



# WELLINGTON SCHOOL, AYR

## INFORMATION UPDATE 3 FEBRUARY 2011

The central purpose of this mailing is to introduce and distribute the Action Plan following on from the publication of the report by HM Inspectorate of Education on 2 November 2010.

Further to the publication of the Inspection Report, the Chairman was contacted by the Registrar of Independent Schools, for the Scottish Government, who commented:

"The Registrar of Independent Schools has read the report which judged the majority of indicators to be excellent or very good. The Registrar would, therefore, like to congratulate the school on its extremely good performance."

You will all know from the inspection report that HMIe will not make any further visits in connection with the inspection, and the School and Board of Governors agreed the following areas of improvement with HMIe:

- Ensuring continuity and progression within the curriculum on a 3-18 basis, including approaches to assessment.
- Further involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- More consistent approaches to self-evaluation and sharing of good practice to improve the quality of learning for children and young people.

From this starting point, the school refined an Action Plan which was approved by the Board in December 2010 and presented to all staff at the In-service day on 10 January 2011. A further expansion of the Action Plan was then distributed to all staff on 19 January for discussion at Departmental Meetings and to give all staff the opportunity to provide feedback. Simply put, our aim is to move from Good to Very Good; from Very Good to Excellent.

### ***Change of management structure from Nursery to Primary 6***

One particularly significant point of action, in terms of restructuring, is point 1a: to 'Improve structures to manage and coordinate the curriculum 3-10 and articulate with the Senior School curriculum.'

Within this, the decision was taken to change the management structure of the Nursery, Infant and Junior Departments to have a single Head of a unified Junior School including all years from Nursery Reception through to Primary 6. This decision has the full support of all the management team and the staff.

We believe that, by attributing strategic responsibility in this way, it will be easier to promote a common theme, clear vision and achieve continuity and consistency of the educational experience through the entire 3-10 age group.

Following on from interviews on 1 February, I am pleased to inform you that Mrs Nancy Allan has been appointed as Head of Junior School, with effect from August 2011. In addition, Mrs Allan will chair the Strategic Curriculum Group, directing developments relating to A Curriculum for Excellence within Nursery and Primary years with immediate effect.

Mrs Allan has a degree in Economics, a PGCE (Primary) and a PGDEE. She has also been an associate lecturer for the PGDE (Primary) and assessor for the BEd (Primary) for the University of the West of Scotland. She has teaching experience at all stages from Primary 1 to Primary 6. Mrs Allan was appointed Senior Teacher of Wellington Nursery in 2000, being promoted to Head of Wellington Nursery in 2005 and appointed to the Senior Management Team in January 2009. She has an extensive track record of leadership, development and innovation, and has had her educational work published and disseminated as good practice.

I know that you will all want to join with me in congratulating Mrs Allan on this appointment and will all give her your full support in this post. There will be an information meeting for all parents of pupils from Nursery to Primary 6 in the Summer Term where Mrs Allan will outline her plans for the Junior School.

Prior to this restructuring, Mr Robinson had already intimated his desire to 'wind down' from next session including relinquishing his position as Head of the Junior Department after many years of outstanding service. I know that you will all want to join me in thanking Mr Robinson for his very significant contribution to the School. I am pleased to say that Mr Robinson has agreed to continue to teach French in the upper Primary years for the coming session and beyond.

### ***Further involvement of parents in their children's learning***

You may already be aware of our drive to improve the involvement of all parents in our pupils' learning, including extending the range and scope of Focus Groups at all levels, improving Parents' Evenings based on feedback, increasing the number of Parents' Information sessions, and Improving the 'home-school learning partnership' (e.g. by giving more detailed information on homework expectations and teaching methods to involve parents more directly in their children's learning).

The most significant change in involvement with parents is perhaps point 2a: the increased involvement of the Wellington School Association Committee. The School has enjoyed an extremely close and productive relationship with the WSA over the years, and the Board has endorsed proposed changes to the WSA constitution to expand the formal involvement of the WSA Committee with the School to inform learning and teaching and other aspects of the Wellington experience.

On a more general point we will, of course, keep you informed of all developments related to this Action Plan over the coming months and we intend to have all new procedures and structures in place for the coming session.

### ***Staffing changes***

Mrs Sandy Cotter has relinquished her post as House Activities Coordinator after many years' exceptional service. As a result, with immediate effect, Mrs Morag Allan has been appointed House Activities Coordinator, Mr David Helps has been appointed as Head of Churchill House (formerly Deputy) and Mrs Susan Docherty has been appointed as Deputy Head of Churchill House.

### ***Curriculum for Excellence***

Plans for the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence continue as the Heads of English and Mathematics met with Mrs. Diana McLaren, the new Acting Assistant Head (Curriculum), to marry their ideas for the recording of assessments and to discuss progression for pupils in these subject areas. An extension to the Working Groups is planned so that in addition to Numeracy, Literacy and Health and Wellbeing, groups from areas which extend across the school including Science, Social subjects, Modern Languages, PE, Art and Music will focus on continuity and progression.

In addition, in February, Mrs. McLaren and a group of staff from the senior school will attend a CPD opportunity to gain experience in assessment and trial draft materials to support Curriculum for Excellence assessment methods.

The Health and Wellbeing Working Group continues to look closely at Health and Wellbeing across all three sectors of the School. With staff representatives from the Nursery, the Junior School and the Senior School, this term sees the group focusing on 'Transition' and ways that the school might improve transition between various stages of the school.

### ***S6 YASS - Young Applicants in Schools Scheme***

We intend to pilot YASS next session, with a small group of our most able S6 pupils having the opportunity to choose from selected YASS courses in addition to our very wide range of Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

The scheme, run by the Open University, offers a range of academic courses for able post 16 pupils. This gives pupils the chance to study at a higher level, encouraging independent learning and building confidence, and bridging the gap between school and university.

### ***John Muir Award for P7 'River Doon from Source to Sea'***

It has been decided to broaden the Primary 7 experience at Wellington by introducing the John Muir Award: an environmental award scheme focused on wild places. It encourages awareness and responsibility for the natural environment, in a spirit of fun, adventure and exploration. At the heart of the Award are four challenges: discover - explore - conserve – share, and we have devised an exciting programme of outdoor activities to allow our P7 pupils to meet these challenges in a way which will enhance their current curriculum. Our theme for the award is 'River Doon from Source to Sea' and an exciting programme of open canoeing sessions, wild walks, beach exploration and an overnight camp has been planned.

### ***P7 Focus Group***

The P7 parents Focus Group is up and running. Two very successful meetings have been held, and Mrs Clark, Mrs Mack and Mrs O'Connell have been delighted with the support and contributions from a group of nine P7 parents. Topics covered so far have been 'Curriculum for Excellence – Health and Wellbeing' and 'Curriculum for Excellence – changes to the P7 syllabus and new terminology'.

### ***Wellington Robert Burns Club***

The School is delighted to announce the institution in January of the Wellington Robert Burns Club. Junior President Mitchell Wyllie and Senior President Gregor Feeney attended a wreath laying ceremony on 25 January at Burns Statue Square. P6 pupils, staff and parents had a very entertaining Ayr Burns Club's Schools' Burns Supper at the Brig O'Doon Hotel. Further events are planned, too.

### ***Eco Schools***

The school continues to forge ahead with its Eco Schools work across all three sectors. In the Secondary Department, pupils are working on the Environmental Review in PSE classes, tidying up the garden, planting new bulbs and generally preparing for Spring.

### ***Traffic issues - again***

Once again we have had complaints from our neighbours about inconsiderate parking around the school. Please make sure that you do not park on double yellow lines or on street corners, and do not block our neighbours' driveways. At Parents' Evenings outwith normal school hours we would urge all parents to park in the Craigweil House playgrounds (at the end of Craigweil Road) to avoid blocking the adjacent streets.

Regarding traffic congestion, you will be aware that we are operating a new Alloway bus route. Clearly, if all eligible pupils made use of this service it would take some fifty vehicles out of circulation. For further details, please contact the School Office.

At this time of year, where it is still quite dark as children are dropped off or picked up at School, I would ask you all to exercise extreme caution as you drive around the school, and reinforce good road safety habits whenever possible.

**RM Parlour, Headmaster**

## APPENDIX



# WELLINGTON SCHOOL POST-INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

## 2<sup>ND</sup> LEVEL EXPANSION

10 January 2011

- 1 Ensuring **continuity and progression within the curriculum on a 3-18 basis**, including approaches to assessment.
  - a. Improve structures to manage and coordinate the curriculum 3-10 and articulate with the Senior School curriculum.
  - b. Improve strategic articulation of Curriculum oriented Working Groups (Numeracy, Literacy, Health and Wellbeing) and Departments with whole school scope (PE, Art, Music; to be extended to include Science, social studies, Modern Languages etc) to focus on continuity and progression on a 3-18 basis.
  - c. Extend objective, externally-verified testing of all pupils 3-14.
  
- 2 Further **involvement of parents in their children's learning**.
  - a. Expand involvement of Wellington School Association Committee with Board and School to inform learning and teaching.
  - b. Extend stage specific Focus Groups (currently Nursery, Infants, P6) to include P7, S1/2 etc. and to cover all aspects of learning.
  - c. Extend on best practice in reporting and Parents' Evenings.
  - d. Increase opportunities for Parents' Information sessions (currently in Nursery and Infants, in addition to specific events - e.g. Careers, Curriculum for Excellence) to include Juniors, P7, S1 etc.
  - e. Improve 'home-school learning partnership' - improved and extended opportunities for dialogue and information for parents on tasks within curriculum areas.
  
- 3 More consistent approaches to **self-evaluation** and **sharing of good practice** to improve the quality of learning for children and young people.
  - a. Introduce mechanisms to ensure quality and scope of existing self evaluation.
  - b. Introduce regular whole-school thematic self evaluation of key Quality Indicators coordinated with departmental monitoring cycles.
  - c. Improve coordination of cross-school identification and sharing of good practice through Departmental Meetings, Heads of Department Meetings, Twilight Sessions and In-Service Days.
  - d. Extend opportunities to involve learners in evaluating the quality of courses and teaching at all levels.

**RM Parlour, Headmaster**