



Pilrig Park School

To be the best we can be

Sunshine in Leith



December 2024

Our Winter Newsletter is once again bursting with stories and pictures of life at Pilrig Park School over the past couple of months. Each class has shared some highlights of their work, there are articles and pictures of our festive activities, news on our Celebration of Cultures fortnight, the excitement of our Winter Show, and there are our very proud moments in the Pilrig Park News section! The hard work and dedication of all the staff in supporting our pupils to participate in all these different experiences must be commended. A massive thank you also goes to all the parents and carers who are able to come along and support our events. We know that this is not always easy for you to do. Thank you also for all the other types of support which you give to the school, it really is appreciated.

On the next page you will find a list of key dates until Easter. Our next parental engagement event is Parents Night on the 23rd of January. Appointments with Tutor Teachers can either be on the telephone or in person. I will send out details of your appointment time when we return in January.

I am absolutely delighted to announce that we have been able to form a Parent Council. At a meeting in October, Ms Laura Rose was elected Chairperson, Ms Clare Armstrong was elected Treasurer and Mr Hugh Mooney was elected Secretary. I am grateful to the other parents/carers who were in attendance and assisted in this process. The new office bearers are undertaking training and we will be sending out details of the next meeting early in the New Year. In the meantime, if you have anything you wish to raise with them, they can be contacted at the following email address: Pilrigparkpc@gmail.com

All parents / carers will shortly be receiving two questionnaires which we would be very grateful if you could take some time to complete. The first is a review of our communication strategy and the second is to gather some feedback on your perspective of our school curriculum.

At particular times of the year, Natalie likes to decorate the picture of me on my office door (she then hides and watches my reaction!!!). I think this time she has surpassed herself with the addition of the pink legs and Crocs. So for this term, my favourite picture has to be:

On behalf of the staff and myself, thank you again for all the support and kindness you show to us. We would like to wish all our families a very relaxing holiday and all the very best for 2025!

We look forward to welcoming our pupils back on **Tuesday the 7th of January.**

With every best wish,

Ann M. O'Hagan - Head Teacher



Key Dates:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Tuesday the 7 th of January 2025 | - Pupils return |
| Wednesday the 22 nd of January 2025 | - School ceilidh with parents/carers (pm) |
| Thursday the 23 rd of January 2025 | - S1-S6 Parents Night (4:00-6:00pm) |
| Friday the 7 th of February 2025 | - Break for February holiday |
| Monday the 17 th of February 2025 | - Pupils return |
| Wednesday the 19 th of February 2025 | - Cultural Café for parents/carers (pm) |
| Friday the 4 th of April 2025 | - Newsletter 3 issued and Easter Holidays |

PILRIG PARK NEWS

Pilrig Park School is the winner of the Judge's Special Commendation Prize for the Black History Month 2024 Competition for Edinburgh Schools!

October was Black History Month. Miss McLarty and Red Class worked very hard on an entry for the competition which was open to all S1 – S3 pupils across the city. Red Class submitted a poster as their entry. It included visuals which they use as one of their inclusive communication methods.

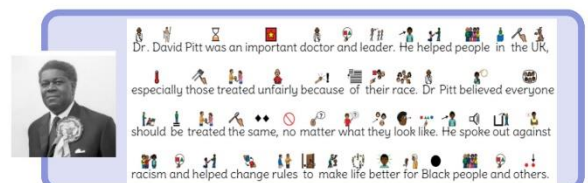
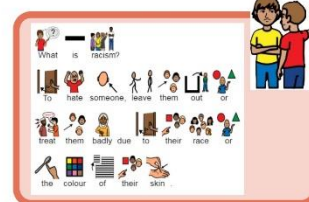


We were absolutely blown away to find out we had been selected for the Judge's Special Commendation Prize by Lisa Williams who was the judge for the competition.

Everyone at Pilrig Park School is VERY proud of what Red Class have achieved! Well done!

Pilrig Park Special School
S3 Red Class

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Bus Shelter Art Competition

We are absolutely delighted to let everyone know that one of our pupils is a winner of The City of Edinburgh Council and bus shelter advertising company JCDecaux recent artwork competition where pupils from Edinburgh schools were invited to create designs to be showcased along Princes Street as digital posters in bus shelters. These designs will also be transformed into e-cards for elected members to share.

The artwork was displayed for four days from 28 November to 1 December. Check out our Twitter for more photos of visits to the bus stop.

A huge congratulations to our winner.

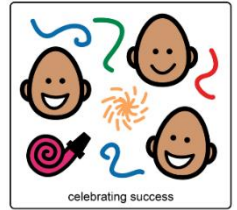
We are all SO proud!



Celebrating Success at Pilrig Park School!

We like to celebrate the success of our pupils at Pilrig Park School!

We do this in a variety of ways. 'Huge Wins' which are gained by an individual pupil for achieving something which may be a big achievement for them. These are then shared with the school at our monthly assembly.



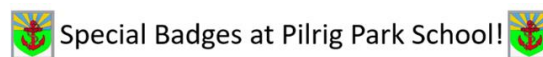
Head Teacher Awards are presented at our monthly assembly. Staff (and pupils!) can nominate someone (or a whole class) for an award! There are also 'Gold' Head Teacher Awards!



Another way of celebrating success is a 'Pilrig Park Praises You!' postcard. Staff can write a postcard to a pupil for achieving success through one of the 8 school values. Our Pupil Council recently suggested that the values be printed on the reverse of the postcard, thus making it slightly quicker for the sender to write! This change was made, and the pupils are very happy with the result! Postcards are delivered by a pupil in Green Class every Friday!



And there's another way of celebrating success - Special Badges! These are gained by a class after they have worked towards a particular area for example 'School Service' or 'Creativity'. The badge is presented at assembly to the class and each pupil receives an individual badge as well as the special class one for their pennant. Once each of the eight special badges have been gained, a treat is awarded to the whole class!!



Phew! We like to celebrate success! 😊

Blue Class

This term, Blue Class has been very busy exploring lots of exciting topics and having fun along the way!

Our young learners have been discovering all about the people who help us in our communities. We had great fun learning about bus drivers. The class discovered how these drivers ensure we get safely from one place to another and the important responsibilities of driving a bus, from planning safe routes to keeping passengers comfortable and secure. We even had the chance to try on a bus driver's uniform!

During literacy, the class especially enjoyed reading the book *The Rainbow Fish*. Inspired by the story, the young people made their own colourful rainbow fish using paper plates, which turned out beautifully.



Blue Class also worked incredibly hard to prepare for the Winter Show! The children made papier mâché masks of animals from Ghana to wear during their performance, as in Ghana people celebrate New Year with a masked parade. They put in a lot of effort and creativity, and each child has designed and created their own unique mask. They looked fabulous during the show.



It's been another great term full of fun, learning, and creativity!

Yellow Class

This term has been a very busy one in Yellow Class. In Communication, we have been focusing on core words and signs, we have enjoyed stories, songs and lots of other fun activities.

In Numeracy we have been focusing on shape and pattern. This tied in with our Celebration of Cultures, looking at Rangoli patterns for Diwali. We were also very lucky to be invited to Clyde Class's Shapes Party, where we enjoyed lots of sensory activities.

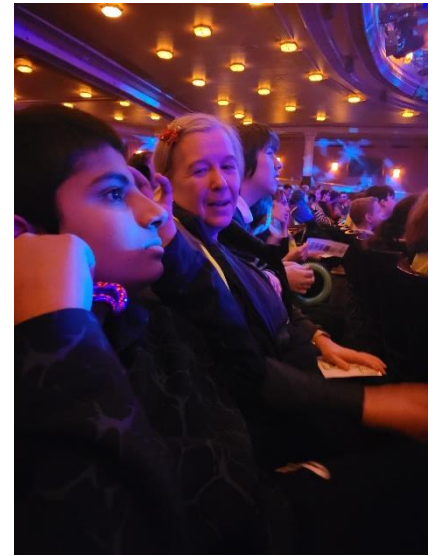


In recent weeks, we have really enjoyed music with Julia from the Youth Music Initiative. We love clapping along to music, trying new instruments and playing with the colourful band. It has been great fun!

One of the topics we have been learning about is 'People Who Help Us'. We have set up a postal service and have loved delivering and receiving post!



In the run up to the Christmas holidays we were lucky enough to go to the theatre to see Cinderella. We had an absolute ball! There was a lot to take in, lights, music and lots of audience participation. It was brilliant! The ice cream at the interval was a particular highlight! We are already looking forward to going next year!



We had a lot of fun being part of the school show.



A brilliant and busy term comes an end, and we look forward to carrying on our learning journey in the new year!

Purple Class

Purple Class have had an excellent term 2, with lots of opportunities to get out and about to the Boccia Festival, the pantomime and the cinema! We also led our assembly on the school value 'Respect' and enjoyed the opportunity to learn about different religions and demonstrate being respectful of others' beliefs.

In Literacy, we have been working on learning to sign, say and write core words. These are the words that are used most in everyday life, such as 'more' and 'help'. We have practised identifying these words in different contexts and using them across the curriculum. We will continue to develop our knowledge and understanding of core words in the Spring term, starting with 'who' and 'you'.

In Maths, we have been developing our counting skills, using technology to support us. We have also started looking at 2D shapes, using an Aided Language Board to identify and describe different shapes. We particularly enjoyed going on a shape scavenger hunt outside – we found lots of different shapes and used our skills to sort them by shape and colour!

In Health and Wellbeing, we have been learning about how to keep ourselves healthy as we continue to work towards our ASDAN award. We took part in visits to our school salon, learning about how to wash and take care of our hair. We particularly liked trying on the salon tunics! We have also been working on our fitness by taking part in the 'Daily Mile' which involves being outdoors and walking, jogging or running for 15 minutes per day.



Cinema Trip

As part of their JAS Award, Purple Class chose to go on a class trip to the cinema. They did some preparation before their adventure, looking at the cinema on Google Maps and watching a trailer for the film. They went to see the film 'Butterfly Tale' which was about a butterfly who struggled to fly. They also learned about what to expect at the cinema, through a social story and symbols.

They travelled by minibus and enjoyed the recliner seats in the cinema screen! Purple Class were fantastic at following their symbols, showing good listening and sitting calmly throughout the film. They loved the visuals which showed lots of beautiful flowers and butterflies.

Afterwards, Purple Class used writing, symbols and an Aided Language Board to share their views of the film. This linked into our core word of the week, which was 'like'. Most pupils chose to say 'I liked it'!



We loved being part of the school show.



Purple Class have had a great second term and are really looking forward to seeing what 2025 brings!

Red Class

Red Class have been working with Julia from Youth Music Initiative this term. They love taking part in her sessions and using the parachute. They have been working on their listening skills, rhythm and playing different instruments.



Red Class had a fantastic time adding some Rock and Roll to the school show.



Orange Class

Celebrations of Culture event:

Orange Class were amazing during the Celebrations of Culture Week. They are learning about Hinduism in RME. This was an opportunity for Orange Class to tell everyone about Hinduism and the celebration of Diwali. Orange Class made Diya decorations using rangoli prints. They created a pop-up shop for dressing up in Indian clothes. All the pupils in school were invited to come and visit the shop to try out Indian clothes and to learn about Diwali and Indian culture.



Tram trip to Prince's Street to view the winning artwork:

We are so proud of the winning artwork displayed on the bus shelter at Prince's Street. Orange Class decided to visit Prince's Street on the tram to view the artwork. We travelled to Prince's Street on the tram, walked along Prince's Street to find the bus shelter that displayed the winning artwork. Orange Class were brilliant walking along the street, catching the tram, and then finally viewing the artwork. Well done Orange Class!



The best sparkly boots in school:

Someone was wearing the BEST SPARKLY BOOTS in school – even better than Ms O'Hagan's boots.



Decorating the hall:

Orange Class getting ready for Christmas. They were very busy elves making decorations for the School Show, Christmas lunch and the silent disco!! The show must go on.....



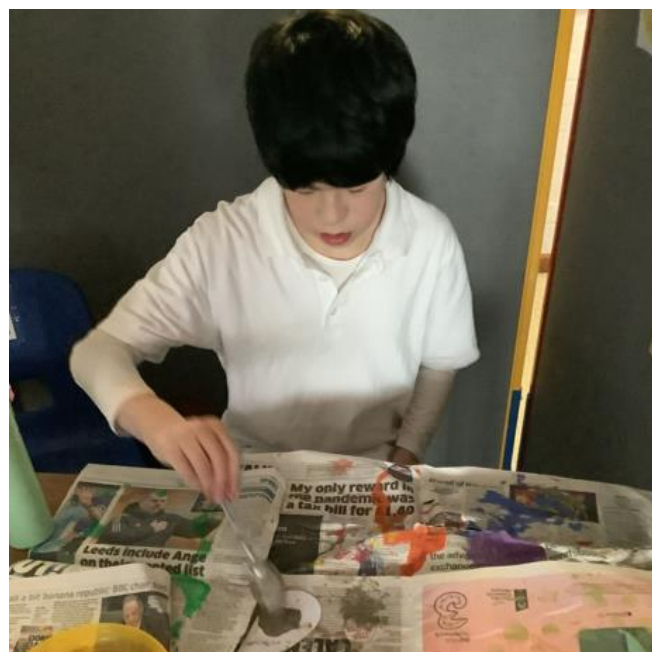
Orange Class have enjoyed participating in different activities this term. They are always ready for a new challenge. Wishing you all happy holidays!!!

Green Class

Forth, Green and Red Classes took part in a partnership with Friends of Pilrig Park to plant the parks new area of flowers. We will be back to visit our flowers in the springtime!



We made candle holders to celebrate Diwali. We used a template to create a flower shape from clay and then painted them bright colours that we liked.



Green Class shared that they wanted to learn what is it like to work in a shop, so we had a visit from the community champion from our local Tesco shop. We prepared some questions about the type of jobs and taught him some Signalong we have been learning during our course.



Green Class have been exploring different cameras as part of their Photography SQA course. One pupil here fully embraced his director role and communicated how he wanted us to stand for the portraits he was taking. Stay tuned for a photography exhibit in the new year 😊



Green Class have been learning about dangerous things at home, and how we can make things less dangerous. We have been practicing the steps of wiping up spills and different things we can use to clean with.



Clyde Class

What a busy term Clyde Class have had!

We enjoyed a trip to Pizza Express at Ocean Terminal to make pizzas. The whole class loved every minute of it, especially getting to travel by tram. The pizzas didn't last long once we got back to school, yummy! was the phrase of the day.



For our National 1 Number Skills: Shape course, Clyde Class decided they wanted to share their learning with Yellow Class by throwing a Shapes Party. They made shapes biscuits in Home Economics and had a number of sensory activities for all to enjoy. Both classes had a rare old time and enjoyed working together.



Clyde Class had the honour of presenting at assembly during our Celebration of Culture fortnight. We decided to share the story of Diwali with the whole school and how to stay safe when celebrating Diwali with sparklers.



Clyde pupils also took part in a number of activities based on India, including creating the Taj Mahl in 2D shapes in Maths, and visiting the cultural clothes shop.



Ness Class

Ness Class have had a busy term. There has been so much going on and we have really enjoyed being a part of it all.

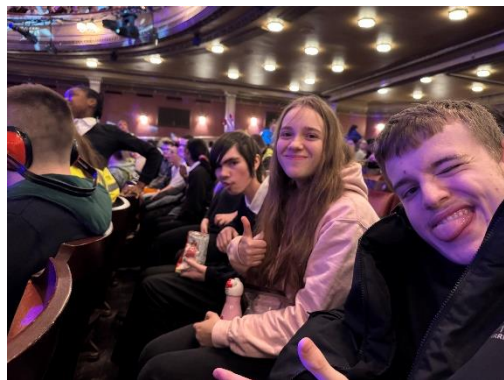
We enjoyed the Upmo Experience Rock Concert.



Everyone was involved in the Winter Show and our performance of Loch Lomond provided the perfect Finale.



Everyone enjoyed the Panto this year, especially the ice-cream at the interval. We all got more than our fair share.



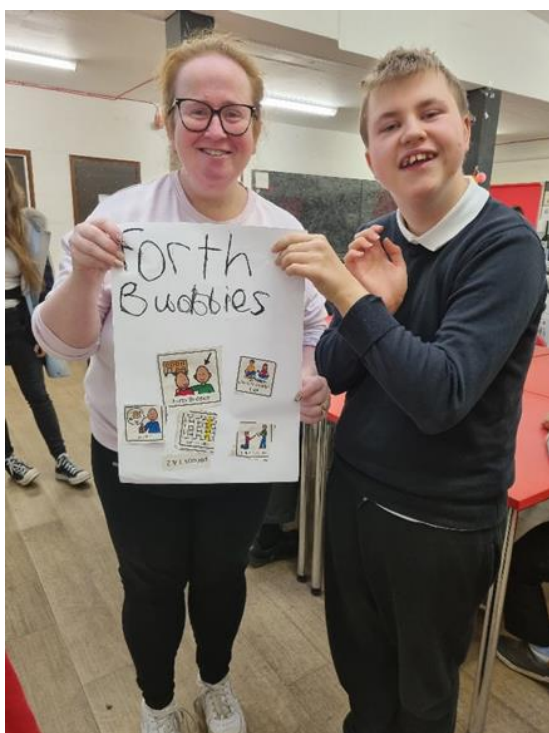
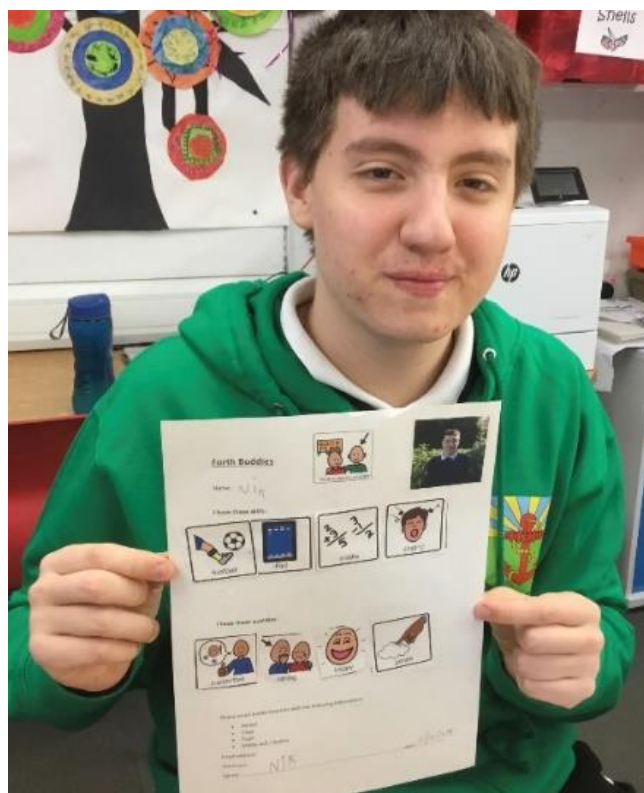
We have finished the year with lots of fun, especially while creating our Festivision video – You're A Mean One, Mr Grinch! Mr McPhillips fitted the part of Mr Grinch perfectly, didn't even have to act!!



Forth Class

Forth Class have been working hard on their SQA Mentoring Award this past term. In January, each member of Forth Class will become a buddy to a younger class, and support the staff with the lesson. Forth Class have each created a selection of adverts which are now displayed across the school. They have also compiled a CV with their skills and qualities and emailed the staff, to apply for a position! We are now practicing our budding skills and cannot wait to support after the holidays!

Forth Buddies are coming to a class near you!



Forth Class were very proud to receive their second **Special Badge** in November!! This time, they were awarded the Creativity badge for their efforts in making show props for the school winter show, The Pilgrig Express. They made some Stop Motion movies using toy trains, and then painted a huge train – both of which appeared in the show!



Some of Forth Class have been attending the School College Partnership taster course at Edinburgh College's Sighthill Campus, this past term. They have really enjoyed getting an idea of what college is like, making some new friends and best of all – getting out of school for the morning! They have been learning about volcanoes and also writing songs!



S6 Leavers

The S6 leavers were delighted to receive their very special 'leavers hoodies', a gift from the school. They had each chosen their own colour and can wear their hoodie with pride from now on, throughout their last year at Pilrig Park School. 😊

We presented each leaver with their hoodie, followed by a very funny photo session – and the obligatory photo bombing by Ms O'Hagan!!



DYW – Developing the Young Workforce

After the October holidays, for a period of 5 weeks, a small group of senior pupils took part in SCRAN Van sessions. These sessions were tailored to their future goals on leaving school and specifically focussed on their SQA qualifications. SCRAN van staff provide meaningful engagement with pupils, delivering confidence-building cookery sessions on the van – and much enjoyed products for their efforts! The work with SCRAN van will support pupils develop positive health and wellbeing, as well as hopefully guide them onto careers in food preparation in the future!



The Art Room



The focus for the BGE classes in the art room this term has been the school focus, **Celebration of Culture!**

Blue Class have been learning about the Spanish artist called Gaudi. They discovered his amazing mosaics and reproduced their own style, based on Gaudi's lizard and the sun.



Purple Class had great fun making Maasai warrior necklaces which they decorated with pasta shapes and colourful paper straw beads. We even had a dress up session and did some Maasai warrior jumping – in the art room!

Yellow Class learnt about Indian elephants and made some beautiful blankets and head dresses for their printed animals.



Red Class enjoyed a focus on Italy and made a map of the country using different types of dried pasta shapes. They are now making more Italian 'food', and this time it's pizza on the menu, using a collage technique! We had great fun creating the 'cheese' using shredded tissue paper!!



The senior pupils have been starting new projects.

Clyde and Green Classes have been working on making a gigantic Chinese dragon!! The dragon was used as a prop in the Pilrig Park Express Winter Show. There was much laughter and scary noises one morning, when we each dressed up as the 'dragon', held the magnificent head and danced around the art room!



Orange Class are continuing with their SQA unit - Developing Skills in Creative Arts, and have been learning about oil pastel resist techniques this term. They created some lovely designs using this technique. The class are now working on some photography techniques which will lead on to a painting.



The **National 3 Art & Design Class** had some fun in amongst preparing for their SQA Expressive unit, when we made some Irish Leprechaun puppets as part of the IDL Celebration of Culture! The class have also been preparing large scale work for a competition.



The Music Department



Over the past term, all classes have been working towards the school show in Music.

After many weeks of rehearsing, the show was a huge success and saw us welcome one of our biggest crowds of parents and carers for the event. With a mixture of live performances and a film, this was a massive project, and everyone in the school had a part to play and worked very hard to ensure it was a success.



In addition to our own music department, we also have partners from Drake Music, Youth Music Initiative, and Pulse of the Place visiting us on a regular basis.

**DRAKE
MUSIC**
SCOTLAND

Drake Music sessions have been taking place for our S1 and S2 pupils who have enjoyed working with Leah and developing skills using iPads to produce a range of sounds.



We have also had two of our senior pupils attend a course at Drake Music. Both pupils have achieved so much from this course, produced their own music, and are on track to pass.



Julia from **Youth Music Initiative** is working with some of the senior pupils and practicing their communication skills through music making.

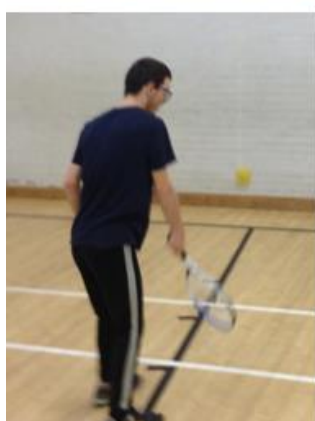
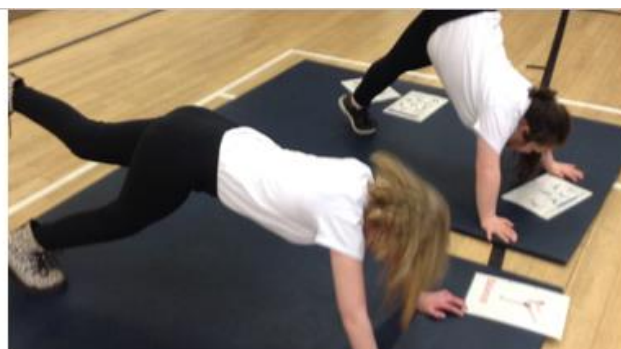


And Rohan and his team from **Pulse of the Place** Samba Band have returned to Pilrig Park School this term to deliver weekly sessions with a group of pupils from across the school. Their drumbeats can be heard throughout the school on a Thursday afternoon!



P.E.









Pupils participating in PE have been developing and improving skills and techniques through practice and play in following activities: Gymnastics, Tennis, Dance.



There are also break and lunchtime clubs in football, basketball and table tennis.



Lunchtime/breaktime sports

Monday 	 Football
Tuesday 	 Basketball
Wednesday 	
Thursday 	 Table tennis
Friday 	



In November, Purple Class took part in Boccia Festival 2024 at Edinburgh College amongst seven other schools from the city. Our Young Leader helped to run station activities.



Home Economics

This term in Home Economics we have not only been learning new skills and practicing routines, but also cooking up a storm for this festive season. The BGE classes had helped make gingerbread biscuits for our show – The Pilrig Express, and the senior classes made goods to sell hoping to raise funds for the school. Thanks to our families we raised over £110. Our SQA National 3 and 4 classes learnt rolling and cutting out dough to build their gingerbread houses which they were very pleased with. Our other classes were measuring, melting, mixing, portioning and decorating, whilst staying safe and hygienic.

Well done everyone, I wish you all the best for the festive season and a Happy New Year.



Events

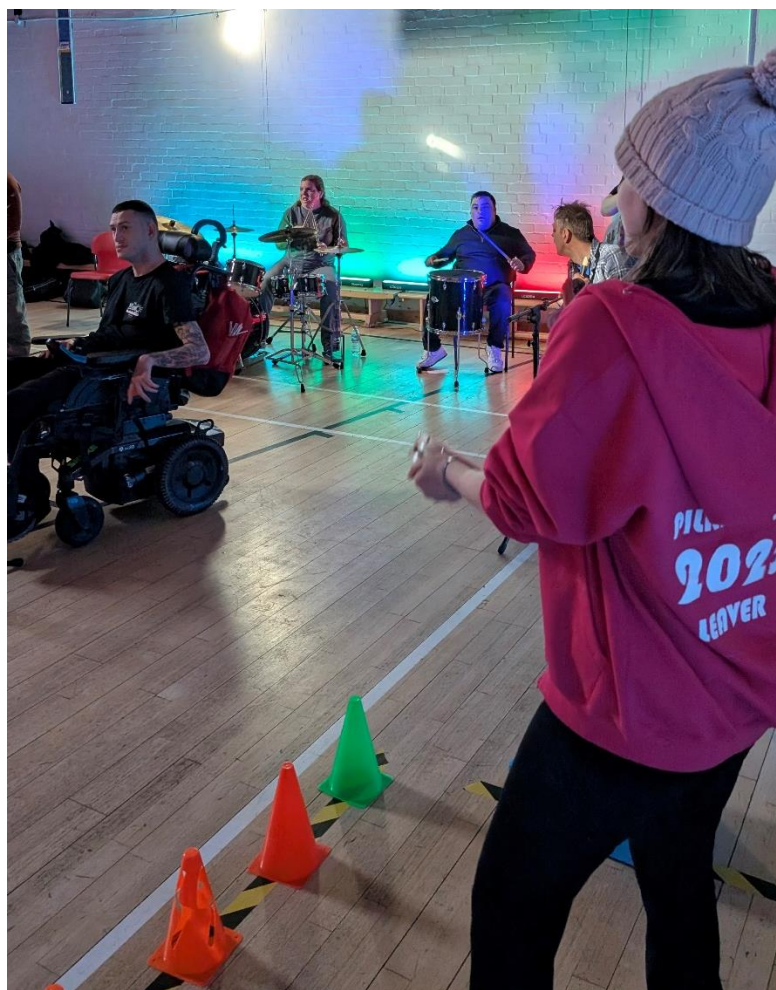
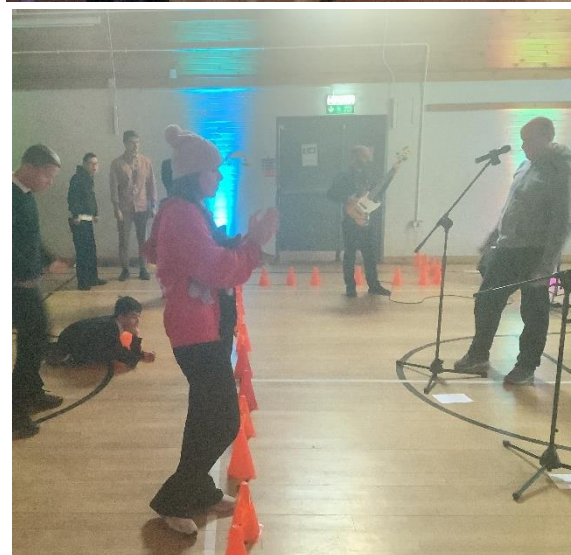
Remembrance Day 11th November 2024

Red Class marked Remembrance Day by making some very special poppies. In their art lesson, the pupils learnt about the four different colours of poppies and what each one represents. They then created some beautiful poppies using a variety of collage materials. The finished poppies were glued onto a photograph of the pupil's hands, to represent the care for each of the different groups represented.



The Upmo Experience Rock Show

In November, we were very lucky to have **The Upmo Experience Rock Show** at Pilrig Park School.



The Panto



In December, the whole school was invited to attend the relaxed performance of 'Cinderella' in the Festival Theatre. This annual visit to watch the pantomime, is a particular highlight of the school calendar and one which we all look forward to, very much indeed! The theatre staff make a huge effort to make it an accessible experience for young people from special school across the city. This year was no exception and we all thoroughly enjoyed 'booing' at the villain and laughing at the antics of 'Buttons'. Thank you to all the staff at the Festival Theatre and Cash for Kids, who make this an unforgettable trip!



The Pilrig Park School Choir



The Pilrig Park School Choir held their very first public performance on Monday 16th December! Pupils and staff were warmly welcomed at Tesco, Duke Street, Leith and sang to the customers while they shopped!

Thank you to everyone who was able to come along and support the visit. It was a tremendous success, and we are hoping that this is the start of many more public performances!

We raised £328.75 for school funds which was fantastic!



Silent Disco

Once again DJ Cuddy provided the music for our Silent Disco, which as always, was a great success and everyone had a great time.



Christmas Lunch 2024



We all enjoyed a fabulous Christmas Lunch on Wednesday 18th December! Pupils and staff sat together at decorated tables, and tucked into a feast of turkey, roast potatoes and all the trimmings! Crackers were pulled, festive hats were worn and everyone enjoyed being together in the hall. There was even a guest appearance from a very special Christmas Tree (although I am sure I recognised that voice, the Editor)!!!!



Festivision

On the last day of term, we are having our annual Festivision competition.

Each class creates a video with a Winter theme. Once we have all watched the videos, each class scores the other classes videos, like at Eurovision, and the winner will be announced at the end of the morning.



And in the winner.....

will be announced on X (formerly Twitter) at around 12pm on the last day of term!

Celebration of Culture!



Our focus this session is the Celebration of Culture and in November, we held a parental engagement event, called ‘Celebration of Culture’ Cinema Event!

We were delighted to welcome many families to school on the afternoon of 6th November and share with them the learning activities which had taken place in classes over a two-week period.



Classes each learned about a particular country across the curriculum. In Home Economics, pupils enjoyed making a variety of foods from across the world, including curries, pizzas and shortbread. Pupils learnt how to do a beautiful Spanish dance in PE. In the Art room, classes produced Japanese Koinobori kites, Indian elephants and some Italian maps made of pasta! Melodies from several countries could be heard from the music room as the pupils enjoyed exploring different cultural rhythms. And a few pupils learnt how to say ‘hello’ and ‘goodbye’ in Chinese and counting from 1 to 5!

Thank you to all the parents and carers who were able to join us for the cinema event. We hope you enjoyed watching the films with your child along with some tasty ‘world’ biscuits!

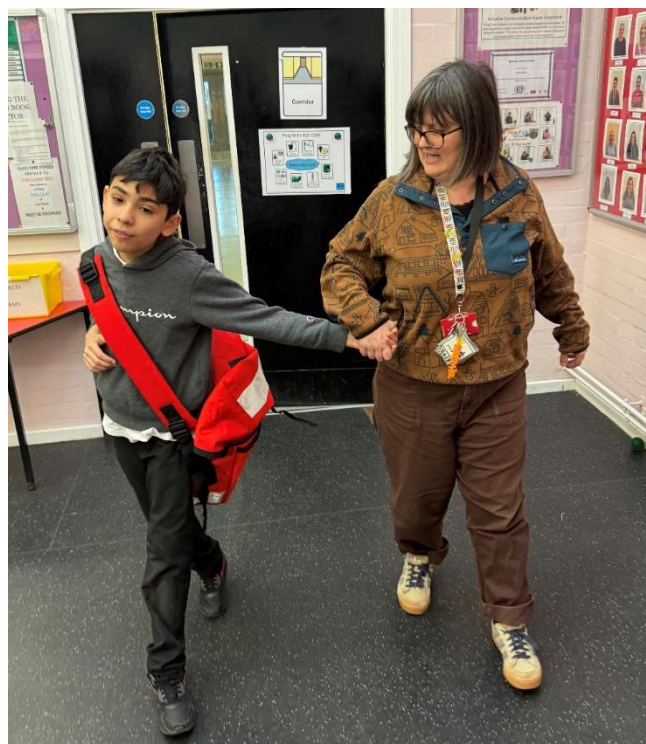
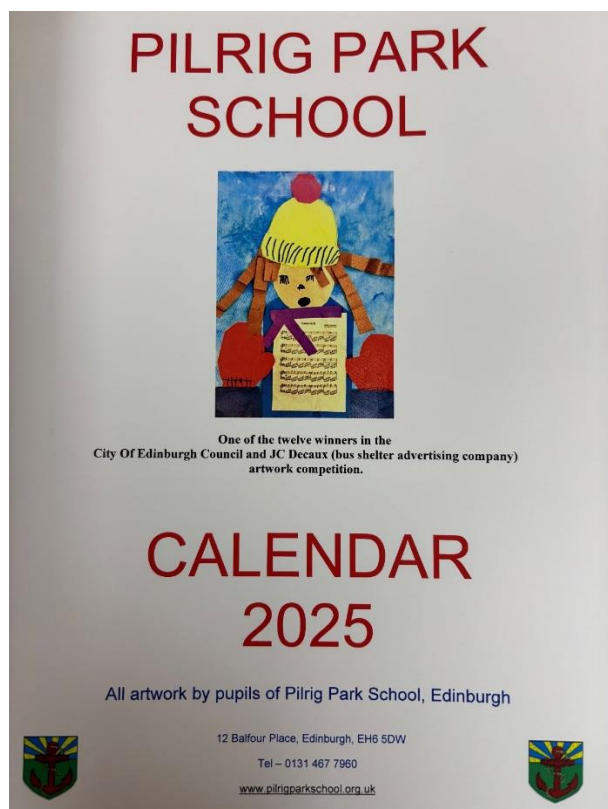


School Calendars

We hope all our families have been able to display our school calendar for 2025 in their homes. Mrs Ferguson and her Art classes were very busy creating all the artwork for next year's calendar and it was a tough decision to choose the pictures for each month!

Natalie had some help from apprentice post office workers in Red and Yellow Classes as the envelopes were delivered round the school for our pupils to take home!

On behalf of all the staff at Pilrig Park School we would like to wish our families all the very best for 2025!



Update from the Pupil Council

We are delighted that Special Badges@PPS are now well established at our monthly assemblies. We really enjoy reading all the applications each month and presenting classes with their badges and certificates. We are very proud of our work in developing a creative approach to celebrating the class and curriculum work which all pupils are involved in. Special Badges@PPS allows the opportunity for ALL pupils to achieve success and for this to be celebrated as class TEAMS.

At the December assembly we launched the new Special Badge for 2025 - 'My Big Achievement'. This badge recognises the importance we place on celebrating everyone's 'little wins'.



New badge for 2025!!!

My big achievement

- Tell the Pupil Council about your big achievement
- Once every pupil in the class has a big achievement badge.....
-the class will be awarded a white pin badge for their class pendant



• **Good luck!**

Our focus for January is going to be the school lunches. We have lots we need to say about our lunch provision!

The Pupil Council would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year! It is going to be a busy 2025 for us!

Pilrig Park School Pupil Council

Parent Council

The Parent Council represent the views of the parents and carers to ensure that the parental perspective is taken into account.

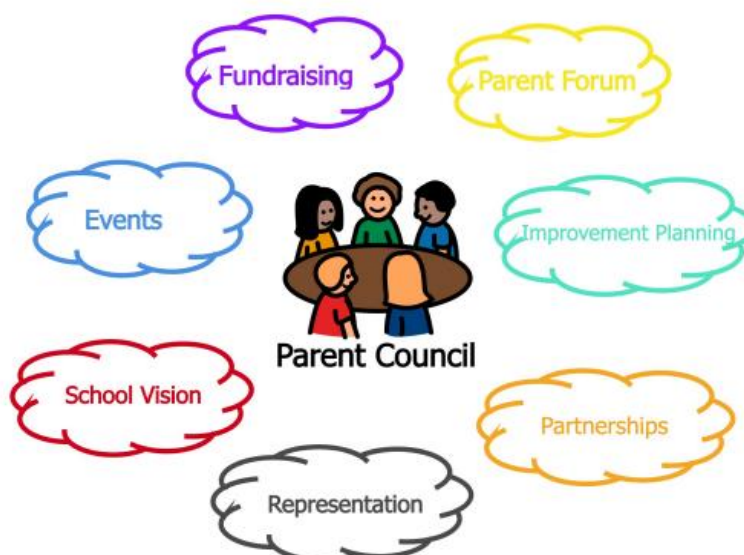
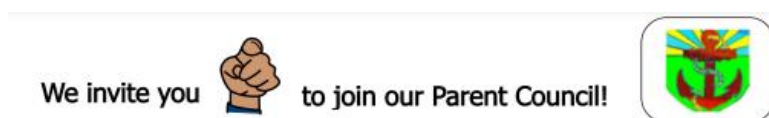
Parent Council business may include:

- partnerships between home, school and the community
- communication with other parents
- improvement planning for parental involvement
- events such as assemblies, school fairs, and discos
- growing school and community finances through fundraising and grant applications
- representing the school parent forum locally and nationally



Typically, Parent Council consists of:

- Chairperson - who run parent's meetings.
- Secretary - to take minutes and handle all communication.
- Treasurer - to keep a good record of all money related matters,
- Parent Council members



We would like to invite parents and carers willing to be part of The Parent Council this school year to contact our school office.