

13<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Dear Parents and Children

As we approach the end of term, it is appropriate to reflect on the school year and consider some of the changes that have taken place at Auchterhouse.

This year has ushered in a growing emphasis upon a Curriculum for Excellence, with its four capacities and skill centred approach. As staff we have endeavoured to make sure that our teaching is consultative, inclusive and interactive. We have increased the decision making opportunities for children and worked closely with parents to gauge the values that lie close to the hearts of families. Our health and ECO profiles have been raised this session and we have seen notable improvements as a result of increased active learning from nursery to P7.

In relation to the building we have refurbished the boys toilets, installed the parental noticeboard and had a small (but perfectly formed!) office added to the staff area. The nursery fence has been moved to extend the play area and include the newly built playhouse. The outdoor blue store and masonry walls are about to be painted along with the perimeter iron fence, and this year the playground will be completely resurfaced. During the first week of the holidays, we will have new windows installed along the front of the school. Only this week we completed a major ICT initiative which now gives digital TV, video, DVD, audio and PC through the interactive projectors in the P1-3 and P4-7 rooms. Both of these classes also have received an interactive voting kit which can be used by all pupils.

Throughout the year we have increased the quality and quantity of books, games and educational toys for all classes. We have even improved the opportunities available during Golden Time by purchasing a games console and additional games for use in classes.

This year saw the establishment of a new Parent Council. I am very grateful for the wonderful work completed by this group on behalf of the school both in terms of educational content and the very necessary fundraising.

Yesterday we enjoyed a particularly happy sports day with the children and their extended families. The happy and positive atmosphere and the great sense of support and trust typified the atmosphere that makes Auchterhouse so special.

At this time of year we prepare to welcome new children to school life and encourage existing children as they make the transition to new and important stages in their learning. Sadly, we also say goodbye to five lovely young people as they leave Auchterhouse and move to Monifieth High School. Although we will miss the kindness, reliability, enthusiasm and talents of Brandon, Callum, Chloe, Eilidh and Ross, we wish them every happiness and success as they take the very natural steps of advancement into the exciting world of secondary school. We have done our bit as a school to prepare them for life during primary education. We feel confident that they enter Monifieth High School as fine examples of young men and women who will go on to do great things from year to year.

This is also a time of change for myself. I recently accepted a secondment to “Learning and Teaching Scotland”, with the task of working with local teams to develop Achievement across Scotland. This means that I will be seconded from school until at least March 2009. During the time of my absence from Auchterhouse, Angus Council has arranged for an Acting Head to take over. Mrs. Higgins comes with an excellent reputation and detailed experience of life in a rural setting. I have met with Mrs. Higgins and she is delighted to have the opportunity to lead the school over the next few months.

My time at Auchterhouse has been one of the most special periods of my life. I cannot speak highly enough of my colleagues within the school, and of the external support staff who have worked alongside me during all school developments. Without the unstinting support of my immediate colleagues, Auchterhouse would lose its uniquely warm, accommodating and welcoming atmosphere. I would like to express to them my gratitude for not only their excellent work but also for the generosity and care they have extended to myself, and to the children and parents as well as visitors to the school. It has also been an immense privilege to work so closely with delightful children and their families. It is rare to feel such a bond which easily overturns mere professionalism and enters into the joys, concerns and interests of the people within the community. Thank you all for sharing a little part of your lives with me during the past five years.

Although this letter is more Au Revoir than farewell, I am confident that Auchterhouse Primary is in good shape presently as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century school while continuing to keep an eye on future developments.

The post I take up in August is a personal and professional passion for me. I genuinely believe that as a nation we must reevaluate our current system of recognition for all young people, and develop parallel systems of achievement as well as academic attainment. This is a major undertaking in Scotland, and I hope to play my part well in the shaping of parity between the two perspectives.

Yesterday I was fascinated to watch the senior relay race as every child expended maximum effort and energy before passing over the baton to the next team member. As Head Teacher, I am pleased to have done this very thing at Auchterhouse over the past five years. I now hand over to Mrs. Higgins and wish her every success as she builds upon the existing good practice of this lovely school.

Thank you for your much valued support during my time at Auchterhouse. I look forward to hearing about you all during the next few months.

Yours faithfully

Peter D Ferguson  
Head Teacher