

Portlethen Academy Newsletter Spring 2015

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Acting Head Teacher's Message



As always, I am certain you will enjoy reading about the many achievements of pupils of all ages. It is a privilege to be part of a school that offers such a wide range of

opportunities, where all pupils can be recognised for their successes both in school and in the wider community. One of our school values is to 'Get involved': we encourage pupils to make the most of their time both in school and outwith school. This term, Portlethen Academy has been a busy working environment for all staff and pupils, but particularly for our senior pupils. We are now in the midst of the SQA exams. In the current climate it is important that pupils look beyond the next step and instead think about the competitive job market that may exist for them further down the line, where additional qualifications will undoubtedly reap dividends. We constantly strive to improve the school experience for our young people and value your ideas as to how we can make further improvements; so please do not hesitate to get in touch. Finally, Mr Morrison continues to make good progress with his recovery from his accident and is back in school on a phased return.

Mrs L Scott



Spain Trip



Recently, four S6 pupils who are all studying Advanced Higher Spanish went to Nerja, Malaga so they could develop their Spanish language skills.

They left on Sunday, 15th February 2015 for a week. They attended classes in Nerja for a total of 3 hours per day between Monday and Friday. In their free time they did a range of activities including going to a bull ring and visiting a castle. James McLeod and Callum McGee stayed with one Spanish family and Jenny McDonald and Rebecca Donald stayed with another family. Neither of the two families spoke English and the pupils were the only English-speaking people in their class, so all four pupils had lots of practice speaking Spanish. They all agreed that they had had an amazing time.

Maersk Star Winners



A total of 7 pupils were selected as Maersk Star Winners for 2014-15: Adam McGregor, Drew Gregg, Reece Gordon, Shannon Polson, Christina Polson, India Duce and Matthew Taylor. They went to Maersk House, Altens, Aberdeen

to collect their certificates. In addition to the ceremony, the Maersk Stars were given lunch and a presentation about Maersk. The afternoon began with a talk about Geology and then an engineering expert spoke about his role in the company. He talked about drilling equipment used to get the oil from the North Sea. There was then a presentation about Maersk's latest project, *Culzean*. This project relates to the company's discovery of a huge volume of oil which they hope will produce 5% of UK's oil needs in the next 5 years.

Rights Respecting Schools Group



The Rights Respecting Schools Group (RRSG) is a small group run by pupils which meets regularly to discuss pupils' rights within the school. The group makes sure that every pupil

knows about their rights and can exercise them. This year, the group's focus is children's rights abroad and ensuring that children get a full education. Scotland signed up for The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Children (UNCRC) in 2014 to ensure that all children are given their rights and are treated equally. The UNCRC has a total of 42 Articles which must be followed to ensure a full and successful education for all pupils. Here are some examples of articles: Article 12 states that every child's rights should be taken seriously and equally. Article 29 states that every child deserves a full education. There have been several notices in the Daily Bulletin to make pupils aware of the group's work and give them opportunities to join it. This is a nationally recognised extra-curricular activity which gives valuable experience for many future careers, for example law, social work, etc.

Erasmus



Erasmus is an international education project that features collaborations between different nationalities and social backgrounds. A group of 12 S6 pupils

and 2 teachers from Portlethen Academy went to the outskirts of Naples, Italy as part of this project. The purpose of the Italy trip was to present information to other schools from across Europe about the Scottish education system and aspects of our culture. Our pupils then watched other schools' presentations to get insights into their education systems and cultures. Whilst our S6 pupils were in Italy they were given many opportunities to meet with people from different countries and to form friendships. Pupils from other countries who socialised with our S6 pupils expressed their appreciation of the opportunities they got to develop their English language skills: for many of them, it is the second language they study in school.

Art Exhibition



During January and February 2015 a number of S3 pupils had the chance to showcase their artwork. They were able to display their work in the school reception area for visitors, pupils and teachers to view. Their drawings showed lots of different art techniques. Miss Dickson said, "It's a great chance

for the pupils to showcase their artwork." There were many different types of drawings, for example abstract, perspective drawing, etc. The exhibition displayed a wide range of artistic skills.



Scottish Schools Freestyle Competition



Fynn Gentle S3 took part in the Scottish Schools Freestyle Competition, held at Braehead, Glasgow in April 2015. Fynn represented Portlethen Academy in the freestyle skiing event — achieving an impressive 3rd place.

The competition was tough: Fynn was delighted to end up amongst the medal winners. He was the only participant from Portlethen Academy, so he didn't get a group rating; but a couple of his snow sports friends will be entering S1 after the summer, so watch this space for next year.

Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)



On 14th January 2015 the Youth Philanthropy Initiative final took place in Portlethen Academy Theatre. A total of five S2 groups progressed

to the final. The winning team consisted of Craig McLennan, Jasmine Collett, Kirsty Ross and Cara Bremner. They gave a presentation promoting the work of a worthy cause: NEEDS (North-East Eating Disorders). The YPI judges were suitably impressed with the group's presentation and awarded them the winning prize. The group obtained £3000 for NEEDS.

First Aid Course



In February 2015, 15 senior pupils completed a first aid course as part of their Sports Leadership Award. The pupils worked hard to learn a range of skills

including: how to perform CPR, how to put someone in the recovery position, how to apply bandages or a sling, etc. They were also given a PowerPoint presentation which included information on how to deal with people who are choking, having a seizure or unconscious. The course ended with a first aid assessment: all the pupils passed it.

Senior Football Team



The senior football team recently progressed through to the quarter-finals of the Scottish Shield. They played Holyrood Sec-

ondary School — Europe's second largest school, based in the south of Glasgow. The game took place on 19th February 2015 at Portlethen Academy; Portlethen won 4-1. The goal scorers were Christopher Hamilton, Aidan Cran, Shaun Morrison and Nicholas Laurenson. Mr Cowie, the team coach, said after the Holyrood game, "We were delighted to beat the biggest school in Scotland and defeat last year's champions." They then played Paisley Grammar School in the quarter final at Paisley on 3rd March 2015. They unfortunately lost 5-0 after facing a very strong opposition. The score line did not reflect how Portlethen played after they decided to go out attacking after being 3-0 down. However, Portlethen did themselves proud by getting to the quarter-final of such a competitive cup. The team also took part in the President's Trophy on 18th March 2015. Their opponents on this occasion were Aberdeen Grammar School. Portlethen played a great game but unfortunately lost on penalties. The game was 0-0 until penalties where they lost 5-4. "They played very well and didn't deserve to lose," said Mr Cowie.

Badminton Club Tournaments



The Badminton Club held several doubles tournaments throughout the term. The first tournament was the Burns Night Tournament

held on 23rd January 2015. This tournament was won by Jack Browning S5 and Colin Wood S5; runners up were Andrew Duncan S3 and Rory Cargill S3. The second tournament was held on Friday, 6th February 2015: it was the annual Valentine's Day Doubles Tournament. The winners were Ryan Watson S2 and Finlay Wallace S2; runners up were Lachlan Kirk S4 and Lewis Sinclair S4. The next tournament was the Easter Doubles Tournament held on Friday, March 2015. On this occasion, the winners were Ryan Watson S2 and Ryan McNally S2. The final night of the club's season featured a King of the Court Competition which was eventually won by Lewis Sinclair S4.

The Ladder League was won by Lachlan Kirk S4. The best girl player was won by Rosie Craig S5; best junior player was Ryan Watson S2.



Sports Leadership Award



Throughout this term, several pupils took part in the Sports Leadership Award scheme. It involved participating in various activities during

the term including teaching classes at Fishermoss Primary School, completing a first aid course on Wednesday 18th February 2015, etc. The Sports Leadership Award gives pupils opportunities to learn how to teach children how to play short and fun games in PE classes. The course is taught every Friday during periods 1 and 2. The course is available to S5 and S6 pupils. It is taught by PE teacher Miss Hardie and Portlethen Academy's sports coordinator, Miss Coutts. As part of the course, each pupil has to do at least 10 hours of volunteering: helping out extra curricular sports clubs or in lessons for other year groups in the PE Department.

Huntly Volleyball Tournament



The annual Huntly Volleyball Tournament took place on Thursday, 19th March 2015. Two senior teams took part: an S5/S6 boys team, and an S5/S6

girls team. The boys' teams ended up in 4th place. The boys' team took a while to adjust to the competitive nature of the matches. In their first game, they were feeling pressurised and were not able to play in a structured form. However, as the games progressed they started to play in a more controlled and attacking fashion and began to win more points. The girls' team managed to finish in a respectable 3rd place. They gave Aberdeen Grammar School girls' team a good competitive game. The girls played in a professional, determined manner and adjusted to the pressure of the tournament really quickly.

Interhouse Basketball Tournament



The first interhouse event in 2015 was a basketball tournament. Auchlee won the S1 competition; their team won 4 points for their house.

Auchlee also won the S2 event; and again won 4 points for their house. Unfortunately, the S3 competition was unable to take place due to a lack of participants from every house. However, the S4 winners were Bourtree. The senior winners were Cookston: they won all of their matches and gained 4 points for their house. This means that the overall standings were very close between the houses. The final standings were :1st Bourtree with 13 points ; 2nd Auchlee with 11 points; 3rd Downies with 9 points; and 4th Cookston with 6 points.

Heptathlon Event



S1 and S2 pupils participated in a heptathlon event on Thursday, 19th February 2015. The event was held at the Aberdeen Sports Village. There were 14 pupils who took part: 7

boys and 7 girls. The heptathlon is made up of 7 events which includes: a hurdling event, shot put, high jump, a sprinting event, long jump, a javelin event and a long distance running race. Portlethen Academy came 8th out of the 10 schools who participated.

Swimming Gala



The annual Swimming Gala took place in the Portlethen Swimming Pool on Thursday, 26th March 2015. Pupils had the opportunity to win house points by winning or participating in

races. The races were competed in year groups — S1, S2, S3 and seniors. There were both boys' and girls' events; which combined made a total of 8 different groups. There were 5 different races: butterfly, backstroke, breast stroke and front crawl. There was also a team relay. The results were: 1st place Bourtree with 148 points, Auchlee were 2nd with 127, Cookston were 3rd with 126, and Downies were 4th with 55 points.

Newsletter Team



This newsletter was produced by: (l-r) Keith Steele, Drew Gregg, Lewis Wisely, Keelan Edgar, Glen Singer and Paul Steele (not in the photo as he was

behind the camera). The team would like to thank everyone who contributed material for the newsletter and who agreed to be interviewed and photographed for it.