

Head Teacher's Report

31st August 2021

We currently have a **school roll** of 131 children which is an increase of 18 children since this time last year. Due to movement of children over the summer, we currently have 8 spaces in our English classes.

We have a stable **staff** with Mr Haston as Newly Qualified Teacher and all permanent staff remaining the same. Mrs Russell left her post last session and this leaves us with vacancies in our support staff. Due to an increase in clerical hours, Mrs MacKintosh will also leave her support post to focus on clerical only and this will leave a further vacancy. These are currently being covered with temporary staff. However, our support allocation will be reviewed this term and appointments cannot be sought until this process has completed.

Covid

We are proud of our school's response to the Covid situation. The staff have worked extremely hard to support families throughout it and continue a calm, safe and welcoming environment with a focus on health and wellbeing and education recovery. Google classroom and our Family Learning site have been are main sources of online learning and were utilised well. Families admirably worked with these through both lockdowns. We aimed to be as flexible and supportive as possible during these. Our risk assessments are updated as per advice and shared on our school website that provides all up-to-date information. We continue to follow all Council and government guidelines.

School Improvement –Our annual Standards and Quality report will be published by the end of Term along with our finalised School Improvement Plan.

As explained in the school newsletter, this year we hope to focus on;

Recovery from Covid-19 School Closures:

- 1) Health and wellbeing – continuing the work started last year using Emotion Works as well as, continued work towards Rights Respecting Schools Gold award (assessment set for Nov 2nd), reviewing positive relationships and behaviour charters and our Health and wellbeing programmes.
- 2) Recovery of learning, teaching and assessment – continued work to embed 'playful learning', increased focus on global citizenship, reviewing Interdisciplinary learning and parental engagement.
- 3) Attainment in session 20/21 - focusing on identifying new or widened gaps caused by the Covid-19 situation and continued support for all children to achieve.

Pupil Equity Funding – Last year Pupil Equity Funding was used to;

- provide teacher cover towards bridging gaps with maths and literacy
- extra support hours to help in the senior years
- Calm a class training for all staff
- maths home learning packs for new children
- Education city for the next 3 years and
- 50 sets of waterproof clothing and wellies

Due to Covid restrictions teacher support was given in blocks to limit contact and movement of staff between classes. All staff felt this had an adverse effect on progression and the support we were able to give. Again, due to Covid, support for Literacy was interrupted due to lockdowns and while progress was evident prior to this, all felt this remained a focus for the coming year – particularly with writing. Calm a Class continues to be used by all teachers daily in class and some children have responded really well to this (others aren't as keen, as expected.) The waterproof clothing has provided equity and been utilised well in outdoor learning and enabled all to take part in wider awards such as working to achieve our Gold Woodland Trust Award.

We were then left with a carry forward of £13297 which we agreed at previous Parent Council meeting to keep for staffing purposes.

This year we have an award of £21,557 and then our carry forward giving us a total of £34135. I spoke with the Council in regards having another class teacher that was partly funded by Covid (as discussed at previous Parent Council meeting) but, this was not an option. With previous discussions with staff and parents in mind we have therefore focussed on staffing for our coming support with children who are free school meals (PEF funding for) being the main target for this support.

We therefore hope to provide;

- 1 day teacher cover a week to allow teachers to take children and support with maths (each class getting approximately 1 hour dependent on no. of children)
- 1 day teacher cover a week to allow the PEF teacher to support writing (again with each class getting a proportion depending on no.s)
- 8 hours a week support (Mr Christie) to provide support for Literacy and Numeracy in the upper classes
- 16 hours a week support (to be advertised) to provide support for Literacy across the school including, supporting the use of Lexia, precision spelling and talk for writing.
- maths packs for all new children
- continued 3 year subscription to Lexia
- Emotion Works subscription for this coming year.

This PEF plan has been approved and Authority to Recruit forms submitted for vacant posts.

Building Works: Over the course of this week, work to install new security – front gate and round the school (door alarms and fencing) should be completed. New lights were fitted throughout the school in the summer break. The Gaelic nursery build has had to be put on hold until October due to a maternal bat roost.

Thank You A big thank you to the Parent Council and wider parent forum for all their support and understanding over what has been another very different year with its own set of challenges but also opportunities. We all really appreciate your support which works alongside our daily work to make Glenurquhart the best it can be.

Any other business;

Toilets – as part of our nursery conversion I have previously made parents aware that the senior boys toilets in the main school will be used for nursery. This means that both boys and girls in P3-5 will share what is currently the girls toilets. The door will be removed and cubicles will be replaced with floor to ceiling height cubicles. We will have 2 male and 2 female and 1 gender neutral toilet. Please be aware that boys and girls already share the toilet in the portacabins. Any questions/concerns regarding this?

Swimming This has now started again with classes being allowed to visit. However, we need to find a sustainable option going forward. The lowest quote we could get for buses was £240 per trip to Inverness. For this block of swimming this will cost us £1680. This equates to £13.33 per child per visit for a half hour swimming lesson. We had hoped to enable all P6 and P7 children to attend but, cannot afford this (£4410 in total.) In consultation with staff, we had to make a decision as to who would attend. Based on what we could staff, we have agreed that all P7s will go swimming. This will be our only block this session though. Even with the Soirbheas grant of £1000 we would like to request £500 from Parent Council to cover the remaining cost. We have then requested £2 a trip (trying to keep cost down considering Covid) from children attending.

The cost of transport and cover from staff is an ongoing issue. What are thoughts on going forward? Parents should also be aware that this will be prohibitive in terms of school trips and taking part in competitions e.g. cross country.

Gaelic consultation An email was recently sent to Parent Council regarding the proposed Gaelic Medium catchment area for Glenurquhart Primary. This gave an advance notice of a possible statutory consultation which may be undertaken by Highland Council. If approved the consultation would create an additional catchment area for GUPS in relation to Gaelic Medium Education. At the moment they are awaiting approval for this consultation but, asked us to share with Parent Council members. Request secretary to send copy on to Parent Council membership.

Safer Schools app This was launched at the online safety event last night. We only had one parent in attendance and one who got in touch regarding confusion of times. These have not been widely attended (hence why we teamed up with the High School.) If parents wish though, I can look to rearrange the event. I have sent out information on the safer schools app on the News blog (please encourage people to follow – currently only have 32 followers)

Rights Respecting Schools We now have an assessment date for our Gold Rights Respecting Schools award – 2nd November. As part of this, we will be looking for parents to speak with assessors. (Advanced notice)