

Holmston Primary School
October / November Newsletter 2018



Events so Far...

Dolphin House was a huge success yet again and photos of the week can be found on the blog on the website. P6 have been to Culzean as part of their work in Science and P4 have been to Vikingar.

We have an on-going project with Southcraig School and our P7s. Our P7 class go every Monday to work with the Southcraig pupils on the Sherbourne Movement Project. This has been a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to demonstrate our school values in action and learn in partnership with pupils from Southcraig.

Members of P6 and P7 participated in a very enjoyable multisport event at Whitletts and representatives from P7 helped to prepare the town hall for the homecoming soldiers. All our P6 and P7s went to the homecoming parade at the County Buildings.

We have been very busy developing our creativity skills based around Tamfest and the 'Day O' the Deid' procession. It was wonderful to see so many pupils and families turn up to take part. Our Glee Club also performed around the town.

Parent Voice

We had a great turn out at the last Parent Voice meeting with lots of new members. I would like to thank all the parents for organising and supporting the Halloween Discos – everyone had a 'fangtastic' time! A group of parents are currently exploring ideas to develop the playground and plans for the Christmas Fayre are well underway. I am also very grateful to those parents for volunteering to help keep our bank open. This is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to develop life skills. If you would like to become involved with the Parent Voice please contact the school office.

Photographs and updates can be found on the school website and an updated 'dates for you dairy' is available under 'School Information':
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sa/holmstonps/>

Yours faithfully,

Richard Hardy
 Head Teacher

Article 29
 Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

It was very interesting to hear all of the stories about our pupils' adventures during the October Week. Now that we are back, I'm sure it won't be that long until all of the winter festivities get under way! I would like to thank P6 and all the families for contributing to our Harvest Service. Our collection of food this year went to the Salvation Army. I was immensely proud of all the P6 pupils - they led the service confidently and professionally, well done. A huge thanks also goes to the parents that helped at the Macmillan Coffee Morning – we raised over £500. An amazing effort!

Our pupil numbers have steadily increased over the past three years and we now have over 200 pupils. I enjoyed meeting most of our families at the recent Parents' Evenings. There was some very positive feedback including, *"Impressed with the support and encouragement my child is getting,"* and, *"The children were very helpful during parents' evening. They did everything with a smile on their faces."* There were a few comments around the length of the interviews. This is set, nationally and locally, by the number of hours teachers work and the number of pupils in the classes. However, there are a range of opportunities throughout the year to come and see your child at the school. Most teachers are usually available at the end of the school day for informal meetings or if you wish to make an appointment with the teacher please contact the school office.

We are very sad to be saying goodbye to Mrs MacInnes at the start of November. Mrs MacInnes has supported many of the pupils across the school for the past two years and has been a dedicated and hard-working member of our Holmston family. We wish her all the very best in her new job.

Article 28
 You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 3
 All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect

Growth Mindset Parent Workshop

There was very positive feedback from the workshop and we will hold future ones throughout the year including one on approaches to maths. The parent leaflet was given out at parents evening and further information is available on the school website.

Literacy

As part of our School Improvement work this year, we are developing our approaches to the teaching of writing and developing our library. Staff have been trained in 'Talk for Writing' – developed by Pie Corbett, supported by Julia Strong. It is a powerful approach because it is based on the principles of how children learn and it enables children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally before reading and analysing it and then writing their own version. You may have enjoyed hearing some of the stories your child has been learning in class!

Our library has been set up for pupils in Primaries 4, 5, 6 and 7 to use the 'Accelerated Reader' programme. Accelerated Reader is a reading program designed to encourage and promote successful reading. Accelerated Reader places the focus on the careful reading of books, which in turn promotes critical thinking. All pupils sit a short assessment on the computer which generates a reading level range to help pupils independently choose a book appropriate to their reading ability. When they have finished the novel a short quiz is carried out and pupils can earn points based on the length of book they have read. I would like to thank Mrs Scott, Miss Bell and Miss Susan Bell for helping to organise this. When the system is completely set up further information will be available for parents including how you can also view your child's progress at home.

Numeracy

Staff have been developing their skills in teaching Numeracy this term. Four staff attended a one day training session led by Professor Jo Boaler from Stamford University on 'Teaching Mindset Mathematics through Creative Mathematics and Brain Science Messages' and three staff have been trained in using 'bar model' techniques. All staff have been trained in using 'Numicon' resources. Research shows that good teaching and learning in Mathematics is underpinned by a concrete, pictorial and abstract approach. We will have a greater focus on Numeracy after Christmas including parental workshops covering some of these areas.

Attendance and Punctuality

I was surprised to see that over 30 pupils were absent on the last day before the October holiday and were therefore unable to come with us to the church service.

Parents are reminded that any holidays or trips taken during the school term will be marked as an unauthorised absence. We know that pupil's development can be adversely affected by a poor attendance record so we urge you not to take your children out of school during term time.

I will continue to monitor the rates of absence and lateness to ensure they do not become a cause for concern and for those pupils who have an attendance rate of below 90% absence letters will be issued. These letters are kept in your child's file.

Lego Mindstorms



I would like to thank Miss Bell for organising the baking sale during parents evening. Our digital leaders raised over £100 towards the cost of the transport to take them to the Lego Mindstorm competition later in the year. Mr Ross Doyle of Ross Doyle Joinery, Green Street, Ayr has made and donated to the school our very own Mindstorm table. Thank-you very much for this kind gift.

Online Payments

As part of South Ayrshire Council's Go Digital transformation programme you can now pay for your child's school meals, school trips and other school items or activities online through the school payment system – iPayimpact. You can register through the South Ayrshire Council Website. Details have been sent home previously about this. If you wish for any help in registering your account, please contact the school.

