FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Parent

The Session Report is intended to provide information for the wider School community on the development work undertaken by the School during the session. In addition, information is provided on next session's Improvement Plans and on staffing changes.

Curriculum for Excellence

You will be aware from the news media of the Scottish Government's major curriculum development project, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). CfE entails a complete revision of the curriculum 3-18 including a review of the content of syllabuses and also, very importantly, a review of teaching methodologies and assessment. The current Standard Grade and Intermediate 2 qualifications, taken in Senior IV, will be replaced by new qualifications, the most important of which, for St Columba's, will be the National 5. Pupils currently completing their Transitus year will be the first to take the new qualification in Senior IV. Higher Grade and Advanced Higher Grade qualifications will remain largely unchanged. Highers will continue to be the matriculating qualification for Scottish universities, while Advanced Higher will continue to provide students with an excellent preparation for university study. Advanced Higher will also continue to be the matriculating qualification for leading English universities.

A great deal of our time this session has been devoted to CfE development and reports on this work are provided here.

Senior School Subjects

Faculties in Senior School have been concentrating on revising courses for Transitus, SI and SII in line with the outcomes and experiences published in CfE. Next session, Faculties will review teaching methodology in order to maximise "active learning" and will ensure that assessment is in line with CfE guidance.

Literacy across Learning

The policy devised by the Language across the Curriculum group last session was revised in the light of CfE guidelines. This was well received by staff with many appreciating the set of clear strategies identified for all teachers to employ in order to ensure that they play their role in the development of pupils' literacy skills.

Numeracy across Learning

A Numeracy across Learning group was established in the autumn term under the chairmanship of Mr Iain Weir, Head of Physics. This brought together a range of staff from across the Senior School subjects and Junior School. The group was set a brief of auditing existing practices of numeracy teaching from Prep to Senior VI, against the guidelines published by CfE and to make recommendations which will ensure that all numeracy experiences can be met and to devise a whole school policy for the teaching of numeracy. The group has made considerable progress. The policy will be finalised in the autumn term and the recommendations implemented thereafter.

Inter-disciplinary Learning

Scottish Science Baccalaureate

In the first year of the Scottish Baccalaureate, a pilot of the new qualification was undertaken at St Columba's, led by Mrs Nicoll, Head of Biology: the initial course being offered to pupils studying Advanced Higher Sciences. In addition to studying at least two Advanced Higher Sciences, each candidate was also required to undertake an inter-disciplinary project with the assessment focus being on the process of carrying out the project rather than on the end result. Mrs Nicoll engaged the support and expertise of four other Senior School staff to mentor students and to assist with assessment arrangements. In addition, Mrs Nicoll has been appointed as an external verifier for the Scottish Baccalaureate by the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Inter-disciplinary Projects

Building on the cross curricular work carried out last session as part of the SII Jekyll and Hyde project, in which many subjects devised ways of making topics (sometimes new topics) explored in their subjects connected with the themes, settings, plot or characterisation of the Stevenson's novel studied by all SII pupils in English during the autumn term, other subjects are devising initiatives which will allow pupils to make connections with the learning taking place in more than one area of the curriculum. Languages and Humanities worked on the Berlin Wall as a planned collaboration between SIII Modern Studies and German pupils.

Next session will see many more inter-disciplinary initiatives taken forward as a result of the strategic planning of various Faculties with a view to finding ways in which specific connections might be made between the different courses they teach. Immediate feedback from meetings between staff from the different subjects has been very positive with a number of imaginative inter-disciplinary ideas being suggested for implementation in the new session.

Junior School Teaching

Junior School has continued to build on the target setting work of last year with all classes completing targets, both academic and social, which are followed up by Mrs Cook, who takes samples from all year groups to discuss the targets. A record of discussions is kept on the target wall in Junior School.

There has been an increase in active learning in Junior School. Children are encouraged to take an active part in the learning process, reporting back on the learning activities and analysing what has been learned. Teachers have commented that children are becoming more skilled in negotiating and in expressing the targets which they have achieved.

Teachers' planning has focused on a more inter-active approach, an example of which was Junior 4 children making their own soup and bread from raw ingredients as part of the Healthy Eating topic. A topic planner is being developed to ensure inter-disciplinary work at all levels. Although, not fully formalised, peer observation is taking place at all stages with particular support being given for advancing the use of inter active whiteboards.

Baseline Assessments

The evidence from baseline assessment tests in Junior School has been monitored very carefully with class teachers being asked to highlight and respond to children who have performed better or

worse than expected from the baseline assessments. Plans have then been put in place to address these issues.

Senior School has used the standardised test data to track pupils' progress in School assessments and has taken action where there is a discrepancy between the two. The standardised test data will also be used to inform decisions on the setting of pupils in English, Mathematics and French. The current Senior III year group was the first to undergo standardised testing and performance in the SIV examinations in 2011 will be compared to the predictions made through standardised testing. This will allow the value added by the School to be calculated. We also hope to quantify, to some extent, the value added for individual pupils.

Junior School / Senior School Liaison

Junior School-Senior School liaison has focused on reviewing the transition arrangements from Transitus to Senior I, which were introduced in June 2009, and updating and implementing new arrangements for June 2010. Questionnaires were issued to SI pupils and parents to review the induction and transition arrangements. Feedback was very positive and a few amendments have been made to this session's arrangements, for example, pupils had lunch at Senior School when they came for their induction afternoon. Some changes to the booklet issued to pupils and parents have also been made including the addition of a map of the School. A booklet has been compiled for pupils going into Transitus which will be issued at the class visit in June.

Investors in People

During the course of the session the School has worked to act on recommendations made in the initial IiP assessment of June 2007. In particular, we have re-written the Learning and Development Strategy, Process and Procedures for all staff. We have also extended our Employment Policies and amended some HR procedures including those relating to the induction process for new staff and the professional review cycle. An enhanced self-evaluation and improvement planning cycle is now fully embedded. Heads of Faculty have also worked on individual targets related to the leadership of improvement and change.

In Junior School, the format of the six weekly reviews undertaken by staff is now changed in order to bring it in line with quality indicators published by the Scottish government and this has made the evaluations much more focused than previously allowing staff to be more reflective in their practice.

Chinese

In May we said farewell to Miss Li, our first Chinese language assistant, mindful of the impact she had of raising the profile of Chinese language and culture in both the Junior and Senior Schools; one of the highlights of her input being the organisation in February of a lunch in the Senior School hall to mark the Chinese new year.

In many respects her reach, in terms of contact with pupils, was as comprehensive as it was possible to be in the School given that during her eight months sojourn at St Columba's her teaching experience ranged from leading a short course in Mandarin for Senior VI pupils in the autumn term, to working with those in the Prep department and Junior 6 after Christmas. Miss Li found opportunities to engage pupils from other year groups through contributions to SII Modern

Studies lessons and the establishment of a lunchtime club for SI and SII pupils where the programme focused on calligraphy, paper cutting and Chinese knots.

There is no doubt that our pupils' awareness of Chinese language and culture has increased considerably during the last year and the School is currently reflecting carefully on how this can be taken forward next session.

Senior School Support for Learning
The School has worked to develop a system to assist pupils who have difficulty with the transfer of notes and homework between School and home. The work has raised awareness amongst teachers of the problems experienced by some pupils and parents when they have tried to support their children with homework. Early reports from SI parents are that our efforts are welcome but we need to be more consistent. This matter will be taken forward next session.

Pastoral Care
Heads of House have worked to improve communication between them and staff through the introduction of an electronic system for communicating important background information provided by parents. Such information could, for example, relate to a stressful situation at home or family bereavement. This development has let do to all staff being aware of issues regarding vulnerable pupils and, therefore, better equipped to support them. Heads of House have also looked at improving pupil evaluation of courses and lessons in personal and social education. This has led to improvements in courses and also a feeling amongst pupils that their input is valued and encouraged.

Pastoral staff have also been heavily involved in leading the School's Health and Wellbeing programme. It was mentioned earlier that a working group will be established to produce a policy on Health and Wellbeing and during the course of this session, Heads of House have undertaken a great deal of work in auditing our current Health and Wellbeing provision.

Able Pupils
This year the different groups working on resources merged into the Parachute Group which had representatives from each Faculty and met after school to discuss methodologies to try, as well as preparing a number of resources. The group tried a number of ideas with their own classes, many of which have subsequently been used with whole year groups or by a variety of subjects. One of the in-service days focused on Able Pupils with staff learning from the experiences of colleagues.

Faculty Weeks
We developed our Faculty Weeks this session with Science and Languages taking learning beyond the classroom in September and November respectively and in May we had a Health and Wellbeing Week organised by the Guidance Faculty with, one of the key areas of Curriculum for Excellence.

Science Faculty Week was the first of our Faculty Weeks in 2009-2010 and the pupils' experiences of Science outside the classroom were led by Professor Wilson's 'Plasma' Lecture to Senior VI and included talks on careers involving Science from a pilot, a renewable energy expert and a beautician. Ben Craven brought his 'Fantastic Forces' show and there was a lecture on "Cars, Cats

and the Environment" for Senior IV to Senior VI. Throughout the week there were quizzes for each year group, and the staff, to test their scientific knowledge as well as the 'runaround' quiz.

Each language in the Faculty of Languages was highlighted on a different day of Languages Faculty week. Snacks were provided at break from France, Germany and Spain with pupils enjoying croissants, brioche and pain au chocolat, lebenkuchen and tapas. Native French and Spanish speakers worked with a number of classes, the Goethe Institute developed German through games and conversation, the Antonine Guard prepared the pupils for marching and defending a garrison Roman style and Miss Li extended our experience of Mandarin. The School kitchen staff created menus from each of the countries on the relevant day throughout the week and everyone enjoyed the changes at lunchtime.

Health & Wellbeing Week was held in May while upper school pupils were on SQA examination leave. The aim was to raise awareness of mental, physical and social health issues among staff and pupils in SI, II and III. A large number of guest speakers visited the School to share their expertise, including Breathing Space on the topic of positive mental health; a smoking cessation specialist; and a motivational speaker. In addition, sessions were held on physical health including salsa, yoga and football. Staff were offered hand and shoulder massages by students of Reid Keir College. Other sessions included a Megasmoothie workshop and competition to make the healthiest smoothie; a workshop led by Inverclyde Youth Alcohol Workers; and sponsored Sports Relief activities. The week was extremely successful in reinforcing many health issues covered by pupils throughout the session.

Eco Schools

Senior School has made considerable progress towards achieving Green Flag status with much of the work being taken forward by a highly motivated Eco Committee team led by SVI pupils. The School's first Eco Week took place in February starting with a visit by Patrick Harvie, the Green MSP, who addressed the School at Assembly and later spoke to the Eco Committee and SVI pupils. During this week learning and teaching across all subjects focused on environmental issues. The week also included some fund raising activities: £350 was raised for a Ugandan HIV charity through the sale of jewellery made from recycled magazines; and a laptop donated by a parent, was raffled raising over £350. In addition to the pupils' committee, a staff committee has also been formed to identify all areas in which environmental issues are studied across the curriculum.

Junior School has achieved the Silver Award and is also well on its way to achieving the Green Flag status.

Prospectus

At the start of the session, the preparation for the production of a new prospectus got underway while, at the same time, an ITN film crew descended on the School spending a number of days filming a variety of aspects of the life of the School, the end result of which is a three minute DVD. This has been incorporated in to the prospectus. The new prospectus captures the ethos of the School with wonderful images of our pupils participating in a variety of aspects of the daily life of the School.

Yearbook Concert
Mr Andrew Macgregor produced and directed the Yearbook concert in December 2009. As usual the show was an outstanding success with all SVI pupils taking part. Every one of the pupils showed enormous talent in comic sketches, dance routines and musical numbers. Special mention must go to those SVI boys who see their futures on the stage as dancers in tights!

Charities
This was another very busy year for charities in Senior School with substantial sums of money being raised for a number of different causes including Jeans for Genes £300, Sports Relief £280, the Wallace and Gromit Tea Party for sick kids £328.50 as well as the Earl Haig Fund and Ardgowan Hospice. We supported a former pupil, James Mitchell, through Orkidstudio, a humanitarian design organisation, of which James is a Director, whose focus is to benefit young people and communities worldwide through innovative and sustainable architecture. This summer James is helping street children in Bolivia through the Alalay Project. We have donated £732 to Orkidstudio to help James with this project. The SII Business Studies class raised over £200 and sent it to the DEC Haiti Appeal, the Woodland Trust and the RSPB. The Charities Committee is currently deciding how to disburse the remaining £2500 we have raised.

Junior School has also had an excellent year for charities with £1085 raised for the Haiti Earthquake Appeal in addition to the weekly collections which totalled a fantastic £1,999. This money will be distributed at the end of the year according to the votes of the children.

The staff enjoyed a Summer Supper at the Erskine Hospital's new Garden Centre. Proceeds from a raffle raised £200 for the hospital.

Tours and Excursions
Tours and excursions this session have included

- Junior 6 to Newlands (Outward bound)
- SVI Teambuilding Weekend to Ardeonaig
- SVI Motivational Weekend to Drymen
- SI to Paris
- Leading debaters to the World Debating Championship in Doha, Qatar
- SII to Ardeonaig
- SIII to Barcelona or the Rhinelands
- SIV to Lagganlia (Outward Bound)
- SV to London (Theatre trip)
- SVI to the Ardeche (watersports) or SVI to the Alps

Duke of Edinburgh's Award
The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has enjoyed a very successful season with 56 participants at Bronze, 41 at Silver and 22 at Gold. Not all participants have completed their award programmes yet, but hopefully they will do so soon.

National Honours
The following pupils have been awarded Gold Honours for representing their country at under 18 level:

Megan Girdwood	SVI	Scottish Schools' Debating
Rebecca Meredith	SVI	Scottish Schools' Debating

The following pupils have been awarded Silver Honours for representing their country a under 16 or below:

Alex Baum	SV	Under 15 Cricket
William Hesselmann	SV	Scottish Development Squad
Kirstin Bailey	SIV	Under 16 Hockey
Sally Bishop	SIV	National Girls' Choir
Caitlin Findlay	SIV	National Girls' Choir
Jennifer Faint	SIV	National Girls' Choir
Luca Hlaing	SIV	National Boys' Choir
Melissa Meighan	SIV	National Girls' Choir
Rebecca Ronney	SIV	National Girls' Choir
Jack McCusker	SIV	Under 15 Swimming Relay
Laurie Kirkland	SIII	Under 16 Hockey
Lewis Marr	SI	Under 15 Sailing Squad

Staff Changes
The following members of staff will leave St Columba's at the end of the session:

- Mr Calum Ure, Head of the Faculty of Ancient and Modern Languages has been appointed to the Head of the Faculty Languages at George Watson's
- Mrs Eileen Carey has been appointed to Teacher of Classics at Hutchesons' Grammar School.
- Mrs Jane Wild, Receptionist at Senior School has left to take up a full time post at Glasgow University.
- Mrs Hilary Davies, Junior 3 teacher, who has been absent due to ill health since February 2009, has resigned from her post.
- Mrs Irene McDougall, Junior School Playground Assistant, has resigned from her post due to her husband's ill health.
- Mrs Christine Gillies will leave her post as part-time Support for Learning teacher in the Junior School but will continue to assist with Senior School entrance assessments.

A number of new appointments have been made for next session:

- Ms Lisa Rodger has been appointed to the post of Head of Languages. Ms Rodger is currently a teacher of French and Italian at Auchinleck Academy. She is a graduate in French from the University of Edinburgh.

- Dr Samantha Newington has been appointed to the post of Teacher of Latin & Classical Studies. Dr Newington is a graduate of Surrey (BA), King's College, London (MA) and Durham (PhD). She currently tutors at St Andrews, Edinburgh and the Open Universities.
- Ms Rachel Kerr has been appointed to the post of part-time Teacher of Geography. Mrs Kerr is a graduate of the University of Glasgow (MA) and is a former pupil of the School.
- Miss Gillian Rourke, also a former pupil, has been appointed to the post of Temporary Teacher of French to cover during Mrs Kennedy's maternity leave. She is a graduate of Coventry University (BA) and joins us from Dumbarton Academy where she has been teaching during her probationary year.
- Ms Zoe Shaw has been appointed to teach Business Management and Accounting during Ms Wright's maternity leave. She is a graduate of Glasgow Caledonian University and joins us from Hutchesons' Grammar School where she is covering a maternity leave this session.
- Ms Jill Paterson has been appointed to the post of part-time Teacher of Physical Education to cover during Mrs Green's maternity leave. She is a graduate of Stirling University (BSc) and joins us from Balfron High School where she has been teaching during her probationary year.
- Mrs Joy Wolfe who has covered during Mrs Davies' long term absence has been appointed as permanent teacher in the Junior School.
- Mrs Gill Hall, who has covered during Mrs Moore's long term absence, will continue to teach Junior 4 next session.
- Ms Laura Melville has been appointed to the post of Temporary Junior 1 teacher to cover during Mrs Corbett's maternity leave. Ms Melville is a graduate of Strathclyde University (BEd).
- Mrs Jane Flinders, part-time Support for Learning teacher in Junior School, will become full-time following the departure of Mrs Gillies.
- Ms Anne Murdoch has been appointed as Playground Assistant in Junior School
- Mrs Judith Murdoch has been appointed to the post of Receptionist at Senior School.
- Ms Debi McConnon has been appointed as an assistant in the Finance Department.

IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2010-2011

LEARNING & TEACHING

- Establishing a programme of Thinking Skills appropriate for each stage in Junior School.
- Ensuring that able pupils are fully provided for within their everyday schooling
- Improving the continuity of learning and teaching from Junior 6 to Senior II in the sciences
- Improving the learning experience of all pupils through analysis of areas of strength and weakness through standardised testing
- Re-writing the RME curriculum for Junior School
- **Curriculum for Excellence**
    - Implementing the School's Literacy Policy
    - Finalising and beginning to implement the School's Numeracy Policy
    - Establishing a Health and Wellbeing Staff Working Group to draft a School policy and make proposals for change
    - Developing topic planners in respect of inter-disciplinary learning in Junior School
    - Implementing inter-disciplinary initiatives in Senior School
    - Implementing revised courses in all Senior School subjects for Transitus and Senior I; revising assessments; and developing teaching methodology particularly "active learning"
    - Reviewing the timetable structure in Senior School

PUPIL SUPPORT

- Establishing focus groups which will allow greater account to be taken of learners' views
- Expanding the existing use of pupil progress plans in to SII and SIV
- Identifying methods of assessing progress and attainment in personal and social education in Senior School

THE WIDER SCHOOL

- Responding to the Investors in People review
- Extending Faculty weeks to Mathematics, Humanities and Design
- Achieving Green Flag status for Eco Schools

PRIZEGIVINGS

Junior School Prizegiving	Thursday 24th June 2010 St Columba Church, 10.30am
Senior School Prizegiving	Friday 25th June 2010 St Columba Church, 10.30am

SESSION DATES

I enclose further copies of Session dates for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The recently announced Queen's Diamond Jubilee holiday has been added to the date list for 2012.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

It is always a pleasure to welcome pupils back to School for the start of a new session. The summer holiday is often the time when parents buy new blazers, trousers and kilts and pupils look very smart in their new school wear. The summer holiday is often a time too when some pupils experiment with alternative hairstyles and hair colour. With that in mind, I would remind you of the School's Dress Code and ask for your support to ensure that the session gets off to a good start.

- Hair colour – **hair should be of one natural colour.** If hair is streaked or dyed green or red (or any other colour!) for the summer holiday it must be returned to one natural colour for the start of session.
- Girls' shoes – the maximum permitted is 4cm at its highest point. Stiletto heels are inappropriate for school.
- Girls' make-up – the school rules allow **discreet** make-up to be worn by girls from **SIII to SVI only.**

I should be grateful for the co-operation of parents in ensuring that all items of clothing are named.

I look forward to welcoming pupils back to School on Wednesday 18th August (at 8.40am Senior School, 8.50am Junior School). On entering the Senior School, Senior I pupils should go to the Assembly hall where they will be met by a member of staff.

I would like to stress to Senior V and Senior VI, the importance of their appointments with Heads of House on the morning **Thursday 12th August**. I shall also hold a meeting for Senior VI at **11.00am on Thursday 12th August.**

With best wishes for a most enjoyable holiday.

Rector

Date List
Session 2010/2011

AUTUMN TERM 2010

Monday	16th August	Staff In-Service Day
Tuesday	17th August	Staff In-Service Day
Wednesday	18th August	School opens for pupils
Thursday	19th August	J1 pupils commence
Friday	20th August	Preparatory, Nursery pupils commence
Friday	8th October	School closes for mid term holiday +
Monday	25th October	School re-opens
Tuesday	21st December	School closes for Christmas holiday +
Wednesday	22nd December	Senior Ball

SPRING TERM 2011

Thursday	6th January	School re-opens
Friday	11th February	School closes for mid term holiday +
Monday	21st February	Staff In-Service Day
Tuesday	22nd February	Staff In-Service Day
Wednesday	23rd February	School re-opens for pupils
Friday	8th April	School closes for Easter holiday +

SUMMER TERM 2011

Tuesday	26th April	School re-opens
Monday	2nd May	May Day holiday
Monday	30th May	Mid term holiday
Tuesday	31st May	Mid term holiday
Wednesday	1st June	Staff In-Service Day
Thursday	23rd June	Junior School Prizegiving, Junior School closes thereafter
Friday	24th June	Senior School Prizegiving, Senior School closes thereafter

Session 2011/2012 : Wednesday 17th August 2011 (for pupils)
+Seniors 3.40pm. Junior pupils 3.30pm (or as mentioned in notes below)
NOTES: Children in J1-3 finish at 12.30pm each Thursday.
Preparatory children finish at 12.00noon each day.
Junior 1 children finish at 12.30pm until end of first term (October break) after which date times are as for J2-3.
N.B. Family holidays should be arranged outwith term dates.

Date List
Session 2011/2012

AUTUMN TERM 2011

Monday	15th August	Staff In-Service Day
Tuesday	16th August	Staff In-Service Day
Wednesday	17th August	School opens for pupils
Thursday	18th August	J1 pupils commence
Friday	19th August	Preparatory, Nursery pupils commence
Friday	7th October	School closes for mid term holiday +
Monday	24th October	School re-opens
Tuesday	20th December	School closes for Christmas holiday +
Wednesday	21st December	Senior Ball

SPRING TERM 2012

Thursday	5th January	School re-opens
Friday	10th February	School closes for mid term holiday +
Monday	20th February	Staff In-Service Day
Tuesday	21st February	Staff In-Service Day
Wednesday	22nd February	School re-opens for pupils
Thursday	5th April	School closes for Easter holiday +

SUMMER TERM 2012

Monday	23rd April	School re-opens
Monday	7th May	May Day holiday
Monday	28th May	Mid term holiday
Tuesday	29th May	Mid term holiday
Wednesday	30th May	Staff In-Service Day
Tuesday	5th June	Queen's Diamond Jubilee holiday
Thursday	21st June	Junior School Prizegiving, Junior School closes thereafter
Friday	22nd June	Senior School Prizegiving, Senior School closes thereafter

Provisional starting date Session 2012/2013 Wednesday 22nd August 2012 (for pupils)
+Seniors 3.40pm. Junior pupils 3.30pm (or as mentioned in notes below)
NOTES: Children in J1-3 finish at 12.30pm each Thursday.
Preparatory children finish at 12.00noon each day.
Junior 1 children finish at 12.30pm until end of first term (October break) after which date times are as for J2-3.
N.B. Family holidays should be arranged outwith term dates.

PARKING CODE

ST COLUMBA'S SCHOOL

This code has been drawn up following discussion between the School, the Police and representatives of the local residents.

We commend the parking code to staff, parents, pupils, visitors and neighbours in an effort to ensure that neighbours have open access to their driveways.

Please do not park:

- **across any gates to the school or neighbouring houses**
- **directly opposite gates to the school or neighbouring premises**
- **in a coned area**
- **close to junctions** (in line with the highway code)

This Code applies during the **day and evening.**

Thank you for your co-operation.