



Halfmerke Primary School

Newsletter



Telephone: 01355 221982

Email: office@halfmerke-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk

Web Site : www.halfmerke-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk

Working and Learning together to achieve

August /September 2016

Welcome Back

The weather may not have been kind to us over the summer but I am sure it didn't stop the children enjoying their holiday. It was a pleasure to welcome everyone back to school and to welcome new pupils into their first term in Halfmerke Primary School. On Monday 15th August we welcomed 19 new Primary 1 children and 3 new children into older classes. Our Primary 1 children are now in full time and are enjoying full days of learning.

Parents of our younger children are welcome to drop off their younger children either at the bottom of the steps (to encourage independence) or at the top of the steps at the entrance to the infant area. However please do not stand in the area between the playground and the door. Staff have alerted me to a problem of getting the children from the playground to the door as this can become congested very quickly which can be daunting for our younger children.

Please note that neither of our playgrounds is staffed or supervised before 8:50a.m

New- Build Up Date

Our new building is beginning to take shape and is beginning to resemble a school. There is still lots of work to be done both on the inside and the outside. I have been assured that it continues to be on schedule for phase 1 completion by the end of the year. We will hopefully move sometime in January and the demolition of our current building and completion of the playgrounds and car park being carried out soon after.

We are planning an open afternoon in the second term to celebrate our time in the current building. Look out for details in our newsletters and website.

Car Park

We currently have no car parking facilities in the school grounds. Access is currently limited to school buses and taxis and to holders of blue disabled badges.

The area around the school can become very congested in the morning and at 3:00pm. If you are dropping your child off by car please be mindful of residents and other road users. We have had complaints from residents that their driveways have been blocked, complaints from delivery vans that they cannot get passed park cars. As always the safety of our children is paramount and I have noticed cars going on to the pavement when children are walking along. If you really need to drive your child to the school please do not park on the zig zags (police do spot checks), and be aware of the safety of all children.

Staff News

It was a mixed day on Friday as we said goodbye to Mr Blythe. Mr Blythe has been our school janitor for 18 years but he has decided to go part time and enjoy some quality time with his family. He will now be working at Canberra Primary part time. On Friday the children presented him with a plant, and some goodies and sang to him. He will be missed at Halfmerke but we wish

him well in his semi- retirement. I am sure the boys and girls at Canberra will become as fond of him as our children were.

Our new janitor is Mr Cardwell and he worked alongside Mr Blythe last week. He has told me that he is very impressed with our pupils (who wouldn't be) and is looking forward to getting to know them.

Also on Friday came the news of the safe arrival of Miss Burke's baby daughter. I have seen the photos and I can tell you she is gorgeous!

Staff 2016/ 17

P1 Mrs Hasson
P2 Mrs Aird
P2/3 Mrs Henderson who is our NQT
P4 Mrs McAuslan
P4/5 Mrs Munro
P6 Mrs Bonner (covering Miss Burke's maternity leave)
P7 Miss Byrne
PT Mrs Mackie is working with P1-4 raising attainment
CCC Miss Dowling (replacing Mrs Garner)

Support staff

Mrs Dewhurst
Mrs Thomson
Mrs Fairley
Miss Turner
Miss Graham

Mrs Miller, Mrs Dickson and Mrs Hendry are in the school office.

Curriculum

RME

Schools have a statutory obligation to deliver Religious and Moral Education. Parents also have a right to withdraw their children from Religious Observance and Religious and Moral Education. This should be made in writing to myself.

We are supported in our delivery of Christian Education by three school chaplains - Mrs Paton (Church of Scotland), Mr McGilvray and Mr Cairney (Baptist church)

Learning - Improvement Priorities

To continue to improve the learning and teaching across the school, all areas of the curriculum are constantly under review. Our teachers are continually working to improve the attainment of the pupils.

Literacy

Last session we improved the teaching of spelling and continued to enhance the teaching of reading. P1 are already working with story sacks with parents joining us on a Monday morning. We are grateful to Nikki Hill - Home School Partnership - for her help in this venture. We will continue with these developments over the current session as well as implementing new strategies in the teaching of writing.

Numeracy and Mathematics. Last session we audited our teaching in maths and numeracy. Our teachers make good use of a number of resources in the teaching of this area including the use of ICT and outdoor learning. This year we are looking to introduce T J maths into our materials and ensure that weaker skills are identified and improved.

Health and Wellbeing. All classes use GIRFECs (Getting it Right For Every Child) indicators as part of their every day approach to health and wellbeing across the curriculum. Indicators are - SAFE, HEALTHY, ACHIEVING, NURTURED, ACTIVE, RESPECTED, RESPONSIBLE, INCLUDED. We will continue to develop this throughout the session particularly in the light of moving to a new building.

This year we will continue to work on the rights of the child. Our school rules are based on children's rights and their need to respect the rights of others. The session will begin recapping the work we did last year on the right to learn and the right to play.

Pupil Voice

We are hoping to develop this area to ensure that all children have an active voice in improving our school.

Reporting. We hope that you found the snap shot jotters a valuable way of reporting the work your child is doing in class. We will continue this over the new session, please remember to send these back and don't forget to add comments.

We also intend to show case learning in the classroom this year with the children and the teacher selecting an aspect of their learning / curriculum to showcase and invite you in to see. This will take the place of our curriculum evening which was not well attended.

We also hope to make further improvements in our communications with parents of children requiring additional support in school.

Learning out of school

When children are learning outwith the school site, they will bring home a consent form with the information letter. This **must** be returned before the child can be taken off the premises. If we do not have the consent form we **cannot** take your child out of school. Your child will bring home a consent form covering 'Local visits - on foot'. This will cover your child until the end of June. Please remember to inform the school office if any details change - particularly concerning medical and emergency contacts.

As the school grounds are limited this year, teachers are seeking opportunities to make more use of the local community in enhancing learning. This sometimes means taking advantage of fine weather to make use of local amenities. Look out for information in homework diaries as to when your child is likely to be out. By completing the 'Local visits- On Foot EV5' you are giving permission for your child to participate.

Home Time

Bus Children

Unless we are informed differently we assume that bus children are travelling on the bus every day. If your child deviates from their normal pattern of bus travel please inform the school office. This year we have one school bus, a school taxi and Happy Days after school care picking up from school.

P1 - 3 children should be collected from the infant area. If you have other arrangements for your child please let the teacher know and ensure that your child knows what they have to do.

Contact Numbers

Please ensure that the school office has an up to date telephone contact number in case you need to be contacted in an emergency.

School Captains and House Leaders

Our school captains this year are **Leona Main** and **Lewis Craigie**. I am looking forward to working with them over the year to continue to improve our school.

House leaders from Primary 7 will be elected by all the children in each House.

The children earn points throughout the year and the House with the most points at the end of the session win the House Shield. Last session the House Shield was won by Stirling House.

School Uniform

Our school uniform is **Red polo shirt, red sweat shirt and grey trousers or skirt / pinafore**. Alternatively, our more formal uniform is **white school shirt and tie with grey trousers / skirts**. Some children have taken to wearing a white polo shirt - this is not part of our uniform. It is great to see the majority of the pupils wearing their school uniform. Whether they are in the formal uniform of white shirt and tie or the red polo shirt and sweatshirt, they look very smart.

Red polo shirts should be worn for PE

As usual I am very appreciative of the work our Parent Council has done to ensure that the uniforms were delivered. A huge thank you to Mrs McHugh for her hard work in this area.

Attendance

In accordance with South Lanarkshire Council's guidelines, if your child is ill and off school we ask that you telephone the school between 8:30a.m and 9:30a.m to let us know. If the school has not heard from you a member of the office staff will contact you. On their return to school, pupils should also bring an absence note.

Please note that I am unable to authorise absences for holidays. If a child is absent from school due to a parental holiday this will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Parent Helpers

We are often looking for parents to help and support activities where we take pupils out of school. Parents need to hold a PVG certificate to be able to help. If you would like to be a parent helper please contact the school for an application form for a PVG certificate.

Reminders

Dogs

Please do not bring dogs into the school grounds. Some of our children are frightened of dogs (even small ones).

Nuts

Please do not send your child with nuts for a snack or as part of their lunch. We have some children who are allergic to nuts.

Water

Research has shown that children learn better if they are properly hydrated. They should bring a bottle of water with them to school to drink during the day. Sports caps are best as they are less likely to spill.

Extra Curricular Activities

Currently we are short of staff to run clubs after school and we hope to build these up over the session. If you are able to commit to a club please contact the school.

Mrs McAuslan is planning a Totty Bumpkin club for after the September Weekend for the younger children. This is a yoga type club. She is also in the process of setting up a Lego club during a lunch time.

Miss Dowling is planning to start netball on a Wednesday.

Our Web Team will continue to update our website during their lunch club. Remember to keep checking our web site for information on what we are up to in school.

Dress Down Days

Friday 30 th September,	Friday 28 th October,
Friday 25 th November,	Thursday 22 nd December
Friday 27 th January	Friday 24 th February ,
Friday 28 th April,	Friday 9 th June

These are the proposed dates. Themes will be on our web site and in our news letters.

Credit Union

Our credit union is run by our P7 children and overseen by Blantyre Credit Union. This is organised on a Wednesday morning.

Outdoor Play and Learning

Children learn in a variety of ways both in and out of the classroom. At Halfmerke we believe that children also learn through outdoor play. A little rain will not stop us from going outside so please ensure that your child has appropriate outdoor clothes.

We will however operate an indoor interval when the weather is extreme.

ParentZone Scotland

Parentzone Scotland is a unique website for parents and carers in Scotland. The website provides up -to-date information about learning in Scotland and gives practical advice and ideas about supporting learning at home. The website can be accessed at www.ParentzoneScotland.com

Achievements

My target for this year is to be better at recording the many achievements of our pupils. Please let us know if your child is achieving out side of school and if you want it mentioned in our newsletter.

To start the year off -

P3 **Abigail Jenkins** took part in the world street dance championships and earned a bronze medal. Well done!

A few dates for your diary

Friday 26 th August	P6 swimming starts
Friday 23 rd and Monday 26 th September	Holiday
Thursday 6 th October	Open Evening
October 18 th - 22 nd October	Holiday
Thursday 17 th November	Rooky Rock Stars Evening
Monday 21 st November	School closed for pupils (INSET)
Wednesday 16 th December	Flu vaccination
Thursday 22 nd December	School Closes 2:30
Monday 9 th January	School Re-opens 9:00
Monday 13 th ,Tuesday 14 th , Wednesday 15 th February	School closed. 15 th February is an INSET day for staff
Thursday 16 th February	Parents Appointments
Friday 31 st March	School Closes 2:30pm
Tuesday 18 th April	School reopens 9:00
Monday 1 st May	Holiday
Thursday 4 th May	INSET day - school closed to pupils
Wednesday 10 th - Friday 12 th May	P7 Residential Robinwood
Thursday 19 th May	Curricular Evening (TBC)
Friday 26 th and Monday 29 th May	Holidays
Tuesday 27 th June	School closes 1pm

Please remember to check updates on our website www.halfmerke-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk.

I am looking forward to working with your children over what promises to be another very busy year.

As always, if you have concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school. DO NOT WAIT FOR ONE OF OUR FORMAL EVENTS TO SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF STAFF

Yours sincerely,
K Douglas (Mrs)
Head Teacher