

# HEADTEACHER REPORT 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2016

## Holocaust Survivor Visit

Two sixth year students, Matthew Reilly and Emilia Doel were chosen from Forres Academy to visit the concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau last October. As a part of their next steps, they invited Henri Obstfeld, a Holocaust Survivor to share his testimony with the community.

On the 14th March 2016, he shared his story, ending with Q&A session and tea and coffee. His testimony offered an insight to the consequences of intolerance and will explored the contemporary relevance of remembering this period in time.

## Moray Young Citizen Awards 2016

Pupils were given the red carpet treatment whilst being piped into the Mansfield Hotel by S6 pupil Cora Meechan for the 2016 Moray Young Citizens Award. Former pupil Andrew Hanton was awarded a Highly Commended certificate for the Individual Award. During the event another S6 Forres Academy pupil Ross Mallon entertained with a piece on the piano. FANG (Forres Academy News Group) were nominated for the Community Group Award. Two FANG members from each of the three years the group has been running attended the event. FANG came first in this category and they were presented with a cheque for £500 to go towards the group.

## Music Concert

In the last week of term many parents and members of our school community enjoyed an evening of high quality entertainment when eleven of our students performed in the Rotary Young Musician concert. It was a lovely way to wind down to the holidays! Ross Tulloch was the overall winner. Ross Mallon and Cora Meechan came third and second respectively.

## School Excursions Abroad

I am delighted to report that all three trips during the Easter break were extremely successful. I have attached a most welcome email I received from a gentleman from Wales who took the trouble to contact me as a result of the positive impression our young people made.

## House Assemblies

This week we have been holding House Assemblies to recognise and celebrate the personal achievements of many of our young people. Often achievements are recognised through our FANG articles, school notices and assemblies. The Positive Recognition working group however believed we could do better to celebrate these personal achievements with their peers. Young people have been asked to tell us about these but we have also respected their wishes should they wish not to be recognised at the assemblies.

## SQA Examinations

All students have attended several assemblies to make sure they are fully aware of the requirements and expectations during study leave and whilst they are sitting their examinations. Letters and information about the examinations have been shared with parents and are available on the school website.

## Standards and Quality Report

The Standards and Quality Report 2014-15 has been available on the website since the beginning of this term. The publication of the report for all schools in Moray is later this session to allow for the inclusion of updated examination statistics.

## Improvement Planning and Parental Engagement

Initial planning priorities were outlined in the Standards and Quality report. They are

### *Improving the quality of our learning experiences*

Promote the highest level of attainment in numeracy

Increase the flexibility of the senior phase curriculum

Plan for a 33 period week and improve personal support opportunities

### *Improve the quality of our learning provision to raise attainment and achievement*

Promote positive relationships, respect and fairness

Engage learners in their learning and support them in taking more responsibility for their learning and progress

### *Build capacity for leadership at all levels*

Increase effective partnership working with pupils, parents, local employers and wider community

I would welcome discussions with you on these and in particular the area of parental engagement.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland has been working with Skills Development Scotland as part of the programme of work underway in Developing the Young Workforce. They have produced some tailored information for parents, as part of their successful "in a nutshell" series, which covers the new Careers Education Standard launched at the Scottish Learning Festival 2015. This gives parents basic information about the initial role of this programme in schools and signposts them to where they can get some more information if they need it. A copy has been issued to all parents. The link is <http://www.npfs.org.uk/career-education-a-world-of-possibilities/>

## Staff Meetings

Our most recent meeting focused on the Learning and Teaching policy and our meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May will discuss the 33 period week and our continued work on promoting positive relationships.

## Investors in People Award

We have successfully maintained our Investors in People status. This is a rigorous and challenging process involving interviews with individuals and groups of both teaching and non-teaching staff. Information was also sought from an on-line survey. Our continued success is a testament to all our staff and the effort we have invested together in pursuit of improvement.

## School Roll, Budgets and Timetabling 2016 -17

Our school roll continues to fall and this coming session will see our roll falling to around 820 students. As our annual budget is based on the school roll, we are now in a position where we can no longer continue with current staffing levels. Our management structures are still the same as when the school roll was over 1000. In recent years we have not declared any surplus staff and the range and breadth of curricular experiences offered has remained the same or indeed increased. Throughout this time we have had to

take our share of budget cuts as have all areas within the Council. We also know that the current financial situation is not likely to improve in the foreseeable future.

As a school we can no longer maintain our current management structure and total number of staff. Following discussions at Authority level, we will be reducing our SLT team and Guidance team.

Timetabling for next year is almost finalised with draft copies now with our Principal Teachers.

## Consultation

During May we will be involved in a consultation process on the 33 period week for session 2017-18. This will involve parents, staff and our young people. I will be giving you an opportunity to discuss this next month and ask that a meeting be arranged with this as the only item on the agenda. As a school we have already completed a lot of discussions around the possibility of moving to a 33 period week and would also wish to have the opportunity to discuss this with you all.

## Staffing

We said farewell to Jan Grigg who is taking a career break for two years. We wished her all the very best with her new ventures and thanked her for her contributions to the school over the past 15 years. Two new teaching appointments have been made since our last meeting. Hailey Curry will join the Physical Education department this week and Didier le Moal will take up the post of teacher of Modern Languages in August. We have two posts currently advertised. These are for a part-time post in the Music department and the post of Principal Teacher of English and RME.

As a school and ASG we have a new Home School Link worker, Gillian Murdoch and a new Locality Wellbeing Officer, Susan Reid.

*From: Baxter, Phil [mailto:PBaxter@rydalpenrhos.com]*

*Sent: 19 April 2016 12:36*

*To: admin.forresacad*

*Subject: FOA Mrs Stuart*

*Hello,*

*I am hoping that I have the correct recipient for my comments, but if not, I apologise in advance.*

*Recently, in early April, I was travelling from Hull to Zeebrugge on a P&O ferry with my family. I think that a party from your school was also on the ferry at the same; I believe they were travelling to visit the Flanders battlefields?*

*As a school teacher myself, I am acutely aware of the public profile groups present when representing the school in this way. In the case of the students (& staff!) I saw they were an exemplar of everything you could hope for. What struck me most was the palpable sense of togetherness they demonstrated. They seemed confident, secure, sociable and very much a community. In the never ending scrutiny of academic performance I feel that some observers lose sight of the attributes and values that education provides.*

*My assumption, from what I saw, is that Forres Academy is offering these students a very effective and secure provision. They were everything that could possibly be hoped for in our society.*

*Please share my utmost personal, and professional, congratulations with your colleagues.  
With the very best of wishes from North Wales,*

*Fraternally,  
Phill Baxter*