



Hillhead Primary School
110 Otago Street
Glasgow
G12 8NS
0141-339-1365

office@hillhead-pri.glasgow.sch.uk
www.hillheadprimaryglasgow.org

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March Newsletter

This term seems to have sped by with us now into March.

There are a number of pieces of information to share with you.

Fairtrade Fortnight

We are now into the second week of our very enjoyable Fairtrade Fortnight. We had a very successful Fairtrade Café last Thursday. Many thanks to all who baked for this event and for all those who supported it by coming along on the day. The Fairtrade Committee have done a wonderful job by continuing to raise awareness on this important subject. We are committed to continuing to be a school worthy of the status of Fairtrade.

Malawi Rice Challenge

You may have seen an article recently in the Evening Times (http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/15133681.Glasgow_pupils_pay_to_send_their_Malawi_an_peers_to_school/#) which reports on Baillie Liz Cameron's visit to Hillhead Primary. Baillie Cameron, Executive Member of Education Services, attended our upper school assembly along with a representative of JTS, who supplied the Fairtrade Rice, and Ruth Downes from our Parent Council, who made the original social enterprise suggestion to the school.

This event was the official recognition we had reached our target of selling one tonne of rice. This enables eleven youngsters from Malawi to attend their first year at Secondary School. In addition, because of the generosity of many of those who purchased the rice and did not take their change, we were able to collect an additional £200.

We donated this impressive amount to Baillie Cameron who will pass it onto the maternity unit she opened when she previously visited Malawi.

This is a wonderful story about our school, which reflects the generosity, social awareness and thoughtfulness of our children and our community. Thank you all.

Parents' Evening Reminder

Our Parents' Evening will take place on Thursday 23 March and Tuesday 28 March from 3:40-6:40pm. We look forward to discussing your child's progress with you.

We have arranged for our Book Fair to be available on these evenings. Separate details will follow.

Fund Raiser

We will announce details of our annual whole school fundraiser shortly.

Pupil Equity Funding

As you may know the Scottish Government has made a financial commitment to fund schools directly with new funding to address inequality in education resulting from poverty and its effects.

The money will be distributed from April and is based on the number of children entitled to a free school meal in each school. We have to submit a detailed plan outlining how we would spend the money we will receive. The plan has to identify those affected by economic equality and how we can use the funding to remove barriers and raise levels of attainment for all of those affected. We have been awarded £110,800 and this money should be available to us on a yearly basis for the next three or four years.

We have been busy drawing up our plans and have identified two main priorities. Firstly we want to continue to improve the quality of Teaching and Learning in our school. Our Teaching and Learning were assessed as being very good at our last school inspection and we want to move to excellent. This priority will benefit all of the children in our school including those who are financially disadvantaged. Secondly we will introduce a number of initiatives that will support our children who face any barriers to learning as a result of economic inequality. We will undertake this thoughtfully and sensitively but effectively.

We have been asked to consult with parents on this exciting opportunity and we would welcome any constructive suggestions. The money cannot be used for Capital Expenditure and so we cannot use it to build a new classroom or resurface the football pitch but we can use it to employ an additional Teacher or Support for Learning Worker or to commission agencies to provide, for example Play Therapy or Counselling provided it is for the benefit of those for whom it is intended.

If you have any suggestions please share them. The Pupil Equity Funding will also be discussed at our next Parent Council Meeting. This takes place on Friday 24 March at 9:30am.

Reducing the Amount of Paper Communications

As you know we took a decision to try to change way we communicate with you in an effort to reduce the amount of paper we send out.

We have run a pilot for a couple of months and said we would review it at the end of February.

Certainly we have seriously reduced the amount of letters we send home but have tried to ensure we provide information by texting everyone to alert them to the new information that has been put on our website. We believe this practice has been working well and are keen to continue communicating this way, we have also discovered Twitter and have sent a lot of interesting information using this. We now have 562 followers and it is growing daily:
@hillheadprimary

If you have any views on this we are happy to hear from you.

Information for P3 and P6 Parents

Our P6 pupils will be completing a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in the next two weeks. This questionnaire comes from Glasgow University on behalf of Education Services and is used to inform clinicians, researchers and educationalists on the Social and Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Young People.

The results are collated anonymously and children can opt out if they wish. P3 teachers complete the form for the children in their class. P6 pupils complete the form in class themselves.

Holidays

Please remember we finish for our Spring Holidays on Friday 31 March at 2:30pm. The school reopens on Tuesday 18 April at 9am.

I think that is all.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Francis Donaghy
Head Teacher