



FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to the first school newsletter for this Session. I hope you had a relaxing summer, although it does seem some time ago!

It has been a very busy term. Our new S1's have settled in well and all other year groups are continuing with the courses they started in June. We recently completed our ScotXed returns to the Authority, which state at the present time we have just under 700 young people on our school roll.

Once again our SOA results were excellent and above both local and national trends. Many congratulations to you all and a huge thank you to the staff that supported our pupils. This year saw our highest ever attainment across a number of measures with a particular highlight being the performance of our S4 young people with 66% of our young people achieving 5+ Awards at National 5, outperforming our comparator school by over 10%. Literacy and Numeracy is again extremely strong within Mearns Academy with 95.49% of our young people in S4 achieving level 4 in both Literacy and Numeracy by the end of S4. Again over 10% above our virtual comparator.

5+ L5 (S4)					
Year	Mearns	Aberdeenshire	National	VC	Difference (Mearns – VC)
2019	66.92%	55.2%	49.83%	56.54%	10.38%
2018	53.57%	52.3%	48.3%	49.91%	3.66%
2017	48.25%	50.1%	46.0%	45.61%	2.64%

Literacy and Numeracy Level 4					
Year	Mearns	Aberdeenshire	National	VC	Difference (Mearns – VC)
2019	95.49%	83.82%	82.05%	84.96%	10.53%
2018	91.96%	87.75%	82.61%	81.70%	10.26%
2017	95.61%	91.94%	85.49%	86.14%	9.47%

Literacy and Numeracy Level 5					
Year	Mearns	Aberdeenshire	National	VC	Difference (Mearns – VC)
2019	72.93%	59.91%	53.38%	57.14%	15.79%
2018	71.43%	57.05%	49.53%	50.45%	20.98%
2017	60.53%	62.73%	52.29%	51.93%	8.60%

Next term we will have a formal meeting with senior officers of the authority during which we will discuss our results in detail and especially in relation to our Virtual Comparator (the virtual

FROM THE HEADTEACHER

comparator is made up of pupils from schools in other local authorities who have similar characteristics to the pupils in our school). We will prepare a presentation for the officers and the Senior Leadership Team which will then be presented to the Mearns Academy Parent Council. We look forward to you joining us when we make this presentation at MAPC.

In September, we held our annual sponsored walk. This event is a vital fundraiser in allowing us to support the many and varying activities that we offer across Mearns Academy. Many thanks to all the staff and pupils who participated and returned still smiling. For those that still need to hand in their sponsor money, we would be very grateful if this is done as soon as possible.

This term we welcome three new members to our teaching staff. George Hughes has joined our Maths Faculty, Phillipa Mackie has joined us in Science and Shalini Pattabiraman has joined us as a Teacher of English. Joy Lorimer has replaced Margaret Adams as our Admin Support Assistant and Graham Milne has taken up post as Whole School Technician. We welcome all of our new staff and are delighted that Mearns Academy continues to be in a strong staffing position and is very much a place where people wish to come and work.

There have been many highlights already this term some of which include:

- Competing in the Northsound Energy and Gas Challenge
- S1 Open Evening and S1-S3 Open Morning
- Macmillan Coffee Morning
- Mearns Master Chef
- Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions for both Bronze and Silver
- Active Schools sports clubs
- Young Enterprise Masterclass
- Edinburgh International Book Festival Trip
- Glencoe Adventure Trip
- Young people competing in the South Aberdeenshire Multi Sports Event
- Senior Pupils attending the Higher Education Convention

As you can see it has already been a busy start to the session and I know that this session will once again be a successful one.

Lastly, I would like to recognise the fantastic achievement of our Sports Committee who working with Active Schools, Health & Leisure and other staff and partners across our community have achieved the Sports Scotland GOLD School Sports Award. It is tremendous to see Mearns Academy recognised for this work and everybody involved should be extremely proud.

I hope you have a very enjoyable October break and I look forward to reporting back to you termly on what has been happening.

Gareth Campbell
Head Teacher

PUPIL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to all of the following pupils for receiving colours awards.

Full Colours

Catherine Anderson	Academic
Sophie Anderson	Academic
Sam Nelson	Citizenship
Gavin Johansen	Citizenship
Sophie Anderson	Sport
Catherine Wotherspoon	Sport

Half Colours

Jack Dias-Harrison	Academic
Christopher Monachello	Academic
Joanne Riddoch	Academic
Katie Sanderson	Academic
Mitchell Stuart	Academic
Maria Wotherspoon	Academic
Kate Cummings	Academic
Emily Baird	Academic
Amy Waddell	Academic
Charlotte Hay	Expressive Arts
Amy Logue	Expressive Arts
Shannon Brown	Expressive Arts

Half Colours

Eliza Barrie	Citizenship
Ella Bruce	Citizenship
Lauryn Bruce	Citizenship
Charlotte Jenkins	Citizenship
Millie Ptaszek	Citizenship
Findlay Robertson	Citizenship
Katie Taylor	Citizenship
Emily Baird	Citizenship
Amy Logue	Citizenship
Jacob Burgoyne	Sport
Chulainn Doan	Sport
Fraser Jamieson	Sport
Fraser Nelson	Sport
Matthew Nelson	Sport
JJ Stewart	Sport
Shannon Tait	Sport
Amy Waddell	Sport
Shannon Brown	Sport
Fergus Alberts	Sport

STAFF BAKE OFF

A big thank you to all the members of staff who baked for this morning's Bake Off, an amazing bunch of talented bakers are amongst us; an incredible £159.55 was raised. This money is being donated to the RNLI; we have 2 members of staff, Mr Sim and Mr Bandeen, who are active volunteers for this invaluable service.

The overall winner was Mrs Howe. Best decorated awards went to Mrs Fish and Mr Sim. Best taste awards went to Mr G Milne and Miss Cameron.

Well done to everyone involved and thank you for all the donations.

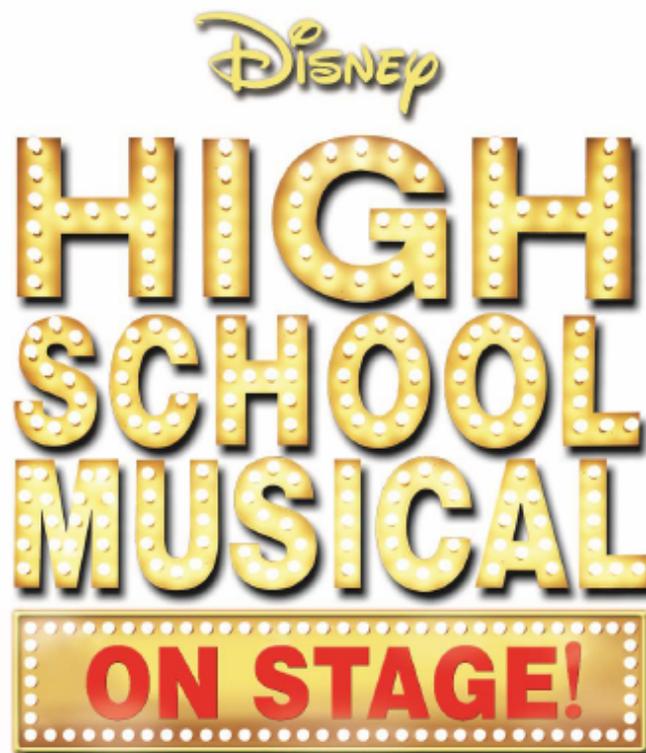
Mrs Ptaszek and Mrs Gallacher



Rehearsals are now in full swing for the all singing, all dancing, High School Musical, our school show which is happening in January next year. We have an amazing cast in place, with pupils from S1 to S6 and a full and talented team busily working behind the scenes to ensure our show sounds and looks fantastic. It has been over 6 years since Mearns Academy has had a school show and the Expressive Arts Faculty have been blown away by the enthusiasm and support we have had from both pupils and staff who are getting involved and making it all possible. The show will run from the 14th to the 15th of January and tickets will be going on sale soon. Go Wildcats!

Mearns Academy

Production of



14th-16th January 2020



This amateur production is presented by arrangement with
Music Theatre International (Europe)

All authorised performance materials are also supplied by MTI Europe

www.mtishows.co.uk

Book by
David Simpatico

Songs by
Matthew Gerrard and Robbie Nevil; Ray Cham, Greg Cham and
Andrew Seeley; Randy Petersen and Kevin Quinn; Andy Dodd and
Adam Watts; Bryan Louiselle; David N. Lawrence and
Faye Greenberg; Jamie Houston

Music Adapted,
Arranged and Produced
by Bryan Louiselle

Based on a Disney Channel Original Movie Written by
Peter Barsocchini



EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Samba Band

Samba Band is in full swing and our S1s are having fun learning to play a lot of very complicated rhythms together on our fabulous set of Samba Drums. We have completed a Samba Funk and are now working on a Samba Batucada. We meet every Tuesday lunchtime and new members are always welcome.



Music Department – Scottish Chamber Orchestra

The Senior Music classes were given the opportunity to attend a Scottish Chamber Orchestra Performance at Aberdeen Music Hall on the 18th September. This was a concert targeted at SQA pupils based on a piece of music written and conducted by Sir James MacMillan called *Tryst*. The concert explored concepts and compositional techniques which gave our pupils a live, hands-on experience which they could hopefully bring back to the classroom and apply to their own coursework.



S1/S2 Seesaw app

This term sees the launch of an app called 'Seesaw' within subject areas in Expressive Arts. This app will be used to share and communicate learning with families. It was used last session, very successfully, with our S1 pupils and will continue to be used with this year group (S2) as well as the new S1 cohort. We have recently sent home a letter which needs to be returned to the faculty regarding permission to use this app with you and your child based on new GDPR legislation. We also ran some sessions on this at the recent S1 Open Evening. We would strongly encourage you to engage with this app so we can start to share artwork and music videos of your child in the classroom instantly!



HEALTH & LEISURE



Mearns Academy Health & Leisure is 🏆 celebrating Sport. ...
Yesterday at 11:28 · 🌐

🏆 School Sport Award - GOLD 🏆

During the last 18 months, Active Schools, PE, School Sports Committee and multiple other staff and partners came together to submit a bid for the SportsScotland #SchoolSportAward. 🙌🙌

We found out that after all of the hard work put in by a countless number of people, we achieved #GOLD 🏆🏆

Our School Sports Committee got to see the fruits of their labour with this certificate, however there will be an official unveiling from SportsScotland and Aberdeenshire Council in due course 😊👁️

A big thank you goes to all of our staff who had an impact on the award and our volunteers who make clubs happen and promote #sport and #physicalactivity. Finally, the pupils, from taking part, to telling us about your experiences in sport, you've all contributed in some way to the overall success of the award, well done!



Mearns Academy Health & Leisure is 😊 feeling motivated. ...
6 September at 15:29 · 🌐

🏃 Fitness Friday 🏃

A lively bunch appeared the last 2 Fridays to give an early morning round of circuits a go. If you're keen to join us, come to the small hall at 8am and get a quick half hour in before school!

Open to all S5/S6 pupils and staff!



Mearns Academy Health & Leisure is 😊 feeling proud. ...
27 September at 18:33 · 🌐

Well done to our pupils who represented the school today at the SASSA event. A special thanks to the NPA Sports Development class who did a fantastic job managing and motivating our pupils throughout the day.

Have a great weekend and see you all on Monday.

#competitive #fairplay #win #lose #draw #schoolsport #MearnsAcademy



Mearns Academy Health & Leisure — 😊 feeling proud. ...
18 September at 19:58 · 🌐

What a team 🙌🙌 If you're interested in finding out more about this fantastic opportunity please speak to Derek, Mark or a member of the PE department.



Active Schools Aberdeenshire South

18 September at 19:30 · 🌐

I Can Lead

Here are some of the pupils who took part in the I Can Lead course last year and completed their volunteering hours through various Active Schools programmes: after school athletics, football and orienteering to name a few, as well as being involved in our holiday programmes!

Cameron, one of the pupils said "I really enjoyed the 2-day #ICanLead course because I learnt a lot of new things, and I would definitely recommend it to anyone that was thinking about doing it"

If you're interested in learning more about the course or want to apply, please speak to your local Active Schools Coordinator.

ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Another school year begins and another tremendous programme of extra-curricular clubs for pupils to take part in. Special mention goes to all of our volunteers who give up their time to offer 18 opportunities this term! A thank you also goes to our Sports Development Class who have been excellent in their first few weeks leading clubs they are interested in. They also organised an excellent S1 Sports Fayre to showcase the opportunities available to our new S1's, so well done to them!

One of the biggest news stories is the announcement of our School Sport Award status, which, after 18 months of hard work getting pupils to tell us about their sport experience, getting interviews, photos and pulling together a wealth of evidence from across the school, we are delighted to say we've achieved GOLD for the first time! So a massive well done to everyone involved! In the coming months there will be an official unveiling of the Gold Sport Award and we will bring more detail on that when it happens.

We look forward to what the rest of the year brings, we're out of the blocks flying!

S3 RME & ART TRIP

S3 Pupils enjoyed our annual Art and RME trip. This trip consisted of visiting the Gurdwara to learn a little more about the Sikh religion and their customs, followed by a trip to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum.



SPONSORED WALK



ROCK CHALLENGE – THE END!!

Mrs Birse

What has been your favourite year and why?

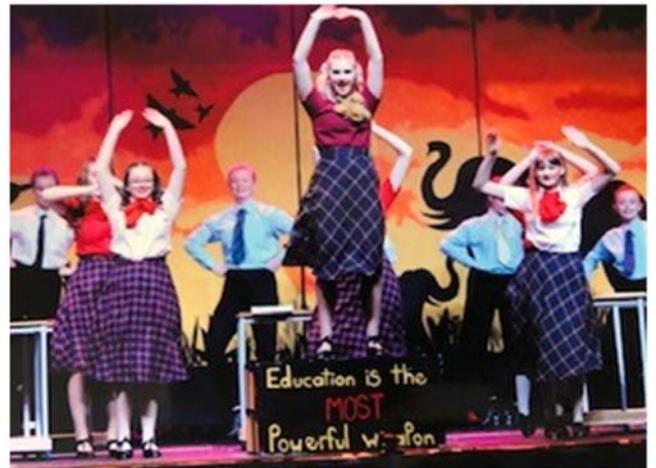
We definitely raised the bar in the 'Circus' year and it showed in the certificates that we won including the Performers Choice Award which is voted by all the other schools.

What has made you most proud?

The fact our team are involved in everything. But I think special mention must go the pupil choreographers every single year they create every step and movement that you see within our performance and every year I am amazed at how strong this element is within our show.

What won't you miss?

Finishing the soundtrack to be told that we need an extra 10 seconds added to a track!!!!



Miss Wight

What has been your favourite year and why?

The Circus! The leaders had lots of great ideas and each led their allocated group with dedication and enthusiasm. The dancing was fantastic and the soundtrack choices really suited the theme. I loved the clown and animal costumes and the bright colourful set. Making a circus curtain to cover the width of the stage was a bit of a challenge!!

What has made you most proud?

The day of the competition – the pupils show fantastic teamwork getting ready for their performance, they all work together making sure everyone is ready with hair, make-up and costume. They do an amazing job. Their rehearsal is always very professional and focuses on the positives. They practice throughout the day to make sure their dancing is perfect. It can be quite emotional watching their performance on the night and seeing all their hard work pay off!

What won't you miss?

I won't miss my desk and PE office being covered in amazon parcels with various costumes, hairspray, safety pins and unitards!!! And the daily – Miss, we've had another idea, do we have enough money to order.....!!!"



Miss Docherty

What has been your favourite year and why?

The Circus! I thought the leaders and performers gave 100% dedication and enthusiasm. There was an amazing sense of team spirit on the day.

The leaders cleverly used the set within the performance and it had a huge impact on stage! Overall a fantastic year and the first year we achieved the performers choice award!

What has made you most proud?

There really wasn't a time throughout the RC competition that I didn't feel proud of the hard work and dedication of our pupils. Regardless of their role, our pupils work so hard to make sure we have a memorable soundtrack, stage, costumes and performance. Being part of the Rock challenge team I was always impressed at how much commitment our pupils showed.

What won't you miss?

I won't miss the rock challenge leaders coming to see me and starting every sentence with "Miss, is there any chance...". The moment I hear those words I know I am going to be asked for another extravagant piece of set or something that is ALMOST impossible! I won't miss my classroom being full of random pieces of Rock challenge set and signs saying "wet paint" everywhere.



Mrs Baker

What has been your favourite year and why?

Definitely my first year which was 2018. I had never been involved in Rock Challenge prior to this but loved the full day's experience with all the pupils and staff at the AECC. It was also where I celebrated my first 'Air Guitar' performance.

What has made you most proud?

The Performances! This is when all of the hard work pays off and you see every pupil, on and off-stage giving it their all.

What won't you miss?

FUNDRAISING!!

Chloe Griggs

What has been your favourite year and why?

The Circus year – we all worked well together and as we rehearsed we heard a rumour that some schools were changing their routine as we were seen as competition!

What has made you most proud?

The way the show comes together and how the end result shows that all the hard work and dedication has been worth it.

What won't you miss?

It is such a massive event and having to organise absolutely everything from fundraising, set, costume and choreography. I finally have some free time!!



ROCK CHALLENGE
– THE END ...

Grace Holtom

What has been your favourite year and why?

Mandela Performance – I loved the meaningful theme!

What has made you most proud?

It was great seeing all the set come together on stage.

What won't you miss?

I won't miss the mad rush to get everything ready.

Jaime Dima

What has been your favourite year and why?

Snow white – I loved being able to do highland dancing in the performance. It was my second year taking part and I could dance alongside friends I had made the year before.

What has made you most proud?

I am really proud of all the awards we won! It was great to be recognised for our hard work as a team!

What won't you miss?

I won't miss being painted green! And also the hours and hours of rehearsals!



ROCK CHALLENGE – THE END! !



Erin Spence

What has been your favourite year and why?

My favourite year was first year when we did the circus theme, I loved the costumes, make up and the routines. They looked great!

What has made you most proud?

Seeing all the routines come together at the end of the year and performing it on the stage. Its nerve wracking waiting but is great once we have performed.

What won't you miss?

The stress of everything being ready for the day, making sure all the dances work on the stage.



2019-2020 DIARY DATES

Term 2	Monday, 28 October 2019	Term 2 Begins
	Thursday 14th November	Masterchef final
	Monday, 18 November	In-Service Day
	Tuesday, 19 November	In-Service Day
	Commencing 4th December	Prelim diet
	10th December	S2 Parents Evening
	16th-18th December	Christmas Dances
	Thursday 19th December	Christmas Dinner
	Friday, 20 December 2019	Term 2 Ends
Term 3	Monday, 6 January 2020	Term 3 Begins
	Thursday, 13 February 2020	Occasional Day
	Friday, 14 February 2020	Occasional Day
	Monday, 17 February 2020	Mid-Term Break
	Tuesday, 18 February 2020	In-Service Day
	Wed 19 February 2020	In-Service Day
	Friday, 3 April 2020	Term 3 Ends
Term 4	Monday, 20 April 2020	Term 4 Begins
	Friday, 8 May 2020	May Day
	Friday, 3 July 2020	End of Term 4

Further dates are available on our website and the Aberdeenshire Council website.

CHRISTMAS DINNER

This year's Christmas dinner will be on the 19th December. Our canteen staff make a lovely turkey dinner with all the trimmings, so put the date in your diary.



CONTACT DETAILS

Mearns Academy
Aberdeen Road
LAURENCEKIRK
AB30 1ZJ

Tel: 01561 378817



Email:
mearns.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Web address:
www.mearns.aberdeenshire.sch.uk