

SFSA Head Teacher Report – 07/02/24

Classes were reconfigured back to a 5-class model at the beginning of term 3 due to some changes in the school roll and to staffing. Both teaching and support staff have worked extremely hard to ensure this has been as smooth a transition as possible for all children. Our learners have shown resilience and really have displayed our school values of being happy and confident, embracing the change mid-session with enthusiasm and commitment. We would envisage the 5-class model to continue for the foreseeable but do need to make you aware that changes to school roll can at times result in re-configurations being unavoidable during a school session.

The second week of term was registration week for entry into P1 in August. It is usual practice for children to attend their local catchment primary school. However, all parents have the right to apply to place their child in a school out with their local zoned catchment area. E.g. A child may have attended ELC for 2 years at an out of zone setting and parent would like them to transfer into P1 with their peer group. These out of zone applications are not dealt with by Head Teachers but centrally by the Learning Estates Team. The outcome of out of zone applications are usually communicated to parents in April.

Mon 22nd Jan – Fri 2nd Feb was application for ELC fortnight. This is a different process from school registration. Any child with a birth date between 20th Aug 2019 and 13th Apr 2022 is eligible for a funded place, commencing at the beginning of the term following their 3rd birthday. At ELC we have an intake four times a year – Aug, Oct, Jan and April. It is an online application and parents are asked to provide a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place choice of ELC setting. Parents must also complete an application for any child returning to the same ELC setting for a new August session. Places are retained for returners. It is part of the Early Years Senior Practitioner remit (Ms Cantlay) to contact parents regarding allocation of places, induction meetings, taster sessions, etc. However, this is done in collaboration with the Head Teachers.

We currently have 31 children on our ELC roll and can take a maximum of 16 at each session. We did not have a January intake this year. We have limited space available from now until July on Mon, Wed and Fri afternoons.

We issued parental questionnaires for both school and nursery this week. We would strongly encourage all parents to respond. This is one of our key methods for gathering feedback that we can use towards improving experiences and outcomes for all. We were last inspected as a school by HMIE back in 2011 so would now be termed a 'targeted' school by our local authority. This means that inspection is not imminent but is likely to happen in the next couple of school sessions. Part of the inspection process involves parents receiving a pre-inspection questionnaire. The one we issued on Monday is of a similar format, with similar questions. We would appreciate a high and timely response rate so that we can take forward parental views and suggestions to bring about positive change that is beneficial for all children and families. Our ELC is anticipating a return visit from Care Inspectorate at some point later this year. Parental response rates to the questionnaires sent out in October by CI were low so again we encourage all parents/carers of ELC children to respond. Tell us what we are doing well but please also tell us how you think we can improve! We are on this improvement journey together; it has to be very much a partnership.

Term 3 will have a couple of distinct priorities, clearly linked to our school improvement plan.

This is currently Online Safety Week in school culminating with a Family Learning event tomorrow afternoon. Back in November, teaching staff used in-service time to audit our online safety procedures and we are now creating an online safety policy for St Fergus School. The expected outcome is that our pupils will be more innovative, confident and responsible in their use of technology and more able to stay safe online. Mrs Robertson met with the Parent Online Safety Group recently. The group discussed 360 Safe, which is a self-evaluation tool for online safety and

comprises of 4 elements – Policy & Leadership, Education, Technology and Outcomes. The discussion focused on the “Education” element and parents were asked to indicate which statement best reflected the current situation in school with regards to the online safety programme, contribution of learners, raising awareness with parent/carer and community engagement. As a result of this discussion, it was felt that parents would like more regular information with regards to online safety, as this is an ever-changing situation. Therefore, communication will be sent out using the National Online Safety initiative #WakeUpWednesday.

This year the focus of our online safety week is change online, this includes covering:

- Young people’s perspective on new and emerging technology, e.g.AI
- Using the internet to make change for the better
- The changes young people want to see online
- The things that can influence and change the way young people think, feel and act online and offline

PC Will and PC Hislop visited classes on Monday and PC Matthew Roger (Peterhead Academy) will offer a parent session on Thursday at 1:30pm.

We will be introducing the French Virtual Class on Google Class later this term. Our aim is that the Virtual Class will become a regular part of One Plus Two (French) within each class as staff, children and parents all become familiar and confident using this resource. The launch of the Virtual Class will promote real and meaningful learning experiences as well as helping to increase children’s knowledge and use of French vocabulary. More info to come on this later in the term...

Term 3 will also see the beginning of regular, planned transition activities between pre-school nursery and P1. High-quality weekly writing remains a focus this term and Head Teachers will be sampling pupils’ writing across all classes and stages for moderation and quality assurance. Our meta-skill of the term as a school will be ‘focusing’. This can include sorting (the ability to sort information into categories), attention (the ability to focus on the present and avoid distractions), filtering (the ability to filter out non-essential information). The skill is introduced at a whole school assembly then class teachers plan and implement in age/stage appropriate ways. E.g. Our P1/2 class with Miss Cantlay have linked meta-skills to their play-based learning. Miss Cantlay observes and then links this to their ability to demonstrate certain skills.

Our P7 and P4 pupils have Scottish National Standardised Assessments online this term. All pupils across Scotland participate in these assessments during P1, P4 and P7. These are diagnostic assessments that help identify their strengths/areas where support & reinforcement may be beneficial in Literacy and Numeracy/Maths. Their purpose is very much to inform learning and teaching.

So once again, a busy term ahead. There will be lots going on and lots of opportunity for parent and family involvement. We appreciate the support provided by SFSA in attendance at these events and in promoting them with our wider parent body. Finally, a big thank you for financial support with pantomime tickets and for raising awareness with our wider parent body around the cost implications of buses to the pantomime. Not only was the cost of the buses covered but we even have a pot towards next year’s panto trip.