

Head Teacher's Report: Parent Council Meeting: 12th January 2016

School Visits

Officers from Moray Council and Inspectors from Education Scotland have visited our school last term. I have received informal feedback from these visits and this has been positive. Written reports will be published as a result of both visits. Firstly, as a result of the Sustainable Review visit a report will go to Councillors in February. Education Scotland will also publish a report but that will be across Moray Council and not specific to each school visited.

We will welcome some Councillors to the school on two occasions this term – 22nd January and 2nd February.

End of Term

We enjoyed several events in the run up to the Christmas holidays. Our S6 show, junior and senior dances and Christmas Concert were all great opportunities to show the talents of our young people. Thanks to the work of our senior students studying the Sports Leadership course, we also had a very active and entertaining last day of term. This was called 'A Christmas Cracker' with all students participating in events throughout the day to win House points. Edinkillie House were the overall winners. Over £600 was raised and a donation will be given to the chosen charity which was MFR Cash for Kids. The rest will be used to support the Sports Leadership class with their work in Primary schools.

Investors in People

Forres Academy is an 'Investors in People' establishment. Every three years this is reviewed to ensure we still meet the standards required. All staff have already completed an on-line survey with extremely encouraging results based on staff views about their working relationships, the school's values and the school's leadership and direction. Hilary Crick from Investors in People will continue to work with us over the coming years to build on these positive results.

Mount Dora Exchange

Following a presentation from our two current Mount Dora students to S5 students and a Parents' Evening in December, applications for next sessions exchange programme have been received. Interviews will take place after the prelim examinations.

S4-6 Preliminary Examinations

Our senior students are busy preparing themselves for prelim exams and were issued with their exam timetables last term. There will be study leave for most of our young people in S4 – 6 starting next week and study support sessions will continue to be offered by staff either at lunchtimes or after school. We wish all our students success with these very important exams.

Developing the Young Workforce

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 Scottish Learning Festival 2015. This new nutshell will supply parents with basic information about the initial role of this programme in schools and signpost them to where they can get some more information if they need it. This nutshell has been produced in hard copy with one for each child in primary, secondary and ASN schools and deliveries will start w/c 11-1-16. The link is <http://www.npfs.org.uk/career-education-a-world-of-possibilities/>

S3 Profiles

All Departments are supporting S3 pupils with their reflection on skills and helping them to add this to their Profiles. All S3 pupils will complete a Profile by the end of their third year. From the recent focus group meetings that have taken place, authority staff and inspectors have confirmed that our S3 pupils have a clear focus on skills in their subject areas. As a school we have now completed our Skills poster and large copies are now available for all classrooms.

Positive Relationships

This session we have been focusing on positive relationships as we strongly believe that they are the foundation of everything we are trying to achieve. If we get these right then good learning and teaching will take place and we will be able to meet the needs of all our young people so much better. Our very successful in-service day in November focused on this within the context of our Rights Respecting School agenda.

Good relationships with parents and our partners are also crucial if we want to achieve this. We are supporting our young people through the subject choice process at the moment. Our parents' evenings and Information evenings were well attended last term and these continued this term with our recent S4 – S5 Information Evening. All documents such as subject choice booklets will be available on the school website as well as being issued to parents. As a Parent Council we are looking at ways to further involve parents in the work of the school.

How Good is our School 4

This document has been published recently and gives an update of the main criteria schools should use to evaluate how well they are doing and support future planning for improvement. I have shared an overview of this with promoted staff and would be more than happy to discuss further with the Parent Council.

Session 2016-17

Mike Burchell is well under way with next year's timetable and I had a meeting last week with Lindsay Stanley and Nicky Gosling (Finance) regarding budgets and staffing for next session. We have all been informed of the challenges in terms of the budget position following comments by Councillor Wright at the end of last year. We continue to have a falling roll and are aware that we will need to consider potential savings. These will be discussed over the course of the next two months.

School Handbook

This has been updated and is now available on the school website. All Primary 7 parents will be issued with hard copies prior to the transition programme next term.

Staffing

Sadly, we said farewell to Liz Shanks from the Technical department last week. Liz is joining the Fire Service and will be heading back down to Glasgow. Gordon Bain retired at the end of last term but has agreed to come back on supply this term. We are extremely grateful for this and are also fortunate to have secured another qualified Technical teacher on a supply basis in the meantime. Catherine Ogilvie-Richards will be going into hospital w/b 18th January and therefore Sheila Smart will take up the Acting Principal Teacher Additional Support for Learning post for six weeks until Catherine returns.