Thank you so much to everyone who supported our MacMillan coffee morning last Friday. We had a huge amount of delicious home baking donated and the turn out for the event was fantastic. Thank you to our Captains and Mrs Moir for organising such a successful morning. We raised just over £1240.60!

Another piece of exciting news….. During the October break our Muga pitch will be resurfaced with an artificial grass carpet. The work should take approximately 6 weeks. This will truly transform playtimes and PE sessions for our children. Thank you to our Parent Council for pursuing this for a number of years and to the Council for the grant which has made this possible.

Mandy Thompson

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**Attendance**

The attendance of a typical child in South Lanarkshire is 95%.

Should your child’s attendance fall below 90% you will receive an initial letter highlighting our concerns and offering any support. If your child’s attendance continues to deteriorate and falls below 80% you will receive another letter and the schools attendance officer will visit you to offer support.

Late coming is also tracked. Children arriving at school after 9:30am will have their lateness recorded on the register. Should any pattern become apparent, or there be any significant level of late coming, letters will also be issued highlighting our concerns.

We often get asked for work home for a child who is unwell. In general, we do not send work home for a child who is off sick. Class teachers will arrange for a small summary of work to be sent home on the child’s return.

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**Playground Monitors**

I would like to introduce to you all our wonderful new Playground Monitors (looking for a better, more inspiring name).

Our playground helpers have been doing a fabulous job over the last month or so supporting others to have a really positive experience at playtime and lunchtime. Our children have been leading games and supporting play. The children have coped really well with this leadership opportunity and are looking forward to the ‘training’ which will be delivered by our active schools coordinator Emma Strachan.
Pupil Equity Fund

As shared in previous newsletters and on the news regularly, schools across Scotland have been given specific amounts of money to reduce the gap in attainment which exists as a result of poverty.

Each month I hope to give you an update on spending and how we are seeing an impact on all our pupils.

Our laptops have now been registered on the school system and are being used to support pupils with specific literacy difficulties to access experiences across the curriculum.

Our staff have now undertaken 3 outdoor learning training sessions and I hope you have begun to hear about your children learning more outside as a result.

Other spends this term include:

- 5 minute box - a multi-sensory system for teaching early literacy;
- Headphones for our rapid readers resource;
- Staff training for our early Years staff on ‘Contexts for Learning Rich Language’ and ‘Challenge, Breadth, Depth and Progression’

Head Lice

A quick reminder to all parents to check your child’s hair regularly and treat accordingly which will help prevent the spread of head lice amongst children.

Traffic in and around the School

Our battle against speedy drivers and those who park inappropriately continues. Just before the summer I contacted the Council about the road markings around the back entrance of the school on Fernlea Road.

The use of road signs and markings is prescribed in statutory legislation and we have been advised that Keep Clear zig zag lines would not be appropriate on Fernlea Road.

The Council have suggested, however, that we introduced a “No Waiting and No Loading at Any Time” restriction (double yellow lines and kerb blips). The “No Loading” part of the restriction means that the Council’s Parking Attendants could issue an instant ticket, rather than having to undertake the ten minute observation period required for a “No Waiting” only restriction, during which time the drivers usually drive off.

In order to introduce restrictions there needs to be various stages of consultation, one of which is open to the general public. If the residents in the vicinity of the school thought that they would be adversely affected by the restrictions they could object to the proposal and we would have to consider their objection. It is hoped that some of the pupils could canvass the opinion of those residents closest to the school over the next few months.

School Clubs

School clubs running this month include:

- Tuesday lunch time Athletics for P6 and P7
- Wednesday 8am Multi Sports for P3-5
- Wednesday after school Netball for P7
- Thursday football team training after school

Communication

As you will all know we are trying hard to improve our communication, especially with parents. Almost all our parents now receive newsletters and other paper communication through email. At times, these may be sent to your junk/clutter boxes, so please be mindful to check these from time to time.

Our Parent Council has a Facebook Page which is used to share general information about the school. Please bear in mind that staff are not expected to work evenings and weekends and may not respond to questions and queries posted on Facebook until back at work. Please do not use Facebook to criticise individual teachers or the school. We would recommend that you phone the school immediately to discuss your concerns with us in person.
School Improvement

Our school improvement plan has now been finalised and a brief synopsis of our plan will be sent to all parents next week.

Our improvement plan takes into consideration all of the feedback from our recent inspection and I hope, on reading, you will see that we are already making progress on many aspect for improvement.

Change of service and Chaplin

As some of you will know, our current school chaplain, Bill Stewart, will be retiring in April. This means that the school will be appointing a new school chaplain. The Rankin Church and Strathaven East will be merging with services from April being held at the Rankin. Our new school chaplain from April will be Shaw Paterson.

This has meant a change in the date and venue for our end of year service. Please see dates below.

Nursery News

The Nursery children and staff at Wester Overton would like to thank Mr McKinven and Mr Rogers for battling through the wind and rainy weather to build our new shed. The shed will be used to store all the bikes and large play equipment, allowing for easy access in and out. You did a fantastic job and we are so grateful.

The Orthoptist shall visit our nursery on WEDNESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2017 to carry out vision tests on the pre-school children. It is anticipated that they shall arrive at the nursery around 09.30am.

Our nursery children will be visiting the library on Wednesday as they launch their Book Bug initiative.

Student Teachers

As many of you will know there continues to be a significant shortage of teachers across Scotland. The Government are trying to tackle this by training more teachers. As a result many schools are being asked to take more students. This year, almost all classes at Wester Overton will have a student teacher, including the Nursery. I am looking forward to the enthusiasm and motivation these students will bring.

School Fund

Recent school fund purchases this term include:
- Subsidise bus costs for school trips;
- Topping up reading books;
- Purchases for a range of Master Classes;
- Badges for all our new pupil groups (Captains, Pupil Council, Health Committee and Rights respecting Steering group);
- Hi-Vis vests for our Playground Monitors;
- Christmas show licenses and music;
- LETS for our discos and school fairs;
- The DJ for our up and coming school discos;

Thank you to everyone for supporting the school in all our fund raising events.

The Great Outdoors!

Our plans to develop our playground continue. Children across all stages are enjoying a slightly larger area to play in following the removal of fences before the summer. Callum Perrie’s Dad (R6) kindly donate a large number of pallets that we hope to make into seating for our children. We have had one parent volunteer to help build these ‘corner sofas’, but we would be grateful if any other parents would be willing to help out.

Please get in touch if you think you can 😊.

Medication

A reminder that no child should have medication in their school bags. If a child is to take medication at school, specific paperwork must be completed. This can be obtained at our school office.
Term Time Holidays

We have had a large number of families taking holidays during term time over this month and next. I just wanted to take this opportunity to remind you that if you are taking your child out of school for a holiday during term time, you must inform the school in writing. Where possible, the school will send you a letter of acknowledgement and a reminder that in line with South Lanarkshire Council policy, any holidays (unless in exceptional circumstances) are noted as an unauthorised absence. Work will not be sent home for children to take away on holiday, but will be sent home as homework on return.

Parental Comments

We welcome your feedback at Wester Overton. Please feel free to share your views on this tear off slip and hand in to the office. Alternatively you can contact gw14wovertonht@glow.sch.uk

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Dates for your Diary

Mon 16th -20th Oct  October week holiday
Thu 26th Oct  Halloween disco. P1-3 6:30-7:30pm and P4-7 7:45 – 9pm
Tue 7th Nov  Flu Immunisation today
Wed 15th Nov  Parents’ night
Thu 16th Nov  Parents’ night
Mon 20th Nov  In-service day
Wed 29th Nov  Christmas Fair
Fri 8th Dec  ‘Snapshot’ week
Fri 22nd Dec  School closes at 2:30pm
Mon 8th Dec  Children return to school
Mon 15th Jan  Start of enrolment week for children starting P1 in Aug 2018
Thu 8th Feb  Valentine Disco
Mon 12th Feb  Holiday
Tue 13th Feb  Holiday
Wed 14th Feb  In-service day
Fri 16th Mar  ‘Snapshot’ week
Wed 21st Mar  Parents’ night
Thu 22nd Mar  Parents’ night
Sat 24th Mar  Spring Fair
Thu 29th Mar  Easter Service at Strathaven East Church 10am
Thu 29th Mar  School closes at 2:30pm
Mon 16th April  Children return to school
Fri 4th May  Sports’ Day
Mon 7th May  Holiday
Tue 8th May  In-service
Mon 21st May  P7s off to residential trip to Lochgoilhead
Thu 24th May  P7s return from residential
Fri 25th -28th May  Holiday
Wed 30th May  P1 induction
Wed 30th May  P7 induction to Strathaven Academy
Thu 31st May  P1 induction
Thu 31st May  P7 induction to Strathaven Academy
Thu 7th June  Summer Disco
Fri 15th June  ‘Snapshot’ week
Wed 20th June  Nursery Graduation 11am and 3:30pm
Tues 26th June  Summer Service at the Rankin Church 10am **** change
Thu 28th June  Westie’s Got Talent and school closes at 1pm