

BALLOCH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Dear Parent/Guardian,

The term continues to be busy with lots of extra activities and visits to some classes.

LEARN TO SAVE A LIFE

Once again Primary 7 pupils have had an opportunity to take part in training organised by the Scottish Ambulance Service. They should all now know how to react in emergency situations and use basic first aid skills which could save a life.

JIVE LESSON

Primary 6/7 pupils are currently studying the 1950's and 1960's and had a great time learning about popular dance of that era.

'On Tuesday 3rd February, Mr. and Mrs. McCormack and Diane Morris came to teach P6/7 some jiving moves. We were doing this because our project is on the 1950's and 1960's and jiving was popular around then.

We started with a simple hand jive which we picked up quite quickly. Then we went onto partner work where we did a lot of twirling and swinging.

Diane and Mr. McCormack were surprisingly good and made it easy for us to follow and learn. It was a little hard and embarrassing at first but then we got into the mood and had a lot of fun.

P6/7 would like to say a huge thank you to them all for giving up their spare time to do this and would love to have them back. It was a lot better than maths!

by Cara Fraser and Vicky MacRae P6/7

JACOBITES

P5 pupils are learning about the Jacobites uprisings, life at that time and the Battle of Culloden. They will soon be visiting the Prisoners Stone and the Culloden Visitors Centre. This is what Liam and Emma have to say about a recent talk by Ray Owens:

'On Monday 2nd February, Ray Owens came to talk to P5 about the Jacobites. We learnt about their home life, weapons, battles and clothes. The Jacobites had something called a plaid. It was used for clothes and as their blanket. It could be up to 8 metres long. Calum and Nina were lucky enough to try the plaid on! Their shoes were made out of the skin of a deer's throat. Their houses were called blackhouses. There was no glass because it was too expensive. The blackhouses were made from stone and wood. They slept on straw.

We learnt about the Jacobites weapons. They had the basket broadsword, the targe and a small dagger. The targe was a circular shaped shield; a sharp spike could be attached to the front. It was the Jacobites pillow, weapon, seat and shield.

We really enjoyed learning about the Jacobites and we would like to say thank you to Ray Owens for the talk. It has really helped us with our project.'

by Liam Burnside and Emma Booth P5

THE UNIVERSE

P7 pupils also enjoyed another talk by Mr. Owens, extending their knowledge and understanding of 'The Universe'.

ENERGY TALK

P3/4 learned more about saving energy during a visit by Dennis and Karen from Highland Council, Housing and Property Services and Energy Advice.

'On Wednesday 4th February Dennis and Karen came to talk to our class about saving energy. It was amazing what we learnt. We know that we have to try and do 'our bit' to save energy and help the planet. Dennis and Karen thought it was really good that the school had solar panels on the roof. Some of the ideas were ones we already do e.g. switch off lights when you are not in the room, turn off taps and mend dripping taps. Teachers need to remember to switch off computers at night!

We really enjoyed the talk because it was interesting and fun. We laughed at some of their jokes:

Q: Why does a gardener plant a light bulb? A: So he can make a power plant.

Q: What kind of oil do you use at night? A: Midnight oil.

We need to try and save energy so that our planet will be a better place to stay.'

by Beth MacKenzie and Ethan MacKinnon P3/4

DOLPHIN TALKS

Children in P5, P6, P6/7 and P7 enjoyed finding out more about Dolphins in the Moray Firth when Education Officer, Katy Norbury visited them on February 5th.

OUT OF EDEN PROJECT

P1, P1/2 and P2/3 pupils are enjoying their drama sessions with Jessie Paul.

MUSIC: FEIS ROIS

Tin whistle lessons have started for P4/5 and P5 and will continue during the term.

HAND WASHING

P4 pupils were challenged to show if they could wash their hands properly following a talk and demonstration by the school nurses.

SPORT

- ❖ Nursery pupils are having great fun in the 'Little Dribblers' sessions run by Ross County Football Club.
- ❖ P7 pupils have taken part in their first fitness testing session. They will be tested again before the summer to see if they have managed to

improve their individual levels. Thank you for Miles Fuller (Active Schools Co-ordinator) for this.

- ❖ Cross Country training is underway for the events in March. Well done to all pupils who took part in the trials.
- ❖ P5 pupils have taken part in Basketball coaching with John Kerry. Katie and Sophie clearly enjoyed it:
 - *'John Kerry is a basketball player and Highland Development Officer from Zimbabwe, Africa, who is going round schools teaching children how to play basketball and encouraging them to keep fit. He has been coming for the past 3 weeks for an hour to teach Primary 5 lots of basketball skills. We have really enjoyed it and would recommend basketball to anyone!'*

by Katie McKenzie and Sophie King P5

EXPRESSIVE ARTS WEEK

We plan to run this from February 23rd - 27th and have organised lots of interesting activities for all the children to take part in.

One of these will be learning how to use our Traverse Climbing Wall which was installed over the February break. The children will also have the opportunity to take part in taster sessions by a range of specialists e.g. Music, Drama, Capoeira and Drum Fun.

We are looking forward to a great week which I am sure everyone will enjoy.

ATTAINMENT IN SCHOOL

Some of you may have read recent reports in the national press which indicate that pupils in some Council areas in Scotland are not performing well in attainment in Maths, Reading and Writing. Highland appears to be one of these. The overall attainment for Highland Schools is quoted as follows: the numbers representing the percentage of children reaching expected levels of attainment.

Maths - 73.5. Reading - 76.4. Writing 66.2.

I would like to assure you that this in no way reflects performance at Balloch School. Indeed, our results are better than the average quoted for the best performing Council Area which is:

Maths - 88.4. Reading 89.5. Writing 79.1.

Our current attainment is as follows:

Maths 97%. Reading 91%. Writing 82%.

Our staff work hard to provide very high quality teaching and our pupils work hard to achieve these very good results which we hope to maintain and continue to improve.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher