



Issue No 146

December 2009

Update

A Merry Christmas
to all our readers



Welcome

A warm welcome to the December issue of '*Update*'. We hope you enjoy reading about many of the activities that are taking place within and outwith the school. I am sure you will join me in thanking all the staff and the pupils for their hard work and commitment to making Dyce Academy an innovative and vibrant school which is contributing such a lot to our community. My thanks also go to the many business links and groups that work with us throughout the session to create such wonderful opportunities.

We had a tremendous response from members of the public in support of our Fair Trade campaign to amend the Schools (Health and Nutrition) Act to allow our pupils to act responsibly in respect to their own Health and to learn about 'fair trade'. In particular we received a letter from Brian Adam MSP, Aberdeen North congratulating Laura, Julie and Erin on presenting a persuasive argument which convinced an influential committee to take the matter further. This is particularly commendable as they have shown how we can all become involved and make a difference.

Thank you for attending our concert of light music which was held in the school in November. We were delighted with the 'Full House'. My thanks to all the participants from ACMS for the high quality and variety of their selected pieces. The addition of jazz is very exciting and is a very welcome addition to the programme of music available within our school. We hope to offer more opportunities to hear our pupils perform in the near future. Tickets for our spring concert in the Music Hall will be available soon.

The final touches are being made to our hall of residence. This is another facet of Dyce Academy which is quite unique. There are 45 individual en-suite rooms to cater for our boarders; there is state of the art security and an innovative heating system which uses a combination of geo-thermal heating and solar panelling. The pupils will be ready to move in on the 4th January. We hope to hold an opening ceremony sometime in January. Staff at Dyce Academy will be offered a chance to look round the accommodation before the end of this term.

Thank you to the parents who attended the first part of our Drugs' Awareness programme. Any one who could not attend the evening in November is still welcome to attend our next session. The sessions are geared towards parents of our pupils in S1 and S2. Please look for more information on our website.

Congratulations to Craig Paton, who at 16 is a highly thought of musician. He came to the notice of Claudio Beltrami, the maker of very special hand- crafted Italian accordions. He has been presented with one of the prized instruments.

Congratulations also go to Corinne Candlish whose work has been selected for exhibition at the Glasgow School of Art.

Life beyond school can be a daunting prospect for parents as well as pupils. Parents play an essential role in helping and encouraging their children to make the appropriate choices for study, work and the future. ASPIRENorth provides a range of activities aimed at widening access to post-school education for pupils in selected schools in the North of Scotland. Dyce Academy is one of those selected schools. Many of our current S2 pupils have been involved in a range of activities designed to familiarise our pupils with the life of a college or university student through interactive talks, workshops, lectures and tours. The activities also aim to build positive perceptions of post-school education amongst pupils.

There have been some staff changes since the last *'Update'*. Mr Donald Thomson, Principal Teacher modern Languages retired at the end of October. I understand that he is, at present, travelling in Australia. We thank him for his many years' of service and wish him well.

Ms Angela Collie has taken up the post as Head of the Faculty of Mathematics at Mearns Academy. We wish her every success in her new post.

We have been grateful to Mrs Liz Nicholson, who has been helping us out in the Business Education department. We wish her well as she leaves the area to return to Inverness.

We also have to say goodbye to Lesley Wilson, our woodwind instructor, who retires at the end of this term. We thank Lesley for all the work she has done in the school and wish her a long and healthy retirement.

Don't forget that we are still aiming to purchase our Guide dog. Keep picking up those coins and depositing them in the boxes around the school.

I have to agree with the article by the PE Department - the Dyce AB Crew were quite simply the best. Their Hip Hop Dance was quite brilliant.

Finally, we await the arrival of The National Theatre of Scotland to the school in January. A very packed and exciting programme has been outlined. If the taster fortnight gave us a tiny flavour of what is to happen within our school and community, we can expect quite an amazing experience. I was stunned by the quality of the work produced by our pupils from S3 –S6 and incredibly proud of the talent we have here in the Academy. All I can say is 'Look out Aberdeen City and Shire.'

Can I take this opportunity to offer seasonal best wishes to you and your families on behalf of all the staff at Dyce Academy.

Lesley Adam

DYCE ACADEMY AND OTIENO OYOO HIGH SCHOOL LINK THE NEXT CHAPTER

Following the successful exchange visits of Solomon Okiro with Mrs Elinor Farquharson in 2008, we were pleased to welcome George Ohiambo and George Ongong'a from Kisumu, Kenya in the last week of term before Summer Break. Their stay was fruitful as we moved into the next stage of the link project which compared a transect (slice) of each city and examined health issues affecting young people in the respective communities. To further the project Angela Collie and Tom Ferguson visited Kenya during the October break spending one week in the High School; a particularly busy week given the forthcoming final exams similar to those sat in May in Scotland. Funding was secured through a successful grant application to the British Council.

The differences were considerable; a single sex (boys) boarding school of 1000 students aged 15-18. A school day beginning with rise at 4 am, lessons at 7 am, classes of over 50 taught in the same room all day (the teachers move), ending at 1.30pm with games or prep until 6pm.

One area of comparison of special interest to a Social Subjects teacher was field work. This is extremely rare given student numbers but with the help of the British Council grant we were able to go on an excursion deep into the surrounding countryside. Pupils were selected on the basis of commitment to class and several were turned away due to the bus reaching capacity. Before leaving, prayers for the excursion were said by a pupil, sincerely, although given the state of the roads and the behaviour of some road users, they were comforting.

The first part of the trip involved a journey from the school on the western outskirts of the city into the centre where many photographs were taken using the digital camera bought in Aberdeen to help with the transect exercise. This included the local rubbish tip with rubbish scavengers and grazing cattle.

From there, the group visited a site of special geographical and religious significance, the Kit Makii rock formation, a series of granitic tors similar to those found in the summits of the Cairngorms e.g. Ben Avon, North Yorkshire Moors or Dartmoor in Devon. Some local people also come here to say prayers or meditate. The students enjoyed the freedom of climbing the tors and admiring the impressive surrounding countryside much of which was used for subsistence farming in shambas or crofts.

Next, we were able to see (Raila Odinga) the present Prime Minister of Kenya's country residence and visit his father's mausoleum, now a visitor centre. Jamiroga Odinga was the first Vice President of Kenya following independence in 1962 and a staunch supporter of democracy as the country slid into dictatorship in the late 1980's. It is a beautiful site with many historical exhibits important to the Luo people, dominant in this area. Our next area of interest was an area of reclaimed swamp that was now used for growing rice for commercial business. All along the journey we passed by many villages busy with people going about their daily duties.



One interesting stop involved pupils being given a piece of sugar cane for a snack, expertly cut up by George Odhiambo with a large machete! We stuck to the mini sweet bananas and copious supplies of water to quench our thirst in the rising temperatures which reached the high thirties in centigrade.

After lunch we culminated our trip with a visit to the Obama Homestead where after taking photographs of Obama's father's grave. He was a very high ranking economist destined for political fame before being untimely killed in a car crash in 1976. We felt very honoured to visit this place but what happened next was quite incredible.

Out of the house came Mama Sarah Obama, the President's grandmother who came down to the group circle and addressed us all for around 20 minutes including answering questions. This grand old lady close to ninety happily imparted a lot of good advice (sadly in Luo tongue!) while telling of her family's hardships. We were told of the importance of education to her family's success and how Obama's father walked barefoot for several kilometers to school every day and how he would not accept second place as good enough. This was an inspirational moment for many students of whom there were some who also came from impoverished backgrounds.

We returned safely to school before being released following prayers of thanksgiving. The following day was Angela's birthday and she was presented with a special outfit, a traditional Kenyan dress called a Kitenga made by Molly, a teacher at the school.



This visit was a memorable experience in so many ways. Although we were teachers, we learned so many things about the resourcefulness of the Kenyan people in the face of poverty and other adversities. Their cheerfulness and general optimism is a lesson to those of us who lead much more fortunate lives but adopt a “glass half empty” rather than “half full” approach.

Tom Ferguson

Macmillan Coffee Morning

On Friday 18th of September the S4 SVS class held a coffee morning as part of the Worlds Biggest Coffee Morning. The coffee morning was organised as part of our SVS course work; we started to work on the project in April to make sure that we were organised for it on time.

We had to get permission from Mrs Adam to hold the coffee morning; we had to write letters to companies to ask for their donations. We got replies from several companies who donated baked goods, chocolates and vouchers to spend in their stores on items for the coffee morning.

On the day of the coffee morning we had to set up the tables then clean them and set out the food and juice. As we are a Health Promoting school, we even served fruit salad!

We were astonished by the amount of cakes, biscuits and home bakes that were donated by staff, but we were even more amazed by how many people came and how much they ate!!

The coffee morning was a huge success and we raised an amazing £400 for Macmillan Cancer Care.

Thank you all!



A Taste Sensation!

After a long wait the TRANSFORM team from The National theatre of Scotland arrived in school for the last two weeks of term before the October holidays. The aim of their whirlwind visit was to allow all S3-S6 pupils a 'taste' of what to expect if they decided to get involved in the TRANSFORM project which will run from January until March 2010.

Pupils (and staff!) participated in a variety of workshops over the 2 weeks and the visit ended with the pupils sharing their work with each other during the afternoon of the last day of term.

I have always known that the pupils of Dyce Academy are a talented bunch, but I was 'blown away' by the phenomenal work that was created by our pupils in a very short space of time. I was also exceptionally impressed (though not surprised) by the way in which the pupils respected each others work. I think that everyone had a great time – pupils even choosing to stay and listen to the music after the bell had rung to mark the beginning of their holidays!

The TRANSFORM team will be back in school towards the end of January and I know that they can't wait to come back to Dyce Academy. They will be working with all of the pupils who have volunteered to be involved in the project and the work that they create will be performed on and around the week of the 15th March 2010. A number of performances will take place, so clear a space your diary NOW!

In the meantime, don't take my word for it, have a look at the photos below!

Lynsay Wilson
Lead Teacher
TRANSFORM



STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

I can now confirm that the city centre venue for 'TRANSFORM ABERDEEN' will be The Forum.

(Just across the road from the Central Library and His Majesty's Theatre)

The Fair Trade Group: Our Petition to Parliament

As I'm sure most of you are aware, three of us went to the Scottish Parliament on the 17th of November to clarify our petition against the Health And Nutrition Act (2007). The Act has meant that our Fair Trade stall that ran each Friday had to be withdrawn. We felt that although it is very important to have a healthy diet, the Act was curtailing our wish to raise awareness of Fair Trade through selling the products. We had a great day and it was a valuable experience. We felt that we were listened to and our opinions were respected. Although it was quite daunting to speak to MSPs they were very welcoming and helpful. They are taking our ideas very seriously and have asked various groups to consider our points. This is the best result we could have wished for. While we are waiting to hear from the Parliament, we will continue to have meetings of the Fair Trade Group in school.

Laura, Erin and Julia

Jewellery Evening

Members of the Fair Trade group would like to thank everybody who visited their stalls in the library on the evening of the S4 parents' consultation. Jewellery, scarves, bags, clothing and Christmas gifts and decorations were on display. The evening was a great success and the group took in nearly £400.00.

Shannon Smith, Shannon Philip, Toni Prosser, Abigail Pereira, Sophie and Katie Coroon, Jaime Hey, Julia Standing and Erin Young.



Pudsey Dance



Sparkle - Dyce Academy Young Enterprise Group



“Sparkle” is the new Young Enterprise Group in Dyce Academy. It has 13 members from S5 and S6 who are currently selling soap and jewellery products. The soaps are packaged by the Group in-house and we are re-cycling costume jewellery donated by pupils and staff at the Academy. We have sold our products in November at 2 Christmas Fairs at Inverurie Town Hall and the Music Hall in Aberdeen. There will be an opportunity for you to buy our goods at our stall within the school and at any forthcoming Parents’ Evenings. We hope, very much, that you will enjoy our products and support our Group.

CHARITIES COMMITTEE

Charities Committee meets once a week every Thursday. We arrange activities to raise money for different charities such as, tickled Pink, Children in Need and McMillan Cancer.

Since August we have raised £1362. We did this by various things. For Tickled Pink we held pink Friday where everyone had to wear as much or as little pink as we wanted. We raised £300! We raised £400 for Children in need by dressing up differently. We sold poppies for Remembrance Day and raised £186. We collected £386 from our copper dropper for our guide dog. Red ribbons were sold on World aids Day and raised £36. A coffee morning in aid of McMillan Cancer raised £344 (the cakes were yum).

We hope to carry on making money for various charities. It’s all worth it!

Carly Pickard and Charlotte Garden S1

Catalan visitors come to Dyce Academy

Here in the Modern Languages Dept at Dyce Academy, we try really hard to open up new opportunities to you, our pupils. Occasionally this means working alongside other departments within school, but also with people from outside of school. This is exactly what happened at the end of November 2009.

The ML Dept were approached by Aberdeen University and asked if we would be willing to have some visitors into school. We accepted and anticipated the arrival of 8 teachers from Catalonia, Spain who were interested in seeing how school works and school life in Scotland. Members of staff from other departments in Dyce Academy kindly agreed to accept one each of these teachers into their classes on either Monday 23rd or Friday 27th November.

Firstly, there was Neus Diumenge who attended classes in the Maths Dept, David Coves in Business Studies, Jordi Marin in Physics and Josep Calucho who was in Home Economics. On the Friday, Marcel-li Valdes went to Modern Studies, Dani Banagas to PE, Jaume Cascade to Biology and lastly Elisana Fenes came to Modern Languages.

Mrs Cullen and Miss Edgar also made sure to give a guided tour to our visitors all around Dyce Academy, and they showcased the good work and resources available to the pupils here. Our Catalan visitors were very impressed with all that goes on here and also commented on how welcoming the pupils had been to them. The ML department are really proud of how the pupils who met the visitors behaved in class and would like to send out a massive thank you to you all and also to all the other departments that agreed to have a visitor with them.

As it turns out, many of the Catalan teachers, who return to Spain mid-December, wish to set up links between Dyce Academy and their respective schools in Spain. This has yet to be initialised but there are many ideas as to what we could do between the schools, and between departments. So keep an eye out in class and around school to see what we manage to set up and make sure to get involved when it does happen!





NETBALL

The Netball Teams have played matches recently with mixed results.

The Junior and Senior Teams have played regular matches in the Aberdeen Schools Netball League and hope to finish in the top half of the League this year. Good luck to all!

The 1st Year team entered a Friendly Tournament at the Beach Leisure Centre where they played against teams from Schools around the city. It was a great experience and pupils are now training hard for the Tournament in February, which will declare a Champion team. Good luck and train hard!

FOOTBALL

The Football teams have had a quiet time recently due to the weather and the condition of the pitches.

The 1st years continue to train indoors in preparation for the Inter Class Indoor Football Competition in January. Each Register Class will be encouraged to enter a team and matches will be played at lunchtime.

The 'A B CREW'

A group of boys have met with Daniel for 10 weeks learning the basic moves of HIP HOP. They worked very hard and with great concentration to create their performance for the 'Showcase of the AB CREWS'.

This was held in the Lemon Tree Theatre and was sold out.

Our boys were magic, brilliant and according to those who watched – the Best! We are not biased but we are hard to impress.

The Boys put on a performance for Staff in the Games Hall and impressed and delighted those who managed to watch!

Well done boys – it was great to watch you work!

Unfortunately the project has now ended but Daniel has left them inspired and with moves to practice. We will invite him back for a visit.

S4 Work Experience - The Pupils' Views

It was great and I would love to do it again. Would have been better if I was there longer than a week. I really want to work in a nursery now.

Was very good. I felt a bit scared at first but fitted in well after the first day once I knew everyone.

It was okay. I felt the hours were long and at times it was boring. I felt that I could have done more to help.

It was good learning about plumbing. I was shown a lot of things. It was good going about in the van. A little boring watching at times.

I absolutely loved working there - everyone was so nice and friendly.

Some days weren't great but I enjoyed using the 3D model software and going on site. I enjoyed the experience and it will influence what I choose to do in the future.

Did a lot of cleaning!

I think I should have been introduced to the children so they knew my name. It was good experience and I did enjoy it but I am glad to be back at school

I really enjoyed it because of the guys I worked with. Got to do stuff I didn't expect.

Very enjoyable, was never bored or watching the clock. Varied work which kept me interested and enthused

It was a bit disappointing as I couldn't work on the computers as it was confidential information. Overall I really enjoyed it and am considering working in an office

I really enjoyed it. Sometimes I was left a bit idle but that is to be expected. It was a really good opportunity and totally worth going.

I was made to feel welcome. The experience has given me more patience.

I really enjoyed it, and was offered a part-time job so I'm really glad I did it.

S4 Work Experience - The Employers' Views

Was a great help in the classroom - got on extremely well with the children and me.

When you have a starting time for a job, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure they are at their work for that time.

Impressed with this student's mature attitude and willingness to work as part of a team. A "natural" with children.

It has been a pleasure to have her in class with us. She has shown great interest in all aspects of the children's' abilities and development.

Very pleasant and enthusiastic. Was not fazed by any task asked to do. Has right attitude for this job.

Conscientious individual who should do well in a work environment.

An excellent representative from Dyce Academy - we were all delighted with the high standard of professionalism displayed.

Timekeeping was impeccable. Had a great rapport with the team. Polite and attentive at all times.

Was clock watching at the start of the week to finish on time!

Fitted in with the team very quickly. Very friendly and helpful. Positive attitude and will be a great attribute to a team.

Always arrived before necessary. Always keen to get stuck into any task. Was very helpful and great entertainment.

We had a very quiet week so was maybe not stretched in terms of pace of work and range of experiences. Came into work on a Saturday instead of Friday due to flooding.