**Ellon Academy Community Campus**



**Rector’s News Letter December 2016**

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

I have been Acting Rector at Ellon Academy for 7 weeks now and I can absolutely say that Ellon Academy is an excellent school. My overall impressions have been that staff and pupils are committed to learning, development and improvement in all aspects of school life and I have been impressed by the collegiate ethos of team work within the school.

On the 21st November I had the pleasure of meeting a number of parents and carers at my ‘Meet and Greet’ session in the school theatre and I was able to tell them a little about me as your Acting Rector and my vision for the coming months.

I have been teaching for 27 years, graduating as a Music Teacher in 1989 and took up my first post at Fraserburgh Academy. I was promoted to Principal Teacher Guidance in 1997, and promoted again to Depute Head Teacher in 2006. During my 10 years as a DHT, I have had two previous Acting Head Teacher experiences, and I completed my MSc Masters in Educational Leadership and my Scottish Qualification for Headship in 2012. I have been married for 26 years and my husband is also a promoted teacher and I have two sons. My elder son is 21 and in his final year at university and my younger son is still in secondary school. I am also a church organist and I run a large community choir in Fraserburgh.

My vision for Ellon Academy is based on what I refer to as the Four Pillars of an excellent school:-

My ultimate aim is for all pupils to raise their attainment to gain the best possible exam passes for them as individual learners, and my view is that the Four Pillar above set the rationale for the school Raising Attainment agenda. The health and wellbeing of our learners is also of paramount importance, so that they can overcome any barriers to learning and succeed at school and beyond.

It is also important not to under estimate the value of participation in wider achievement clubs and activities and the impact that this has on the development of skills which are essential in the world of work.

Over the coming months I will be working closely with staff, parents and pupils to meet these goals to ensure positive outcomes for all pupils at Ellon Academy.

**The ‘Learner Mark’**

I have also been working with staff to ensure that hard work and commitment to learning is recognised by using the ‘Ellon Learner Mark’, which is a tool to measure pupils’ attitudes to learning in the classroom which if positive, will ensure our high expectations are met and that pupils can achieve to real their full potential.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Am I?** | **Achieved all 5** | **Achieved****4 or 3** | **Achieved** **2 or 1** | **Achieved None** |
| **1** | **Punctual** |  1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **2** | **Prepared** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **3** | **Participating** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **4** | **Persevering** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **5** | **Progressing** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

This has been in consultation with staff, and will be introduced to pupils at assemblies in the New Year and was shared with parents at the Meet and Greet session back in November and will also be shared with the Parent Council at our next meeting in January.

**Successes and Achievements**

Ellon Academy is a vibrant school which offers exceptional opportunities for learners to develop their skills and talents. This term has seen a number of individual and group successes in all aspects of school life. When I visited the school at the end of October, I attended a lunchtime Talent Show featuring many talented musicians, singers, dance and drama and a Pupil Leadership Conference involving pupils from S1 – S6 in leadership roles in the school. My first day here saw all S3 pupils participating in a very impressive S3 Entrepreneurship Day with workshops and presentations from former pupil Aqib Pervais and local businessman Gavin Hendry. Also the whole school participated in Remembrance Services in November which were poignant and moving, including presentations from the Royal Navy, Rev A Brown and our History pupils.

**Individual Pupil Successes**

A number of Ellon Academy pupils were nominated and **Mhairi Falconer** our Head Girl received her award as best in Category at the Aberdeenshire Youth Volunteer Awards last month. Also receiving certificates of recognition for volunteering in the community were **Kayleigh Murray 6M, Michelle Murray 6M, Chloe Clark 5F1** and Highly Commended in the ‘Young People’ category was Lewis **Watt 3C1**. Well done to them all.

S5 pupil **Magnus Dixon** has been selected by the Poetry Society as one of the 85 Commended Foyle Young Poets of the Year 2016.   There were over 6,000 entrants from across the world, an amazing and impressive achievement. Well done Magnus!

S1 Pupil **Samantha Milne** designed our school Christmas card which is given to all P7 pupils. Well done Samantha!

S1 pupil **Cerys Jakeman** did brilliantly in the finals of the Scottish Schools Climbing Competition in Glasgow coming 2nd in her age group, S1-S2 girls. Well done Cerys!

Miss Cargill’s **S3 History Class** have been commended on their hard work and effort in their ‘Spy Report’ sending Miss Cargill on an amazing secret mission to crack codes, puzzles and riddles. Very well done!

**Individual Pupil Successes**

S3 pupil **Lauren Thomson** was our winner in the Rotary Young Chef competition and the standard, skills and sophistication of menu from all 6 pupils was outstanding. Well done Lauren!

S3 Pupil **Rhys Gill** has done very well again with his disability swimming.  He won a variety of medals, including three  at the Scottish National Disability Swimming Championships, where he won two Golds, one for Individual Medley and Freestyle, and a Silver for Breaststroke. Rhys has taken significant time off his PBs in what was a very tough competition where he faced stiff competition. Well done Rhys!

S4 Pupil **Aisling O’Sullivan** was one of six dancers from her dance school in Aberdeen, Danscentre, to represent Scotland at Dance Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in London on October 30th ‘16. Dance Proms is an annual show featuring international acts to celebrate all genres of dance.  Aisling currently attends classes at The Royal Ballet School each Saturday in London.  Well done Aisling!

S5 pupil **Marcel Horne** in 5C1 participated in the North East Scotland College Hair & Beauty Festival 2016. This year’s competition especially for the School Links Hairdressing pupils was Freestyle. Competitors were asked to produce an “Alien Attack” style on a mannequin head. Marcel was awarded 3rd place.  Marcel received a certificate and a small prize, which consisted of hairdressing tools or products from the college. Well done Marcel!

**Fund Raising and Enterprise**

On Monday 7th November we hosted the S6 Youth Philanthropy Finals in which S6 pupils gave moving and inspirational presentations representing their chosen charities. Also recently S6 pupils also worked hard to raise an amazing £650.00 for Children in Need making us one of the top 100 school in the Britain for CIN fund raising.

Our Fairtrade Christmas stall is doing well and our Link Committee have been making hampers for CHAS Africa. Also our Business Club and Make and Sell club are selling Christmas products for the school fund. The club is a group that meets at lunchtime and they decide on what they would like to try and sell at various times throughout the year. They have had great success in making and selling a range of Christmas products from sweetie bags to Christmas baubles.  They have been selling their products at Parent's Evenings and to staff and pupils alike.  We have many budding Entrepreneurs!

A group of S4 boys Peter Groat 4M2, Jason Canning 4K1, William Paterson 4K1 and Wade Fisher-Raufenacht 4M2 are in the process of organising a fun run in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust which will take place in March 2017.

**Fund Raising and Enterprise**

The Fairtrade Steering Group organised a very successful Christmas stall over two days on 14 -15 November.  A large selection of Fairtrade gifts, craft etc were supplied by Mrs Anne Aspden, a local Tradecraft representative. The stall was open throughout the two days and was manned by pupil members of the steering group. Teachers were invited to take their classes and pupils also had the opportunity to visit the stall at interval and lunchtimes. Over the two days goods totalling £462.20 were sold. Mrs Aspden kindly allowed the school to keep 10% of the takings (£46.00) which will be used to fund various Fairtrade activities around the school during Fairtrade Fortnight 2017.

**Sports Stars**

Our very successful **senior netball team** are currently sitting 3rd in the Aberdeen District League and are through to the 3rd round of the Bronze Scottish School Cup.  Good luck!

Ellon Academy **senior girls’ football team** have had an excellent season so far. They have progressed to the semi-final of both the North of Scotland Cup and Aberdeenshire Cup. The girls are also currently top of the league having recently beaten the current reigning champions Mintlaw 4-1. In the other two league matches they scored 18 goals in both matches. An exciting end of season awaits with silverware a real possibility.

The **first year football team** (U13’s), have made an exceptional start to the football season, undefeated leaders in the League, Aberdeenshire cup finalists, and North of Scotland Semi Finalists, all before Christmas.  We have also received a new strip kindly sponsored by Burns Coaches of Tarves.Well done!

**Aberdeenshire Road Relay Championship at Ellon on Wednesday 5th October 2016**

Ellon S1 Boys 1st



Ellon S2 Boys 1st

Ellon S2 Girls 2nd

Ellon S3/4 Girls 1st

Ellon S5/6 Boys 3rd

Overall Winners – 1st – Gordon Schools Huntly, 2nd - Ellon, 3rd – Inverurie. Well done everyone!

**Cheerleading** - Currently there are 77 pupils in the Junior Team and 36 pupils in the Senior Team. In March, pupils participated in the North of Scotland Schools Cheerleading competition in Inverness. Both teams won their categories and the seniors’ were named 'Grand Champions' for being the highest scoring team of the competition. In June, pupils travelled to Inverness to participate in the Scottish Cheer Festival where the juniors’ were placed 4th and the seniors 3rd in their respective categories. Pupils also let a showcase event on 15th December here in the school.

**Biathlon** is a combined running and swimming event. In March, Miss Meacher and 6 pupils travelled down to London to compete in the British Schools' Biathlon Championships, they were Bobby-Drew Strachan Buchan, Euan Currie, Isla Burns, Lauren Duncan, James McIntosh and Beth Armour.  All pupils had been doing extra running sessions 2 lunchtimes a week and they trained at Aberdeen Sports Village on Sunday afternoons to fully prepare for the competition. All 6 recorded fantastic PB's and were a credit to the school whilst in London. The qualifying competition for next year's event took place in October, there were 9 pupils and Miss Meacher representing Ellon Academy, and we will find out soon December if they have qualified again.

**Citizenship and Intergenerational Links**

S6 pupils Nicola Will, Morgan Fenwick and Becky Lees have been delivering Ipad and tablet taster sessions with the Alzheimer group and as part of Dementia Friends training.   S6 also had Dementia Friends training as part of S6 Team PSE.



**Christmas 2016 at Ellon Academy**

In the run up to Christmas pupils were busy decorating the House Christmas trees, making up over 200 shoe boxes for Kosovo, we had a Christmas Jumper Day on the 7th December and a lunch for the Ellon Senior Citizens, who enjoyed a lovely Christmas dinner and some entertainment too. Also our S6 pupils have also donated money towards two luxury Christmas Hampers and the draw will take place before the end of term. Senior pupils have also been visiting senior citizens in sheltered housing with donations for their Christmas parties and also provided some entertainment. Our school Music for Christmas Concerts were exceptional, a real showcase of pupil talents and this week we also are having our Christmas services in various churches in Ellon and we are very grateful for the support of our school Chaplains and their church members. Thanks to Mrs E Henderson for her support of local Foodbanks and to staff for their support of the ‘Giving Tree’.

**Family Learning -** Last month staff and pupils in our Health and Wellbeing Faculty had a very successful Family Learning Evening and parents/carers who attended gave very positive feedback and we plan to have more of these events in the future.

**Stars in Our School -** On Friday 25th November, we celebrated ‘Stars in our School’ day and awarded our non-teaching staff with certificates to recognise the hard work which goes on behind the scenes to ensure that our school runs smoothly for the benefit of our pupils. Thank you all!

**Events for Staff -** On 29th November, staff stayed after school to participate in a Global Literacy and Numeracy training session delivered by Hannes and Steve from the Montgomery Education Centre and the session was very informative and enjoyed by all who attended.

On Friday 2nd December many of our Principal Teachers attended a training event organised by SCEL, the **Scottish College of Educational Leadership** and on Saturday 6 of our Ellon Academy staff presented at the SCEL Enquire Event here at Ellon Academy, attended by teaching staff from across Aberdeenshire, our Director of Education Maria Walker and senior leaders from SCEL, The General Teaching Council and the University of Aberdeen. The purpose of these events is to continue to develop the leadership skills of teaching staff.

**Developing the Young Workforce**

Ellon Academy also continues to be recognised nationally for our work in Developing the Young Workforce and this can only benefit our young people. Events this session so far include a Work Relating Learning Programme, our Careers Convention and Mock Interviews.

**Information for Parents/Carers**

Please see the school Facebook page for information on Adverse Weather/Storm Closures.

New Terms begins on Thursday 5th January 2017.

Mon 9th January – S3 Choices – Rectors’ Evening – 7pm



Wed 11th January – SQA Senior Phase Prelims begin

Mon 16th January – S3 Parents’/Carers’ Evening – 5pm

Tues 17th January – S2 Choices - Rector’s Evening – 7pm

Tuesday 24th January – S3 DTP and MenACWY Immunisations

Wed 25th January – S2 Parents’/Carers’ Evening – 5pm

Fri 27th January – SQA Senior Phase Prelims end

Mon 6th February – S4/5/6 Choices – Rector’s Evening – 7pm

Wed 8th February – S4 Parents’ Evening – 5pm

Fri 10th February – Holiday

Mon 13th February – Holiday

Tues 14th February – In-Service Day

Wed 15th February – In-Service Day

Ellon Academy Community Campus



So, as you can see it’s been a very busy and productive term at Ellon Academy and I am very proud of all our pupils and staff.

On behalf of the staff and pupils of Ellon Academy, I wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for a healthy and prosperous New Year.



Yours sincerely,

Pauline Buchan

Mrs Pauline Buchan

Rector (Acting)