

Sandwick Junior High School Parent Council

Head Teacher's Report – 05/12/18

1. **Staffing**

There is a preferred candidate for the vacant post in English and Modern Studies. Subject to all necessary checks and procedures going to plan, we'd be hopeful of confirming the appointment soon, with a view to the successful candidate commencing post after Christmas.

Michael Manson and Tracy Hastie will return to their respective permanent posts at the beginning of next week. I'd like to thank them for excellent work in their acting roles.

Jonathan Kerr is currently on a full-time contract until Feb 4th 2019, covering Dave MacNicol's PE timetable and providing support in the ASN department. Ann-Marie Flaws continues in her acting role of PT Curriculum, also until Feb 4th, 2019.

Annette Smith and Rhiannon Inkster are covering John Morton's former timetable. Discussions are ongoing with the Authority on how we will manage this going forward.

There is currently an advertisement for a part-time teacher in Primary. This is to facilitate a request for a reduction in hours.

We welcome Bev Redfern to the Office Staff. Bev will work every Thursday and Friday, to cover for Miranda Smith, who will now do Monday to Wednesday.

2. **School News**

The School Improvement Plan has been finalised. A pupil/parent friendly version is currently being put together. Both versions will be posted on the school website and shared with the school community.

We have started work around updating the school's vision, values and aims. Michael Manson is currently leading a consultation on values. A short survey has been issued to parents, with pupils undertaking their role in the process during PSE lessons. The response rate from parents has been excellent and they have already offered many constructive and helpful suggestions. The values will then be used to help formulate our school aims. These are what we want everyone in the school community – pupils, parents, staff and partners - to be thinking about as they engage with the life and work of the school.

The S4 Parents' evening saw a 75% turnout. Parents were invited to complete a survey and the results of this are ready for analysis. A number of parents gave me their views directly and I'm grateful for their input. Once the data has been interrogated we will update the school community about the actions we propose to undertake.

The website is being updated and populated with up-to-date information. Additional features are also being developed, including an area for the Parent Council managed by the Parent Council. Michael Manson will manage access for the willing volunteer(s).

A very successful and well-attended Christmas Fayre was held on Sunday, Nov 25th, raising over £1200 for school funds. A big thankyou to everyone who contributed, helped and participated and apologies to those of you unfortunate enough to have had to put up with my tea/coffee!

Two of the pupils who went to China last year on the Confucius trip with Yolanda Bruce have just been awarded a year's scholarship in Tianjin, China, the home of Yan, our current Confucius

teacher, and Ying our former Confucius teacher. Kirsten Keay was a pupil at Sandwick Junior High School until the end of S4. Henry Hynman is a pupil from AHS: it is a fantastic opportunity for them both.

Twenty S2 and S3 pupils will continue their DofE training this Friday with a school camp. The group are also hoping to hold some bake sales next spring to raise some money for the minibus hire. Our Silver Award pupils are teaming up with 2 from AHS to work on their expedition training and our Gold group are currently working through their sections. We are still hopeful of having the first assessed Gold expedition in Shetland.

S1/S2 Maths Team Challenge - Sandwick are hosting the annual S1/2 Maths Team Challenge competition – which helps develop problem-solving skills, leadership and teamwork – and, once again, we have no shortage of entrants keen to take part.

The Wider Achievement group, run by Zuzanna O'Rourke and Yannick Harpe has begun working with older South Mainland residents on their photo stories. This is a joint project between the school and Hoswick Visitor Centre aimed at people at risk of isolation and loneliness. So far 6 pupils and 5 older folk met at Hoswick a couple of times to discuss the project and share stories and resources. Eventually completed photo stories are to become a part of the exhibition at the visitor centre. Our pupils have been excellent, friendly, chatty and polite and we hope that this project will continue and be a success.

A team from Edinburgh University Dept of Evolutionary Biology worked with the S4 biologists. They delivered a workshop on bioinformatics – using DNA sequences to identify species, and linked it to food industry analysis of products in the wake of last year's horsemeat scandal. The pupils used computer programmes to identify unknown samples from a DNA database, and also had a chance to chat with the academics about their professional journey and the life of a real scientist.

Stay and play sessions for parents have been introduced in the Nursery. We had a successful one at the end of last term and want these to become a regular feature of Nursery life. Nursery and P1 children are also engaged in 'Peerie Bodies', a project that has been developed by Children's Services and Education and is being rolled out to all early learning and childcare settings within Shetland. It involves children talking about their bodies; helping them to understand privacy and how to keep safe; knowing who they can speak to if they are worried about anything and to have respect for each other.

S1 classes have completed their work on bullying in PSHE by holding a display and selling wrist bands to highlight the issue. They managed to sell all 100 bands! Related to this, plans are already under way for whole school participation in 'Safer Internet Day', to be held on Tuesday, Feb 5th 2019. In an ever changing digital world, it is vital that schools retain a constant focus on supporting our young folk and equipping them with the skills to make more informed, positive online choices.

S2 pupils are at present taking part in taster sessions with Shetland College as part of our 'Developing skills for work' programme. If they like they can apply to take part in 1 or 2 year courses as part of their S3&4 curriculum.

A production of Bugsy Malone will be put on in the summer term. Work should begin in earnest after the Christmas holiday. We're hoping for a big cast and a huge performance!