



Winter Newsletter - December 2018

FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parent / Carer,

We have reached the end of another very busy and successful term at Mearns Academy. Over the last term, our students have continued to excel in a number of areas and the focus on academic achievement has been ongoing. This term we had our annual attainment meeting with senior officers of the Education and Children's Services Team and I can confirm that the Authority are very pleased with our examination results and they asked me to pass on their appreciation to the staff here at Mearns for all their hard work in preparing young people for examinations. In addition they congratulated the young people for their achievements.

Once again there has been an extensive range of extracurricular events which highlights the willingness of students to get involved and staff being prepared to go the extra mile in organising such a wide range of activities. I would like to thank everyone in our learning community for their diligence, hard work and achievements to date. I am sure you will enjoy reading about our many success stories in this newsletter.

Throughout the term there have been a number of staffing changes. Christine Anderson took up the post of PT English at Portlethen Academy. Miss Jessica Yorkshades and Mr Liam Hely moved to Montrose Academy. We have welcomed to the school Mrs Emma Myatt, teacher of English and will welcome after the Christmas break Miss Rosie Bircham in English and Mr Alastair Taylor in Maths. We are also delighted to have appointed Mr Brian Middleton as permanent Depute Head Teacher, Mrs Hamilton will continue as Acting Principal Teacher of ASL at this time.



Please enjoy reading our newsletter, which is crammed with stories of success, talent and academic progress.

I would like to join with my colleagues at Mearns Academy by wishing all of our students and their families/carers a very Happy Christmas and New Year. We look forward to the challenges and opportunities of 2019.

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE

This term has gone by in a blur and as for our DYW activities, it was action packed!

S4 pupils were very busy this term starting off with an interview workshop given by Sparrows. They came in giving pupils the tools they need to ensure they have a successful interview in the future. Pupils even practised their handshakes to ensure that the very first encounter was a positive one. If you have an S4 pupil, make sure to ask them to give you a hand shake. Throughout the month of November, all S4 pupils participated in mock interviews. This was hugely successful, with 130+ interviews conducted over the month. I must give a very warm and heartfelt thank you to all our business guests who gave their time to conduct the interviews. As always, the pupils went into the interviews with a sense of dread and nervousness, but came away feeling confident and glad for the experience. There will be one more workshop after we return to school in the New Year to round off the S4 Employability Award programme and this is about employment rights and responsibilities. We will have a company coming into to discuss how to behave responsibly in the work place so you don't lose your job. They will be sharing some hilarious and serious stories of former employees not behaving responsibly in the workplace.

All S4 pupils should have completed all the course work for their Employability Award. Their work will be marked after the holidays and sent to the SQA for them to receive their award. Any pupils that perhaps did not get all the course work completed before the end of term can log onto GLOW over the holidays to finish up any last work to complete the award. I would also like to take a moment to remind everyone that after practice exams in January, S4 pupils will be going out for their week long work experience placement. Pupils will be given a workbook to complete while on their placement. For pupils that complete the workbook and turn it in will earn a National 4 Work Experience Unit from the SQA.

As part of our Developing the Young Workforce curriculum, pupils in S3 DYW classes will be undertaking a project with Absafe to run from January to April. Absafe is a charity that runs safety seminars for primary schools. Absafe is going to "employ" our S3 Mearns pupils to carry out a selection of projects, ranging from social media design to fundraising to writing short film. These projects are to give our pupils a chance to develop their employability skills such as team work, communication, and time management. In December, we launched the project by going up to Absafe to see what they do as a charity and participating in their charity. It was a great couple of days and the pupils walked away looking forward to starting their projects.

The term ahead has some events to keep in mind. S4 pupils will be going out on their week long work experience placement the week of 21st January. This will be followed up by a business breakfast to thank all our employers for hosting our pupils. We will also be hosting a medical careers fair, focusing on career in health and medical sciences.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

In the English Department we have had a very busy term. A very successful trip for S4 to see Macbeth at HMT on 8th of November. A very powerful modern interpretation of the Shakespearean Tragedy. We were treated to excellent seats and it was felt by those who attended to be beneficial. Thank you to our Librarian Jill Reid.

We had a busy and informative trip to Aberdeen University on Wednesday 12th December, where a small group of Advanced Higher English and Modern Studies Pupils visited Aberdeen University to support the Dissertation Element of both courses and further develop referencing skills.

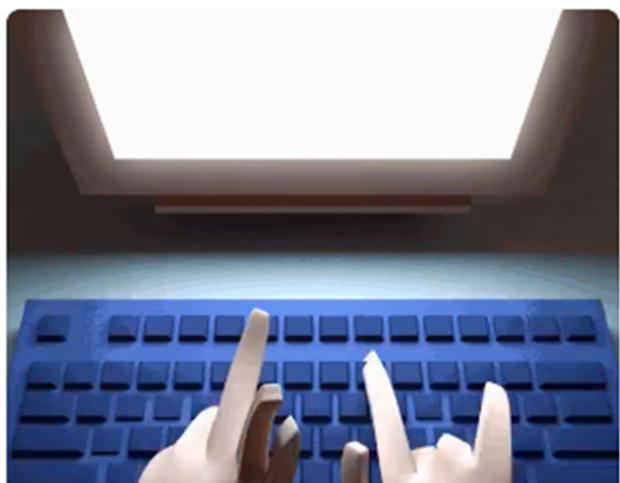
The Afternoon School National 5 revision class has been a success. Every week there has been an average of 20 pupils from across the Faculty in attendance every week. This class will continue into next term.

SOCIAL SUBJECTS - GEOGRAPHY

More great work from the social subject geography pupils from S1 and S3 fieldwork to active lessons and GIS techniques using Google Earth. Keep watching Twitter for updates, related news articles and exam tips (@GeogMearns)... Merry Christmas!

Mearns Geography
@GeogMearns

ALL YEAR GROUPS- all class lesson ppts can be accessed on Google Classroom via @GlowScot log in- all you need is the access code- See Mrs Carlson's class - codes on board! :)



Mearns Geography
@GeogMearns

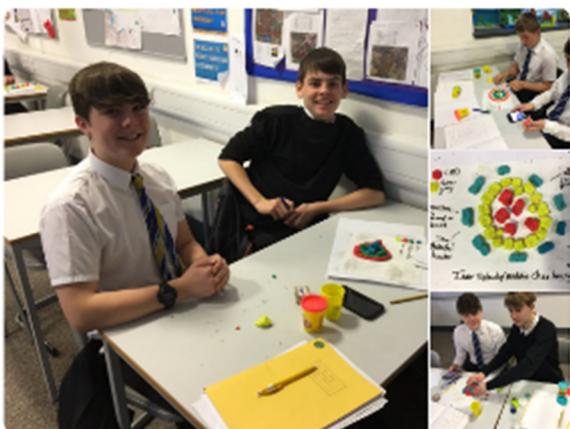
NAT5 Stop animation Rivers Processes Transportation. Learn, create and revision tool/ video. 🎥🎥✍️😊



3:18 PM - 7 Nov 2018

Mearns Geography
@GeogMearns

S3 Settlement- Burgess models- The action... (nice start to a Monday morning)... 😊👏



2:24 AM - 10 Dec 2018

Mearns Geography
@GeogMearns

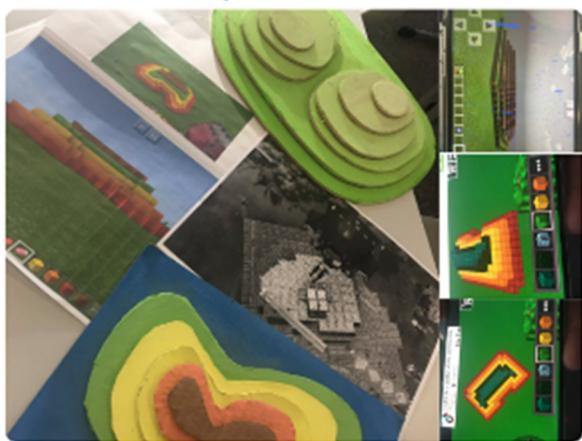
S3 Settlement- GIS/Google Earth- Landuse- RICEPOTS



6:30 AM - 11 Dec 2018

Mearns Geography
@GeogMearns

S1- Map Skills Homework- Contour modelling- great variety of materials used: cardboard, wood, @minecraft and Fortnite @OrdnanceSurvey



Mearns Geography
@GeogMearns

Nat 5- overview- What is climate change?

THE ESPRESSO GUIDE TO
CLIMATE CHANGE

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

What is climate change?
BBC News looks at what we know and don't know about the Earth's changing climate.
bbc.co.uk

11:26 AM - 6 Dec 2018

SCIENCE SHOWCASE

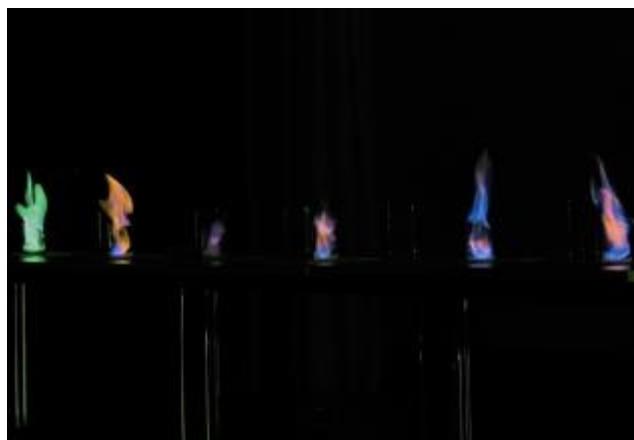
I think it is safe to say the Mearns Science Showcase is one of the best STEM activities I have been involved in, lots of passion and enthusiasm from staff and pupils. (Pamela Walsham)

Mearns Academy Science Faculty hosted our second Science Showcase. This celebration evening was a great success, welcoming over 200 parents and pupils from the academy and our feeder primary schools. Guests were led through a range of interactive experiments and demonstrations by 44 pupil helpers – themselves supported by staff.

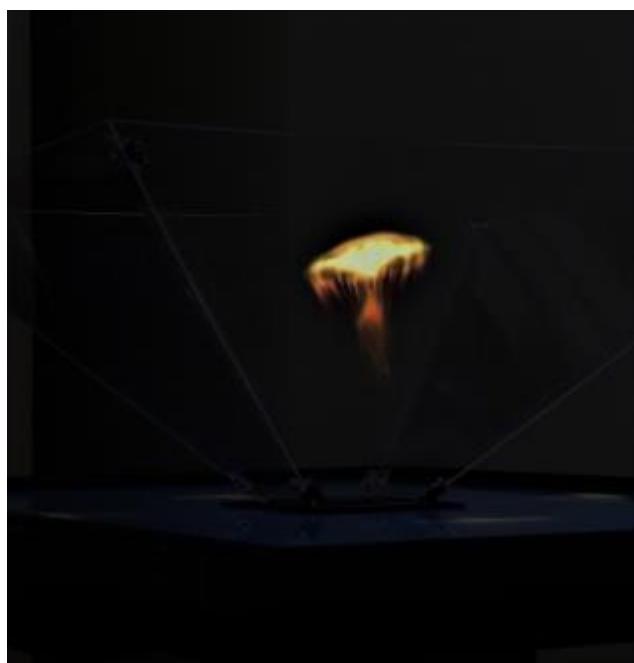
The evening saw young children taking part in activities that explored Non-Newtonian Fluids, Hovercrafts, the art of making Giant Bubbles, Rocket Building, Iodine Clocks and Forensics. We also had a Hologram station where pupils could make a ‘hologram’ image of themselves and play a 3D computer game.

The school library attended and issued books with a ‘science’ theme and our Go-for-SET team presented their design for an eco-friendly swimming pool. We had visiting specialists: Aberdeen University, Woodgroup and Marine Scotland.

The evening was rounded off with a ‘big demo’ in the school theatre where guests were wowed with a tornado of fire, colourful flames and a glowing Christmas tree.



An inspirational time had by all.

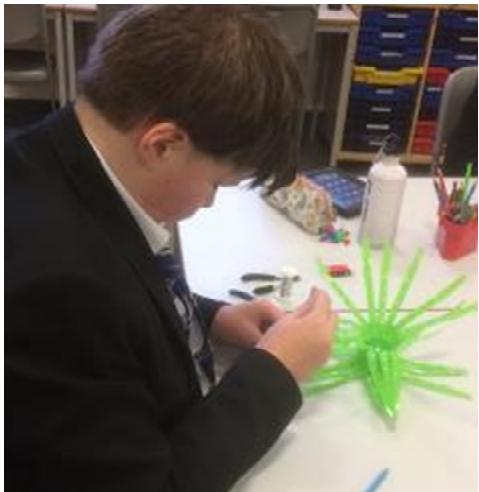


CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Laurencekirk & Aberluthnott Church of Scotland

Christmas Tree Festival

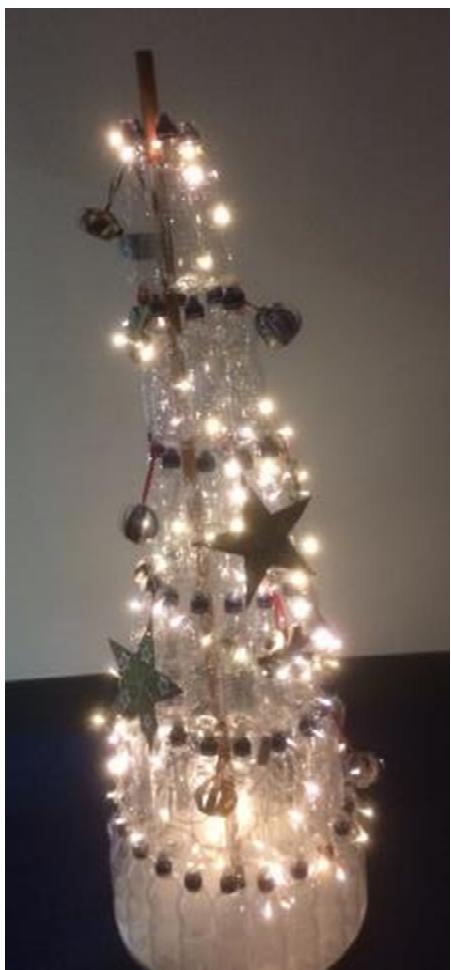
Mearns Academy ASL Department & Eco Club took part in the Christmas Tree festival at Laurencekirk Parish Church.



With the current publicity on the over use of plastics we decided to make an Eco tree representing the song "Mother Earth".



Pupils collected plastic water bottles from the recycling bins to make the tree. Decorations were made from recycling material — glossy magazine covers to make baubles, beer bottle tops for snowmen.

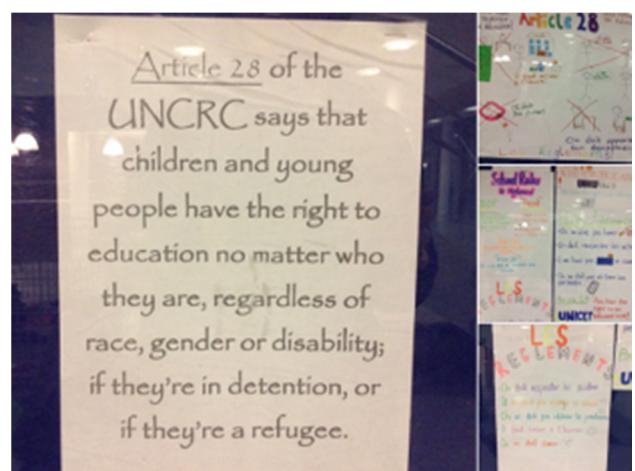
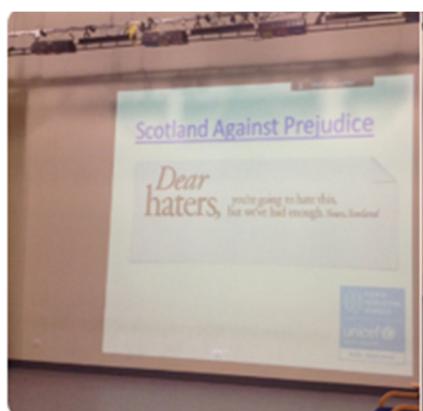
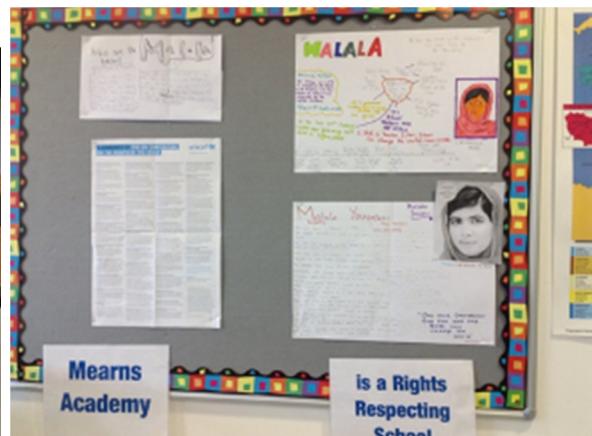


Lots of fun was had creating the tree and decorating the tree. Some pupils were even lucky enough to visit the church to admire the 22 different trees on display.



RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

1. Right of the Week - Lots of classes continue to understand the rights of all children by producing the Right of the Week for the noticeboard and announcing it over the tannoy. Thanks to all who have taken part.
2. World Porridge Day - to celebrate the importance of breakfast, we served free porridge and toppings for a week around the 10th October. Thanks to Scotmid for providing the toppings.
3. World Children's Day - 20th Nov - The RRS group took assemblies looking at equality and fairness for all.
4. Changing Places Toilets - the RRS Class took part in a letter writing campaign and were visited by officers from Aberdeenshire Council to discuss putting fully accessible toilets in all schools. Watch this space!



FESTIVE BAKE-OFF

On Wednesday 12th December, staff organised a Festive Bake-off with all proceeds going to Guidedogs for the Blind. Local resident Reece Watt (who is registered blind) kindly judged the competition going on taste and texture.

A wonderful array of cakes were made from lemon and blueberry polenta cake, American apple & apricot cake, chocolate and caramel torte to Portuguese egg nog tartlets. A special mention must go to the red cabbage and sprout tart, but the winner was deemed to be Mrs Wotherspoon for her chocolate roulade. £95.50 was raised. Thank you to all bakers and donations.

E. Gallacher & C. Ptaszek



2018 CHRISTMAS DANCES

This year's Christmas Dances were once again a big success. In no small part because of the time and effort put in by parents/carers being taken around shops for outfits or Kilt hire.

It's great to see all the pupils together enjoying themselves dancing, taking their selfies and just generating a fantastic atmosphere. Hopefully it will be one of the good memories of school that they will take through life.

It is the glowing comments from the bands who go around lots of schools that make us realise that Mearns Academy has something special here but could not happen without everyone's support.



HEALTH & LEISURE

Physical Education

Throughout the course of this term our football and netball teams across all year groups have been busy with various different home and away fixtures being completed. As we head into the New Year our S1, S2, Senior Boys, Junior Girls and Senior Girls footballers are still in various different tournaments and we hope to update you on their successes as the season progresses. The Netball teams continue to compete and along with their Scottish Cup fixtures they have attended local tournaments in Aberdeen across all year groups.

In relation to our extra-curricular programme, numbers continue to grow and it's great to see so many pupils attend a range of different lunchtime and after school clubs. We look forward to seeing these clubs continue in 2019. If you are interested in attending these clubs please speak to staff in the PE department or Active Schools.

Home Economics

The Mearns Masterchef competition attracted a healthy number of entries from S1 to S5 pupils. A heat was held on the 6th November where pupils had to cook one main course dish. Eight pupils from the original line-up were selected to go through to the final which was held on the 29th November.

For the final the pupils had 1½ hours to make and serve a two course meal for two. The standard of cooking was extremely high and this made it a difficult job for our judges (Ms Elaine Marshall from Macphie and Mr David Johnston representing the competition sponsor, Laurencekirk Rotary).

Well done and thank you to everyone who took part in this year's competition. Katie now goes on to represent the school at the regional final of the Rotary Young Chef Competition.



The winners were:
1st - Katie Taylor (S2)
2nd – Erin Milne (S1)
3rd – Orin Forbes (S4)

HOME ECONOMICS - YULE LOG COMPETITION

Christmas Fun

S2 pupils have enjoyed the annual Yule log Competition over the past couple of weeks although cleaning up all of the icing hasn't been so much fun!

Members of staff helped to judge the competition which as usual was very difficult because of the variety of skills and ideas on display. The winners from each class were:



2C1 – 1st Blaire Morrison
2nd Catriona Bird
3rd Carraig Doan



2D2 – 1st Dylan Mears
2nd Kaidy Burness
3rd Bradley Milne



2J1 – 1st Niamh Harris
2nd William Chong
3rd Paige Mathers



3 Commutator



2T2 – 1st Ross Scott
2nd Lucy Thomson
3rd Mathilda Wolstencroft



**WELL DONE TO ALL S2 PUPILS FOR
BRINGING SOME FESTIVE CHEER TO
THE HOME ECONOMICS CLASS!**

HEALTH & LEISURE - HOME ECONOMICS

S1 classes have been busy sewing their Christmas stockings over the past few weeks and by the end of term all pupils should have their stockings complete and taken home to hang with pride. Great work and hopefully all pupils would now be able to make small repairs to their clothing.



Finally, the S3 classes had great fun making and decorating gingerbread biscuits.

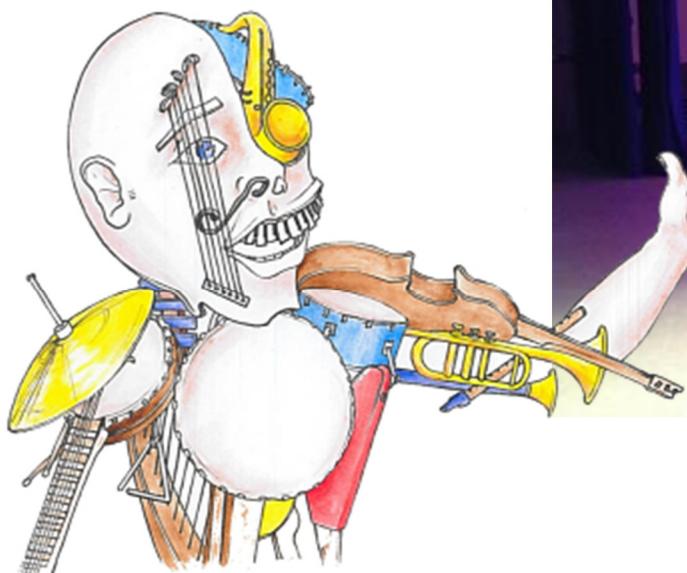


RACHEL COWIE - EVENING OF MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

Mearns Academy pupil Rachel Cowie organised of evening of entertainment with proceeds going towards her Project Trust Scotland South Africa 2019 trip.



It was a fantastic evening with Rachel raising over £1000 towards her trip.



Rachel would like to thank everyone for their support.

2018-19 KEY DATES

Term 2 ends	21st December	Term 3 ends	29th March 2019
Term 3 begins	7th January 2019	Good Friday	19th April 2019
In service / Occasional days	7th Feb - 13th Feb	May Day	6th May 2019
		Term 4 begins	15th April 2019
		Term 4 ends	5th July 2019

ROCK CHALLENGE

Things have been very busy for the Rock Challenge Fundraising committee this term. We had lots of pupils volunteer to serve popcorn and hot chocolate at the Mearns Community Cinema Event on Sunday 9th December. This was a popular event which was enjoyed by many families from the area where over £120 was raised for Rock Challenge.



We held a Xmas Jumper Day which was enjoyed by all staff and pupils which raised £310 and will be shared with the charity Save The Children.

We are looking forward to karaoke on Friday which is always a brilliant event plus we have lots of pupils volunteering to pack bags all day at the Co-op in Stonehaven on Saturday 22nd December.

Thank you to everyone who supports this fantastic event every year. Merry Christmas from Rock Challenge!

UKULELE GROUP

The Ukulele Group went to the Scotmid in Laurencekirk to participate in their Winter Festival. We played and sang some Christmas songs whilst everyone did their shopping!

We all had great fun, and especially enjoyed some free cake at the end!



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