

We have welcomed back Mrs L Burnett from maternity leave and Mrs L Strong who was off long-term due to medical reasons. Both are currently team-teaching across various classes. Mrs Strong on Tuesdays and Thursdays with alternative Wednesdays and Mrs Burnett every Thursday and Friday. Mrs S Hay has recently left her position as school cleaner after being in this role for many years and we thank her for services to the school. We have welcomed Miss C Marr MA3 student who is on placement currently from Aberdeen University and is being supported by Mrs N Davidson in P3/4. Congratulations to Mrs L Wood who attended Woodhill House today for a celebratory lunch for 25 years' service to Aberdeenshire Council. Mrs M Leys and Miss A Cantlay have been nominated for an ACE (Aberdeenshire Council Celebrates Employees) award by Active Schools Aberdeenshire in recognition of their commitment to establishing and promoting netball here at St Fergus School, giving of their time on a voluntary basis at lunchtimes, evenings and weekends so the children can experience participating in matches and galas. The ladies have been nominated in the everyday hero award category.

ELC have welcomed 4 new children into nursery as part of the October intake. Nursery had an unannounced visit from Care Inspectorate on 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> October. Key strengths from the inspection report highlighted that the children were cared for by kind and nurturing staff & that children were kept safe in a well maintained and clean environment. Key messages for improvement were that whilst children enjoyed playing with their friends, play and learning experiences were not always planned to provide children with challenge and opportunities to consolidate their thinking. Children would benefit from the addition of loose parts and real-life resources to engage their imagination and support creativity. Self-evaluation and quality assurance should be developed and the deployment of staffing could be improved to help children reach their full potential. The report in its entirety can be read on the CI website.

In school, our first Family Learning Event of the session was very well attended with 78% of pupils having a parent/carer or family member visiting. The focus was on Global Goals and the UNCRC but there was plenty opportunity for hands on participation and problem solving.

Pupil Council planned and led a fun-filled Children in Need Day raising approximately £364.00. Everyone came dressed up or in PJs and there were lots of fun activities, dancing and competitions to take part in throughout the day. A special thank you to Mrs Paterson, our school cook who baked spotty cookies for everyone to enjoy. The theme this year was 'the great SPOTacular' and there was great excitement when the children were challenged to find all the spots hidden around the corridors and gym hall. The exact number of 98 was guessed by a group of pupils in P4/5 – well done to those three!

Our JRSOs once again participated in Operation Junior Cop with Police Scotland's PC Will and PC Coutts. They monitored the speed of vehicles travelling through the village on the main road, helping to raise awareness with drivers of safe speeds in built up areas. The JRSOs are currently preparing a road safety assembly to share with school on Friday.

Mrs Sutherland met with the Parent Improvement Planning Group recently for an informal coffee and chat, and to share two of our current improvement priorities as a school and get some feedback to help us going forward with these. These priorities were also the focus of staff development work at our recent in-service days.

#### 1. Numeracy/maths

Last session all teaching staff read and became familiar with the document 'Successful Approaches to Learning Outdoors, A Report by HM Inspectors Feb 2022'. We constructed context progressions for outdoor learning within a numeracy/maths context for the whole school P1-7 (early, first and second level CfE). This has been initially implemented during this current school session. At in-service

last week, Mrs Laura Strong led training in outdoor learning for our PSAs. Time was allocated to making resource boxes for outdoor numeracy/maths. We were donated trolleys from B&Q.

A considerable amount of staff development work over the past few sessions has also centred around revising and updating our school numeracy/maths progressions. Teaching staff finalised these last week and ensured that recently purchased Leckie resources to enhance problem solving and assessment were built into these progressions.

Mrs Sutherland asked the parents:

**NUMERACY/MATHS – WHAT IS WORKING WELL?**

P5 homework – using the calculator.

Outdoor learning – feels like fun, doesn't feel like work.

Great use of everyday things like times and coins.

**NUMERACY/MATHS – WHAT COULD WE CHANGE/IMPROVE?**

Go back to basics with clock – analogue rather than digital.

Parent classes to support with homework.

Using more real-life situations e.g., money, pretend shop.

## 2. Internet safety

As a school, we first introduced E Safety focus week/fortnight about 9 years ago. We have recently renamed this Internet Safety. We have an annual focus in term 3 and this includes support from Police Scotland – currently PC Hislop and PC Will with input to every class in an age-appropriate way and support sessions for parents/carers.

During in-service last week, Mrs Robertson took teaching staff through an audit using an online safety self-review tool '360 Safe' to gauge where we currently are as a school regarding internet safety. Digital technology, use of devices and online safety is an area that is constantly changing and we need to keep up to date with these fast-moving changes. Our aim is to ultimately produce an online safety policy for St Fergus School so that our pupils will become more innovative, confident and responsible in their use of technology and stay safe online. They will be more able to make sound, informed choices about their use of digital technology.

But of course, it's not just in school that pupils use the internet and devices, it's part of their life out with school and at home every day. As parents you also need to be up to speed so that you are best placed to support your children and ensure their safety in this area.

Mrs Sutherland asked the parents:

**INTERNET SAFETY – WHAT IS WORKING WELL?**

Children speak about what the local police told them about being safe online.

Definitely keep up the 'no phone at school' policy.

Children enjoy being able to use iPads at school and learn from each other.

**INTERNET SAFETY – WHAT COULD WE CHANGE/IMPROVE?**

More frequent informal class discussion about any issues or problems they have online.

Parent classes with police to show settings/parental controls on various platforms.

Opportunities for support as some may feel they don't want to speak up when in hall with whole school and police there.

We have a Parent Internet Safety group who will meet with Mrs Robertson early in term 3 – 15<sup>th</sup> January at 2:30pm. If this is something you would be interested in coming along to you do not need to be an expert in all things IT, often it is an extra pair of hands during the focus week – supervising groups of children during filming, recording, etc.

Some good news regarding an upgrade to our entrance area and front office. pxLimited have generously covered the cost for painting works in both areas. This will hopefully take place either February half-term or the Easter holiday period.

We are also delighted to share that following a request from SFSA in recent school newsletters for financial assistance with the cost of buses to the pantomime, the full cost has now been covered through parental donations.

Finally, we are approaching a busy few weeks here in school/ELC with everyone rehearsing for concerts, planning for parties, nativity service and so on. We are so grateful to the support of SFSA at this time of year with gifts for the children when our special visitor comes to each party. Our school Christmas lunch is planned for Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December and Christmas crackers would be greatly appreciated again.