



mearns academy
in justice secure

Summer Newsletter - June 2019

FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parent/Carer

I cannot believe that I have been Head Teacher here at Mearns Academy now for one complete session. It is an absolute privilege to be Head Teacher of Mearns Academy and work with the fantastic staff and young people on a daily basis.

On Thursday 4th July we held our annual prize giving. This is an event which reflects some of the absolute highlights of the year and recognises some outstanding pupil achievement. Our Prize Giving speaker this year was Andrea Brymer and her message was excellent in inspiring our young people.

Partnerships

Partnership working is key to the success of Mearns Academy and this session we have continued to work in partnership to support a number of charities some of which include: World Down syndrome day, Comic Relief, Mary's Meals and McMillan. Our YPI work continued this session with our young people supporting a range of local projects – the winner this year being the Brechin Community Pantry. We had another successful Science Showcase and it was great to see people of all ages across our community, in school and learning about Science. This session we have also continued to work closely with Community Learning & Development, Active Schools, Library Services and Leisure.

Attainment

Attainment in Mearns Academy is strong and 2018-2019 again saw an increase in attainment of our young people. As a school we have strong sustained Positive Destinations and strong attainment across all areas of our school. We outperform our Virtual comparator school in National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Qualifications. Next session we will also see a record number of our young people starting foundation apprenticeships.

Staffing

As always there have been many staffing changes throughout the session. There has been a change in our Senior Leadership Team with Angela Wotherspoon taking up a secondment as Quality Improvement Officer resulting in a new look leadership team of Pauline Logue, Brian Middleton, Robin Christie and John Vickers. Tom Mawhirt has taken up post as Depute Head Teacher at Brechin Academy and has been replaced by Stuart Fleming as Acting Principal Teacher of Social Subjects. In Maths Alastair Taylor was appointed Acting Principal Teacher to allow Robin Christie to take up post as Acting Depute Head Teacher. George Hughes, previously Principal Teacher of Maths at Hazelhead Academy, will join us in August as Teacher of Maths and we look forward to welcoming him. Philippa Mackie has been appointed as a Teacher of Physics and will take up post at Mearns Academy in August, this adding further capacity across our Science

continued...

FROM THE HEADTEACHER

team. Alison Lewis has joined us as a Teacher of Languages from Cults Academy to further add capacity. In English Christine Anderson was appointed as Principal Teacher of English at Portlethen Academy and this session we have welcomed to the English Faculty both Rosie Bircham and Emma Myatt.

Within our Additional Support for Learning Team Mrs Kathryn Hamilton has been appointed as Principal Teacher ASL. Both Susan Robson and Alison Currie retired from ASL this session and we wish them both well. Karina Bryce, Susan Rhind and Laura Fish have been added to our ASL team this session and we are delighted to have them with us supporting our young people. Following the summer break Natalie Wight will return from maternity leave and we thank Chris Hobson who has replaced Natalie as Teacher of PE this session. We wish Chris luck as he heads off to China.

In May Bob Cattnach retired after 20 years with Mearns Academy and has been replaced by Graeme Milne. On Friday 5th July Margaret Adams, our Senior Clerical Assistant, leaves Mearns Academy 40 years with Aberdeenshire council, 20 with Mearns Academy. Margaret has been replaced by Joy Lorimer who will take up post during the summer break. We wish all staff who have retired this session a long, healthy and happy retirement.

As you can see there have been many staffing changes however staffing at Mearns Academy remains strong. Our strong staffing position allows us to offer a wide range of options for our young people across all curricular areas.

It has been an extremely busy but rewarding session for all staff at Mearns Academy. It fills us all with great pride to see our young people learn, make progress and succeed in the challenges that they face.

We now welcome the summer holidays and I would like to wish all staff, pupils, parents/carers and our wider community and an enjoyable summer. We look forward to working with you all next session.

Gareth

Gareth Campbell

S1 SALTIRE AWARD

This year we had more opportunities than ever for our S1 pupils to participate in. Pupils travelled all around South Aberdeenshire and Angus to volunteer their time to help the environment and community. This year pupils worked at the following locations: Gardening at the House of Dun, gardening with Brighter Bervie, beach clean-up at St Cyrus Nature Reserve, gardening at Ecclesgreig Castle, plastic clean up at Glensaugh Farm, farming at What's For Tea Tonight Farm, helping at Murton Trust Nature Reserve, litter pick around Laurencekirk, reading to primary pupils at Laurencekirk Primary School, and backing/hosting a tea party for local senior residents. It was a fun filled day with lots of fantastic sunshine.

PUPIL ACHIEVEMENTS



Congratulations to Lexie Cochrane, S4, who competed in the Bridge of Don Banded Swimming and won a gold medal in every race she competed in - 100 IM, 50m breaststroke, 50m backstroke and 50 freestyle.



Congratulations to Mearns Academy pupils Jodie Boydell S6, Ethan Boydell S4 and Chulainn Doan S4 who took part in ITF TaeKwon-Do World Championships in Germany in April. An amazing achievement to celebrate!

Boydell Blackbelt Academy from Laurencekirk are celebrating success after several of their students in the Scotland National Team attended the ITF TaeKwon-Do World Championships in Germany last week with their Instructor and National Coach Mr Mark Boydell V Degree.

Junior Female Jodie Boydell II Degree was unlucky not to medal on this occasion but her performance in both individual and team events showed great determination with tough draws going against her on the day.

Ethan Boydell, Jack Shaw, Owen Garden, Chulainn Doan along side Matthew Irvine (MWBA, Aberdeen) all I Degrees made their debut for Scotland. With a fantastic display of team work the boys claimed Bronze in the Junior Male Team Pattern event after weeks of extra weekend training came to fruition beating Israel and Poland losing out to Norway in the semi finals.

The week-long event saw 64 participating nations and 1234 competitors travelling to Inzell near the Austrian border of which Team Scotland had 29 competitors in total.

With a total of 1 Gold and 4 Bronze Medals, Scotland were 17th country overall.

The Blackbelts will shortly be preparing for the forthcoming national team selections with the European Championships in Sarajevo, Bosnia planned later in the year.



CPR TRAINING

Over the last few weeks all S6 pupils have been given some CPR training with the help of Dr Leona Houston, covering the first three steps on the Chain of survival.

Following these sessions some pupils have signed up to work more closely with Leona to develop the skills required to deliver sessions to other year-groups and staff.

On behalf of the school, I would like to say a massive thank you to Leona for giving up her time to deliver this potentially life-saving training to our pupils.

Mr Christie



BEE HIVES

Mearns Academy have taken a huge step to help the environment by starting up their own Apiary (bee hives).

These have been placed in an area that is far enough from the school that the pupils and staff will not be disturbed by the bees but it will allow us to visit the bee hives with small groups.



A number of pupils are now helping look after these hives and it is intended that they will go on to gain a Scottish bee keeping certificate. In the long term, it is hoped that we can then progress to teach N5 bee keeping while also putting something back into the environment.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

S3 Art competition

Since the beginning of the new timetable our S3 Art and Design pupils have been taking part in a department competition. Pupils were asked to create an artwork of our school tie using coloured pencil. Pupils worked on their colour mixing and analytical drawing skills throughout this project. Our winner had their artwork displayed on the front cover of the Mearns Academy prize giving booklet and all artwork was displayed at the event.

The Art and Design department would like to say a massive well done to all pupils on the outstanding quality of work that was produced. Congratulations to our winner Callum Grant, as well as our runner ups, Kenza Henderson, Erin Hendrie, Bradley Milne and Zoe Nelson.



Memory Café

The Music Department was invited along to the local Memory Café in Laurencekirk to provide some entertainment at the end of May. Following their Advanced Higher Music SQA exam Joan Dangana and Hannah Glassby went along and sung a few songs.

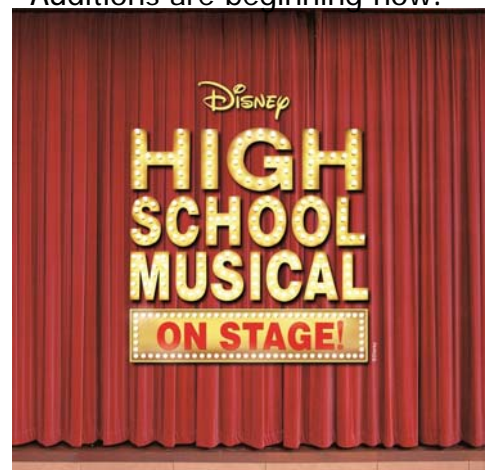
They did a fantastic job and as always their voices sounded beautiful, one member of the community described their performances as 'haunting'. It was a worthwhile afternoon and the feedback from those attending was amazing. Hopefully we will get another chance to do something similar over the coming session. Well Done Ladies you put lots of smiles on faces!

Drama

In the last four weeks of term, two of our senior pupils, Grace McArthur and Grace Lamb organised a lunch time drama club for S2 and S3 pupils.

As it coincided with the P7 transition days, we also had some of our upcoming S1 along to join in the games and activities. The senior girls planned and organised the club to gain experience of leadership and they both did a great job.

Its happening the school show is scheduled for this January.
Auditions are beginning now!



ECO CLUB

Eco Club meets weekly at lunchtimes. We discuss and carry out activities on the things that matter to us. This year the whole school participated in the 'Hands up Scotland' transport to school survey. Eco Club analysed the results and carried out an additional survey on staff transport. The results were made into large colourful bar charts (with help from pupils in ASN) and are now displayed in the library.

We also embarked on a number of charitable recycling schemes this year. Mearns Academy is now a drop off point for empty crisp packets which when recycled are turned into useful products. We also raise money for every kilo we recycle which goes towards our chosen charity Mary's meals. Unfortunately, we can't collect over the summer holidays, but normal service will resume in August.

Our second scheme is collecting quality second-hand books for 'Books Abroad', a local charity in Aberdeenshire which sends books to schools in need in developing countries. We have sent our first batch of 12 boxes away (donated from faculties around the school), but, are still collecting from pupils and staff in school until the end of August - so get clearing those bookshelves at home! (see www.booksaboard.org.uk for more details).

We are a small group and sometimes we come up with ideas and other groups do the work. For example, we wanted to help a homeless charity. We organised baking for an organisation in Dundee called 'Graham's kitchen' which runs a weekly soup kitchen. We were able to fund this through the money we get from Ragbag. Many thanks to Mrs Brand our pupil support worker and local primary school pupils for doing all the baking!

Other things we've been involved in include helping out in a community litter pick and helping organise the gardening and litter picking day for the S1 Saltire award. This included painting and hanging out the bird boxes we asked the technical department to make for us last year - many thanks to them!

Recently Eliza brought in several Bluetooth wireless plant monitors which our eco club members are trying out. These are being used to monitor the health of plants in your area and can be linked to a mobile phone via an app. The information on your soil and plants gets sent to the GROW observatory - an organisation whose vision is to 'support the emergence of a movement of citizens generating, sharing and using information on growing and the land'. Thanks to Eliza for organising.



ECO CLUB

As well as being busy with projects, at our meetings we also talk about things that inspire us. We have a twitter page ([@Ecomearns@ecoclubmearns](https://twitter.com/Ecomearns)) which includes information on our activities and any interesting articles which appear in the news. Sometimes we watch environmental documentaries. We look forward to embarking on more projects after the summer and welcome new members.

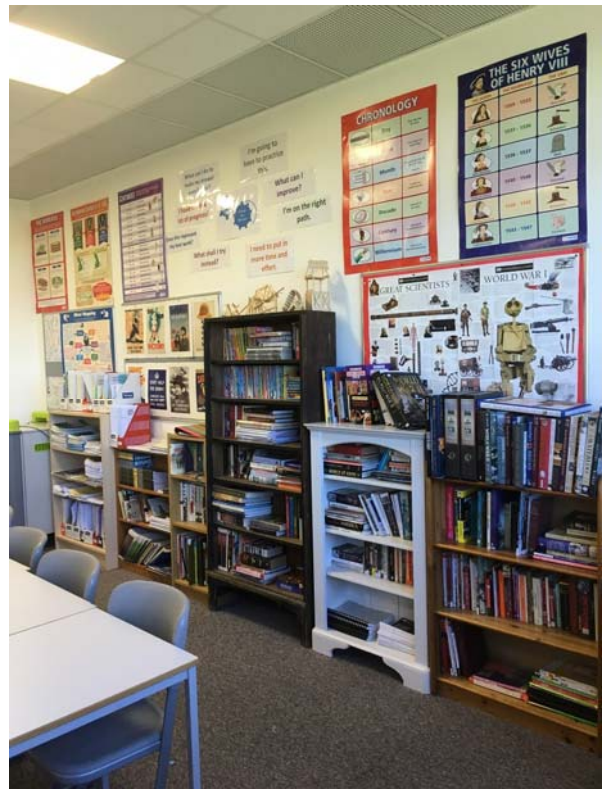


CARNEGIE-HUME HISTORY LIBRARY KEEPS ON GROWING

Within the Social Subjects department something has been growing over the past few years. The Carnegie-Hume History library was created as a response to provide an in-class open resource for pupils to access books for both academic pursuit and for enjoyment. The range of books has been slowly growing to include early level reading, such as Horrible Histories, National 4 and 5 level books, all the way up to university level to provide extension, challenge and opportunity. The library runs on an honesty based system where pupils are encouraged to borrow books for research, assignments or for leisure. By having the library close at hand, pupils have ready access to books which cover topics studied in the academy within the curriculum, as well as a range of books which focus on themes which can be explored by pupils which are not covered by the curriculum.

The extensive size of the library has come through donations from staff and pupils. As well, the library has been augmented by generous donations from the Laurencekirk community. Most recently Mrs Kennedy of Laurencekirk has provided a significant donation of books covering a range of topics including trains, canals and military, as well as a collection of maps. Much thanks to Mrs Kennedy and other members of the community who have also made contributions to the growth of the library.

Further donations are welcomed from the Laurencekirk community.



S5 PERSONAL SKILLS PERIOD

A new addition to the curriculum this session is our S5 Personal Skills period which focuses on developing our S5 pupils' personal and vocational skills.

Over the course of the year each tutor group will take part in the following sessions on a rota basis:

Developing Leadership Skills in PE.

Practical Cookery Skills in HE.

Practical Woodworking Skills in Technical.

Mental Health and Wellbeing in PSE.

Mr Christie



CHESS CLUB

Congratulations to Tyler Webley (old 5J) who is our new Mearns Academy Chess Champion 2018/19. Tyler has fought some serious battles over the years and been a serious contender every single year since joining the club in S1. In fact Tyler last won the trophy in 2015-16. This year Tyler has also helped coach pupils and has helped us all up our game and introduced us to better openings and better ways to defend.

This year 26 pupils took part in the chess ladder at various times throughout the session and there looks like a lot of new competition from the current P7s who enjoyed a game at the club whilst on their 3 day visit. Pupils taking part in The Duke of Edinburgh Award also joined us to improve their skills.

The club will see some changes next session as Tyler has volunteered to run the club with assistance from Mrs Anderson. A new format for the competition is in the cards but it will continue to be welcoming to all pupils of all abilities. We will also continue to host the inter-house chess competition as usual and if you beat the teacher you will still win a mars bar.

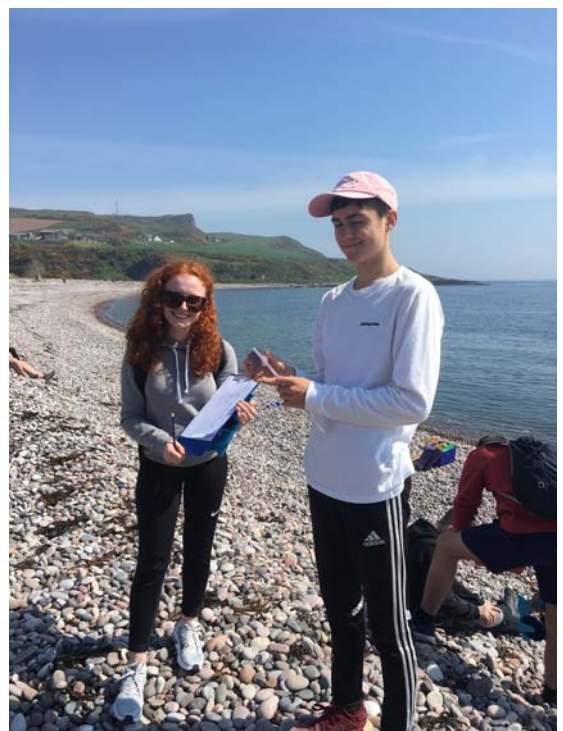
Mrs J. Anderson



S3 GEOGRAPHY

S3 Geography pupils along with Mrs Carlson, Mrs Bryce, Ms Russell, and Mr Ikpa were able to experience outdoor learning in action on a warm sunny day at Inverbervie beach. We put theory into practice by developing geographical fieldwork skills. Pupils were able to measure a beach profile using a clinometer (to measure the gradient) and tape measure for the distance between each point. Pupils were also able to develop skills such as fieldwork sketching, where they identified and annotated the coastal features that they had been studying in class. Sediment analysis was also recorded at each point along the beach profile to identify where larger and smaller materials had been transported and deposited. Pupils were shown how to measure and record longshore drift along a stretch of coastline. They were even able to see evidence of coastal erosion and coastal management strategies used to try and reduce the impact of erosion along the coast this included rock armour, a small gabion and sea wall.

After a picnic lunch and ice lollies pupils were joined by Amy and Crawford from Surfers Against Sewage and East Grampian Coastal Partnership - Turning the Plastic Tide. We walked to Gordoun and walked back to Inverbervie picking up all we could - largest item was a tractor tyre (well done boys!) and down to the smallest microplastics. During class time pupils have been researching the environmental impacts of plastics and their impact on coastal environment, aquatic life, humans as well as links to climate change but they've also been researching individual, national and global action that can be taken to reduce the impact of plastics. It was nice to see so many pupils keen to make a positive change and have an impact on their local environment. Big well done and congratulations to Katie Taylor who went to the extra effort of taking a zero waste lunch too! Amazing geographers and responsible citizens.



HEALTH & LEISURE

Welcome to the updates from the PE Department and Active Schools from the Summer term. Over the past few months a host of different events and achievements have taken place and here is a little snapshot of what we've been doing? Make sure you like us on Facebook – Mearns Academy Health and Leisure & Active Schools @ActiveSchoolsAberdeenshireSouth

Boccia Festival

- Mearns Academy participated in a Boccia festival, run in conjunction with our Disability Sports Officer and neighbouring networks, to give pupils the opportunity to try / compete at Boccia in a safe and fun environment.
- All 3 of our pupils enjoyed the event where Mrs Anderson, Mr Atkinson and Mrs Hamilton also got the opportunity to have a go!



Boccia & New Age Kurling

- In advance of the festival, we made sure we got some practice in!





Active Schools Aberdeenshire South ...

Page Liked · 14 May ·

#MearnsPupilsVolunteering

With the sun beating down Ella and Shannon started their volunteer journey with #ActiveSchools by leading the P1 – P3 athletics session at Laurencekirk Primary School.

Both are Mearns Academy Health & Leisure pupils who attended the "I Can Lead" course in November to enhance their leadership skills.

The session went great and everyone is looking forward to the remaining sessions in the block! We managed to get a wee photo of some of the pupils during a well-deserved break 😊

Derek & Mark

#ActiveSchoolsMearns #Volunteering #Athletics #FutureLeaders



Active Schools Aberdeenshire South ...

Page Liked · 23 May ·

#MearnsPupilsVolunteering #MentalHealth

Dodgeball is back on the menu for P4 – P7 pupils at Laurencekirk Primary School with Mearns Academy Health & Leisure pupil Finlay on hand to lead these sessions.

Taking part in physical activity is a great way for pupils to increase their self-esteem, social wellbeing and confidence. Some of our dodgeballers are pictured below, one session down and five to go! 😊

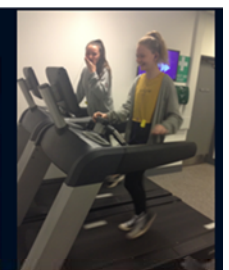
Derek & Mark

#ActiveSchoolsMearns #Volunteering

13

4 comments

Festival of Sport Gallery





Mearns Academy Health & Leisure

17 May at 11:42 · 🌐

We're up and running and our S1 have just finished their session. Great to see everyone with a smile on their face. Next up S2....



Mearns Academy Health & Leisure

17 May at 13:10 · 🌐

Another successful session with the S2. Quick bite to eat and we go again with the S3!



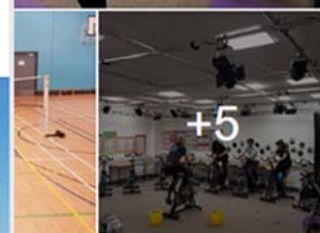
Mearns Academy Health & Leisure is 😊 feeling positive.

17 May at 16:10 · 🌐

And relax! Our first ever Festival of Sport is over. Thanks to all staff and pupils for their efforts today. Enjoy your weekend.



👍❤️ You, Sophie Macleod, Scott Cameron and



others 1 share

Sports Day 2019

On Thursday 20th June our annual Sports Day took place at Aberdeen Sports Village. Once again we got lucky with the weather and it was great to see our pupils competing with a smile on their face.

The standard of performances across all events was exceptional with 6 school records being broken on the day.

Final House Standings

- 1st Conveth
- 2nd Thornton
- 3rd Johnston
- 4th Drumtochty



Sports Champions

- S1 Girls: Ellie Beattie
- Daisy Cleland
- Orla Faherty
- S1 Boys: Matthew Brown
- S2 Girls: Sophie Johansen
- S2 Boys: Aulay Martin
- S3 Girls: Olivia McDermott
- S3 Boys: Dylan Griggs
- Senior Girls: Shannon Brown
- Senior Boys: Fergus Alberts



Volunteer Recognition Presentation

- Thank you to all of our volunteers who make it possible to offer such a wide ranging extra-curricular sports programme.
- We are in the process of handing out certificates to everyone involved!



School Sports Committee Recognition

In order to recognise the hard work of our School Sports Committee, we are currently handing out certificates detailing the work they contributed to.

Their work on the following projects was invaluable:

- Festival of Sport
- S1 pupil survey
- School Sport Gold Award



PE Volunteer of the Year

- Kirsty MacKinnon
- In its first year, Mearns Academy have introduced this award to recognise the efforts and achievements of our pupils who volunteer their free time in the Department. This year we have had 7 senior pupils working with our junior classes and some have supported extra-curricular clubs. We are grateful for all their help and look forward to working with them next year (SC, PE)



HEALTH & LEISURE

Saltire Award

Pupils spent the morning baking a huge variety of cakes, biscuits and scones which they then served to local pensioners and members of the school community. The pupils worked very hard throughout the whole day and our guests left substantially heavier after a feast of cakes and biscuits washed down with tea and chat!



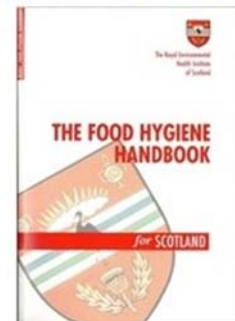
Elementary Food Hygiene

S3 Hospitality pupils were once again given the opportunity to complete the REHIS (Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland) Elementary Food Hygiene course and this year we once again had 19 successful students.

Please encourage pupils to look after their certificates as they are valid for life and may help them to get a job in the future.



The Royal Environmental
Health Institute of Scotland



S5 Pupils Get Cooking!

S5 pupils will all get the chance to cook in school this year and gain some new life skills. Each class will spend 5 periods in the HE classroom where they will mainly be cooking a variety of tasty and easy to prepare foods. This will hopefully make our students (and their family) more confident about cooking for themselves and others at home or away.

The first class started off their block with breaded fish tortilla wraps which went down well.



ACTIVITY DAYS

Cake Decorating

A great day was had by pupils and staff who were taking part in the cake decorating activity. Cakes were baked, designed and iced then taken home for a delicious tea time treat. Once again there was a great variety of cake designs – so much enthusiasm and talent and very competitive staff!



My chocolate trip to **Cocoa Ooze** – Activities Days

We went up to the Cocoa Ooze factory up in Aberdeen where we made chocolate truffles and marshmallow creations. We were shown how to melt the chocolate for the ganache filling and how to pipe it in to the shells. We then got to cover them in more melted chocolate and put toppings on. After we had visited the factory we came back to the school where we baked some cupcakes. It was an amazing day and I would like to do it again.

Islay Carnegie 2C2



ACTIVITY DAYS



This years Activity Days included many in-school and local options. Lochter Activity Centre in Oldmeldrum is always popular and the staff at the centre are enthusiastic and encourage the pupils. Captain Tom's in Aberdeen was a great experience for pupils recording their tracks.

In-school was the woodworking workshop, willow weaving and the design workshop.



ACTIVITY DAYS



STAFF CUPCAKE BAKE-OFF

A very successful, and tasty, Staff Cupcake Bake Off was held this term, with lots of amazing sweet and savoury treats created by our very talented members of staff. The Bake Off was a fundraising event for the Alzheimer's Society and between us we raised £78.62.

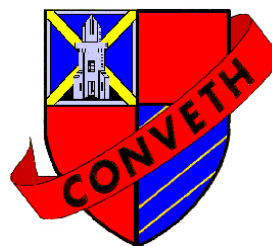
Mrs Ptaszek and Mrs Gallacher



Mrs Mearns taking a selection of cakes to her colleagues in the office (well, that's what she told us!)



HOUSE NEWS



This year House Cup winners are Thornton

2019 - 2020 KEY DATES

19 August 2019	In-Service Day	6 January 2020	Term 3 Begins
20 August 2019	In-Service Day	13 February 2020	Occasional Day
21 August 2019	Start of Term 1	14 February 2020	Occasional Day
10 October 2019	Term 1 Ends	17 February 2020	Mid-Term Break
11 October 2019	In-Service Day	18 February 2020	In-Service Day
		19 February 2020	In-Service Day
28 October 2019	Term 2 Begins	3 April 2020	Term 3 Ends
18 November 2019	In-Service Day		
19 November 2019	In-Service Day	20 April 2020	Term 4 Begins
20 December 2019	Term 2 Ends	4 May 2020	May Day (Public Holiday)
		July 2020	End of Term 4

Further dates are available on our website and the Aberdeenshire Council website. School calendar dates which include reporting, parents evenings and events will be available after the summer holiday break.

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