

CEDARS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our Spring newsletter.

March 2024



A message from our Head Teacher

Dear Parents and Friends,

There is always something magical about the first signs of Spring - the world, long dormant, is coming to life, the days are longer and lighter and there is a feeling of expectation in the air.

In Cedars, the newness of Spring heralds the approach of Easter. I'm reminded of Bob Goff's words that **'hope doesn't go to sleep just because it's dark outside; it lights a candle and stays up waiting for the rest of the story.'**

Our Lighthouse Choir have just finished their Monday night rehearsal, and the line of a new piece is playing in my mind - 'God's love is never demanding, but always is gentle and kind. God's love is always forgiving, leaving the past behind...' In our school, we place real importance on the idea that we can make mistakes - learn from them, and leave the past behind - our mistakes do not define us. In Cedars, our values mean that if we see our pupils struggle - we hold in with them, 'waiting for the rest of the story.'

As you read this newsletter, I am sure you will see that our pupils have achieved incredible success in the arts, technologies, sciences, languages, outdoor pursuits, athletic endeavours and much more. The success we celebrate the most, is the noble character that is built as our pupils learn to be kind, to put others first, and to pursue the very best for themselves and those around them. I am immensely grateful to the staff, volunteers, friends and supporters of Cedars School who work tirelessly to give every pupil every opportunity to achieve their potential. And to our parents, I say a very particular thank you. Your children are a credit to themselves and to their families, and we are very grateful for all your efforts to keep on top of uniforms, homework, school bags, trip letters and more.

Enjoy our Spring newsletter - and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Emma Rukin ~ Headteacher

Easter Service invitation to all

Our Easter Service takes place on Thursday 28th March from 13:00 - 14:00 in the church on West Stewart Street.



Pupils will be taking part, and we will hear from Lighthouse, and Junior choir.

All family and friends are welcome to join us.

Pupils will leave for the holidays from the end of the service - parents should collect their children at the church.

The school bus will run at the earlier time of 14.15 - please speak to Mrs Stables if your child will need a space on the bus that day.



Here are our Junior Choir preparing some new pieces for our service.

Parent fundraising committee

Update! A huge thank you to our Parent Fundraising Committee. Their efforts in the Lucky Dip and the Easy Fundraising app have raised over £1500 so far for our playground renovations.

We really want to improve our playground facilities and have some exciting plans from professional designers. Perhaps you would like to sponsor this initiative. In return we could have your family name on a specific shelter or goal end!

Their next venture is our Spring Fayre on Saturday 27th April 10.30am - 2.30pm.

Save the date - all are welcome at what promises to be a fantastic day!

[If you would like to book a stall at the fayre, please click here.](#)

Our fundraising committee would like more parents volunteers to join them in helping to plan the Spring Fayre.

If you are interested, please contact Mrs Debbie Cosker at d.cosker@sky.com.

Community Evening

Thank you to all who came to our Community Evening at the end of January. Lighthouse performed two beautiful pieces,

Our J7s presented a Keynote on their Clyde in the Classroom project and our Head Boy spoke to parents on behalf of the pupil council on the proposal to extend the right to go out at lunchtime to S1 and S2.



Kirsty Marks delivered an excellent talk on 'Movement, Wellbeing and Learning' - linking in with our **Steps to Wellbeing** which we began in January.

We heard from Craig Houston about the work he is doing with our Stepping Stones group, and Dr Martin and Dr Rankin explained the next steps for our S3 - 6 pupils in their **Learner Journeys**.

Hot Chocolate Friday

Our last Hot Chocolate Friday was in aid of *Man On Inverclyde*.

Well done to Head Girl and Head Boy - Emma and Lochlann - for organising another very successful Hot Chocolate Friday.

These events are very popular across the whole school, and Emma and Lochlann have the organising of this down to a fine art.



The pupil council chose [Man On](#) as the charity to support through this event - Man On offers wellbeing support to the young people and adults of Inverclyde.

Watch out for our next Hot Chocolate Friday!

FIRST LEGO League Challenge

Huge congratulations to our Lego League Team!

They have worked incredibly hard on their coding, their robot design, their presentation for the judges, and their music!



Their performance as a team, their interactions with competitors - and their lively drums have been noticed!

In their first regional competition in Kilmarnock, the team came a very respectable 4th out of 12 teams. After a very early start on the morning of the Dundee competition, the team came 3rd out of 19. Their last heat was in Glasgow where the team came 4th against some stiff competition.

We are immensely grateful to our STEM volunteers - Graham, Derek and Ken - for their tireless work with our pupils.

This is a remarkable opportunity for our young people, working with three engineers, learning a whole new way of working and gaining lifelong skills in coding, problem solving, teamwork, resilience and hard work. Thank you very much to our volunteers for all that you bring to our School!

The Photography Project

Our Senior 1 and 2 classes are really enjoying a new technology unit - Photography.

So far, they have learnt about how to focus, the importance of light and how to compose a picture. As the course progresses, they will discover editing tricks, how to take a striking portrait and much more.

Keep an eye on Instagram to see their handiwork.



Junior School Discovery Room

Our Juniors are loving their new Discovery Room.



This is our space for creative **Big Art Afternoons**, for exploration, for play, for music and drama, and much more.

We are currently designing a block play area - if you have any wooden blocks, you no longer use, please see Mr Atkinson who will gladly take them.



Stepping Stones

Recent visitors at Stepping Stones have included:

- Professor Jim Atkinson (Marine Biologist)
- Derek Meldrum (Engineering)
- Kirsty Marks (Physical Activity)
- St Andrews First Aid
- Sheriff Tom Ward
- Craig Houston (Substance Misuse Education)

We also enjoyed a great outdoor afternoon and a chance to play some team games.

We are focusing on building connections, skills, and an understanding of the wider community of which we are a part. Our pupils are to be commended on their attitude and communication skills. Next term, we are going to focus on **public speaking skills** - we have some exciting lessons planned!



If you are interested in coming to the school on a Thursday afternoon to talk about your career, for 20 minutes or so, please get in touch with Miss Wilkie cw@cedars.school

Gateway

S5/6 pupils recently participated in a 'World of Work' evening where they joined Gateway Mentors for a curry before splitting into smaller groups where they were able to quiz the mentors on all aspects of working life - no questions barred!

The discussions were very profitable, and everyone enjoyed the evening.



Many thanks to our Sponsor who provided the curry!

Future Gateway activities include:

- Practice interviews
- A money course
- A tour of the Scottish Football Museum by Head Boy Lochlann.

**Graduation is confirmed
for Thursday 6th June.**

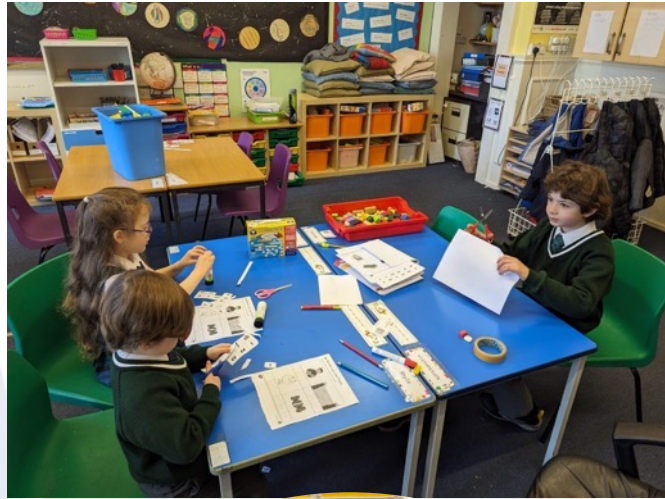
Tickets will be available in due course.



Junior School hard at work

Well done to our Juniors 1 - 7 who are working really hard!

Great progress this term everyone!



Clyde in the Classroom

What a super time J5 -7 have had with 'Clyde in the Classroom'!

Since mid January they have looked after 150 trout eggs, learnt how to keep the water clean and cold, and have seen the eggs develop into alevin and little fry.

They released the 'wee troutlets' into the Daff Burn in Inverkip at the end of February and it was lovely to see them swimming out in the wild! (The trout, not the pupils!)



You may have noticed?

We hope you like our new layout for the Newsletter.

We have attempted to make it easier to read on a mobile phone or tablet by reducing the page size to A5.

We hope you have enjoyed finding out about the many things going on at the school, not all of which manage to make it into the Newsletter.

Reading Schools

Senior students and staff were all given the opportunity to receive a surprise wrapped book from the school library as part of our Christmas Reading Challenge.

This is a great way to introduce students to new books and also raise awareness among staff about contemporary children's and young adult's literature.

We have also started a Book Club this year for Senior School students and so far we have discussed *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell and *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck.

Our Junior School is all set up with outdoor cushions and rugs so that they can read outside when the warmer weather arrives. The Junior classes sometimes join together so that the older students can read with the younger children. J6/7 have written and designed some eye-catching shelf-talkers for their class library.

We raised over £200 during a Hot Chocolate Friday in November. The money was used to buy books at The Ginger Cat Bookshop which we then wrapped and donated to Inverclyde Women's Aid to distribute to children who don't get many presents at Christmas.



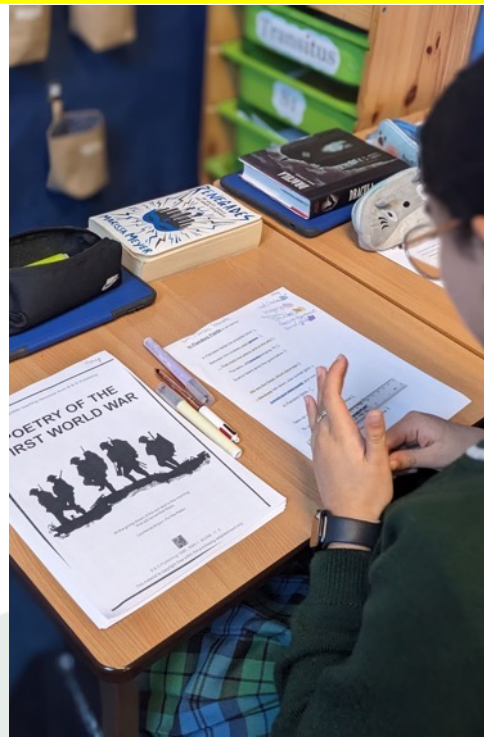
English

Our S4 - 6 students are busy getting ready for exam season in April & May. S5/6 have enjoyed studying the American classic *The Great Gatsby*, as well as the poetry of Norman MacCaig.

S4 have been reading the poetry of Jackie Kay and also *An Inspector Calls* by J.B. Priestley, a timeless play about the importance of social responsibility.

In other year groups, we have been getting to grips with Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice*, WW1 poetry, as well as some more contemporary novels and plays.

All our texts allow the students to explore many thought-provoking and powerful themes, while developing their reading, writing and talking skills.



Mathematics

S4 and S5 pupils have now completed their courses to allow plenty of time for revision.

The best way to revise for Maths exams is to do all the available past papers. In class we will go over exam technique and address any topics that may still be causing problems. S1-3 pupils continue to work hard.

We have been especially focussing on the algebra skills required for success in later years. MathsPad resources for S1 and S2 have been a great help. We also use the iPad as a mini whiteboard to check for pupils' understanding during teaching.



Social Subjects

We have been off to a flying start in social subjects after half term.

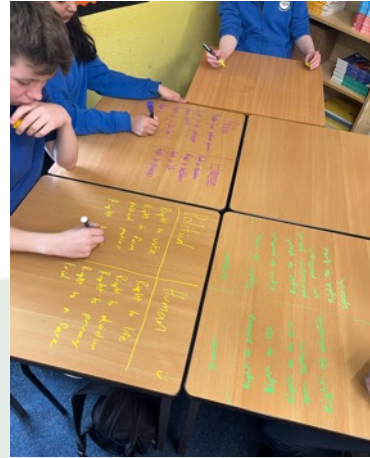
Our senior pupils have been hard at work with their SQA coursework with some of them investigating some interesting topics.

I'm sure you will agree that they have been working very hard and wish them every success in preparing for their upcoming exams!



S1 and S2 have also been busy learning about the USA and North Korea.

Over the coming weeks, we will embark on some debatable topics such as arming teachers in the USA and playing some Jenga to see how long we can survive in a dictatorship!



Business Studies

This has been a very hard working and exciting term in Business Studies.

The S4 - 6 students have been investigating a business of their choice, using a concept from our course content. These have been incredibly interesting and varied.

One title from these assignments is 'Assessing the effectiveness of the Corporate Social Responsibility of Dove'.

These assignments will form part of their final mark towards their award.

As we move towards the final examination session,

S3 students have been busy learning about the Management of People, and what a recruitment process looks like - do we have some potential HR managers of the future?

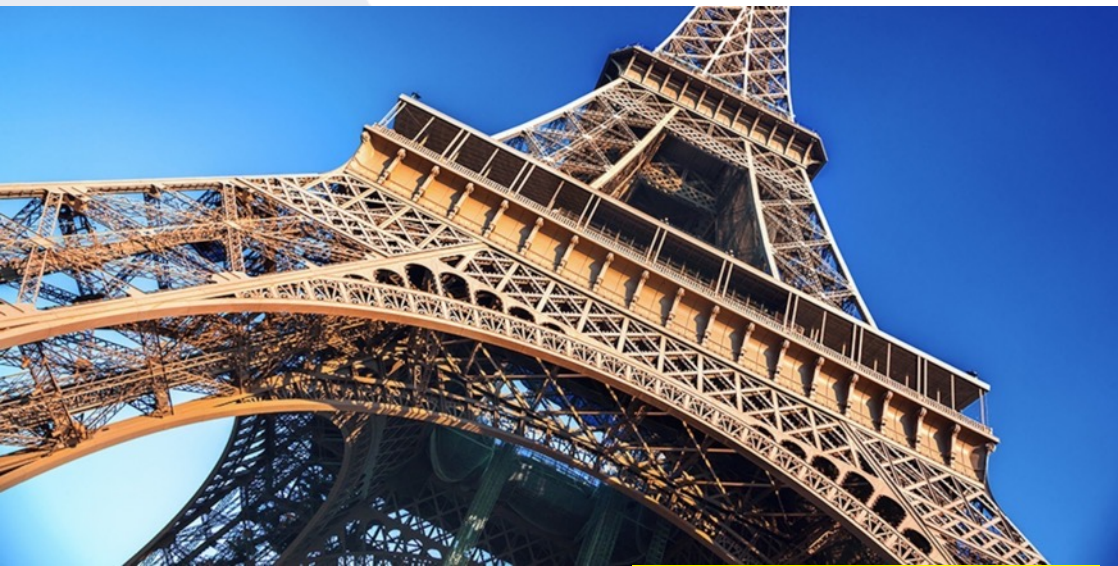


French

This is an important and hard-working term for French students in S4-6, as they finish off internal assessments for national courses.

Exam pupils are about to complete written assignments, and each week are practising a different talk topic - they've got great French accents!

Younger pupils are also looking towards completing their modules and grammar work for the year, **and of course, we're all looking forward to our school trip to Paris!**



School Fundraising & support

A reminder that Cedars School is registered with **easyfundraising** and you could help us to raise funds for the school at no extra cost to yourself?!

This is a great opportunity to raise funds for the school. When you shop online, with over 7,500 of your favourite brands; including John Lewis & Partners, Amazon, eBay, notonthehighstreet; you will raise FREE donations for Cedars School.

If you're not already signed up, it only takes a few minutes, then you can begin using the easyfundraising website or app straightaway.

Visit our [easyfundraising page](#) to get started using the QR code shown here.



Science

The JOHN MUIR TRUST.

Between now and the Summer break, some senior students are working on their John Muir Discovery Award.

The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme focused on wild places.

It encourages people of all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.

The award recognises awareness and responsibility for the natural environment through a structured yet adaptable scheme, in a spirit of fun, adventure and exploration!



S3 pupils visited the **Newton Flight Academy** at the Glasgow Science Centre to experience flying in a full motion simulator.

Pupils put their maths skills to the test, plotting their aircraft's route before flying the route in a Cessna Skyhawk and completing challenges along the way.

A great time was had by all!



For more details (or to book a visit yourself) visit:

<https://www.glasgowsciencecentre.org/discover/newton-flight-academy>

The Wellbeing Project

As part of our focus on the wellbeing of our whole school community, we started our Steps to Wellbeing Challenges in January,

Congratulations to all those who completed each challenge for January - we had some brilliant culinary creations, some pupils trying journaling, others working on daily exercise and time outdoors - all quite impressive for the month of January!

Our February and March challenges are well underway and include switching off screens an hour before bed for 7 days in a row, completing a challenging jigsaw, going outside for 10 minutes after school every day for a week - and more!

House points are awarded for all completed challenges.



The DofE Award Bronze Qualifying Expedition

is on Wednesday 29th May to Thursday 30th May.

More details to follow.

Speak to Miss Bell if you have any questions

kb@cedars.school

Phone Free School

Another part of our Wellbeing project is our phone free school trial.

We commend our pupils for the maturity with which they have embraced this project.



We are delighted with the impact this is having on pupil engagement in class, and on the ambience in the school. If you are interested in reading more about the impact of the presence of mobile phones on learning, [click here](#).

To find out more about how we operate our phone free school, [click here](#).

Residential Trips

J6/7 are very excited about their upcoming residential trip to the North of England.



The week will be filled with many cultural visits and fun activities including a trip to Durham, and a day at the world famous open air museum, Beamish!

There is always great anticipation as to who they will share a room with and the whole experience creates memories that will last a lifetime!

S1-6 will be visiting Paris in June.

They will be touring the sights, including visiting the Eiffel Tower, Sacre Coeur and Montmartre and of course Disneyland Paris!

It promises to be a fantastic action-packed week!

Charis in S2 - is having an excellent basketball season! He plays for the Scotland under 14s regional academy. His team - the NL Titans - are currently first in the national league. Well done, Charis!



Daniel in S4 - continues an excellent season in his running.

Congratulations to Daniel and his team – Gartscube - who won Bronze in the National Cross - Country Race at the start of March.



Netball club - is up and running - and is proving very popular!

All girls in J6 - S6 are welcome to join. It takes place on a Wednesday from 3:30pm to 4:30pm.

If your child is interested and would like more information, then please see Miss Wilkie! cw@cedars.school



Partnership with Smiths to support Aid for Education in Rwanda

Cedars School and Smiths of Greenock have partnered to donate old PE uniforms.

[Aid for Education](#) - a charity based in Rwamagana, Rwanda, is transforming the future of hundreds of children and their families by providing education, basic medical care and shelter, as well as sponsoring pupils to attend schools in the local area,

Aid for Education now runs its own nursery and primary school: Tubarere. On a school trip to Rwanda in 2016, pupils from Cedars helped to build a classroom and taught some lessons. Aid for Education is run by Douglas and Sarah Kakooza, who are based in Greenock.

When we developed our new PE kit last year, we wanted to use our old stock to support the school in Rwanda.

We approached Smiths, who have supplied Cedars uniform since 1999, and owner Keith Wilson was delighted to partner with us to support this venture.

Douglas will go out to Rwanda later this year, and pupils from Cedars will supply spare suitcases and help to pack the polo shirts and jumpers ready to go to pupils in the school in Rwanda.

Last week, Keith met Douglas Kakooza and some pupils from Cedars School, to hand over the stock and wish Douglas well in his travels to Rwanda this year.



Project Sponsorship Opportunities now available

Our supporters often ask how they can support the School. Here are details from our recent Sponsorship update - if you would like to sponsor a project, please contact Miss Rukin (er@cedars.school).

<p>Gateway Graduation 2024</p> <p>Gateway creates experiences that allow \$5/6 students to become confident, connected communicators. They engage with a wide professional community and experience challenges such as practice interviews, public <u>speaking</u> and networking dinners.</p> <p>£800</p>	<p>Junior Artists 2024</p> <p>We love to be creative in our Junior School! Each year we have an art competition, to win the sought after Anne Thomas Art Prize. We would like to buy some new art materials for our budding artists to use.</p> <p>£400</p>	<p>Wining House Day Out 2024</p> <p>Exciting plans are afoot for a new adventure for this year's House Cup winners!</p> <p>£350</p>	<p>Discovery</p> <p>Our Junior 1 - 7 cross curricular programme. Our motto is: 'Discovering our world and our place in it.' We undertake projects including: STEM, 'My world of Work, and learning for sustainability. We connect with people and places in our local community and further afield.</p> <p>£300</p>
<p>Netball Club!</p> <p>Our new club would love some new training netballs</p> <p>£120</p>	<p>Green fingers</p> <p>We want to build and fill some new planters for a quiet zone in the playground.</p> <p>£480</p>	<p>Slip Slidin' Away</p> <p>Skiing lessons for Junior 6/7 in our Autumn Term 2024</p> <p>£800</p>	<p>Thank you!</p> <p>If you sponsor a project we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add you to our Friends and Supporters emails- you will hear news and updates from the school. - Let you know what impact your sponsorship has on the pupils in our School.

Please get in touch with Miss Rukin if you would like to sponsor all or part of a project, or to find out about further sponsorship opportunities.

Coming up soon

Monday 22nd - Friday 26th April

- **Junior 6 and 7 north of England trip**

Thursday 30th May.

- **Gateway Greenock Cut Walk**

Speak to Miss Bell or Dr Martin for more details.

Thursday 6th June.

- **Gateway Graduation**

Dr Martin will send out the link to buy tickets soon.

Sunday 9th June - Friday 14th June

- **S1 - S6 Paris Trip**

Thursday 20th June.

- **Cedars Summer Celebration**

All welcome to come along to celebrate a very successful year.

This event will be held in Struthers Church on West Stewart Street.

What's going on! - keep in touch

Remember our door is always open – you are welcome anytime to pop in to view our school in action – or make an appointment to discuss any pressing issue.



cedars.school

School Facebook & Instagram Accounts

Look out for Facebook and Instagram accounts.

We try to update these on a daily and weekly basis – bringing you immediate insight into what is going on across our whole school.



@cedarsschool

Meet some more of our volunteers

Our volunteers play a pivotal role in our school community.

Our pupils benefit so much from their experience and care.

Look out for more of our volunteers in future newsletters

