

# Pencaitland Parent Council

Issue 2 March 2010



[www.edubuzz.org/blogs/pencaitland/parents/](http://www.edubuzz.org/blogs/pencaitland/parents/)

## Welcome

Welcome to our second newsletter. Thanks for all the positive comments we have received about our first newsletter and the communications we have had with you regarding the Head Teacher recruitment exercise and budget cuts. We're delighted that the information is reaching you and you are feeling more informed about issues relating to the school.

With Head Teacher recruitment now behind us, the Parent Council has begun to focus on the other key aims for this year which are captured in our **Action Plan**. (To view this, go to the Blog). We want to share more information with you about your children's education and we are trying to make the information accessible to you so we would encourage you to read our new article on GLOW on the Blog. Also, we are making progress on

an online calendar for the school covering significant dates for the classrooms, school, PC and PTA and should now be available to everyone.

We are excited about our upcoming **Grandparent's Day**. This will give grandparents an opportunity to share a part of the school day with their grandchildren. This is planned for after the Easter break and you will be given plenty of notice of the date. If any parent would like to assist the sub-group of the Parent Council who are organising this (Dorothy Ogilvy, Alison Glencorse, Ian Archer and myself), then please get in touch with one of us.

We encourage you to visit the Blog and our pages regularly as we will be using this platform more and more to communicate with you and allow you to communicate with us. We welcome any views,

suggestions or comments you have about the Parent Council or any issues or concerns relating to the school.

We wish to congratulate the school on receiving its third **Green Flag**. This takes a lot of hard work and commitment from the pupils and the staff. Well done!

Our third and final newsletter for this academic year will be published in the next school term. In it we plan to include more on Curriculum for Excellence, and also on Community Based Management of Schools, a Year Round up of the PTA and so much more.

**Carol Snow, Chair**  
[parent.council@pencaitlandps.org.uk](mailto:parent.council@pencaitlandps.org.uk)

## Events Update

We held our first **focus group** with pupils in P4 and P5 to talk about health and well-being in September 2009. What we discovered is that there are a lot of good ideas already being taken forward by the Pupil Council and the PTA. Our next focus group is being held on 3 March 2010. We will meet a group of pupils from P7 and a separate group of parents to discuss the transition from P7 to high school. This will be followed by a further focus group of parents of children in P1 to discuss the transition from nursery to P1 on 11 March 2010.

In October we gathered your views about the school at the **Parent Consultations**. Read the Tickled Pink article for a summary. We plan on speaking to you again at the Parent Consultations in March to expand/update our parent resource database.

Some members have been busy undertaking some of the free **training** events offered by East Lothian Council. Several members now have received training in recruitment and selection but let's hope

we don't need to go through that process for some time to come. Ralph Averbuch attended one on Internet Safety and Graham Wilson attended one on Health and Safety. Ralph also attended the first **Parent Council Conference** in February. Find out more about these in this newsletter or the Blog website.

The Parent Council submitted a response to the East Lothian Council's **You Pay... Have Your Say** consultation document. I wrote to all the parents letting them know about the planned changes for education as a result of the proposed budget cuts and want to thank all the parents who took the time to write into the Council to express their views.

### DID YOU KNOW...

We can only cover a small fraction of the information which passes through the **Parent Council** between newsletters. That's why we recommend to check out the Parents section of the School Blog where we can provide much more detail. <http://edubuzz.org/blogs/pencaitland/>

## Important Dates

- 29th March** - Next Parent Council meeting.
- 17th and 18th March** - Parent Consultation Evenings.
- 1 April** - Pupils break for Easter.
- 20th April** - Pupils return.
- 10th May** - Parent Council meeting.
- 29th May** - Spring Fayre.
- 16th June** - Annual General meeting.

Did you know that you can now leave your email address, Skype or Twitter ID in order to be alerted each time something new is posted up on the Pencaitland Primary School Blog? Just visit the site and look for the "Get Updates" section in the Blog sidebar. If you are familiar with RSS or really simple syndication, then you'll find that you can also subscribe for updates using this method. The BBC provides a good primer on RSS at:

<http://bit.ly/BBCRSS>

## Tickled Pink!

At last year's **Parent Consultations** parents made comments on post-it notes; pink for things they liked & green for those they'd like to see. We were very encouraged by the response. Pupils left comments too! Happy kids was an overriding message throughout the notes. The friendly environment and the school's engagement with parents were notable themes. One parent said, "I never feel left out of my children's education." There was praise for the children's hard work, artwork, wall displays, P1 folders and the Viking project. The pupils used words like "amazing", "cool", "fun", to describe the school and talked favourably of their teachers – not only are they kind, generous and helpful, but "fab".

Here is a selection of some of the "Tickled Pink" comments:

*"Help and support is only a phone call away – great for working mum and dads."*

*"A very friendly community school; well engaged with parents; happy children who seem to enjoy coming to school."*

## Internet Safety

East Lothian Council recently held an Internet Safety training evening to raise awareness of web dangers. It looked at issues around how parents can manage internet use at home and ensure the chances of children being exposed to unsuitable material is minimised.

Anyone keen to know when a future

*"Delighted with P1 and never a problem getting our wee one out the door to school."*

*"Is there a more positive and welcoming school? I don't think so!"*

*"Very welcoming, encouraging and just fab!"*

*"What a lovely school to come to."*

Needless to say, the school was "Tickled Pink" with the positive comments.

There were some **Green for Growth** comments which focussed mainly on improvements of what the school currently offers. One parent asked for an **online calendar**. This is something the PC is working on and it's now here!

Some parents suggested eco ideas such as more recycling in the dining hall, using email more, saving rain water, more bins in the playgrounds, gardening tips on the Blog, as well as using old seeds and stalks instead of just throwing them away. The school has just received its third **Green Flag** so it's doing well. It's now going to

event is being organised should check the East Lothian Council **Internet Safety and Responsible Use** Blog for updates. The site can be found by going to:

<http://bit.ly/i-safe>

Advice was aimed at teaching ourselves about the issues surrounding online

work towards the fourth and so will be looking at more ways to achieve this. All these suggestions are good – keep them coming!

There were some other specific suggestions, such as teaching other languages as part of the core curriculum, developing a new logo for school jumpers and issuing parking stickers. There were some comments about the desire to improve interaction between the pupils in composite classes, as well as bringing literacy and maths workshops earlier in the year, at different times. Lastly there was the suggestion of having meetings for parents for each year, similar to the meetings done for P1.

The school has already followed up on some suggestions with a bin for plastic now in the dining room and the Eco group plan to do some more work on Waste Free Lunch. The school will now be holding Welcome Evenings in classes at the beginning of session 10/11 and plans are being developed for further Parent Workshops for next session.

safety. Materials used are widely available and can be found via the website with excellent guides produced by other specialist organisations, such as the **Purely for Parents** guide from thinkuknow.co.uk. This offers a good grounding in what parents can do to ensure children are safe from a number of potential dangers online and via mobiles.

## What's Curriculum for Excellence?

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) aims to transform education in Scotland by providing a flexible, coherent and enriched curriculum for pupils aged 3-18. It's underpinned by four values inscribed on the Scottish Parliament's mace – wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity.

The aim of CfE is to enable pupils to be **successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens** and **effective contributors**. It gives pupils opportunities to develop skills for learning, for life and for work, with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and well-being. It's designed to be flexible, to allow careful planning for those with support needs such as those with a learning difficulty and those who are particularly gifted.

The principles of the curriculum, or what each child should experience while learning, are challenge and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence and relevance. These should all apply at each educational stage, but have different emphases at different developmental levels.

The CfE changes will be supported by a new assessment framework which has five levels, from pre-school to S6. There will be new qualifications in literacy and numeracy for S2/S3 children from 2012/13, and new National 4 and 5 Qualifications which will replace Standard Grades in 2013/14.

More information on the CfE is available at: <http://bit.ly/PPCCFE>

### ON The Blog

Ralph Averbuch attended the first Parent Council Conference held in Musselburgh's Grammar School and wrote two short reports on workshops he attended. These covered '**The Role of Parents in an HMIE Inspection**' and '**Website and Blogs**'. You can read both his posts by visiting the Pencaitland Primary Blog. There is also an article by Alison Glencourse on **GLOW**.

Don't forget to check out the '**Parent's**' section where you can find other useful information such as Parent Council and PTA Minutes, members, policies and past school and PC newsletters.

<http://bit.ly/PPCPARENTS>