

Be the Best You Can Be!

RESPECT *for yourself, others and the environment*

RESPONSIBILITY *for all of your actions*

KINDNESS *always*

Williamston Primary School Update

September/October 2024

Staffing Update

With Mrs Young's absence the following backfill is now in place –

- Acting Depute – Roisin Thomson with a remit for Early Years and wellbeing
- Acting Principal Teacher – Sharon Blair with a remit for Meeting Learner Needs
- Backfill class teacher – Miss Abby Little supporting meeting learner needs, raising attainment and HWB

Each contract mirrors the initial absence cover.

Mrs Rachel McDonagh (PSW) left us just before the September weekend. Doris Stewart and Lorna Gilmour, our Early Years practitioners currently supporting P1 are returning to their ELC roles. Mrs Kelly Mason has moved on to another position. Jo McNaughton will shortly be leaving us having secured a new post within the Civil Service. We wish everyone all the best in their new roles.

We welcome Stephanie Bazely in the office covering the clerical role.

We also welcome a number of students across the school in the coming weeks as well as S6 work placement volunteers.

School Improvement Update

Our school improvement plan (SIP) outlines our priorities for the coming year. The Standards and Quality Report (SQR) reflects on the progress made last session. Both have been sent out to all parents and are now published on our school website.

SIP and SQR and ratings

Supported by the central team, our self-evaluation gradings now evidence Very Good in all 4 Quality Improvement areas. We are very proud of the work we have undertaken to achieve this.

Cluster Partnerships

We are working with our cluster schools on a project around learner engagement targeted at our current P5 pupils and tracking this through transition and into S1. The theme is around expressive arts. More information will follow for the P5 classes.

Curriculum Development

As part of our Health and Wellbeing programme, we are introducing mindfulness to support our learners and staff. Staff are currently undertaking training around this. The programme closely interlinks with outdoor learning which we also know has a very positive impact on wellbeing. We continue to work closely with West Lothian College towards outdoor learning priorities, with some classes either invited there for learning or learning taking place with an 'in house' trip within the school estate. Look out for a whole school sharing our learning event in Term 4 where you can find out more about mindfulness and outdoor learning. We also have a date identified for family learning around Health and Wellbeing in November for your P5-7 families.

Budget Linked to School Improvement

In line with our improvement plan, mindfulness and resources to support equality and diversity will be prioritised.

A plea from school – where reading books are issued, sometimes these come back to school damaged or not at all. This makes a significant dent into our resources. We would ask that ALL reading books are stored in these and brought to school daily.

We are delighted to share with you that we have won a GOLD Music Award! When we collated our evidence we were not anticipating that the work we have done to have expressive arts so fully implemented following the pandemic that we would in fact be awarded Gold status! The presentation will take place at a special assembly in November.

Sharing our Learning

We welcomed a large number of P1 and P2 parents to our literacy and numeracy event in September, with some very positive feedback following the visit. The model where we have had most success is where we have a brief input in the large hall for parents and carer around an area of the curriculum and how we are delivering this/how the children learn. This is followed by a visit to classes to see the learning in action and where you can learn alongside your child, seeing their learning in action. We have identified a date in November for a P3/4 literacy and numeracy event and a P5-7 Health and Wellbeing event in November.

This session, our events are on Wednesday mornings first thing for the most part. This is in line with assemblies this year and due to timetabling and staffing.

Wider Achievements

Gordy in P7 completed a fundraiser for Held In Our Hearts where he ziplined across the river Clyde. We are very proud of you Gordy and the pictures looked amazing!

Logan in P4 is a very keen mini moto enthusiast and had great success in many competitions and training, travelling abroad to do so. Logan has shared his passion with his class. Well done Logan!

We had 3 pupils attend the opening of a new crossing near the station. The idea for the crossing here came from Chloe in P7, who delivered a short speech on the day. Chloe is always keen to contribute to her community and we know that this will make a difference for our children and families.

UNCRC Update

Health and Safety

Parent Contact Details

With the recent events of the Police incident last week, we had some parents/carers say they had not received the Groupcall text/email. We only use Groupcall for urgent messaging. The system uses the primary contact from Seemis to send the alert. If anyone did not receive this, then you should check your contact details are updated and current using Parent Portal.

I would stress that any school closure decision is taken in partnership with the centre and not solely at the head teacher's discretion, ensuring the safety of all children, families and staff is a priority.

Snow or Bad Weather

In the event of a snow day/bad weather, we open one entrance in the morning via breakfast club with a safe path being cleared from the lane to the entrance here. The car park is often not cleared until later and we would advise a park and stride for safety in the event of snow, especially given the incline to leave the exit. Should the school be closed, we would use Groupcall email/text to share with all parents/carers as soon as we know this is the case.

Parking in Wider Community

We appreciate that it is not always practical to walk to school, and we do ask that parents/carers be considerate in their parking in the local area. We have had a local resident ask us to share the implications when parents/carers park in the bus stop at the bottom of the road preventing safe disembarking from the bus. This resident is disabled, and needs a ramp to leave the bus. When there are cars parked there, this means that they cannot disembark safely in the bus stop but on the main road.

Blue badge spaces

There are 3 spaces marked for blue badge holders, 2 within the school estate and one just outside. We have children who require access to the spaces within the school grounds, with their nearest exit being from the main entrance supported by staff or carers. The spaces are vital for the children to access their transport to and from school. The blue badge space just outside the main entrance gate is closest for nursery pick up and drop off. If a parent/carer is using the car line for drop off/pick up, it may be easier for them to use the car line as these spaces are much nearer the car line gate than walking from the top of the car park down.

Car line

The car line is for drop off and pick up only and there is no need to walk around to the rear of the school as we have staff to man these areas. Parking to walk round prevents the flow of drop off and pick up. If you prefer meeting your child in the courtyard, then please park and stride rather than using drop off and pick up. Children can enter the school from any door in the morning and do not have to walk around to a specific entrance.

Parent Body News

Parent Council/PTA meetings are held regularly throughout the year. The next date is 18th November. If you have an issue or question to raise, this should be raised via school first. At our last meeting, we discussed trips and the related costs. Trips are always linked to learning and under the Cost of the School Day, costs are always a priority. Wherever possible, we would bring in a provider to have the learning 'in house' and negating the bus costs. These trips will be branded as 'in house trips' – a great idea from our Parent Council! The transport for the recent nursery trips in partnership with West Lothian College, were funded by the college and we thank them for their support.

All minutes are on the school website.

PSA Fundraising

The PSA has agreed to support us in fundraising towards our technology hardware. The next event is a Halloween disco on 25th October. Look out for information from them about this event.

We are registered as a school on the Asda Cashpot – see the school app for details.

Cost of the School Day

Our ethos surveys show that parent feedback is that we need to do more to support the cost of the school day for our families with only 77.27% feeling we are doing this well, which is below the WLC average of 81.46%. Individual comments are around the cost of trips, residential visits, uniform costs. We need to plan a range of opportunities to reduce the cost of the school day for our families. We already –

- Fund residential for identified families
- Support clothing provision for new families and through Winted (current uptake this session is higher than the norm)
- Fund after school clubs, with all active school providers now free
- Recommend and promote non branded school uniform
- Donation only events, or participation only events. Our budget group will be arranging our charity focuses this session, one local and one more national.
- Provision of classroom resources for all learners
- Consider the purpose of trips and the cost of these linked to learning at every stage of planning
- Where a greater cost is involved, we offer payment plans over time

Should any parent wish to discuss costs relating to the school day, any further financial support signposting or have any other ideas how we can support the Cost of the School Day, please contact the school directly in confidence.

Clearing out at home plea!

For our Winted, we would welcome any school uniform of any size, pre-loved Halloween costumes and Christmas jumpers.

For our ELC we would welcome any puddle suits of any size between age 3-6 years old

Extra Curricular Clubs

Mrs Howard has been working with our Active Schools contact and partners to pull together an after school club programme that starts on the 28 October for a block. We always plan from after October to allow a settling in period after summer with clubs running in terms 2 (October to December) and terms 3 (January to March) with P1 clubs planned for Term 3. We do not get a big uptake on clubs term 4 with the lighter nights and better weather, as well as the interrupted weeks due to Monday holidays in term 4. In line with WLC request for all schools, all Active School Clubs will be free. Some other clubs may be led by our staff team and will also be free.

Our providers must have gone through the right processes to be H&S/safeguarding/volunteer trained, usually by our Active School Coordinator. There are set protocols and processes for any partner provider to offer an opportunity in schools. Information relating to clubs will be sent out the term before these start with limited places offered on a first come first served basis.

Christmas Planning

Dare we mention the Christmas word already! We thank you for the support for the cards classes have been making – there are some lovely designs! We have already had some behind the scenes nativity meetings as a staff team. The nativity will be a ticketed event due to the capacity of the hall, with P1 performing and P2 singing. Both performances will be in the morning, with an initial 2 tickets per family available with a wait list for any spare tickets. There is a music event on Wednesday 11 December from 4-5pm with Wind, brass and choir performing.

There will be parties for all stages as well as a pantomime 'in house trip' for all classes and the annual Christmas lunch organised by the kitchen. Children are welcome to wear a Christmas jumper or something Christmassy for all of these. Dates for parties are outlined below. Christmas lunch date is TBC.

Breakfast Club

Our breakfast club is run by our 3 lovely ladies, Mrs Hulskramer, Mrs Hong and Mrs Grant. They are there ready for the doors to open from 8am, with the last entry at 8.30am. Children can help themselves to toast or cereal if they have not already had breakfast. They are supervised until 8.40am when they are taken to classes. We would ask that parents/carers take their child to check in at the desk where registration takes place and then leave their child with the staff. Where we have numbers of parents staying with their child, this can add to the management of the Breakfast Club, the business and the noise.

Diary Dates

Please refer to parent calendar sent out in August and also –

Mon 30 September	School photos – classes and siblings
Fri 4 October	Pupil leadership groups
Tues 8 October	Parent consultations 4.30-7.30
Wed 9 October	Parent consultations 4.30-7.30 Cross country
Fri 11 October	Break at 12.25 for October holiday
Mon 21 October	In service day for staff only
Tues 22 October	Pupils return P7 Madrid Marathon at JYHS ELC trip to West Lothain College 1.30-3pm
Wed 23 October	Flu immunisation day
Thurs 24 October	Sky Academy for P6B AM
Fri 25 October	PSA Halloween Disco – details from PSA on the app
Wed 30 October	Building Resilience assembly
Fri 1 November	**Literacy and Numeracy event for P3/4 parents 9-9.45 in the hall, followed by 30 min class visit. Please note this is an addition to the parent calendar and following feedback from the P1/2 event. **
Wed 6 November	Building Resilience assembly
Thurs 14 November	P7 Risk Factory trip
Fri 15 November	Pupil leadership groups
Mon 18 November	Parent Council and PSA meeting
Tues 19 November	P5 cluster expressive arts visit to JYHS 1
Wed 20 November	P5-7 Health and Wellbeing event 9am
Thurs 21 November	Sky Academy visit for P6E AM
Tues 26 November	P5 cluster expressive arts visit to JYHS 2
Wed 27 November	Special Award assembly – Gold Music Award Presentation!
Tues 3 December	P5 cluster expressive arts visit to JYHS 3
Wed 4 December	Chaplain visit assembly
Mon 9 December	Nativity dress rehearsal
Tues 10 December	Nativity 1 (Time estimated to start at 9.15am but TBC)
Wed 11 December	Nativity 2 (Time estimated to start at 9.15am but TBC) Instrumental Music and Choir Concert 4-5pm
Mon 16 December	P6 party AM and P5 PM
Tues 17 December	P4 party AM and P3 PM
Wed 18 December	Pantomime In House Trip AM P7 party PM
Thurs 19 December	P2 party AM and P1 party PM
Fri 20 December	All break for Christmas holiday, all return on 6 January.

Thank you for your continued support.



Jane Livingston and Williamston Staff Team

