



NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dear parents/carers and friends of Ratray

Firstly, thank you to all those who managed along to our open afternoon last term and to our parent contact evenings recently. We hoped you enjoyed seeing the learning in your child's classroom, alongside hearing about your child's progress. We are delighted that over the course of these events so many of our school families have been able to attend.

It is hard to believe that the hectic Christmas season is almost here. As we approach the end of another term, December promises to be an exceptionally busy month at Ratray Primary School. Our staff have been hard at work planning ways to make this season truly magical for all our pupils and families, and I want to extend my gratitude to them for their efforts. Again, we've pulled together a wonderful array of festive activities for the children. A detailed festive news bulletin will follow later, but all key dates can be found at the end of this newsletter. In addition to these seasonal events, there are a number of other items to share with you.

This term P3 and P3/4 have been receiving cricket coaching every Wednesday afternoon from Reg, the local cricket development officer. Our P5 class have been supporting budding high school sports coaches, as every Wednesday morning the class are visited by one of the Blairgowrie High PE teachers and some high school pupils (including former pupils) who coach PE and sport to the class. Returning ex-pupils is a theme at Ratray and we are lucky to have three ex-pupils (Cody, Anya and Sarah) now in 4th year who are visiting our school every week for work experience.

Welcome to our school

We have had two new pupils join us since our last newsletter, Olivia Watts in Mrs Strachan's P7 class and brother Ben Watts in Mr Masterton's P5 class. Also joining us is Lacey Kerr in Mrs Bruce's P6/7 class. We welcome Ben, Olivia and Lacey to our school and their families to this community, we hope all our new starts will enjoy their time at Ratray Primary School.

Staffing Update

I have several staffing updates to share with you. First, I am both delighted and saddened to announce that Mrs. Fiona McCarthy (P6 class teacher) has successfully interviewed for a temporary secondment as Acting Depute Head Teacher at Newhill Primary School. This is an excellent opportunity for Mrs. McCarthy and is thoroughly well-deserved. She will begin her new role as soon as we have a suitable replacement for her P6 class, and her secondment will continue until at least December 2025. We wish her every success in this exciting new challenge.

Secondly, Miss Erin Cassels (P4/5 class teacher) has accepted a permanent teaching position at Milnathort Primary School, bringing her closer to home and providing her with a permanent post, something we could not offer at Ratray due to her current role covering a secondment. Miss Cassels will transition to her new post in two weeks. In the meantime, Ms. Gregg will cover her class until a suitable replacement is found. We extend our best wishes to Miss Cassels as she embarks on this new chapter.

This means there are now teaching vacancies in both the P4/5 and P6 classes. These positions are being advertised nationally, and I expect to conduct interviews next week. I hope to share the details of the new class teachers with you very soon.

Finally, it is with sadness that we say goodbye to our Facilities Assistant (Jannie), Mr. Martin Hogg. Martin has been promoted to Area Supervisor for Tayside Contracts Angus. He is highly regarded and much loved by both staff and pupils here at Ratray, and his departure will be deeply felt. However, this well-deserved promotion is a testament to his hard work and dedication, and we know he will excel in his new role. Martin will leave us in two weeks, and his position is currently being advertised on the Tayside Contracts website.

Please join me in wishing Mrs. McCarthy, Miss Cassels, and Mr. Hogg all the very best in their new roles.

Finally, love was truly in the air over the October holidays, as three of our staff members received wedding proposals! A huge congratulations to Miss Shaw (PSA), Ms. Coles (PSA), and Miss Cassels (P4/5 class teacher) on their engagements. We are absolutely thrilled for them and their partners.

Poppies and Armistice Day

Thank you to everyone who has bought a poppy, our school have raised £41 for the Poppy Scotland appeal.

Book Week Scotland 2024 – 18th to 22nd November

In our classes this week, we will be celebrating Book Week Scotland. The theme this year is 'Hope' The Best it Yet to Come – our dreams, hopes and aspirations and how they shape our lives. During the week classes will be discussing their hopes and dreams for the future, alongside other experiences including:

- Opportunities to share their favourite books, stories, comics or poems.
- Redesigning the front cover of their favourite book
- Participating in the Scottish Book Trust Authors Live online sessions
- Buddying younger children for reading.
- P1-3 receiving their Book bug and Read, Write, Count bags.
- An end of week 'reading' assembly led by P3.

On Wednesday of this week, at 2.30pm, we would like to invite parents/grandparents/carers to come into school to collect and share the Read, Write, Count bags with our P1, P2 and P3 children. During this time, it would be lovely if you could stay in your child's class and read a story with them, perhaps a story from the bag? At 2.45pm all parents are invited to our other classes (P4 to P7) to read with their upper-age school children and celebrate Book Week Scotland, if they wish. School will still finish at our normal time of 3.20pm.

Book Fair

Scholastic Travelling Book Fair is currently in school and will remain here until the afternoon of Wednesday 20th November. Every child will have the opportunity to visit the book fair with their class and children will return home with a form containing the names and cost of books they like. If you would like to purchase a book, instructions are for doing so are on the form. **Please be aware there is absolutely no obligation to buy a book for your child from the book fair!**

The Book Fair will open to parents (including nursery) every day this week for a browse from 3pm to 3.30pm

Tempest Photographer

A reminder that we have arranged a Tempest photographer this week on Wednesday (20th November). All school and nursery children will be photographed individually and in sibling groups. Unfortunately, we can't accommodate other family arrangements (cousins etc..).

Parent Council Update

The next Parent Council meeting will take place on Thursday 21st November at 5.30pm in the school staff room. All parents and carers are welcome to attend the parent council meetings, and as a school we would urge you to think about coming along to meetings. It would be incredibly sad for such a thriving school community not to have an equally thriving Parent Council to support the children and to help parents have their say. Please think about joining them even for one or two meetings a year! If you have any items for the agenda or want further information about our Parent Council, please visit their Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/Ratray-Primary-Parent-Council-1486611214939520/>

Thanks to our Parent Council for organising a fabulous Halloween disco. There was lots of fabulous costumes and dancing on display, but most importantly the children (and adults) had a ball. Added thanks to parents and staff members who supported the evening. Due to the success of the evening the parent council raised £262 towards their funds.

Additionally, our parent council will be in attendance at the Blairgowrie and Rattray Christmas Lights switch on from 3pm to 6pm on Saturday 30th November. They need some donations for their Tombola stall. All donations big or small are very much appreciated. Please hand in to the school office before Friday 29th November.

Bikeability

Our cancelled P7s sessions will now take place on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th December. If you haven't done so already, please sign your P7 child up by completing this form <https://forms.office.com/e/SftD3zue1x>

P4/5 and P5 Farm Visit

As part of their class learning, these classes will have the fantastic opportunity to visit a nearby farm on Tuesday 10th December. The cost of transport will be fully funded by RHET (Royal Highland Educational Trust) which means this trip will be free to all pupils. Fantastic news.

Primary 6 Skiing Trip

The skiing trip is still active on Parent Pay, and if you want to sign your child up for this trip, please do so by the end of this week.

P7 Residential – Lendrick Muir

Our 5-day outdoor adventure at Lendrick Muir takes place from **Monday 26th to Friday 30th May**. The booking of places is now open, and all P7 parents should have been sent correspondence regarding this. Further information will be sent out soon to all children interested. Funding is available to those who will find the cost of this residential prohibitive.

Wednesday afternoon Inter-generational Group

We have recommenced our intergenerational sessions this school year, and a number of local residents have been coming along to chat and play games with our younger pupils. This group will run every Wednesday afternoon from 2.15pm. Please get in touch or pop along if you know someone who would fancy a tea/coffee, biscuit and a blether with our pupils.

Mantalk Gardening Support

Terry from Mantalk, supported by other members Grahame and Alan have been working with our very hardworking P4/5 and P3/4 classes to tidy up our outside areas. They have removed two trailers loads of rotten and broken wood. Terry hopes to replace our greenhouse/potting shed and was donated plastic corrugated sheets to replace the broken roof from one of our grandparents Angela Downie and plastic pots from Kev Donald. They are also creating an area where our pupils can plant and grow things. Ben and the team at Moyness Nurseries have been fantastic in supporting this too, providing compost and manure to fill the beds, a lovely apple tree and cherry tree. Terry and his hardy crew have also added some rhubarb, blueberries and strawberries. Mantalk got a good deal from Tony at Blair Hardware Store to buy a couple of forks and spades, and other gardening tools have been donated too. However, we are still in need of any spare gardening tools, so if you have any please drop off to our school office.

We cannot thank Terry Comiskey and all the Mantalk team enough for their dedication to this project. What started as a request to trim overgrown areas of the school has led to an overhauling of our outdoor spaces. We are so grateful, and cannot wait to reap the benefits when the better weather sets in. Thanks again Terry and Mantalk!

Foodbank Vouchers

A little reminder that the school can distribute food vouchers to anyone who needs a wee hand at the moment. Just contact the school office or email rattray@pkc.gov.uk, where your request will be managed discretely.

Tesco School Uniform Donation

Recently, we received a huge donation of school uniforms (30 boxes) and some school shoes from Tesco, thanks again to Darlene Philips one of our parents. We will hold onto these until the end of the school year, which will hopefully help families financially when it comes to new uniform purchases. **In the meantime, if your child has outgrown or damaged their uniform at any time this school year, please do not go to the expense of buying new items.** If you give our school office a call, we can likely supply you with what you need. Huge thanks to Tesco and Darlene for thinking of our school, our pupils and their families.

Pupil Council

The Pupil Council met with Lara and Holly from Empowering Families, following a pupil survey last session. In our meeting Lara and Holly shared their findings on what the pupils at Rattray like and do not like about their local community. The Pupil Council have now identified that they would like to design a campaign to encourage people to use the dog waste bins in the local community. Their next step is to conduct a survey to find out where the bins are and how many there are, and then following this, Empowering Families will support the Pupil Council with their campaign.

Severe Weather Guidance

Accompanying this newsletter is guidance on our school closure procedures, in the event of severe weather or other emergencies.

Assessing Children's Progress

As you may be aware National Standardised Assessments have been introduced across all schools in Scotland, and each year pupils in Primaries One, Four and Seven are assessed in schools locally and nationally. This is part of the Scottish Governments commitment to raising standards across Scottish Education. Testing of our P7 and P4 pupils will take place this term.

Appropriate clothing for winter weather

Please can we ask that your child comes to school each day with a coat and appropriate footwear. It is important that our pupils get plenty of exercise and fresh air, so children will be outdoors for break and lunchtimes in all weathers (except torrential rain and high winds). During the school week, children will spend periods learning outdoors too, therefore it's always best to be prepared.

Pupil Absence and Lateness

Absent - If your child is to be absent from the school for any reason, please contact the school (01250 871980) as soon as possible on the morning of the absence and before 9.30am. **If a staff member does not answer the phone, please do leave a message on our voicemail system.** If there has been no parental contact by 9.30am staff will send a text message to enquire as to your child's absence. If we do not hear from you, this absence will be classed as unexplained and unauthorised. This is normal procedure across Scotland. Your support in this is much appreciated.

Lateness - If your child is going to be late, please call us to let us know their lunch choice for that day as we must report to the kitchen by no later than 10.15am. Late lunch choices cannot be accommodated after this time, due to kitchen deadlines. This also includes children who change their mind midway through the morning.

Term-time Holidays

A little reminder that whilst we appreciate some family holidays can only take place during term-time, council guidance is that these holidays will be marked in school as an unauthorised absence and no schoolwork will be given. This will be done even if you have told the school you intend to take your child on holiday. Further information can be found at the [this link](#).

Contacting Staff

Teaching staff are available at the end of the school day on most days to discuss any general matters or concerns you have. Mr Brown (our school depute) or myself (Mrs Robertson, Headteacher) are usually in the playground before the start of the school day and at the end of the school day. However, if you are concerned about something, no matter how trivial, and you are unable to speak to us at these times please do not hesitate to contact the school office and we will contact you as soon as we can.

We will continue to keep you updated in our usual ways – Parentpay, school app, text messaging and our school Facebook page. **Therefore, please ensure your Parentpay account, email address and your mobile phone numbers are all up to date.**

If you have any questions or queries about any of the items within this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact the school office or the email address below.

Yours faithfully



Joanna Robertson

Headteacher

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01250 871980

Ratray Primary School Key Dates

**Please note these dates are provisional and may be subject to change.
Other dates will also be added.**

November 2024

Monday 11th to 20th – Scholastic Book Fair
Monday 18th – 24th – Book week Scotland
Wednesday 20th – Tempest Photographer (Sibling and Individual Photos)
Wednesday 20th – Parent/Carers to P1 to P3/4 classes (2.30pm)
Thursday 21st – Parent Council Meeting (5.30pm)
Friday 22nd - Mobile Library Visit
Saturday 30th – Ratray Christmas Lights Switch-on

December 2024

2nd, 3rd and 4th – Bikeability for P7 pupils
w/b 9th – last week of After School Clubs
Tuesday 10th – P4/5 and P5 to local farm visit
Tuesday 10th - Infant Nativity (9.30am and 1.30pm)
Wednesday 11th – P3/4 to Stormont House for Carol Singing
Wednesday 11th (PM) in Hub- Nursery PM Party
Thursday 12th (AM) in Hub - Nursery AM Party
Thursday 12th – Christmas Disco - P1 to P3: 6 – 6.45pm; P4 to P7: 7 – 8pm
Friday 13th – Christmas Jumper Day
Friday 13th (2pm) - Carols in the Hub
w/b 16th – No After School Clubs
Tuesday 17th – Christmas Lunch
Tuesday 17th – Whole School Christmas Party Day
Wednesday 18th (PM) – Christmas Activity Day
Thursday 19th (All day) – Christmas Activity Day
Thursday 19th – Christmas Hampers winners drawn.
Thursday 19th (PM) - Nursery Christmas Activity Day and Song
Friday 20th (noon) – School closes for Winter Break

January 2025

Monday 6th - Back to School
Tuesday 14th – NHS Well Good P7 Smoking and Vaping workshop (all day)
Thursday 16th – NHS Well Good P6/7 Smoking and Vaping workshop (all day)
Tuesday 21st – P7 St Johnstone Racism Workshop (PM)
Tuesday 28th – P7s to Blair High Visit (AM)
Friday 31st January – Scots Assembly (PM)

February 2025

3rd to 6th – P6 Skiing Days
Wednesday 5th - Global play day
Wednesday 12th – Inset Day school closed to pupils
Thursday 13th – Public Holiday school closed to all
Friday 14th - Public Holiday school closed to all

March 2025

Wednesday 5th (5pm to 7.30pm)– Parent Contact 3
Thursday 6th (4pm to 6.30pm) - Parent Contact 4
Wednesday 13th March – Young Carers Day
Friday 21st March – Comic Relief Day
Wb 31st March – Health Week

April 2025

Friday 4th - School closes for Spring holiday
Monday 21st - **Public Holiday (Easter Monday) school closed to all**

Tuesday 22nd – **Inset Day school closed to pupils**

Wednesday 23rd - Back to School

May 2025

Monday 5th - **Public Holiday (May Day) school closed to all**

Monday 26th to Friday 30th – P7 residential week Lendrick Muir (pupils only)

Thursday 22nd May – Open Afternoon - Class Focus (2.15pm)

Friday 30th (12 noon to 1pm) – School Summer BBQ (all welcome)

June 2025

Thursday 5th/ Friday 6th – P1 / P7 Transition Days (**more information to follow**)

Monday 2nd June (1.30pm) – Strong Start 2 sports day in courtyard

Tuesday 3rd (1.45pm) – Nursery Sports Day (**more information to follow**)

Wednesday 4th June (1.30pm) – School Sports day (**more information to follow**)

Monday 9th June (1.30pm) – Strong Start 2 sports day in courtyard Contingency Day

Tuesday 10th (1.45pm) – Nursery Sports Contingency Day

Thursday 12th (1.45pm) – Teddy Bear's Picnic (Current and New P1 pupils)

Wednesday 18th – Moving up Morning/meet new class teachers

Thursday 19th June (1.30pm) – Nursery Fun Day

Friday 20th June (1.30pm) –Prizegiving (by invitation)

Monday 23rd June (9.30am) – Nursery Graduation (by invitation)

Monday 23rd June (2pm) – P7 Leaver's Assembly (by invitation)

Tuesday 24th June (PM) – P7 Leaver's Party (pupils only)

Wednesday 25th June – End of term fun day / staff v pupils netball. /Ratray's got talent. etc

(more information to follow)

Thursday 26th June –P7 Shirt Signing (pupils only)

Thursday 26th June (12 noon) – School closes for Summer Break