

Equality and Inclusion

Our very own St Catherine's RC Primary School was invited to give a presentation on their whole school approaches to Equality and Inclusion at the recent Gillis Centre RC Head Teachers' Conference arranged by the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh and convened by His Grace, Archbishop Leo Cushley. The school's presentation outlined school policy and practices to support children and their families by reducing and removing existing inequalities and barriers linked with poverty and low income. The whole school approach outlined focused on poverty proofing

the school day through highlighting CPAG work and CLPL for staff as well as practical things the school does in the community.

This annual event brings together head teachers from all over the diocese and was a chance for Edinburgh to show off the amazing collegiate work done in our city RC schools. The RC primary and secondary head teachers present were very positive about the school's work and talked about how they could implement many of the approaches St Catherine's uses on their return to their own schools. It was also lovely to have our Head of Education, Jackie Reid present to share this practice and to see what other schools in the diocesan local authorities are also doing.

**Paul A Hunter, Head Teacher
St Catherine's RC Primary School**



Digital Literacy at James Gillespie's Primary School

During the festive period, the children and staff at JGPS have continued to use digital technology creatively to enhance learning and teaching. Children within second level learned to code using Micro: bits during our Wee Reindeer Games – a collaborative Christmas event. The children learned to download commands sent to the Micro: bits to feature within hand drawn Christmas baubles which were placed on the JGPS Micro: bit Christmas tree. Some children chose to integrate their flashing Micro: bit designs into hand drawn Christmas scenes.

In December, children in P6 and 7 took part in an augmented reality live Lesson using their empowered iPads.

The children learned to use AR to enhance their learning and support their literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. The lesson itself was based upon creating a Christmas scene. Shortly after the lesson, we shared a video montage of the scenes created by P6A and a festive image was featured on the Edinburgh Learns digital website. Since then, the children have drawn festive images and animated them using AI.

Furthermore, children have created Minecraft winter wonderland scenes, festive sketchbook illustrations and integrated QR codes within Christmas banner projects. Lots of rich learning experiences that connect, empower, and transform learning and teaching at JGPS.

**Miss Rutherford, Digital Coordinator
James Gillespie's Primary School**



Digital Literacy at James Gillespie's Primary School



Running at South Morningside Primary School

Whilst many people might be digging out their running kit for a New Year's resolution at the start of 2024, there are many pupils at South Morningside Primary School who have long been committed to putting in the miles. Bright and early at 8am every Wednesday, the school Cross Country Club meets in Braidburn Valley Park for a morning run. Led by teachers Bruce Wilson and Peter Kiln, a group of over thirty P6 and P7 pupils stretch their legs up the bank and along the river. With the endorphins pumping, everyone makes their way back to school, happy, ready, and focussed for a busy day of learning.

Meanwhile, another of the school's P7 pupils has been making national headlines all of his own. In

2023, Seb Jellema set himself the target of running every day until he is 62. After learning about Ron Hall's world record of running daily for 52 years and 39 days, Seb decided to chase down that record. For over a year now, Seb has run at least 3km every day, even during P7 camp to Lagganlia and on family holidays abroad. Keep going Seb and roll on 2075!

Euan Stimpson (P7A) and Lois Maciver (P7B)
South Morningside Primary School



Working Towards Silver in James Gillespie's Primary School

James Gillespie's Primary School were delighted to achieve the Rights Respecting Bronze Award in October. We are now working towards silver! One of our latest projects has been developing our reward system.

Our school values (mascots) each have an aim: red – kindness and respect, yellow – can do attitude, blue – curiosity, green – connection. When a child demonstrates one of these values, they are given a paper chain in the corresponding colour. To link

this to the UNCRC and spark conversations about rights, children now also record the number of the right underpinning that positive behaviour.

'For example, if someone fell in the playground and you went to tell a PSA you would get a red strip and write 39, because you've respected their right to help if they have been hurt' **Rana, P7.**

'If you walked quietly passed a classroom you could write 29 on a green strip because you are respecting other peoples' right to an education' **Christina, P6.**

'Every time you get a paper chain you think about what right you have respected' **Otis, P7.**

'This is great, because now we know more about our rights in general' **Elin, P7.**

Harriet Bannerman, Rights Respecting Coordinator, James Gillespie's Primary School



Prestonfield Nursery — The Jamie Oliver Good School Food Awards

In 2023 the cost-of-living crisis was impacting the whole of the UK, and our learners at Prestonfield Nursery were among those being affected. To support our nursery community through this difficult period, the Family Cooking initiative was created with the main aim of bringing families together to cook an affordable, tasty, hot meal to take home to feed their family.

Each week we see the sense of achievement growing amongst our learners and families when, at the end of each session, we sit down to eat together and share our thoughts on the meal we have created. A sense of achievement, community connections and

relationships are being built at this vital early stage.

So successful was the Family Cooking programme, that in June 2023, Prestonfield Nursery won the Early Years Award in the Jamie Oliver Good School Food Awards which featured on the BBC One Show.

In January this year, project leaders Kirsty Pacitti, EYO, Saleha Begum, EYA and Jenny Hennessy, HT, visited Jamie Oliver's Head Quarters to meet with many key figures involved in food and health education.

Future plans for the family cooking initiative are looking positive. Award sponsor Tefal have generously gifted new kitchen ware to Prestonfield, new cookers are being installed into our skills base and a new group of families are excited to take part in the next block of cooking. Plans are in place to expand our growing and cooking all the way from nursery to P7 with the allotment being prepped for spring and a food truck initiative in the pipeline.

More information, photos and printable recipe cards are available on our website:

<https://prestonfieldprimary.co.uk/prestonfield-nursery/family-cooking-programme/>

**Jenny Hennessy, Kirsty Pacitti and
Saleha Begum, Prestonfield Nursery**





Prestonfield Nursery – The Jamie Oliver Good School Food Awards

Opportunities for Personal Achievement

There is so much we can celebrate from Frogston under the banner of Opportunities for Personal Development. Hearing and understanding our children's views and helping them all to improve and thrive has always been central to our ethos.

Play and Skills

Children at Frogston have opportunities to play, explore and lead their own learning from nursery all the way to P7. But when children play, they are not often aware of the incredible range of learning and development which is taking place as they do so. As a result, we wanted to help our pupils to not just understand and value their play-based learning, but to be able to recognise and articulate their strengths and areas for development and growth. To this end, we have combined our School (VVA) of ALL (Achieve, Lead, Love) with the Meta-Skills Toolkit developed by Skills Development Scotland. This is allowing us to promote meaningful discussions around the skills pupils are developing as they play, learn and explore. Pupils are being taught to reflect on skills, analyse their strengths and set targeted goals.

'We have been learning about how we have been using our collaboration skills and initiative in play. It's been interesting to discover how we have adapted and improved our social intelligence through games like Minecraft.'

'I have learned that I am very creative, that I can adapt and also lead people by teaching them and listening.'

'We are going into P3 tomorrow to teach them about our Spanish Twister game which was my idea. I know now that I can collaborate well and communicate clearly and that this helps other people as well as me.'

Farm to Fork

Like many today, a number of our pupils have had limited experiences of the outside world, and we all have an increasingly detached relationship with our food and where it comes from. We know that our pupils love time outside to learn, explore and play. They are particularly motivated and enthusiastic about anything which feels purposeful and real. As a result, further enhancing our outdoor provision is an important part of our School Improvement Plan for 2023–2024. We had also identified that, as a new community, our parents, grandparents, carers and neighbours would benefit from a project which could include them all and bring this community together.

We were successful in a funding bid from the Bupa Foundation Green Community Grant to create a dedicated Farm to Fork space within our grounds. We have all been working hard and we now have a large area for planting so that all classes will be able to plant, tend and grow food crops of their choice such as potatoes, rhubarb and carrots. The funding allowed us to purchase good quality digging tools and a push mower so that we will be able to create and maintain pathways, etc. Most excitingly, the funding paid for a beautiful Omlet coop with attached secure run (Gallinera de Guapas), 42m of moveable fencing and 4 gorgeous chickens called Agnes, Betty, Cathy and Dotty (our pollitos).

There is growing research to show that animals in schools can help reduce stress and anxiety in pupils as well as build confidence, empathy and a huge range of life skills. Growing and creating your own food encourages healthy eating habits, builds sensory development and promotes sustainable thinking and awareness. These were the principal motivations for bringing chickens and farming to our school, but the results even this early on (we have had the chickens since January and have yet to plant a single seed) have been HUGE and far exceed what we expected. Classes are taking it in turns to manage the feeding, cleaning and general care of the chickens for a week at a time. They are excitedly planning what they want to grow and harvest and what they might do with it when they get it. The thrill when they find eggs, the relationships that they are building between themselves and the animals and anyone involved, the connections they are making between their lived experiences of animal husbandry and the

reality for UK farming, the pride and commitment that they are showing every day. It is just incredible and the list of benefits goes on and on.

'I used to be terrified of birds but the chickens have helped me. I like all animals more now.'

'I am a lot calmer around animals now, since the chickens.'

'I think the chickens have been a great part of our school! I like learning how to take care of them. It's like we have big responsibilities when we do it. They have been a lovely addition to Frogston!'

'It's really lovely to see all the little children so excited and enthusiastic about them.'

'I like going outside every morning to see them in the fresh air. They run towards us. I feel loved!'

'Any animal that joins a school is the idol!'

Added to all that loveliness, our call for volunteers from our parent community to care for the chickens at weekends and holidays has also been overwhelmingly positive. The adults have been as enthusiastic and excited as the kids. We are so proud of our staff, pupils, parents, grannys, grandads and carers and how they have all pulled together and got properly stuck in! And we are also exceptionally proud of our pollitos.

e-Twinning

Speaking of Spanish, one of other big projects this year is an e-Twinning project which we set up with the support of SCILT (Scottish Centre for International Language Tuition). We have twinned every class in our school with another class around the UK so that we can promote, share, celebrate and improve our Spanish language learning. Again, staff have risen to the challenge admirably and as a result, every single pupil is involved in selecting some Spanish that they would like to learn, practicing it and then considering ways that this learning could be shared and celebrated with their 'twinned' class. From simple introductions and basic classroom language, to Christmas songs and celebrations, games and recipes. E-Twinning allows pupils and staff to promote Spanish language and culture in a way which is engaging, motivational and purposeful. See our Twitter page for some amazing examples of the Spanish language pupils have been mastering and a wee taste of all that they are achieving.

'I have found it really motivating to share what we've been doing with other children in different places.'

'I have liked everything about e-Twinning. It has been fun to take something you maybe didn't enjoy or feel confident about and realise how you are getting better, and you can make it more fun by turning it into games and helping other people.'

'It is cool knowing that what you are doing and making and learning about is helping some other kids far away to learn too. We are teaching kids in Wales!'

**Lorraine Lawrie, Head Teacher
Frogston Primary School**



Opportunities for Personal Achievement



Opportunities for Personal Achievement



Pilrig Park School

Purple Class – Little Wins – Opportunities for Personal Achievement

At Pilrig Park School, we are dedicated to celebrating all our pupils and their fantastic achievements on a daily basis. This term, Purple Class have set up a class display celebrating individual learner's Little Wins.

Our pupils decorated photos of themselves to add to the display, putting their own unique flare on it! Notes are then added to the wall detailing something that has gone well for the learner. We even have space for staff achievements.

Some examples of our Little Wins are a pupil walking into class independently for the first time, a pupil joining in with a song at morning circle, and a staff member making an accurate estimate in a maths lesson.

Pupils are encouraged to share Little Wins from outside of school too, giving them even more opportunities to celebrate their personal achievements.

Learners at Pilrig Park School are proud to celebrate their Little Wins, excitedly adding their win to the wall and building a picture of their progress across the term. Purple Class are keen to share their Little Wins wall across the school and support other classes to capture their personal achievements as we move forward with embedding this idea across the school.

**Ms Emma Reid, Class Teacher, Purple Class
Pilrig Park School**



Craigour Park Running Club

We have had a running club at Craigour Park every Friday morning before school for about 15 years. It is a fun running club for everyone. Our youngest member is 6 and we have up to 20 other children running with us each week as well as members of staff, parents and carers.

Every other week we go for a proper run, we are very lucky near our school we have lots of beautiful

green spaces, like Burdiehouse Burn, Ellen's Glen and Craigmillar Castle Hill, we can run to. We often stop for a woodland relay, pooh sticks or a game of camouflage.

Sometimes we can run for 3 miles before we start school! On the other weeks we go to a local park and play, the generational Moredun street game, Helpy.

We sometimes dress up and have themes. Some of our favourite themes are cops and robbers, superheroes, doing Christmas in June or summer holidays in December.

It is a great way to start our last day of the school week, see the local area and meet lots of former pupils and members of the community on their way to big school.

**Sally Ketchin, Head Teacher
Craigour Park Primary School**



Front: Jayden Finlayson, Cooper Adamson, Jaymie Bain, Sebastian Byrne, Max Sypien, Ksawery Sypien
Back: Fraser Morton, Lois Adamson, Struan Morton, Mhairi Bagnall, Rory Bell, Shaun Taylor, Tobyn Harding, Jenson Harding, Harli McDermott

Bairns without Borders

Refugee children's stories of hope and healing told in film, podcast and print

Senior authority Hermitage Park primary shared their pupil created short movie entitled Bairns without Borders in April. Last year they were awarded Scottish Book Trust funding to create their emotional digital story. This film shared the first-hand experiences of the school's Ukrainian and Sudanese refugee pupils' journey to Leith.

Acting head teacher, Lisa Black commented, 'We were thrilled to be awarded funding to create our Bairns without Borders writing project. This bridged the cultural gap between our refugee (Ukrainian, Sudanese, Syrian) and non-refugee pupils by offering connection and celebrating courage through digital storytelling.'

Our pupils gained digital storytelling skills but more importantly, it also reduced stigma and amplified the voices of the marginalised.'

The funding paid for author and historian Dan Gray to be the school's author in residence to help produce the story. He was delighted to part of the team.

Music therapist, Kathryn Holt, also helped pupils process any trauma reliving their experiences brought and they composed a song about it.

Lisa Black, acting head teacher, views *Bairns without Borders* as an important project to promote children's rights. She states, 'Our pupils used their

multi-national voices to address anti-refugee rhetoric and misinformation by learning how to research and question sources on human migration and political situations in a partisan, children's rights respecting approach.

The short movie was made by the students using their iPads, which is all their own work. In Edinburgh, our senior pupils all have individual iPads through our empowered learning programme, which was invaluable here.

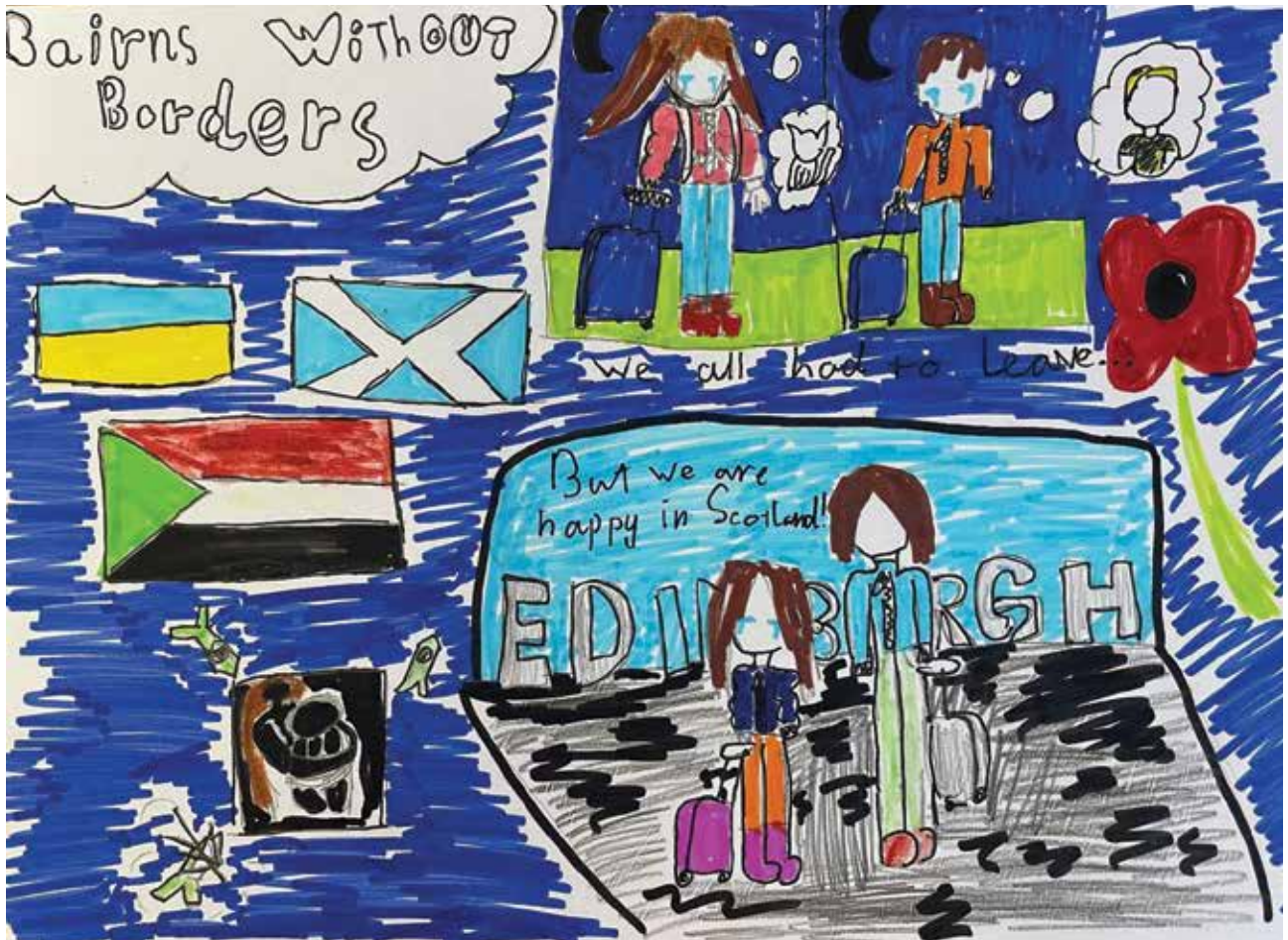
The movie itself, is only around twenty minutes and it is worthy of praise in its own right. But the work that went before, is what really matters. When you watch it you will see the values of compassion and inclusion from our Leith pupils. You will also see the values of resilience and courage from our Ukrainian and Sudanese pupils. Most of all, you will see a connection that transcends the barriers of nationality and culture.

There are many special moments in the movie but if I had to highlight one, it is the recital at the end between Lyan from Sudan and Emma from Ukraine. At the time neither spoke English. Yet they built a friendship up from the shared language of childhood and even the shared language of Scots, as they recite 'A dug, a dug.'

In times of global challenges and uncertainties, these young people instil hope in me. By embracing diversity and fostering cultural exchange, they lay the foundation for a brighter and more interconnected future.'

**Lisa Black, Acting Head Teacher
Hermitage Park Primary School**





Bairns without Borders

Sporting Achievement at Queensferry High School

The school community at Queensferry are incredibly proud of the recent national sporting achievements of our young people. Prior to the Easter break our U15 boys basketball team were rewarded for their efforts by winning the Scottish Schools Cup. This win came through victories over Graeme HS by 70 points to 59 in the semi-finals

before defeating Mearns Castle in the final 83 points to 51, in a thoroughly entertaining match.

There was further success on the 18 April this time on the Volleyball court. Queensferry took both boys and girls senior teams to University of Edinburgh's Pleasance Sports Centre to represent the school at the Scottish finals. Although the girls team demonstrated great fight and resilience, they were unfortunately overcome by a strong Belmont High School team. However, there was better news for the boys team who defeated Woodfarm High School in the final, winning the game after 3 sets, making them Scottish champions. A fantastic achievement having two teams in the national finals. Well done to both teams, the Queensferry HS community are super proud of you all.

**Kenny Manson, Depute Head Teacher
Queensferry High School**





Sporting Achievement at Queensferry High School