



# Neilsland Primary School Newsletter

## March 2025



Dear Parents, Carers and Friends,

I cannot believe that we are almost at the Spring break and fast approaching Term 4. It has been a very busy year for us so far at Neilsland and we are looking forward to an action-packed Term 4! We have many events and activities planned and look forward to welcoming you over the course of the term. As always, I would like to thank all of our families for their continued support. In particular, I would like to remind families of the importance of children being in school on time each day. In the month of February 6% of pupils were late for school, a decrease from 9% in February last year. We know that family circumstances change and if we can support you with these changes, please do not hesitate in contacting the school.

Thank you.

Mrs Kelly



### **Danceathon/ Neilsland's Got Talent /Easter Fun Day/ Dance Festival**

Our P7 pupils have been extremely busy, organising a Talent Show, Danceathon and Easter Fun Day for the full school.

Pupils were able to showcase their talents in front of the whole school during the talent show after a rigorous round of class-based auditions. Everyone agreed that Neilsland certainly does have talent!

On Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March, P7 hosted a Danceathon for all classes, parents and carers to tie in with Comic Relief. It was lovely to invite our adults into the school. The event was enjoyed by all and we raised over £180 for Comic Relief. Thank you.

On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April, all classes will enjoy an Easter Fun Day. P7 are organising a range of games, events and activities for all classes. Every child will receive a small gift to wish them a Happy Easter.

This year we have a group of children who are taking part in the Dance Festival held in Hamilton Townhouse on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May. They are practising hard with Caitlin, our dance instructor. After only 3 rehearsals so far, their performance is already of a very high standard. We are really looking forward to their showcase!



### **Pupil Attendance**

If your child is going to be absent from school, please contact the school before 9.00am. There is an answering machine for this purpose. Unexpected absences will be followed up by school staff, in line with SLC policy. Parents who have to take their child out of school during the day for an appointment, should send in a note in advance and collect their child from the School Office.

Regular school attendance is essential for all our children to make good progress, achieve their academic potential and consequently have better chances in life. Our whole school attendance target is 95%. It is the responsibility of parents/carers and the school to achieve this. There are 190 school days across the school year, leaving 175 days to book holidays and attend non urgent appointments. We appreciate that children are unwell from time to time and that there can be exceptional circumstances for absences, but we ask that you think carefully about keeping your child out of school. There is a strong connection between attendance and achievement at school.

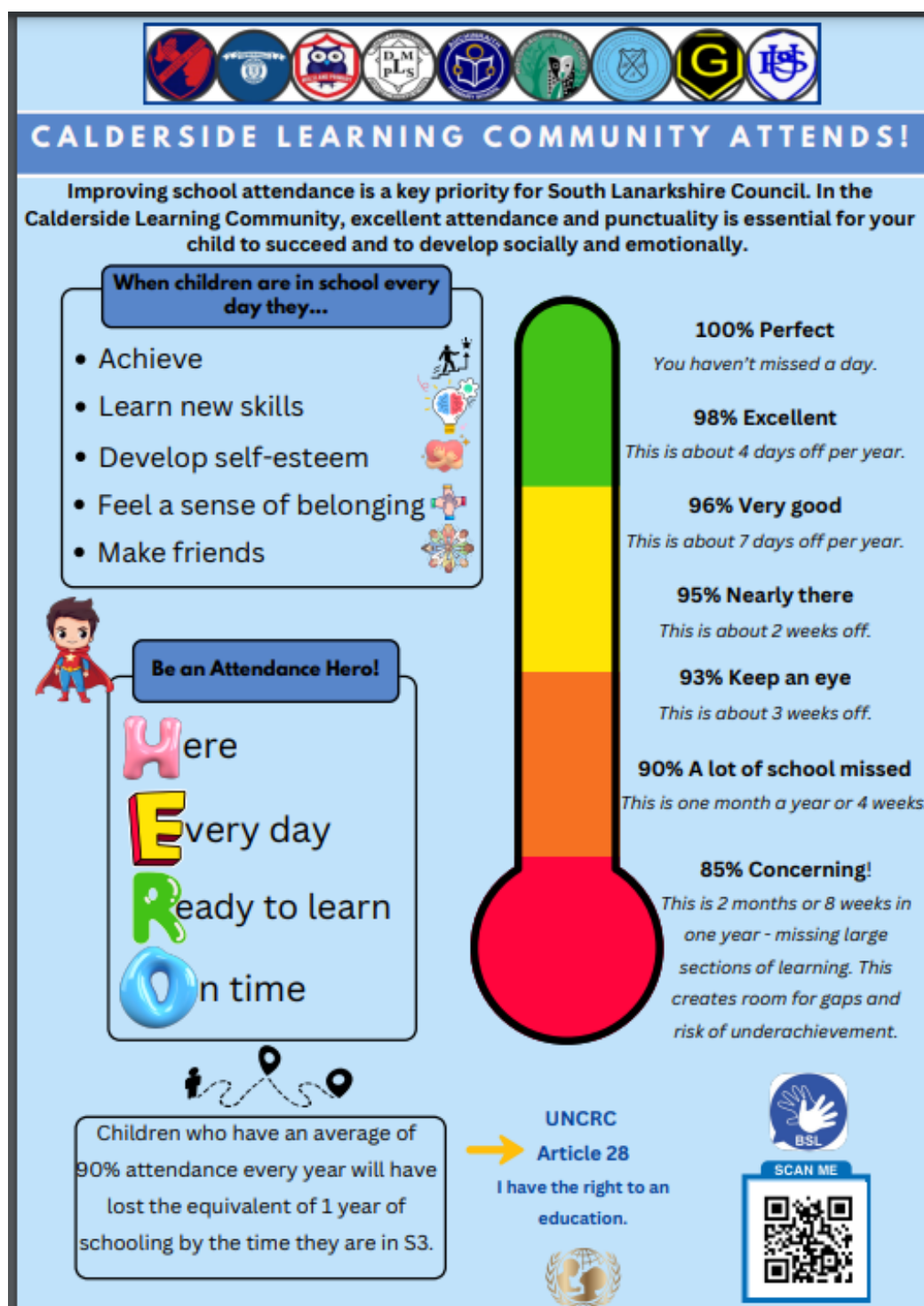
Absence is proven to have a significant negative impact upon a child's educational attainment.

**Currently, our overall attendance is 94.3%**



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### Parent Consultations

We are looking forward to our parent/carer consultations which will take place on **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April**. We are extremely proud of our children's achievements and hope that you enjoy the opportunity to share in their successes. Bookings are open and can be made via Parents Portal. Each appointment is 7 mins (with 1 minute turnaround). After this time, if you feel that you require further discussion, please speak to Mrs Kelly or Mrs Brock and they will make arrangements.

### Transitions

We are currently working in partnership with Calderside Academy to ensure the smooth transition of all our P7 pupils. We have had various visits from staff and pupils with more visits planned for next term.



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Some of our P6 and P7 pupils took part in a Fun Football Festival at Calderside Academy on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March. The event was organised by Lesly Scanlan, Active Schools Co-ordinator and run by the S6 Sports Leaders. Our children thoroughly enjoyed the event and competed against other schools from the Learning Community.

All of the P7 pupils in our Learning Community took part in a Special 'Making Rights Real' event on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> March. This event took place across 2 schools in Blantyre: Auchinraith Primary and Calderside Academy. All children participated in 3 different activities over the course of the day: one linked to mental health and wellbeing, one linked to physical wellbeing, and one linked to food (UNCRC Article 24 – Every child has the right to the best possible health). The event was a huge success and will become part of the annual transition plan.

We have 2 induction dates organised for our pupils coming into P1. The visits will be on **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 1.30pm-2.30pm** and **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 11.00am-12.30pm**. Our new pupils will spend time in class with their teacher and will get to meet their P7 buddy. They will also stay for lunch on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May.

Our new P1 pupils will also be visiting the school and spending time with our current P1 pupils, taking part in a play session, outdoor learning session and P.E. session together.

### Swimming

Our P4 pupils have started their 12 week block of swimming lessons at Hamilton Water Palace. This is a fantastic opportunity for them to develop water confidence, an essential life skill. The children are making great progress and are an absolute credit to the school.



### Parent Council

Our Parent Council are actively involved in many initiatives within the school and always welcome new members. If you would like to find out more about the work of the Parent Council, have any questions or queries you would like taken forward by the Parent Council or if you would like to join, please contact the chairperson Emma McCurdy on [neilsland.ps.pc@gmail.com](mailto:neilsland.ps.pc@gmail.com).

**Unfortunately, we have had to cancel 2 Parent Council events recently due to lack of helpers (Valentine's disco and Film Club). This only happens as a last resort.**

The Parent Council have Easter discos planned for Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March. P1-3 (1.45pm-2.45pm) and P4-7 (4.00pm-5.30pm). We are delighted with our appeal for help and appreciate everyone who has indicated that they are available to help. **The event will go ahead.**



The Parent Council has a fantastic, fun and tasty Easter Hamper up for grabs! It is full of crafts, toys and sweet treats. Raffle ticket sheets have been sent home with your child this week.

Please help us to raise funds for the children by selling as many raffle tickets as possible. Each ticket is £1. Money and raffle tickets should be returned to the school (in an envelope) by Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March.



### Parking/Engine Idling

Last session, we officially introduced our School Travel Plan at Parent Consultations in March. Traffic flows more freely with the nursery staff using the school parking area. This allows more spaces for collection at the end of the day. Initially, this almost eliminated the issue of double parking. However, recently, we have noticed double parking becoming an issue again and have had a number of complaints recently regarding the safety of the children at the end of the school day. **Double Parking makes it almost impossible for children coming out to see beyond**



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**these vehicles.** We have also noted an increase in **incorrect use of disabled bays.** We focus on road safety in school with the support of our Junior Road Safety Officers. It is imperative that parents and carers of pupils are careful, considerate and safe in their driving practices. I have emailed the agreed Travel Plan out once again and would urge you to take the time to read over. This information has also been shared with St Peter's Primary School, Woodlands Nursery Centre and the Learning Hub.

Can we also remind people to turn off their engines if they are parked up waiting to collect pupils. As well as being illegal, breathing in air pollution has been linked to a wide range of health problems, including lung and heart disease, stroke and cancer. **Children and older people are more vulnerable to air pollution.**



### School Fund

We continually aim to reduce the cost of the school day for our pupils. We do not charge for extra curricular activities.

Our school fund is also used to subsidise the transport cost for all trips taking place before the end of the session. This will help to ensure that costs to families are kept to a minimum. The following trips are organised:

- P1 Calderglen – **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May**
- P2 Burrell Collection – **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May**
- P3 Burrell Collection – **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May**
- P4 Science Centre – **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June**
- P5 Forth Road Bridge – **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May**
- P6 – visited Sumerlee in November
- P7 Sky Academy – **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March**



**We are looking for helpers to accompany our classes on trips, particularly P1-4.** If you can help, can you please contact the office on 01698286405 or email [office@neilsland-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk](mailto:office@neilsland-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk).

### Attachment Accreditation

We have recently submitted our evidence for our fifth pledge of South Lanarkshire Council's Attachment Accreditation – Respond with compassion.

We have already been awarded the first four pledges;

- Act to make a difference
- See the whole person
- Hear their voice
- Recognise behaviour as communication

This award recognises the work that we do within the school and community in embedding attachment - informed good practice. There are 6 pledges in total and it is our intention to apply for our last pledge 'Believe in change' before the end of the session. On successful completion of each pledge, we receive a jigsaw piece for that pledge with the aim of completing the jigsaw at the end of the process.

### Lockerbie Manor/Neilsland Activity Week

The Primary 6 and 7 pupils who went to Lockerbie Manor in February had a fantastic time. They were excited to be staying in the pod village and enjoyed lots of challenging, team building, muddy activities! As usual, they were a credit to Neilsland, being brave, mannerly, enthusiastic and kind. They all arrived home happy but exhausted, staff included!

The pupils who stayed at home also enjoyed an activity week here at Neilsland. They spent a day at Chatelherault, made s'mores by campfire baked, crocheted, had a movie afternoon,



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takeaway lunch and a karaoke performance. They had a great week.

### **Extra-Curricular Clubs**

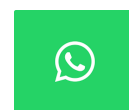
We have many clubs running this term – many of which are being run by our pupils including gymnastics (P1-2 and P3-4), basketball (P5-7), art (P1-2), Polish (P4-7), tennis (P4-7) and chess (P4-6).

- The sewing lunchtime club is run on Tuesdays by some of our P6 and 7's with Mrs Kennedy and is going well.
- Dance club is on a Friday with Caitlin, it's great fun and is currently open to our Dance Festival pupils.
- A fun fitness club for P1-3 pupils has taken place on Friday mornings before school.
- Eco club takes place on a Wednesday lunchtime with Mrs Gilroy and is attended by pupils from across all stages
- Football club for P5-7 takes place on a Wednesday after school with Mrs Hare.

In term 4 the pupil led clubs will include multi sports (P5-7), dance (P1-3), badminton (P5-7) and ball games (all stages).

### **Online Safety**

We often send out an email to all parents/carers regarding online safety



*In the interest of pupil online safety, I would ask you to have an "MOT" of your young person's online presence, if they have one, as soon as you can possibly do so. (WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok)*

*It has come to our attention that several of our pupils have been engaging in an inappropriate and offensive manner online.*

*At the same time I would also ask you to have a serious discussion with them about making sure any posts they make are both legally and morally responsible.*

**This continues to be an issue. I urge all parents/carers to check their child's phone/technology (particularly P7).**

### **School Improvement**

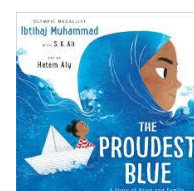
#### **Maths Fluid Groupings – Peer School Review**

Priority 1 of the school's improvement plan is to increase attainment in numeracy. In our last newsletter we explained that we were implementing 'Fluid Groupings' to provide opportunities for children to challenge themselves in maths. Last week we were visited by Headteachers from Loch Primary School and Carnwath Primary School, a Development Officer from South Lanarkshire Council and the Quality Improvement Officer for the school. They went into all classes to watch numeracy lessons, they spoke to some of our pupils and to staff.

The children articulated that they are loving this way of teaching and learning as they can personalise their own learning. So far, it is having a positive impact on attainment. Our visitors thoroughly enjoyed their visit and gave lots of positive feedback. Collectively, we also decided on our next steps in our numeracy and mathematics journey. This will be included in our improvement plan for next session.

### **Equalities and Diversity**

Another improvement priority this session is Equalities and Diversity. We are working with David Livingstone Memorial Primary School and Townhill Primary School. Teachers from each stage across the 3 schools agreed on a focus book and planned a series of 4 activities based on the book to be implemented during Race Equalities Week (3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February). Some of the key themes explored were conflict and war, empathy and understanding, refugees and asylum seekers, gender/LGBT, race, disability and neuro-diversity. The classes shared their learning via Google Meet. The response from both staff and pupils has been extremely positive. Plans are already underway for more collaborative work in Equalities and Diversity next session.







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### **United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

During the In-service day in February, all staff continued their training journey with South Lanarkshire Council's (SLC) Making Rights Real. All staff increased their knowledge of the articles, and we are continuing to embed them in school life. One of the ways we have done this is looking at our pupil led and pupil voice groups and matched them to UNCRC articles.

#### **Article 24**

**As Eco Committee we work to promote our right to a safe environment.**



#### **Article 12**

**As Pupil Council members, we have the right to say our points of view and have our views taken seriously. We support our school friends to do this too.**



We continue to talk about rights at our weekly assemblies. In February we discussed:

#### **Article 31**

We have a right to rest, relax and play.

In this assembly we introduced our new playground charter. All pupils have been involved in the discussions, and it has taken several months to produce our playground charter and we would like to share our final edition with you.



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### Participatory Budgeting

In our last newsletter we explained that we were unable to proceed with our astroturf option and that after consulting with the children, they decided to spend the money on an extra three iPads per class. The iPads have been used extensively and we have asked some of our pupils to share their thoughts with you.

We have used the new iPad for timing ourselves to see what method of written multiplication is faster to do, timing ourselves to see how many of our spelling words we can write in 15 seconds etc. We have also used it to search up stuff and do maths games.

We have used the new iPads for IDL and maths games to help us to practise and remember maths facts. We have used them for STEM, where we learned coding to move Marty the robot.

Mason and Olivia



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### **Foodbank**

We continue to offer our foodbank in our 'Rake and Take' shed. Please feel free to take what you need. We also urge families to contact the school if they need further support and all phone calls are treated confidentially. We are running low on boy's trousers. If you have any preloved trousers, please hand them into the office and we will recycle.



We all enjoyed a fun World Book Day on Thursday the 6th of March when we all took part in lots of reading for pleasure activities to celebrate books. The children all enjoyed dressing up as a favourite character and sharing some of their favourite books from home. A teacher swap reading session took place using our new diversity and equality class books. The session was very popular.

Pupils also got cozy in the gym hall and read together with another class. Each class contributed to our 'We Love Reading at Neilsland' poem which we then put together and will display around the school to remind us all of how we love to read at Neilsland. Some of our P7 children visited Woodlands Nursery to read with the wee ones and all P7's went over to St Peters Primary to share a story with the P1's over there. Our P1's enjoyed their visit from the P7 St Peter's pupils who came to read with them too in our gym hall. Children had the opportunity to read together in our Tales Tent, take part in the Footy Booky Quiz and watch some Authors Live events. Thank you for your donations of blankets and cushions for our Book Nooks. They are now cozy, comfy spaces where the children can relax with a book. We are all looking forward to some dry weather when we can enjoy reading outdoors!

