Breakfast Club

Last year the Parent council asked parents to suggest initiatives that would improve aspects of the school. One of these suggestions was the provision of a Breakfast Club. Alan Watt has taken charge of researching this.

Should the Breakfast Club proceed it will provide young people with a free or subsidised breakfast and incorporate a range of additional social, health, education and childcare elements into healthy breakfast provision.

The role of all Breakfast Clubs is to improve the health and health behaviours of young people as well as the staff and volunteers who become involved, and so underpins the goals of the ‘health-promoting school’. Breakfast Clubs can help ensure the most vulnerable children have regular access to a nutritious breakfast as well as encourage school attendance, reduce late-coming.

The Council’s Education Department have given a strong indication that Oxgangs will qualify for funding to set up and run the club. The Parent Council are considering the practicalities of running the club, considering potential demand, location, times and ongoing communication with parents.

Once we can confirm this funding we can begin to plan to start up the club and will keep parents appraised of plans and progress through, it is a wonderful opportunity to the school to provide a service with the aim of increasing the number of primary school children eating a healthy breakfast before school begins and through this help improve their general health.

Panto

Bad weather had an affect on many things during December, including the school trip to see the Pantomime.

The school were extremely fortunate to have the panto come to us in January so the children did not miss out. Despite the lack of stage lighting etc., the show was a great success and well enjoyed by the youngsters.

Remember: When thinking of making a purchase remember to look at the Buy 4 Schools website where both you and the school and earn a little. For further details go to the school website and click on the logo below.
The recognition of our unsung hero is well overdue. He plays a pivotal role not only within the school but also the local community.

Married to Helen and with three, sons, two of whom attended Firrhill High School, Ian McQuarrie joined Colinton Mains Parish Church back in 1993. He joined what was then called the OXGangs School Board in 1995 and remains a co-opted member of the school Parent Council.

Regrettfully, the Editor was set out to interview him for this piece. He being a Catholic, got it all wrong, despite his own partner being the daughter of Church of Scotland Minister. The first mistake was calling Mr McQuarrie Reverend. The second was referring to the Sunday service as mass. The clanger was Catholicism! While committed to the Church of Scotland, his mother was a Catholic.

So who is this chap that provides pastoral care to the children and runs the school chess club?

While keeping his age a secret, Ian disclosed his love for football and to being a fan of Rangers. His musical tastes surround those of Bob Dylan and he loves walking. When questioned on home life he confessed to being a DIY dodger and that it is his wife who attends to this. His DIY skills, he claims is related solely to demolition.

The Church is where he spends a great deal of his time. In addition to the usual services you would expect, the Church is very busy servicing the community needs. Anchor Boys, Junior Brigade, Brownies, Rainbows, Company Section, Scouts, Mothers and Toddlers, Gamblers Anonymous and a music and Drama group and just a part of what goes on each week.

Ian is keen to interact with the youth and was for a while working together with the Morningside Baptist Street Team on the Hot Chocolate Rota, a group that goes out to meet the youngsters with flasks of hot chocolate, emphasising caring within the community. Surprisingly perhaps, they are very well received.

Humour is never far away. One Christmas Service saw Ian arrive at Church in his pyjamas and he stayed that way throughout. Yes there was a serious message, but in a light-hearted way.

Ian has green credentials … of sorts. Whether it is to stop folk lingering or to save pennies on the power bill. At one gathering he filled the urn with 50% hot water and 50% cold and omitted to plug it in. The tea was awful.

When the Editor visited the Church he was allowed to follow Ian into the main hall. Greeting him was the organist, bathed in 40 watts of energy saving light. Being December it was cold and he couldn't help notice she was physically sitting on an old oil heater. The Organist claimed that in addition to playing in the dark, until recently, she had to bring in her own hot water bottle!

Last year Ian visited Russia as part of a drug rehabilitation programme. His parishioners decided it was time to play a little prank on him and left a notice on his office door advertising his position as vacant.

If you think Ian can help with a problem, he is happy to speak to see if he can help. His interest in our community is what he cares most about.

We are fortunate at OXGangs to have a very high quality of teaching staff and an excellent reputation.

The Parent Council examined ways of enhancing the School's image further and decided that it would be beneficial to produce a top quality “School Folder” to hand out to the parents of prospective pupils and to have available in all nurseries in the area to try to attract more children to the school.

With a combination of wording from historical archives, the school and the Parent Council a draft was put together. Photos were added and the folder was designed and produced by the Melville/Young Partnership who gave their services free.

The end product is superb and reflects all that is good about the school.
Another successful quiz night was held in the Colinton Bowling Club in early February. Despite the cold weather, the event was well attended. Steve was our magical Quizmaster for the evening doing what he could to help the parents overcome the teaching staff. Despite the best efforts of those attending the teachers continued with their winning streak.

The evening continued into the night with a little disco and a chance for some to dust off those cobwebs.

The PTA made a healthy profit for the school of £228. Many thanks to all who bought tickets and joined in the raffle.

PTA Fundraising

Most of you will be aware that the main role of the PTA is to raise funds for the school (as well as organise social events) which in turn benefits all our children in some shape or form. Funds raised from our many activities provide things which would not be possible from regular school funds, which as you know will become more of an issue in this current economic situation.

Where does it come from?
The May Fair is always our biggest event of the year and normally raises between £3,000-£4,000, a huge amount for a school our size, thanks to great support from the whole school community, past and present. Smaller events such as tuck shop and occasionally sales of promotional items can raise approx. £100-300. This year many of you will have bought the Spree voucher booklet and we did the personal Christmas cards for each child, which was a great success. In the past we’ve done mugs, tea towels etc. The PTA volunteers also organise school uniform orders, family Christmas parties and social nights for parents, but these are done without profit to keep costs to a minimum.

Where does it all go?
Every year PTA funds provide the buses which take the whole school to the Christmas pantomime and also the P7’s to school camp. From this year (2010-11) the PTA will also contribute to the P7 leaving party which will be in June. After that, we discuss with the school what extra activities or equipment they feel would most benefit the pupils. This year, as with last, the PTA will fund the whole school visit by the Science Festival in April. Money will also be given to help buy equipment for brass tuition for P4-7’s. In recent years, funds have also been used for:

- school sports tops for athletic competitions,
- assisting with the pavilion in the environmental garden,
- purchase of whiteboards for classrooms.

So, you can see that all our children benefit and that every little helps make Oxgangs the great wee school our kids are so pleased be part of.
Activities

Extra Curricular Activities

Mondays
- Basketball*
- Gymnastics Club

Tuesdays
- Hockey*
- Dance Division*
- Street Dance*
- Cross Country
- Chess Club
- Basketball
- Lunch Tennis*
- Rugby*
- Netball*

Wednesdays

Thursdays
- Cheerleading*
- Jaffa Club
- Badminton*
- Karate*

Fridays

* Charge applies
Contact school office for registration details / times etc

PTA
2nd MARCH
Meeting starts at 7pm in the staff room. All Welcome. Topic - May Fair

PDG
24th MARCH
Meet Environmental Garden after school.

Parents and teachers working together for a better future and a better school

PARENT COUNCIL

8th MARCH
The next Parent Council meeting is on 8th March at the school at 7pm. Every parent/carer is very welcome and if you have an issue which is really bugging you or would just like to find out what goes on at the meetings get yourself along. There is a lot going on, including the "breakfast" club, the term dates for the coming school years, the budget being set by the council and any issue you want to raise. If you cannot make the meeting but you have a question make sure you contact one of the Parent Council members whose details are shown in the newsletter. The job of the Parent Council is to represent your views so please let us know them so that together we can make our children’s experience at school even better.

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