

HEADTEACHER REPORT Monday 7th November 2016

~~Centenary commemoration of the Battle of Arras April 2017~~
Centenary commemoration of the Battle of Arras April 2017 arranged by the Scottish Commemorations Panel. Each local authority was asked to propose two S3 pupils who would benefit from a visit to Arras next April to learn more about the Battle and its significance for Scotland. I am delighted that two students from Forres Academy have been selected to represent Moray and they are Anna Pritchard and Victoria Bell. Both girls are leading our Remembrance assemblies this week.

New Roof

You may have read in the press that our roof is being replaced this session. We are delighted that this is eventually going ahead. Obviously we are very keen to work with the local authority and contractors to allow most of this work to take place before the winter weather sets in but there is no doubt that it has and will continue to result in some noise and inconvenience. At all times the health and safety of pupils and staff will be our priority.

The work will be carried out in three distinct phases, with work stopping during prelims and hopefully being completed before the exams in May.

Phase 1: Central quadrangle

Phase 2: Hall / foyer

Phase 3: Library/Gameshall

Pupil Forum

Our new pupil forum has met and have come up with exciting plans for the new session. It was good to have such a large number of representatives present to be able to put forward all their ideas and suggestions for issues that the forum could explore and work on. These suggestions have been condensed into seven groups and they are now working on achievable targets for the year.

S6 Students

Our S6 students have taken up leadership roles and are contributing to the wider life of the school community in a very positive manner. Many are carrying out duties as Prefects with others taking on leadership roles such as elite tutors, supporting students in S5 with their studies. A menu of 16 opportunities was available for all S6 students, including formalised Volunteering in the local community. They also completed a charity walk and raised over £200. They are now practicing for their S6 Show which is planned to take place on Friday 18th November.

School Excursions Abroad

A range of foreign excursions are being offered again to our students. They include a watersports trip to Spain, a trip to the WW1 Battlefields, a ski trip in 2018 as well as a trip to Berlin for senior students. We are also hoping to offer an exchange trip to Vienenburg.

Standards and Quality Report

The Standards and Quality Report 2014-15 has been available on the website since April 2016. The publication of the report for all schools in Moray was later to allow for the inclusion of updated examination statistics. An update of this year's examination results was given in the letter to all parents at the beginning of term. Although we are seeing continued improvement over the past four years in the following areas –

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65% of students gaining 3 or more National 5 (Higher grade) awards
We need to focus on our S4 results and need to concentrate on improving our % of students gaining National 4 and National 5 awards. Our literacy results are good but we need to improve our results in numeracy. We are working with our ASG primary schools on numeracy as this is a focus for all of them as well as for the Academy.

Improvement Planning and Parental Engagement

Our School Improvement plan is available on the school website. The school priorities for this session are outlined below:

Ensuring the best possible outcomes for ALL our learners

- Developing our Young Workforce/Senior Phase flexibility
- Tracking and moderation
- 32/33 period week/Curriculum Review

Leadership of learning and change

- Supporting Effective Learning & Teaching
- Parental engagement
- Vision & Values [Promoting Positive Relationships/Rights Respecting School]

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/>

Structure of the school week: 33 period week

Following consultation with staff, parents and pupils, it has been decided not to go ahead with a change to the structure of the school week next year. If there are to be any further changes they would not be implemented until 2019-20.

School Twitter Account

As a school we are always looking at ways to improve our communication with parents and our young people. We recently set up a new Twitter account as well as some new twitter accounts from several departments. In particular the Guidance Team has responded to requests from parents to have access to useful information regarding careers as well as other options in terms of post school destinations.

S1 Pupils Our S1 pupils in first year have settled well into the Academy. Discussions with parents at our S1 Parents' Information evening and during S1 parents' meetings with Guidance staff last term have been very productive and well received. Our S3 students also contributed to S1 Information evening and were a credit to the school. Their presentations were informative and confidently delivered. Our S1 students raised a total of £1,353.26 for LEPRA which will go to help victims of leprosy in countries such as India, Mozambique and Bangladesh.

School Roll Our school roll continues to fall and the recent census in September saw the roll falling to 819 pupils as predicted. As our annual budget is based on the school roll, we are now in a position where we face continued constraints despite changes made to some of our management structures at the beginning of term. We know that the current financial situation is not likely to improve in the foreseeable future. We are about to begin on timetabling for next session and will have to make some difficult decisions regarding the courses that will be viable to offer.

Staffing welcomed several new members of staff this session:

Cait Dunphy	Mathematics Department
William McIntosh	English Department
Mhairi Macfarlane	Modern Languages Dept.
Sophie Strain	Music Department
Mel Williams	ASfL Department
Helen Higham	PT Biology/Science
Paul Moore-Bridger	RME Department
Cath Reilly	PT Guidance

Some existing members of staff have also taken up new roles in the school

Craig Edwards	Acting PT Guidance (P/T)
Susan Green	Teacher ASfL
Rachel King	PT English/RME
Lynne Riddoch	PT Guidance
Susan Slater	PT Guidance (P/T)
Sheila Smart	PT ASfL
Jan Maclean	Acting PT Business Studies

Unfortunately, we have not been able to fill two posts – Teacher Business Studies (temporary) and Teacher Design and Technology (permanent). We are so grateful to those members of staff who have returned to the school to help cover these posts, in particular Evan Cameron and Gordon Bain.

Another email we received praising some of our pupils

Quick email to flag-up how impressed myself, Stuart McQuaker (Elgin Eagles) and All were with the young FA Basketball Team lead by Dominik Waczkowski at yesterday's Basketball League Rd1.

Their attitude, performance and teamwork were commendable and a credit to their school, coach and sport. Please can you ensure this message is relayed to the team and in particular their coach/lead player Dom who was exemplary.

Results and feedback will be out soon.

Tim

Tim Walters | Active Schools Coordinator – School Sport Competition | [sportscotland](#) - The Moray Council |