

Term 3 Newsletter

Friday 17 January 2025

Welcome

Welcome back everyone and of course, Happy New Year. With the festive period packed away behind us I hope you all had a wonderful time with family and loved ones and you managed to celebrate in ways that you enjoyed. Term 3 is a bumper of a term with lots going on so keep an eye out for any date changes or updates over the coming 12 weeks. I would like to say a special welcome to Aaron Morgan who has joined the Nursery, and Virtue, Videl and Imogen in Primary 1-7 who joined us mid-way through last term - they have all settled in beautifully and seem quite at home here at Orphir.

Although I mentioned it on stage I really feel I do have to say one more thank you to each and every one of you who helped make Finding Nemo such a success!. The whole production was simply outstanding and I have been approached by many members of the wider community commenting on how impressive the show was - and they are absolutely spot on!

Staffing

Ross Thomson joins us this term for a 5-week block working in P4-7. Ross is a second year M.Ed Primary Education student at the University of Aberdeen and it is a pleasure to have him with us here at Orphir.

Term 2 Attendance

At the end of Term 2 we continued to monitor pupil attendance and for all pupils from P1 to P7 we calculated their percentage attendance so far from August and for Term 2 alone. This allows us to make comparisons with Term 1 attendance and to look for improvements or families who may need help or support. We can now report that as a whole school Orphir has an overall percentage attendance rate of 93.88% which compares to 94% when this was calculated at the end of Term 1. We will contact those who we need to contact and offer any help and support as required but if any family is curious to know their percentage attendance then please get in touch and we will be more than happy to let you know. Or if anyone has anything they would like to know more about please feel to ask me directly.

Of the Month

Last week in Assembly we talked about the character strengths kindness and self-regulation and the meta skills of integrity and feeling. We talked about what these were, why they were important and what they should look and sound like here at Orphir. For the month of January these character strengths and meta skills are going to be our focus with the idea being that each month we will have a different focus of either character strengths, meta skills, children's rights or wellbeing indicators.

Bad Weather Will Not Stop Us!

Mother Nature has certainly kept us on our toes since coming back after the holiday and we do like to get the bairns outside as much as possible. Not only do they love being outside

in the snow and wind it blows those cobwebs away and stops the winter germs from spreading. To help facilitate this we would kindly ask to keep making sure your child/children come to school 'dressed for the weather' and have the odd pair of spare socks and breeks in their bag just in case.

Four Contexts of Learning

The four contexts of learning are a framework for teaching and learning that help define our curriculum, what we do, how we do it and why we do it. They are nationally recognised and all schools across Scotland should have them at the forefront of their practice. They are as follows:

- **Curriculum areas and subjects**

The curriculum areas and subjects are the organisers for the experiences and outcomes from Early, First and Second level from Nursery to P7.

- **Interdisciplinary learning**

This is the space in the curriculum for learning that goes beyond subject boundaries, allowing students to make connections between different areas of learning.

- **Ethos and life of the school as a community**

This is the positive climate of respect and trust based on shared values across the school community.

- **Opportunities for personal achievement**

These are the opportunities for students to achieve both in and beyond the classroom, which can help build confidence, motivation and resilience.

Please find attached to this newsletter examples of how the Four Contexts of Learning have been demonstrated at Orphir over the past two terms and further information that explains them more.

Wider Achievement

Our second celebration assembly was held on Thursday and it, like the first one, was a roaring success. We have all LOVED sharing each other's successes and the children have loved hearing about all the skills and talents we have here at Orphir. Mrs Williams even got a mention this time for making it into the Guinness Book of World Records! Go Mrs W! Our Term 2 recognised wider achievers at Orphir were: Freya T, Harry, Oskar, Kammy, Mary-Ann, Ellie D, Jamie, Tadhg, Jacob, Ellie M, Layla, Elara, Freyja S and Brynja

Please feel free to take a look at the wider achievement board and WOW!! book located next to my office door and be amazed at the range of achievements. Look out for the next nomination form towards the end of Term 3 for our third celebration assembly and feel free to send in any photos as well so we can fill our board.



Young Scot Magazine – P6 and P7 Pupils only

All P6 & P7 pupils have been given a copy of the Young Scot magazine.

Pupil Voice

Last term the pupils from P1 to P7 worked in their school family groups and did a little bit of self-evaluation on the ethos and life of the school. They were tasked with devising a list of stars (things that are working well) and a list of wishes (things that they wish they could change) across a range of themes such as assembly, playground, dining hall, classrooms etc. Being able to get out quicker at lunch time to play was a recurring theme and as a result of this we have reviewed our dining hall logistics and routine so that there is less time spent waiting and the whole pedagogy around the routine and service is slicker.

This means that children are able to eat at their own pace, when they are ready, and do not have to wait for others to be finished before they leave, and others do not feel that they need to rush to be able to let others leave. So far this has been well received, and it has certainly brought a different buzz and feel to the dining hall which is very exciting.

Finding Nemo KIDS

We hope that the video recordings of Finding Nemo KIDS will be available from the mid-term break. Details will be shared closer to the time for how to access it.

DATES FOR DIARY

ENROLMENTS

Enrolment week is from 3- 7 February for children enrolling for the new session. More details are attached at the end of the newsletter. There will be transport information come out if not at the same time as the enrolment, at some point before the end of term 4! he links below guide you to the sections on the council website when needed on 3 February.

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/early-learning-and-childcare/registration/>

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/schools/school-enrolments/>

Parent Council

The next Parent Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 5th February here at the school at 6 PM. Anyone is welcome to attend and it has been lovely to see some new faces there this year. If you have anything you would like to add to the agenda for the meeting, please contact Liz Johnston (Chair) or contact Shona here at the school.

Schools Closed

School and Nursery will be closed on the following dates this term:

- Thursday 13th February.
- Friday 14th February.
- Monday 17th February.

- Tuesday 18th February.

The last day of Term 3 will be Friday 4th April with the first day of the following term being Tuesday 22nd April.

World Book Day

World Book Day will be recognised on Thursday 6th March 2025 and this year it will be planned and led by our Library Pupil Voice group. We look forward to seeing what they will have planned.

Reporting Progress Evenings

Term 3 Reporting Progress Evenings are scheduled for the following dates:

- Tuesday 11th March.
- Wednesday 12th March.

Shona will be in touch nearer the time but if you have a preference for a date and time then please contact her at your earliest convenience.

Comic Relief

Comic Relief will be recognised on Friday 21st March 2025 and this year it will be planned and led by the P1-3 class as part of their pupil led learning work linked to our school improvement plan.

Class Assemblies

Both classes will present their class assemblies on Monday 24th March at 2:30 PM. We are combining both classes this year based on your valued feedback at the end of last year.

Intergenerational Event

After the huge success and overwhelming positive feedback we decided to run another intergenerational event for members of our community and this is scheduled for Friday 28th March 2025. More details will follow nearer the time but please do let Grannies, Grandads, friends and neighbours know to mark the date in their diaries.

P7 Hoy Residential

The dates for the P7 residential visit to Hoy have been confirmed as Tuesday 6th to Friday 9th of May. This year, it looks like Orphir will be joining with P7s from Evie and North Walls and will be accompanied by Mr Dearness.

Young Scot Card - P7 pupils only

All Primary 7 pupils have been given a copy of the letter detailing the application process for the Young Scot Card which includes the free travel element.

School Calendar 2024-2025, 2025-2026

The school calendar for the next 2 years is attached. Please note that there has been a slight change in the days/dates on Term 4 in 2026 if you have looked that far ahead. It had been noted that the days/dates didn't match up and they have been amended on the Council website.

Finally from me...

There are literally lighter days ahead and I do feel them slowly but surely creeping in. It is in this term that we really start to notice all our little people growing up and almost seem to take a leap in their learning. Our youngest humans grow in confidence and more and more we see their little personalities come out and this is lovely - the part of the job that reminds us why we love what we do. Please take care and like me, don't make too many radical and unachievable new year resolutions!

Kind regards as always,

Grant Thomson

Grant Thomson
Head Teacher

Head Teacher Timetable

Do remember that these days and times can change occasionally but on the whole I try and keep to this timetable! I can be contacted at either school however if you need to phone.

Orphir Community School 01856 811265
Stenness Community School 01856 850212

Head Teacher Timetable 2024-2025	
Monday	Orphir
Tuesday	Stenness
Wednesday	Stenness Orphir
Thursday	Orphir
Friday	Stenness

Weekly Timetable

Tuesday	PE Free Fruit	Bring PE Kit and long hair to be tied back Free Fruit for all P1-2 at break time - no need for snack that day
Wednesday	Fiddle Music Free Fruit	Bring fiddles! Free Fruit for all P1-2 at break time - no need for snack that day
Thursday	Art Free Fruit	Art shirt if necessary Free Fruit for all P1-2 at break time - no need for snack that day

Children need at school please:

- Change of clothes with them in their PE bag
- PE kit
- Welly boots
- Waterproof coat (gloves/hat/scarf if they need that type of clothing)
- Water bottle

Education, Leisure and Housing

School term dates - 2024 / 2025 (all dates are inclusive)

Term 3 2025	Monday 6 January – Friday 4 April. (61 days)
Schools closed	Thursday 13 February – Tuesday 18 February.
Spring holidays	Monday 7 April – Monday 21 April (Easter Monday 21 April)
Term 4	Tuesday 22 April – Friday 4 July. (52 days)
Schools closed	Monday 5 May (May Day holiday).
Schools closed	Monday 2 June.
Staff Only, In-service days are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday 19 August.• Monday 28 and Tuesday 29 October.• Tuesday 18 February.• Monday 2 June.



EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE REGISTRATION 2025/26

Registration opens Monday 03 February at 9am until Friday 07 February at 5pm.

If your child turns three years old between 1 March 2025 and 28 February 2026, they become eligible for their first year of funded Early Learning and Childcare place the term after their third birthday as below:

Children born between	Eligible to start
1 March 2022 – 31 August 2022	19 August 2025 (the Autumn Term)
1 September 2022 - 31 December 2022	05 January 2026 (the Spring Term)
1 January 2023 - 28 February 2023	20 April 2026 (the Summer Term)

You need to complete the online registration form during registration week accessed in Education/Learning from the OIC website www.orkney.gov.uk. where information on all local settings and childminders in partnership will also be available. Online registration forms can be accepted after this deadline but please be aware that in some settings, spaces may be oversubscribed.

In the Papdale catchment area there are two settings, Papdale and the Strynd. Glaitness is also available to Papdale catchment parents. When registering, parents will be asked to indicate their first choice, followed by their second and third in the event that their first choice is oversubscribed at the time of registering. Once registration opens, places are allocated in the order they are received.

If your child is three or four years old and is currently attending their first year of Early Learning and Childcare they will automatically be carried forward for their second year of Early Learning and Childcare in their current setting. They do not need to complete a registration form.

Children aged two years old may be eligible for a place the term after their second birthday if parents/carers are in receipt of certain benefits or care experienced. Registration for a two year old place is continually open, an application form can be completed by accessing Education/Learning from the OIC website www.orkney.gov.uk. Forms should be completed no earlier than three months prior to the date of the child's second birthday.

If you have any queries or require any further information or assistance in completing the ELC registration form, please contact the Early Years Team, Education, Leisure & Housing on 01856 873535 ext 3220/2458 or email elc@orkney.gov.uk.





PRIMARY ONE REGISTRATION 2025/26

Registration opens Monday 03 February at 9am until Friday 07 February at 5pm.

If your child is five years old on or between 1 March and the first day of school term, Tuesday 19 August 2025, your child will start school this August.

If your child is five years old on or between Wednesday 20 August 2025 and the last day of February 2026, your child can start school on 19 August 2025. However, you have the option to defer your child’s entry to school. All children who are eligible to defer will automatically be able to access an additional year of funded Early Learning and Childcare.

Parents and guardians who wish to enrol their child(ren) for Primary One should complete the online registration form during registration week. P1 Registration forms can be accessed under ‘Schools’ in Education/Learning from the OIC website www.orkney.gov.uk where information on starting primary one will also be available. Online registration forms can be accepted after this deadline.

If you choose to defer your child, please confirm this with your Early Learning and Childcare setting and your child will automatically be carried forward for an additional year. You will not therefore be required to complete a registration form for Primary One.

If you have any queries or require any further information or assistance in completing the P1 registration form, please contact the head teacher at your local school or the Education Department, Education, Leisure & Housing on 01856 873535 or email education.leisure@orkney.gov.uk.

Education, Leisure and Housing

School term dates - 2025 / 2026 (all dates are inclusive)

Term 1 2025	Tuesday 19 August – Friday 10 October. (39 days)
October holidays	Monday 13 October – Tuesday 28 October.
Term 2	Wednesday 29 October – Friday 19 December. (38 days)
Christmas holidays	Monday 22 December – Friday 2 January.
Term 3 2026	Monday 5 January – Friday 3 April. (61 days)
Schools closed	Thursday 12 February – Tuesday 17 February.
Spring holidays	Monday 6 April – Friday 17 April. (Easter Monday 6 April).
Term 4	Monday 20 April – Thursday 2 July. (52 days)
Schools closed	Monday 4 May (May Day holiday).
Schools closed	Monday 1 June.
Staff Only, In-service days are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 18 August. • Monday 27 – Tuesday 28 October. • Tuesday 17 February. • Monday 1 June. 	

Learning across the four contexts

Opportunities for personal achievement

Opportunities for personal achievement

Personal achievement provides children and young people with a sense of satisfaction and helps to build motivation, resilience and confidence. The experiences and outcomes include opportunities for a range of achievements in the learning setting and beyond. All establishments need to plan to offer opportunities for achievement and to provide the support and encouragement which will enable children and young people to step forward to undertake activities which they find challenging. This is one of the key areas where schools need to work closely with a wide range of partners to help young people access information and opportunities and make their voices heard.

Interdisciplinary Learning

Interdisciplinary learning

The curriculum should include space/opportunities that enable children and young people to make connections between different areas of learning. Interdisciplinary learning should be stimulating, relevant and challenging. Revisiting a concept or skill from different perspectives deepens understanding and can make the curriculum more coherent and meaningful for learners. It can take advantage of opportunities to work with partners who are able to offer and support enriched learning experiences and opportunities for young people's wider involvement in society.

Effective interdisciplinary learning:

- can take the form of individual one-off projects or longer courses of study
- is planned around clear purposes
- is based upon experiences and outcomes drawn from different curriculum areas or subjects within them
- ensures progression in skills and in knowledge and understanding
- can provide opportunities for mixed stage learning which is interest based.

The Curriculum
'the totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education'

Ethos and life of school as a community

The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the school community. All practitioners should contribute through open, positive, supportive relationships where children and young people will feel that they are listened to; promoting a climate in which children and young people feel safe and secure; modelling behaviour which promotes effective learning and wellbeing within the school community; and by being sensitive and responsive to each young person's wellbeing.

Children and young people should be encouraged to contribute to the life and work of the school and to exercise their responsibilities as members of a community. This includes opportunities to participate responsibly in decision-making, to contribute as leaders and role models, offer support and service to others and play an active part in putting the values of the school community into practice.

Ethos and life of the school as a community

Curriculum areas and subjects

The curriculum areas are the organisers for setting out the experiences and outcomes and contribute to developing the four capacities. There are eight curriculum areas. Curriculum areas are not structures for timetabling: establishments and partnerships have the freedom to think creatively about how they can organise and plan for deep, sustained learning which meet the needs of their children and young people.

Subjects are drawn from the curriculum areas and provide a familiar structure for organising knowledge and skills. As young people move through the broad general education and into the senior phase they will experience increasing specialisation and greater depth, with a wide variety of subjects increasingly being the principal means of structuring learning and delivering outcomes.

Curriculum areas and subjects

Learning across the four contexts at Orphir Community School and Nursery

Term 1 & 2 2024-2025



Opportunities for personal achievement

We held our first celebration assembly and it was a great success.

Our football and netball teams started their respective leagues.

Our Nursery children took a trip to the Kirk Café.

Interdisciplinary Learning

P4-7 took part in a coding club and thoroughly enjoyed it.

P1-3 completed a themed topic of 'Under The Sea' and led their own learning.

The Curriculum
'the totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education'

All children in P1 to P7 are part of a group that drives forward change in our school.

We celebrated being a Silver Accredited Rights Respecting School.

We all had great fun at the Halloween party, P4-7 decorated the hall.

All children from Nursery to P7 performed in Finding Nemo.

Nursery to P3 all took part in a joined play morning and had great fun.

Ethos and life of the school as a community

P1-3 used their learned knowledge of electricity to create a working doorbell and torchlight.

P4-7 learned about how robots work in technology lessons.

Nursery have enjoyed learning more about farming.

Curriculum areas and subjects