

# Haddington Infant School Parent Partnership

## Newsletter March 2009

<http://edubuzz.org/blogs/haddingtoninfantspp>

**It has already been a very busy and productive year for the Parent Council – some of the things we have been working on are:**

1. Improved visibility into the main playground. Parents had been finding it difficult to spot their children going into and out of the playground. After discussions about the best way forward Mrs Swinton arranged for the shrubs lining the playground to be pruned. This is helping reduce the numbers of parents wishing to wait in the playground.

2. New signage on Meadowpark Road. We had commented that the school sign at the corner of the annexe playground was becoming scruffy. Mrs Swinton very quickly sorted a new one.

3. P1 lines. Parents commented that, on Fridays, P1s were not always being taken in quickly after the morning bell rang. The P1 Friday staff meeting now

finishes sharply so the children aren't kept waiting.

4. We met with Elite Catering to discuss school lunch payment methods as we know many parents find the current system inconvenient. They are trying to find a way to introduce a cashless system. We will let you know when we hear more.

5. The school is still working hard to try and get the baking room refurbished. The Council's property officer has inspected the room to cost the work and Mrs Swinton is working with him to look at funding. Mrs Inglis has started an after-school baking club for the P3s.

6. We asked whether there was a role for parent helpers in the classroom. Mrs Swinton confirmed that she welcomes parental help. Ask at the office for a parent helper sheet.

### **Also:**

With the help of the PTA the Pupil Council have made

great improvements to the Library (which also houses the IT suite).

There are new chairs, a rug and cushions and a bright new dinosaur bookcase. It was repainted over the February holiday.

The Eco-club is working on creating a re-usable bag. The children have been working on designs.

Some parents, along with the Eco-club and support from the PTA, are working on a cook book which will be handed out to encourage healthy eating.

Sustaining Haddington has recognised the Infant School as a suitable building to take part in a project aimed at encouraging swift nesting. Swift numbers are declining locally and it is hoped the school can help prevent further decline. This project is supported by the Eco-club.

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## Safety:

Following a Fire Safety Inspection of the Annexe Hall all shows, discos etc will be held in the main building.

The Travel Team has been fundamental in improving road safety for children around the school. Recently they have liaised with the local School travel Co-ordinator Iain Reid and PC Stuart Gunn to develop a policy aimed at further improving safety. More information will be circulated when available. Unfortunately Parent Members of the Travel Team have dwindled and any parents or carers interested in becoming involved should contact us at the Parent Council, or Mrs Inglis. The Parent Council would like to thank all members of the Travel Team to date for all their hard work at successfully improving the safety of the children.

The Travel Team and PC Gunn suggest that any bad driving that is seen near the school, is reported to the police and the driver warned. If you see any please note the registration number and report to the police.

Earlier this year the Parent Forum asked if the School could develop ways of allowing the children in both the main and the annexe playground to mix at lunchtime and breaks. Concerns were also raised about safety as children have to cross a Public Right of Way to return to the annexe playground after lunch. Mrs Swinton was prompt in developing an arrangement where children now mix in both playgrounds at lunchtime. She is also exploring, with East Lothian Council, the possibility of temporarily closing the Right of Way at lunchtime and break to improve the children's safety.

## Schools Budgets:

We are delighted to say that the council has reconsidered their original proposals to make 2.25% 'efficiency savings' at all schools. Primary schools are only being asked to make 0.14% 'efficiency savings' and they are allowed to keep those to fund other areas. **This is a very significant change and is largely due to the successful campaign of letter writing, petitions and lobbying of council members that many of you took part in.** The parent council would like to thank all of you who took part. It did make a difference!

The only cloud on the horizon is that with the credit crunch there will almost certainly be pressure to make cuts in the education budget next year.

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## Education:

The school inspection took place early this term. All parents should have received a copy of the report. The report is generally a positive one although some areas were identified as needing further development. An important area for improvement is the curriculum and staff are very aware of this. A lot of work has been done and further work is planned to develop curriculum planning in line with Curriculum for Excellence. Both the inspectors and the parent council are confident that the areas for development identified in the report will be comprehensively addressed in the coming months. Well done to all the staff for working so hard especially since the run-up fell over the Christmas holiday.

Some parents reported that they have been confused about National Assessment and the associated levels of achievement.

When children pass a level (A, B etc) they will be given a certificate to bring home and, from now on, this will have a note attached explaining what it means. This action should help keep parents informed about their children's attainment during the year rather than waiting until the end of year report.

In response to a request for greater variety of homework the school prepared a homework questionnaire. Parent Council members helped hand it out at the recent parents' evening. The school will use the information to help better plan homework in the future.

Next year's class arrangements are still at the planning stages. Once the Primary 1 roll and the number of classes being formed is finalised, Mrs Swinton will advise the Parent Forum of her proposals for next year. Knowing the exact number of

children starting P1 is critical for planning classes. Parents will be updated as soon as possible.

## Dates to note:

The school's Spring Fair will be held on **Saturday 25 April**. There will be activities for children, home baking and lots more to see and do.

For the second year the PTA will be holding a bike sale (in the main playground bike sheds near the boat). If you have a bike, scooter, skateboard, tricycle, rollerblades etc that you would like to sell please bring them along to the playground. Registration and drop off is on the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> April from 9am to 10am. 25% of the sale goes to the PTA.

An additional In Service day will be held on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June**. Please remember the school will be closed! Staff will be working on aspects of A Curriculum for Excellence which ties in with points picked up in the inspection.



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