

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES ACHIEVEMENTS

26 NOVEMBER 2008

APPLEGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Applegrove has achieved its second Eco School green. Inspectors were taken round the school grounds and classrooms by pupil reps from the Eco, Health and JRSO committees. Although they met with a group of children from the Gardening Club, they expressed an interest in ensuring that all the children are aware of Eco issues and don't rely on Gardening Club to win the flag for them. Lack of litter and obvious signs of pupils taking responsibility were noted. They have now set us the task of finding a way to install a flagpole – not an easy task when our playground has a public right of way and regularly has low levels of vandalism.

Britain in Bloom presented the Gardening Club with the Young People's Award in recognition of the number of years this after-school activity has remained consistent.

The school held 2 fundraising days last term. The first raised money for CLIC Sergeant, Roald Dahl's charity. Pupils and staff dressed as characters from Roald Dahl stories and paid 50p for not wearing uniform. £131.50 was raised. The week leading up to the dressing up event focussed on Roald Dahl books in all classes. One of the P6 classes took a particular interest in the Scottish version of George's Marvellous Medicine (George's Mingin Medicine).

The second event was held at the end of term and organised by P5 pupils who had been learning about Kenya. They chose to raise money for the charity Save the Rhino. Pupils and staff made and wore masks to school and raised £161.11.

CABRACH PRIMARY SCHOOL

The children are organising their own St Andrew's Day celebrations. They are finding out information about St Andrew and tartan, deciding who to invite and designing their invitations. The children are learning Scottish poems and songs, and a couple of dances. It should be an enjoyable time.

The school along with many schools in Britain registered with Generation Green - a schools and community programme run by British Gas to encourage people to think about green issues. Each school has to collect leaves which can then be exchanged for environmental rewards. The top ten primary schools and the top ten secondary schools, who reach their leaf target, win solar panels for their school. I am delighted to say that Cabrach School reached their leaf total at the end of September - only the second primary school in Britain to do so. We have not only reached our target once,

but, at the beginning of November, we reached it again - only the third school to do so. If all goes well, we should have our solar panels in the next few months. A very big thank you must go to all who supported us.

DYKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

We have recently received the Eco-schools Bronze Award and work is now underway towards achieving the Silver Award. Thanks to links with, and support from, Dyke Gardening Club we now have a new garden shed and are looking into the possibility of starting up a lunchtime gardening club for pupils. Under the guidance of a parent volunteer a new part of garden has been created.

The new Healthy Tuck Shop opened at the beginning of this term, providing healthy snacks for pupils. This venture is run by our P7 pupils and a parent helper.

A very successful Curriculum for Excellence evening was held in the Village Hall in September and we were delighted with the large turnout of parents at this event.

Dyke School Parent Council has received funding for a Climbing Wall to be provided and we look forward to this being put in place.

The team from Dyke Primary won the Small Schools section at the Inter-school sports in Elgin in June for the 3rd year running. Success has also been achieved at local orienteering events and our senior pupils recently enjoyed a practice session led by one of our parents.

PORTGORDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Peace Windows

Before the summer holidays, a former pupil of Portgordon Primary, Steffie Murray, contacted the school to ask if she could undertake some voluntary work in the school. Steffie, a student at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen, was considering a career in Art Therapy and wanted some experience in working with children. Volunteers are always welcome, especially those who bring with them particular skills and talents! At this time, school chaplain Willie Aitken had been working with the children during assemblies on the theme of Peace. A plan evolved where all pupils in the school and Nursery could contribute towards a very special community project – to produce four stained glass window panels for the village Methodist Church.

Steffie worked with pupils in each class to define in a picture what "Peace" meant to them. A variety of beautiful images and ideas were gathered and Steffie used the pupils' drawings and inspirations to create four very different panels. The intricate cutting of the designs was done by Steffie, whilst every pupil in the school and Nursery helped to place and stick the coloured cellophane paper, creating the "stained glass" effect.

The Nursery window is of a beautiful rainbow and three Christmas roses. They thought the beautiful parts of the world make it a peaceful place to live together.

A peaceful scene encapsulated P1/2/3's view of peace, with their window depicting a sunny sky overlooking a calm and quiet valley.

A dove of peace features in P3/4/5's window. The youngsters decided that this symbolises not only peace but hope as well.

Finally, P6/7 embraces a global theme, depicting people joining hands around the world. Living in harmony while sharing the world together were the ideas behind their contribution.

The panels were handed over to Mr Aitken and the Methodist Church at the Summer End of Term Assembly.

On Friday 31 October 2008 pupils, parents and friends attended a special Assembly in the Methodist Church, where Rev Sean Turner dedicated the windows.

This very rewarding project has allowed us to build community within our school in working together to produce the panels. It has also allowed us to strengthen links between the church, the school and the wider community.

Multi Agency Meeting

A Multi Agency Meeting was held in Portgordon Primary School on Friday 10 October 2008, the purpose being to consider strategies to address concerns in the community at Portgordon that have been impacting on learning and teaching in the school.

The meeting was a very positive one, allowing for valuable input from colleagues of partner agencies. Representatives from Community and Learning Development, Moray East Children & Families Service, Local Community Network, Inclusion and Support Services, Grampian Police and Educational Services were all in attendance.

Examples of current good practice were shared. A number of ideas and suggestions were put forward and a number of actions are now being undertaken as a result of the discussions. One of these is the formation of a Community Wide Consultation. The consultation will allow the wider community the opportunity to have their say on issues that affect them. A group of volunteers will distribute the questionnaire to every household within the catchment area of the school in early January 2009. The results will form the basis of a positive way forward for the school community and the wider community.

The opportunity to work with partner agencies in this constructive way has been a huge support to me and I look forward to continued good practice in this interdisciplinary approach.

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT - ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Being recognised nationally as an effective and successful forum, Moray Adult Learners' Forum (MALF) was invited by Learning Connections to an information stall at this year's International Literacy Day Conference in Glasgow in September. Two

members of the forum were able to tell visitors to the stall how the forum was set up, the activities they have been involved in and the improved confidence and skills they, and their fellow learners, have gained from participation. Low levels of literacy can lead to feelings of isolation and the forum provides support for learners by learners. The forum also informs policy and practice in adult literacy learning in Moray; learners themselves being the people best placed to guide and shape provision. In supporting people to be responsible citizens and effective contributors the forum encourages members to participate and comment on adult learning issues and community consultations. MALF is committed to encouraging and supporting other local authority areas to establish learners' forums and to giving people, who in the past have not had the confidence to participate, the opportunity to have a voice.

The forum, which is now a constituted unincorporated association, is supported by the Adult Literacies Strategy Coordinator and the Essential Skills Development Officer. Along with the two learners attending the event they were delighted to hear Maureen Watt, MSP, Minister for Schools and Skills, state in her opening address for the conference that she had recently visited Moray, where she had met Essential Skills learners "whose lives had been transformed through their involvement in adult literacy learning". Learners and staff were pleased to hear this public affirmation of the success of the adult literacies provision in Moray and the fact that it does change lives.

International Literacy Day activities locally included a series of 8 Writing workshops for learners held throughout Moray, a family literacy event held at Elgin Library and a further three adult learners attending a Learners' Conference at the invitation of Western Isles Learners' Forum and Literacies Partnership on Uist.

LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

Poet Partner

Elgin Library's poet partner Colin Will had a very fruitful three day visit to Moray. In the Falconer Museum on 1 October he read from the works of well known Scottish poets on the theme of "Collecting and Keeping" to S1/S2 pupils from Forres Academy. The pupils then worked with Colin to write a poem "Hugh Falconer's Legacy", the last verse of which so aptly summed up the event.

"A museum is more than the contents of glass cases.
The objects we collect and keep
stimulate, communicate, light up the past,
better than an Olympic torch."

Colin also visited Towerview in Forres where he supported the group to talk about their interests and produce short stories.

Colin also led a Haiku workshop at Buckie Library and read to the Scots Language Group at Lossiemouth.

Learning Centres

Elgin Library Learning Centre has secured approval to deliver two accredited courses.

Advanced ECDL Word is being offered in response to significant demand and offers a continuum of learning for the many ECDL learners.

The Internet Safety, Intermediate 1, course accredited by the SQA is launched in partnership with Grampian Police. The course is designed to give learners the knowledge to recognise and deal with the safety and security issues that they may come across in using the internet and is an excellent opportunity for parents and those working with young people to find out how to ensure appropriate access.

Library Open Days

On 4 October Forres Library celebrated its 35th birthday with a Family Day held jointly with Forres LCN and Active Schools. Over 750 people visited the library with feedback from the public being particularly positive.

Buckie, Cullen and Keith Libraries also had successful open days, with partnership working underpinning their approaches.

Elgin also had a very successful open day during this period attracting 2,100 visitors!

Self Help Collection

A bibliotherapy partnership between Moray Health and Social Care Partnership, the Health Information Team and the Libraries Service underlines a collective commitment to supportive information.

Specific collections of self help books are now available at Buckie, Elgin, Forres, Keith and Lossiemouth Libraries while public access computers in all libraries promote the recommended website www.livinglifetothefull.com.

Supportive training is being carried out for libraries staff.