



Skene School News Nov/Dec 2013

Working Together To Be The Best We Can Be

This month's newsletter is illustrated with a lovely logo by Kara Bucket, P5. Well done, Kara!

Community Time Groups

Pupil Council Children In Need - The Pupil Council organised a fun day



of activities for the school, including a Pudsey t-shirt competition, Pudsey cookie decorating and Children In Need games. Thank you to Lorraine for baking the lovely biscuits for us all to decorate! We raised an impressive £141.85 in total – well done Pupil Council and all who donated!



Eco Group After a sorry start to our Christmas Tree Festival, when we were unsuccessful in getting any company sponsors, Reverend Campbell came to the rescue and we decided to go ahead with a small Christmas Tree Display at Skene Parish Church. The Eco Group wrote to the other Westhill schools and asked their Eco Groups if they would like to decorate a small tree with an Eco theme, and are working on their own Eco decorations, helped by the Fairtrade group. The trees will be on display in the church from the 14th December, so they will be looking good for our Nativity Service.

Christmas Community Café The Fairtrade Group have teamed up with the Rights Respecting School Group and the rest of the children to run a community café with a Christmas theme on Wednesday 11th December, from 9.30-10.40. The café is a chance to catch up with other parents and community members for a Fairtrade coffee or tea and a chat. The Fairtrade Group will be quizzing you about your Fairtrade purchasing habits, and will have a display of goods. The Rights Respecting School Group will give a short presentation on what they have been working on for our school. And for your entertainment there will be a few Christmas songs from the children of both classes. We look forward to seeing you!



Rights Respecting School Group As well as giving their presentation at the Community Café, the Rights Respecting School Group will be having their first Community Meeting on Tuesday 17th December at 2pm. Please do get in touch with Mrs Bisset if you would like to get involved with this – it doesn't take up too much time or effort, but the children would appreciate your support. Any community members would be welcome.

Faye's Tyres

School Challenges

A big thank you goes to the pupils who entered the November challenge, which was for the children to take a photo of their area for the website. These can all be viewed online at www.skene.aberdeenshire.sch.uk and will also be used on our rolling slideshow on the front page of the website.



The December Challenge is to design a front cover for the Nativity Service programme. Remember to include the date, time and venue (Tuesday 17th December, 6pm at Skene Parish Church). The winning entry will be used as the cover on the night.

The Challenges are designed so that the children feel a sense of ownership for their school and what goes on in it rather than me taking control of everything. It's much nicer to see things around the school that have been done by the people learning in it. I hope you agree.

iPad Update

As you may know from the School Council minutes, we have managed to get involved in a pilot project for an ebook reading resource, which means that we will have a class set of iPad minis for the foreseeable future. We will be able to use these across the curriculum. It is very exciting and we can't wait for the iPads to be delivered.



Achievements

The Skene Netball team had an excellent tournament at home against Cluny. Teams were very well matched and the schools drew overall after their 5 matches. Both the standard of play and behaviour was outstanding from all pupils and a good time was had by everyone.



Achievements (cont)

Congratulations to Craig Buckett, P6, who came a fantastic second in the Westhill & District Rotary Club Young Speakers Competition with his informative and amusing talk on Scouting. This was primarily a P7 competition, but as we are low on numbers, our P6s were also invited to take part. Jonathan Foulkes,

P6, also gave a very good talk full of fascinating facts about wind turbines. Well done to both boys on their superb efforts.

Classes

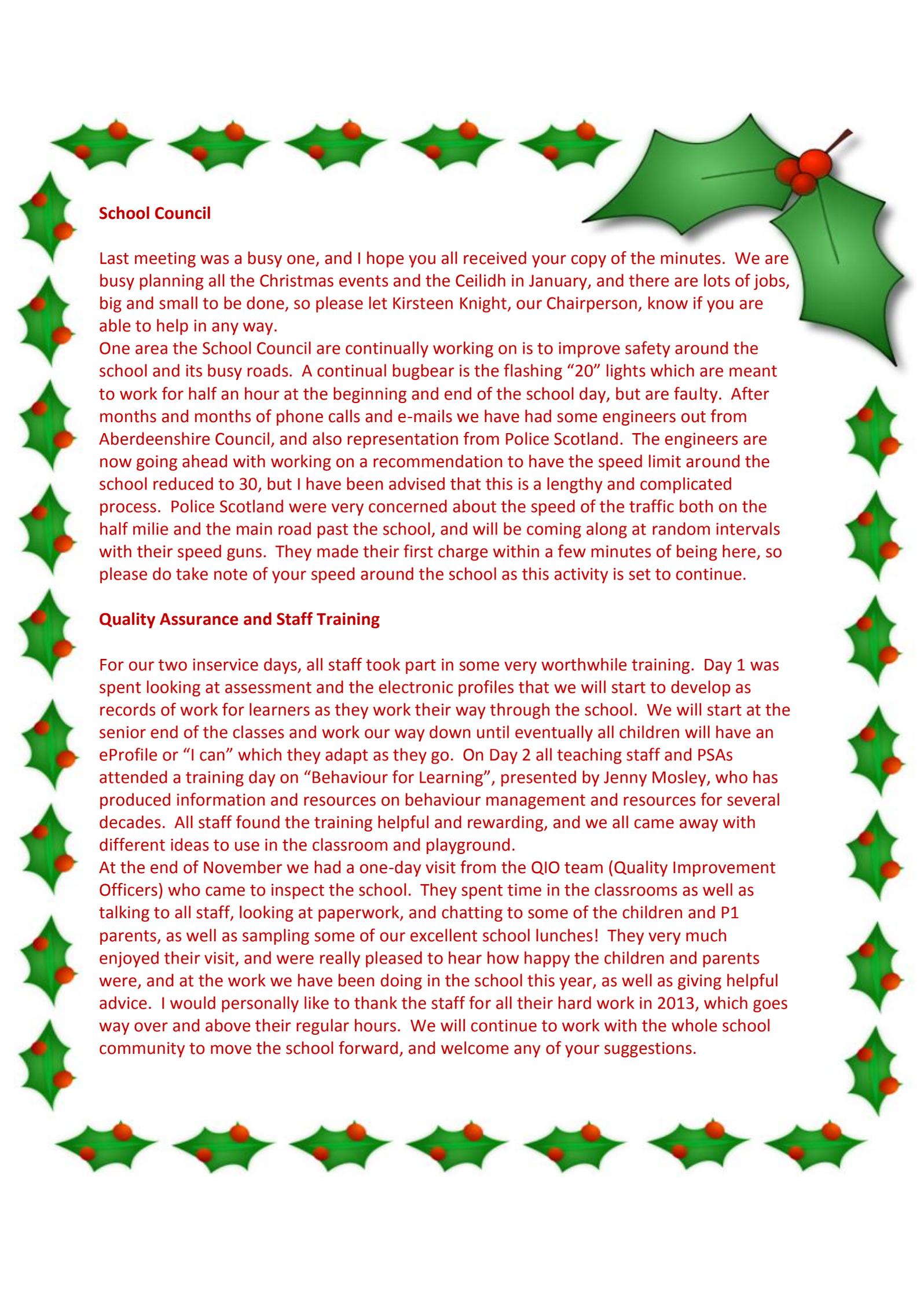
At the beginning of term, P3 used last session's Tattie Growing competition to practise their maths – we were looking at weighing so it fitted in nicely! The P3s looked at different types of scales and measures before deciding on the most effective one to use to hold all the tatties the P1-3s started growing before summer. Innes won the competition by only 50 grams by growing an impressive 1.5kg of tatties. Joanne, Joanna, Sarah, Ellen and Gabby were all close behind her. Well done to everyone for looking after their tattie buckets for such a long time. We all enjoyed eating them for school dinners!



P1-3 are working on "Erik's Toy Test" for their project this term, which is mainly science focused, but also looks at old and new toys, so please let us know if you have a favourite toy from when you were little that you would like to come in and show the class – when this project in the past we have had parents and grandparents in with all sorts of things, from dolls, to Subbuteo, to old board games. Anything you would like to bring in will be



welcome! Please get in touch if you would like to come in. P4-7's project for this term and into the next is "Wheels" and they have been working closely with engineers from Wood Group. 2 engineers are coming in every Wednesday to build a kit car with the class, which they will be able to race against other schools, and other engineers will be coming in at different points to work on other activities. It all looks like great fun!



School Council

Last meeting was a busy one, and I hope you all received your copy of the minutes. We are busy planning all the Christmas events and the Ceilidh in January, and there are lots of jobs, big and small to be done, so please let Kirsteen Knight, our Chairperson, know if you are able to help in any way.

One area the School Council are continually working on is to improve safety around the school and its busy roads. A continual bugbear is the flashing "20" lights which are meant to work for half an hour at the beginning and end of the school day, but are faulty. After months and months of phone calls and e-mails we have had some engineers out from Aberdeenshire Council, and also representation from Police Scotland. The engineers are now going ahead with working on a recommendation to have the speed limit around the school reduced to 30, but I have been advised that this is a lengthy and complicated process. Police Scotland were very concerned about the speed of the traffic both on the half milie and the main road past the school, and will be coming along at random intervals with their speed guns. They made their first charge within a few minutes of being here, so please do take note of your speed around the school as this activity is set to continue.

Quality Assurance and Staff Training

For our two inservice days, all staff took part in some very worthwhile training. Day 1 was spent looking at assessment and the electronic profiles that we will start to develop as records of work for learners as they work their way through the school. We will start at the senior end of the classes and work our way down until eventually all children will have an eProfile or "I can" which they adapt as they go. On Day 2 all teaching staff and PSAs attended a training day on "Behaviour for Learning", presented by Jenny Mosley, who has produced information and resources on behaviour management and resources for several decades. All staff found the training helpful and rewarding, and we all came away with different ideas to use in the classroom and playground.

At the end of November we had a one-day visit from the QIO team (Quality Improvement Officers) who came to inspect the school. They spent time in the classrooms as well as talking to all staff, looking at paperwork, and chatting to some of the children and P1 parents, as well as sampling some of our excellent school lunches! They very much enjoyed their visit, and were really pleased to hear how happy the children and parents were, and at the work we have been doing in the school this year, as well as giving helpful advice. I would personally like to thank the staff for all their hard work in 2013, which goes way over and above their regular hours. We will continue to work with the whole school community to move the school forward, and welcome any of your suggestions.



Christmas Activities and Events

Please see the Dates for your Diary section at the end.

Our annual trip to the HMT Pantomime is on Tuesday 10th December. Please remember we will return to school around 5pm and therefore will not be in time for the school transport home that day. We would therefore ask you to make alternative arrangements to collect your child from school on Tuesday afternoon.

There will be 2 separate Christmas parties this year to accommodate our growing numbers. Please remember these parties will be in the afternoon, so children should bring their party clothes to school with them in a bag to change into at lunch time (we will help the wee ones!). Alternatively if you are free you may wish to take your child home for lunch that day and get them changed at home.

School Christmas Lunch will be on Thursday 19th December, when Lorraine will cook a Christmas dinner instead of the ordinary school lunch. As a treat the School Council have also very kindly hired Gary Seagraves the magician to entertain the children that afternoon.

Dates For Your Diary

Tuesday 10th December – School Trip to HMT “Cinderella” – please arrange transport home

Wednesday 11th December – Christmas Community Café, School Hall, 9.30am

Sunday 15th December – Carols by Candlelight Church Service, 7pm

Tuesday 17th December – Rights Respecting School Meeting, 2pm

School Nativity Service, Skene Parish Church, 6pm

Wednesday 18th December – P1-3 Christmas Party – please bring party clothes

Thursday 19th December – School Christmas Lunch and Magician

Friday 20th December – P4-7 Christmas Party – please bring party clothes

Last day of term

Monday 6th January – First day of Term 3

Website: www.skene.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

Twitter: @SkeneSchool