

Brae High School



**Term 1 & 2 Newsletter
December 2020**

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“Wirk tagidder wi ean anidder”

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Depute Head (Primary)

Mr Billy Forsyth

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Mrs Laehann Johnson

Head Teacher Message

It seems strange to be writing the Term 1 and 2 newsletter without having had the opportunity to welcome parents and families into the school to share all the learning that has been going on, especially as we would normally be in full Christmas concert and Christmas show mode. Despite the unusual times we are living through, our pupils continue to learn and make the best out of a difficult situation.

After the announcement from the First Minister over the past weekend, we know that the return to school will be different than we expected. We will of course keep you informed of changes for the term ahead.

Finally, I would like to thank all the pupil, parents, families and members of the community who have been so very supportive of the school and staff throughout what has been a very challenging year for everyone. Your kindness and support has been brilliant, a heartfelt thank you from us all.

While it may not be the Christmas you had planned for, I do hope you all have a very happy, healthy and well-rested Christmas and New Year.

Kind regards,
Mr L Nicolson

Update on our School Improvement Plan

Closing the attainment Gap

Although we cannot run our breakfast club as we normally would, we have been running a breakfast bar table, and providing cereals to pupils who may benefit from it, and this has been a real success. We have been able to run this thanks to a very generous donation from a member of the community. Mrs Colleen Flaws has taken up her post as Family Learning and Support Worker and she will be supporting us in our drive to close the attainment gap. We continue to work with parents and pupils to ensure improved attendance. Mrs Julie Clark continues to support pupils in primary to increase attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Functioning as an all-through 3-18 school

Over the last two terms, we have worked with pupils to embed our values of Creativity, Aspiration, Relationships and Equality. This has included working with primary pupils to design characters for the values, as well as planning events, online speakers and assemblies around our values. We will continue to embed our values throughout the remaining school year.

All staff are now using SEEMiS to record the tracking information, which will give us a more robust understanding of pupil progress over time.

Responding to Covid.

A significant amount of time and effort from all staff has been dedicated to mitigating and overcoming the impact of Covid. This includes: adapting all learning and teaching from play to SQA qualifications; sourcing additional devices for pupils; finding new ways of partnership working with parents (such as our ELC, P1 and P2 online information sessions – information evenings for senior phase and S1 yet to come); working with staff and pupils to identify ways to support the health and wellbeing of all.

Mr Nicolson's Snapshots



School Value: Equality - Human Rights

Our S3 pupils had an opportunity to meet with Bruce Adamson, The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland. The session focussed on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our pupils asked really insightful and interesting questions. Well done S3.



School Value: Equality - Black History Month

Our Librarian, Sadie Simpson, did a brilliant job promoting books by black and ethnic minority writers or with black and ethnic minority characters. I was delighted to have Ellie Ratter, former pupil and current staff member, join me to speak to S1 about black history and active citizenship. Ellie shared her experience of writing to Up-Helly Aa committees to appeal for "black-face" to no longer be part of the festivities and creating positive change in the community.



School Value: Aspiration – Improving ELC Environment

Possibly one of the bonniest days of the term, and one of the most exciting! This is the remnants of all the empty cardboard boxes from all our brilliant new equipment in ELC. Please take a look at the ELC section of the website to see how the environment looks now.

Term Dates

2020/2021	First Day of Term for Pupils	Last Day of Term
Term 3	Thursday 7 th January 2021	Friday 26 th March 2021
Term 4	Monday 12 th April 2021	Friday 25 th June 2021

Local Holidays:

- Wednesday 27th January 2021
- Friday 19th February 2021
- Monday 22nd February 2021
- Friday 21st May 2021
- Monday 24th May 2021

Early Years News

This term we have had a member of the Early Learning and Childcare central team working closely with the school and our ELC setting. Ann-Marie Flaws, the Equity and Excellence Lead for Early Learning and Childcare has been working closely with management and the ELC staff team to support the development of improvement priorities identified within our school improvement plan.

Priorities for term 2 - October-December 2020 included:-

- Ensuring that we are providing high quality provision and safe practice for children throughout covid-19.
- Reflecting on and reviewing some of our ELC procedures and routines, e.g. personal plans, learning journals, weekly meetings for staff, further development of professional dialogue within the whole staff team and reviewing strategies for sharing information together.
- Enhancing the learning environment through the purchase of new furniture and careful consideration given to the continuous provision on offer.
- An audit of resources within the setting to develop enhancements for learning which promote literacy, numeracy and health and well-being.
- Staff training sessions and modelling of quality observations and how to use these as part of the assessment process.
- Reviewing communication and reporting to parents including the new blog and a new structure for reporting set up.

Ann-Marie will continue to work in partnership with the school next term and is very much looking forward to meeting more of our wider school community.

Priorities for term 3 January – March 2021 include:-

- A review of planning processes and implantation of a planning structure unique to the setting.
- Implementation of a robust tracking and monitoring system.
- Recording self-evaluation undertaken by the setting to demonstrate developments and impacts of improvements.
- Creating a system for recording the learning journey of our ELC learners.
- Continuing to develop ownership of learning through further engagement with individual learning stories.

Primary News

All primary children and staff are looking forward to a well- earned Christmas break after a very unusual Christmas term which, although very different from normal, has still been busy and successful in so many ways.

Clearly there are a great number of restrictions in so many aspects of our normal school life, things like; operating in class bubbles, restricted play areas, lunches served in class, constant hand sanitising not to mention bigger things like no Christmas concert which we are very disappointed in. We do hope that we can do something in the summer term depending on the restrictions in play at that time.

However, despite all these things the school remains an upbeat, happy place where children are learning and displaying great resilience and adaptability through all year groups. We are very proud of how well they are all supporting each other and accepting the new procedures and “getting on with the job!”



Primary 7 pupils completed their Bikeability training this term. Everyone developed their skills in bike control, signalling, manoeuvring, and road safety through weekly sessions with Danny Peterson. The pupils were also lucky enough to receive high-vis vests and water bottles, generously donated by Specsavers.

Primary 7 pupils had a busy couple of weeks in November creating online advent calendars for the P1-4 and P5-7 classes as part of a mini-project to bring the primary pupils together, in what has been a different countdown to Christmas this year. The class worked to create a huge variety of content, including video recordings, art activities, quizzes, games and jokes. They are very proud of their creations and have enjoyed the positive feedback received from pupils and teacher.

As we are not allowed to mix class groups together we have been unable to hold assemblies in the usual manner and so we have had assemblies most weeks using “TEAMS” on the class interactive whiteboards and this has allowed all children to take part and for us to “gather” as the primary department and share thoughts and ideas. Our pupil council members have been able to put forward ideas and make requests through our “TEAMS” assemblies and these ideas have then been taken forward and, where possible, acted upon. This resulted in an order being placed for games/play items to be bought for each class to have when playing in the playground. It also led to a plan being drawn up to add some more “furniture” to the decked area in the “New Area” playground.

Our “TEAMS” assemblies also provided an opportunity for children learning to play a musical instrument to perform for the whole school and this was extremely well received by all classes. My thanks go to those people who have come forward and played which has inspired many more to come and request a “slot” at our assemblies.

To summarise, despite all the changes to normal school life our pupils are working really well and getting on with the hugely important job of **learning**.

Everybody in the primary department would like to wish all parents and pupils a very happy, relaxing Christmas and we look forward to the time when we can welcome all our parents back into the school to see all the great work and to meet with everyone as normal.

B Forsyth

Secondary News

More Achievements Celebrated



S3 pupils have been surprised at the number of achievements they have been able to write about for display on the Secondary Achievement Wall since Covid-19 had an impact on all of our lives. With less social and sporting activities happening pupils anticipated having little to write about but there has been a steady number of achievements to celebrate including the Drama Festival, Saltire Awards, Layla Todd's running achievements, Leigha Leitch's design for Living Lerwick, Ashley's Hay's online fiddle prize at the Perth Fiddle and Accordion Festival and much more. There is also mention of achievements by school leavers Scott Laurenson and Jake Rendall.

If any pupils, parents or staff have suggestions for the Achievement Wall please contact a S3 pupil or Mrs Watt.

Cards of Kindness for North Haven



Pupils in S2 and S3 English classes have made cards and written kind messages for people in our community who are no longer able to attend day care at the North Haven Care Centre. Before Covid-19 some of these pupils were regular visitors to North Haven on a Friday afternoon as part of our Wider Experience programme. Pupils appreciated feedback from the outreach staff who were able to pass on how much these cards meant to the recipients. One commented she was touched the young folk were remembering her and she was very proud of her card and message.



S1 International Film Club



Last period on a Friday, we are watching films from other cultures with all of S1. We watched 'The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind'. It is about a young boy who teaches himself how to build a windmill and he saves his family from starvation. Here is why we thought it was a good film:

- Inspiring that someone who had so little could achieve so much.
- Amazing he could make something so complex after simply reading a book.
- Very realistic and interesting to watch a true story.
- Inspiring that someone our age can achieve so much and change the lives of their community.
- Teaches us how important books can be. We can learn from them and then change our lives.
- Learnt us about how different life can be in another country like Malawi.
- Makes us realise everything we take for granted such as food, electricity and an education.
- Eye opening to see how hard it is for people in developing countries.
- Great to see William achieving so much using scrap materials.
- We learnt you don't need expensive materials to make something useful.
- Few of us have watched a film in which all the characters are black. It encourages us to accept diversity.
- It was good to watch a film portraying black people positively.
- Great to see young people portrayed positively as William know more about science than his elders do.
- Good to watch bi-lingual characters as it encourages us to be bi-lingual.
- Sub-titles helped us understand a Malawian film and our ability to read the sub-titles improved.

Positive Feedback from the Shetland Young Writer on Home Learning Writing



When Shetland Library chose 'the cave' as the theme to the Shetland Young Writer competition, they were unaware that young writers would be at home in their very own metaphorical caves.

Despite the dramatic change in their working environment, S1-3 BGE English pupils produced some excellent writing. It was a challenge for pupils to write alone when they usually get the opportunity to

discuss their ideas with their peers and teacher and they had to rely on online feedback.

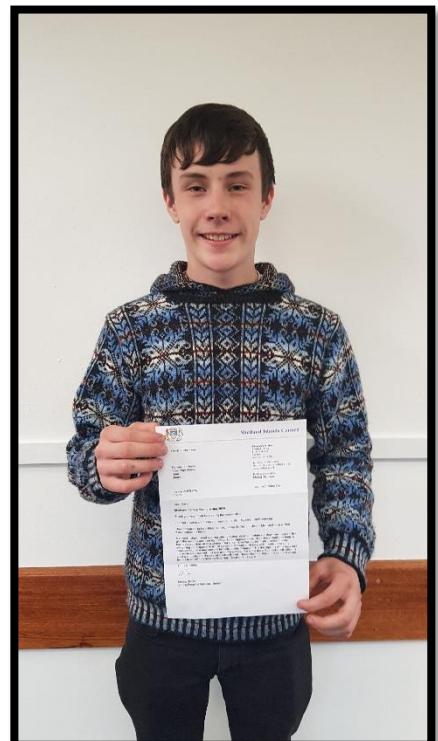
The Young Writer judges Mary Blance, Jim Mainland and James Sinclair wrote to a number of pupils giving very positive feedback about their entries.

Darren Jamieson was joint runner up in the 13-18 dialect prize for his story 'Da Selkie aa da Cave'. He was praised for his strong and believable main character, effective humour and excellent descriptions.

Lily Rendall, Layla Todd, Hannah Williamson, Erin Hunter, Jenni Leask and Murray Todd were all highly commended for their writing. Lily's short story was praised for the frightening and claustrophobic atmosphere created and heightening tension towards the climax. Hannah was recognised for her powerful writing about a personal experience using the cave theme as a metaphor. Layla's authentic detective 'voice' was highly commended in her atmospheric whodunit short story. Erin received praise for her atmospheric dialect story that was well researched and dramatically concluded. Jenni's dialect story was noticed for her effective use of dialect and for the interesting theme of guddicks used to create a tense plot. Murray was highly commended for his dramatic story that encouraged the reader to visualise the vivid setting.

Anna McDowall and Lilybell Wood were both commended for their writing. Anna's descriptive and gripping short story earned her praise as did Lilybell's lively and entertaining dialect story with good use of humour and a great title.

Photo - Darren Jamieson with his joint runner up feedback.



Meet our new Family Learning and Support Worker



Hello! My name is Colleen Flaws and I was recently appointed as the Family Learning and Support Worker for Brae and Mossbank schools. This is a new role for Shetland to help support pupils and their families in any area of life, which may be impacting on a pupil's ability to fully engage at school. An assessment will be carried out with a parent/pupil by myself, to clarify what the key priorities are for the family at home, and this can then be considered alongside the needs identified through education. I will work with a holistic approach, addressing challenges in various areas of life.

Areas which can be considered for support:

- Family learning – supporting parents to support their child's learning at home, support to consider adult learning
- Health & Wellbeing – support to improve or balance physical and mental health with other life commitments
- Finances – support to access financial support and advice, consider employment opportunities, address debt issues, accessing grants
- Safety – support to assess physical and emotional safety in the home
- Relationships – encourage healthy and safe relationships with family and friends
- Inclusion – supporting access to services and facilities in your community
- Social & Emotional Support – a safe space to share concerns, off-load, talk about parenting struggles, think about potential helpful strategies for change, if desired
- Transition – supporting transitions where this is particularly challenging for a child, young person or family

My training is in Community Justice and Domestic Abuse. I have worked in Children's Residential Services, Befriending & Mentoring, and most recently, a long stint in the Domestic Abuse field. I have experience of working with both children and adults with additional support needs and am studying (slowly but surely) towards a degree whilst working and raising my own family. I love working with people, from any and all walks of life. I appreciate all our differences, experiences, and life challenges, making us uniquely who we are.

I look forward to working with you.

Meet our new Librarian!

Hello! My name is Sadie and I am the new library assistant here at Brae High School. Before taking up the position, I was a student at Heriot Watt University where I studied Microbiology. Over the past 3 years, during holidays from university, I spent my time working in the Lerwick Library. This summer, I was given the opportunity to help relocate the Brae High School Library into what was the geography classroom. This was when I realised that being a school librarian was the right career for me. I have thoroughly enjoyed my first 2 terms at the school, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds!



With the current COVID restrictions the library is functioning a little differently than usual. Pupils are asked to sanitise their hand before entering and leaving the library. Books are now quarantined for 72 hours on return and are discharged from the borrower's account after being quarantined. If any books are handled during a class visit, the books are also quarantined. When a class visits, they come in small groups of around 7 pupils at a time and are given the chance to browse through the stock to find a book.

The library is open throughout the school day and pupils are welcome to pop in at any time. S1 – S3 have timetabled library periods where they can visit the library to swap their books. Along with these weekly visits, S1 – S3 have also been getting Library Skills lessons. These lessons are great for further developing library and literacy skills and will support learning throughout the school. So far in these library skills lessons we have covered; Introduction to the Library, using Shetland Library's Online Public Catalogue, the difference between Fiction and Non-fiction, how to find books in the library, and the importance of proofreading.

Unfortunately, the Primary department are unable to visit the library at this time, however I have been regularly keeping in contact with the classes and sending boxes of books over to each class so that the pupils still have access to books. Recently, I have scheduled a time with each class where I go over and have a library period with the class. I have loved meeting all the pupils and I am so excited for them to be able and see the library for themselves!



Currently, there are a few Christmas displays on show. The idea with the 'get wrapped up with a good book' display, which can be seen in the picture below, is to encourage pupils choose a present at random (which is then issued to their borrower account) and read whichever book they get, hopefully introducing them to new genres and books they usually would never read. This has been very popular! Other displays that the library has had throughout the term include 'If you liked the movie you will love the book!' and Black History Month.





For our Black History Month display, we had a range of non-fiction titles covering topics such as Slavery, Civil Rights and a selection of Biographies. Also on display were brilliant fiction titles from black authors, including; 'Dear Martin' by Nic Stone, 'Everything Everything' by Nicola Yoon and 'Noughts & Crosses' by Malorie Blackman. The Shetland Library has a huge variety of titles available as eBooks and eAudio books on RB Digital. A booklet was put on the wall which allowed pupils to flick through and see which titles were available on RB Digital!

The wall display included information about the Black History Month website and the Black Lives Matter website. Both websites contain amazing resources on black history. Along with this, we were kindly gifted a set of posters to display that had QR codes which were linked to videos of picture books (all focusing on the topic of Black History Month) being read aloud.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions about library services, or even the library itself! You can either give me a ring on 01595 745663 or pop me an email at sadie.simpson@shetland.gov.uk. ☺

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and I wish you all the best for 2021!

Sadie Simpson
School Library Assistant

Free Sanitary Products

Don't
forget!



#153632871

As part of the Shetland Islands Council's initiative to tackle the cost of the school day, free sanitary products are available for pupils. You may take as many products as you need. They can be taken home for using at the weekends and during the holidays

If you are interested in eco-friendly reusable sanitary products, please contact Susie Smith on
01595 744172

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Who will be eligible for an EMA?

You may be eligible for an EMA if:

- You were born between 1 March 2001 and 30 September 2004.
- You were born between 1 October 2004 and 28 February 2005.

If you fall into one of the above categories and one of the categories below, you will be eligible for a weekly allowance of £30 (not paid during holiday periods):

- If your household income is £24,421 or below
- If you have more than one child and your household income is £26,884 or below; or
- If you are living in a foster home or in the care of the local authority or a care leaver (no proof of income required).

Will an EMA affect my family or my own benefits?

An EMA is paid in addition to other support and benefits provided by the Government. This will not affect any other benefits you receive. It will not affect any money you earn from a part-time job either.

When should I apply?

You should apply for your EMA before 30th September for payments to be backdated to the start of the Summer Term, August 2020. If the application is submitted after 30th September, payments will only commence from the date the application is received.

For Christmas leavers, eligible for payment from January 2021, you should apply for your EMA by 28th February to receive payments backdated to the start of the Winter Term, January 2021. If the application is submitted after 28th February, payments will only commence from the date the application is received.

For further information or to apply, use the web address:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/EMA.asp>

Clothing Grants, Free School Meals and Free School Milk

What is a Clothing Grant?

A Clothing Grant is a grant awarded to children from families on a low income to help towards the cost of clothing and footwear.

What are Free School Meals?

A free School Meal is a school lunch provided free of charge by Shetland Islands Council to children from families on a low income. All pupils in Primary 1 to Primary 3 are now eligible for free School meals, however these pupils should still be included on your application form if you wish to apply for Free School Milk and / or a Clothing Grant. Children attending Early Learning and Childcare Settings as part of the expanded provision are also eligible for Free School Meals and families should apply as detailed below.

How much is the school clothing grant?

The grant is £100 per pupil. Payments are made by BACS to your nominated bank account, or by cheque, where necessary.

Where can I apply for a clothing grant and /or free school meals / free school milk?

You can apply for a clothing grant and/or free school meals by following the below link:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/ClothingGrants.asp>

*Have a safe and super
Christmas!*

*Here's to a happy and
healthy 2021.*



*From all the staff at
Brae High School*