P6/7 pupils undertaking what is known as the Hi5 award. This award is a nationally recognised award that provides a framework for children to recognise their achievements. Gavin will be in school every Tuesday for 6 weeks and I, for sure, look forward to seeing how this little project evolves.

Winter Attire

A few little requests/points to note now that we are approaching more winter and variable weather...

- All children must come to school with a coat.
- We ask that children are dressed for the weather conditions of the day.
- Children are free to have a pair of dry shoes they can switch and use as indoor shoes if they like. These can be kept here.
- No Crocs outside in terms 2 and 3 (it's too slippy) - crocs are perfect inside shoes.
- Although we have plenty of spare clothes if some get wet, many children prefer their own so keep this in mind and have a spare set in PE bags if needed.

PE

PE is on Tuesday mornings and children are required to have PE kit with them to change into:

- t-shirt
- shorts/sports leggings
- trainers/plimsolls
- Hair bobble if needed for long hair

Holly Elson, our PE teacher, said that this term, don't worry about trainers for PE as the topics/blocks are both requiring bare feet in PE up till Christmas.

Do let Shona in the school office know if you are struggling to source PE kit for your child(ren) for whatever reason and she will be able to help.

Communication

As always we have an open door policy where we welcome your feedback, comments or questions or if you simply want to check in to see how things are going. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher directly for any class or curriculum themed queries, Shona for any admin, school meal, absences, medical appointments, Expressive Arts or general queries and of course myself for anything you would rather approach me directly with. We can be contacted as below:

Mr Thomson: grant.thomson@orkney.gov.uk

Mr Dearness: john.deariness@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk (or on Seesaw)

Mrs Williams: dawn.williams@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk (or on Seesaw)

Mrs Rendall: lynn.rendall@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk (or on Seesaw)

Shona/School Office: admin.orphir@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk

EVENTS

Children in Need - Nursery to P7

Children in Need will be on Friday 14th November and will consist of a bake sale only.

We are looking for donations of home baking and the children can take in a donation and buy a cake for break time. Parents will also be welcome to come in for 11.25am but we would make sure that the children get first choice. 😊



Diary Dates

Please take note of the following diary dates this term...

November 11th: Fluoride Varnish Nursery-P4 only

November 14th: Children in Need.

November 21st: Flu Vaccinations.

November 26th: Parent/carer Information Evening.

November 26th: Norwegian Music Visitors to school.

November 27th: Parent/carer Information Evening.

November 28th: Christmas Crafternoon.

November 28th: P4-7 John Rae workshop.

December 5th: Festive Friday (Christmas jumper day).

December 10th: Christmas Service & Nativity.

December 12th: Festive Friday (Christmas jumper day).

December 17th: Christmas Party PM.

December 19th: Festive Friday (Christmas jumper day).

December 19th: Last day of term 2.

School opens on Monday 5th January 2026.

Finally...

And just like that term 2 will be over. However, what we will endeavour to do in the coming weeks is soak up all the enjoyment and magic that this special time brings. Stay warm and cosy in the dark nights, remember that you don't need to spend lots of money to show people that you love and care for them and happy and lasting memories are made by experiences, not materials (well I think so anyway). This time of year can be financially stressful for many so look out for each other and feel no pressure to conform to social medias ideologies of what makes a good time. We are here for any of you that need us. Stay magical...

Grant Thomson

Grant Thomson
Head Teacher

Learning across The Four Contexts at Orphir P1-3 Term 1

Opportunities for personal achievement

- Pupil Voice Groups – Library; Wellbeing; Gardening & Environment; Media, News & Rights Respecting School
- Daily Mile – personal targets
- Show & Tell – talking in front of an audience
- Plan, Do, Review with the Nursery

Interdisciplinary Learning

- Tractors & Machinery Project
- Visit to MLM Engineering – World of Work, enterprise, seeing pneumatics & hydraulics in real life
- STEM visit from Ria Kirkpatrick – pneumatics & hydraulics
- Science Festival – artificial intelligence, illnesses & medicines

The Curriculum

'the totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education'

- Pupil Voice Groups
- Visit to MLM Engineering
- Parent Council Quiz
- Curriculum Open Evening
- Improving outdoor play area – James & Douglas cleared away the Rosa Rugosa and rotten raised beds
- Soft Start in the mornings
- Transition opportunities through Plan, Do, Review

Ethos and life of the school as a community

- HWB – Zones of Regulation
- Maths – P1 Numbers to 10 – one to one correspondence & formation of numerals, P2 – odd & even numbers, Numbers to 100 – recognising, ordering, sequencing, P3 - Numbers to 1000 – ordering, sequencing, place value
- Literacy – Sounds-Write, rhyming stories
- STEM – pneumatics & hydraulics through 'Tractors & Machinery' topic

Curriculum areas and subjects

Learning across the Four Contexts at Orphir P4-7

Opportunities for personal achievement

- 3 P6 Outdoor Education days! Great job by all children. 😊
- Our fiddlers took part in the instrumental course and represented the school and themselves so well.
- We have all started the BBC 500 words competition and our school got a mention on the online inspire lesson with Lenny Henry.

LIVE LESSONS



The Curriculum

'the totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education'

- Pupil Voice has given all pupils a chance to engage with an activity ran through the school catering to their interests.
- School quiz run by parent council.
- Curriculum open evening, sharing curriculum and pedagogy at Orphir.
- Pupils sharing pet stories and talks with P1-3.
- School values challenge.

Ethos and life of the school as a community

Interdisciplinary Learning

- We chose and planned our topic this term – pets.
- We had Science festival workshops on AI.
- Personal Project and presentations.
- Art work for our pet project.
- Cobweb class novel.



- Talk 4 writing Cobweb story, sustained piece focus on punctuation and grammar.
- Reading the class novel, reading as writers.
- Group reading assessed and set in groups to correct Project X level.
- Place value and addition focus completed.
- Sound Focus and Sounds Write.

Curriculum areas and subjects

Hello,
We have our Term 2 Parent Forum meeting next week, Weds 12th November, 6pm at the school. We can provide an online option if needed.

A focus at this meeting will be making initial plans for the Burn's Supper. This is a fundraiser for outdoor education and residential school trips, and for generally boosting school funds. It will be primarily P6/7 children who will benefit from this at the moment. It would be particularly nice to have parents from those years involved, and anyone else who is keen. Please come along if you are keen to help with organising this.

Thanks,

Role of Parent Councils

- Partnerships
- Communications
- Improvement Planning
- Learning & Teaching
- Involving parents
- Policies
- Education matters
- Consultations
- Events
- Assemblies
- Fayres / discos
- Aims
- Rationale
- School vision
- Fundraising
- Finances
- Representation
- Nationally
- Locally
- Community
- Home / school
- Parent forum
- Cluster schools

Halloween 2025

