



FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of another busy term and our thoughts turn to preparing for the festive season, it is a fitting time to reflect on the many successes and achievements we have celebrated over the last few months as a school community and remind ourselves as to what makes Mearns Academy such a wonderful school. Our young people continue to make us proud be it through their participation in local and national events, their campaigns to make a difference in the school community, or simply in the continued hard work and dedication they illustrate in their lessons. It is also fabulous to hear from Skills Development Scotland that so many students, around 98%, who left from our senior school have found positive destinations and are in either employment, apprenticeships, college or university.

2019 – What a Year!

Mearns has been host to many events and activities this term, some of which have been included within this newsletter and I am sure you will agree that the variety of activities and events Mearns has been involved in is truly impressive. I have highlighted only some of our 2019 work and events below:

Parents' Evenings with over 85% attendance - Fair Trade Assemblies as part of Fair Trade fortnight - Equalities Fair by S3 pupils - Arnold Clark Van visit with apprenticeship opportunities - Fire brigade & Police Scotland safety talk with S4 - Absafe vist - P7 club in partnership with CLD - Tree of Knowledge workshops - Breakfast club - Free breakfast for all pupils offering porridge with fruit - Making Thinking Visible staff workshops - Soccer 7s Fundraiser - Interhouse competitions - Young Musician of the Year - Charity Events - Glencoe Trip - ASL Boccia Festival - Burns Supper - S4 Work Experience – Ski Trip, Tree of Knowledge workshops, P7 Club UV disco, Visitors from Holland, Authority Performance Review -SQA Examinations - Festival of Sport - Rights Respecting School Silver Award Recognition – S1 Saltire Award - CPR Training – Bee Hives! – Memory Café – Mearns Larder – ECO Club Green Flag – Sport Scotland Gold Award – Mearns Masterchef – Northsound Energy and Gas Challenge – London Radio Visit – Young Enterprise – Edinburgh International Book Festival – South Aberdeenshire Sports Event – Higher Education Convention – Bake Off – Gurdwara Trip – Sponsored Walk – Rock Challenge – Poland Trip – Field Trips – Sporting Success – Dragons Den Event

What a truly fantastic school, amazing opportunities with amazing staff and young people.

Attainment

2019 also saw the continued increase in attainment for our young people with the highest ever attainment for Mearns Academy recorded across a number of measures. Well done to all our young people who have achieved success across a wide range of subjects, courses and qualifications. We look forward to our young people building on this attainment and achieving further success in 2020.

FROM THE HEADTEACHER (cont.)

Sport Scotland Gold Award

Special recognition this year has to go to the work and commitment of our Health and Leisure Faculty and their partnership with Active Schools in achieving Gold Recognition from Sports Scotland. When you look at the power of sport you see its importance as a vehicle to teach our young people the lessons of leadership, good health, teamwork, fair play, self-reliance and continuous improvement. These opportunities are offered across our community by the excellent work of a team of staff and pupils. Thank you to Scott Cameron and our Health and Leisure Faculty, Derek Atkinson and Mark McConnachie from Active Schools and all other staff who have been involved. Active Schools is a tremendously successful partnership within Mearns Academy and we are very thankful for that. Thank you also to our sports committee who have worked with staff over a number of years to promote and provide opportunities across the community.

School Show – High School Musical

It has been too long, over 7 years, since our last Mearns Academy school show. In January however that changes. As Head Teacher I am proud to welcome you in January to what will be our first show on our fantastic new Community Campus Faculties – High School Musical. As was the case in our old building where we had a successful tradition in performing, I hope this will be the start of a new tradition in performing high quality musical performances with our young people. As the show moves into its final preparations I would like to thank everybody involved for what I am sure will be an enjoyable week for all.

Staffing

Again Mearns Academy is in a strong position with staffing. We do this term however say goodbye to two members of staff. Jill Reid has taken up a promoted post with North East Scotland Library services and we wish her well. Duncan McRuvie, a teacher of Maths here at Mearns Academy for 18 years retires this Christmas. We wish Duncan a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Values

Prior to the summer break all young people, staff, parents and carers were given the opportunity to vote on what values will underpin all of our work here as part of Mearns Academy. I am delighted to announce that the values chosen by our community are:

RESPECT, WELLBEING & AMBITION

These values have been shared with staff and will be shared with our young people in the new year. I look forward to working with our Pupil Council in launching these values across the school and to see them being embedded in all of our work going forward.

Lastly, thank you.

Can I take this opportunity to thank our young people, parents/carers and staff whom without which Mearns Academy would not be the excellent school it is. It is the hard work, passion and continued enthusiasm of all that helps create a learning community that we can be truly proud of.

Finally, on behalf of all at Mearns Academy we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy 2020.



HEALTH & LEISURE



Mearns Academy Health & Leisure is 🥳 feeling proud.

3 December at 18:57 · 🌐

🏆 SportScotland School Sports Award Presentation 🏆

Today marked a special day for Mearns Academy with the presentation of our Gold School Sport Award. To mark the occasion we were delighted to welcome our former pupil John Souttar, who is now a professional footballer for Hearts and Scotland! We were also joined by 250 S1 and 2 pupils, local partners, the School Sports Committee and staff.

We hope you all enjoyed the celebration of the fantastic work that everyone has been involved in over the last 24 months. It's certainly been a team effort and we are excited by the challenges that we will face over the next 3 years in maintaining the 'Gold' standards that we have achieved!

#proud

#inspired

#teamwork

#mearnsacademy

#activeschools

#schoolsport

#sportscotland

#GOLD

Active Schools Aberdeenshire

Mearns Academy Official



Mearns Academy Health & Leisure

2 December at 20:00 · 🌐

🎾 Scottish Schools Tennis 🎾

For the first time in several years Mearns competed in the Scottish Schools Tennis Championships. We were drawn against Mackie and the boys competed well, losing on a Championship tie break after drawing 3 matches all. Great effort from all involved. Good luck to Mackie in the next round!



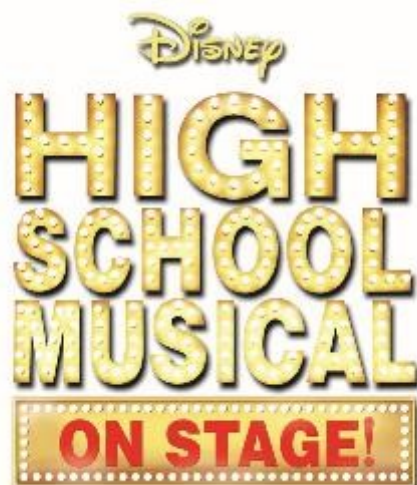
HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

Rehearsals are in full swing, approaching overdrive as we draw ever closer to show week with our production of High School Musical.

The dates for your diary are the 14th, 15th and 16th of January.

The cast have been working so hard and they can't wait to see you all there.

Tickets are on sale now from the school office and online from [Eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk)



A big thank you to Scotmid and the Laurencekirk & District Rotary Club for sponsoring the school show.

We were presented with a cheque for £500 from Scotmid which will help with the costs of putting on the show. The Rotary club have kindly donated £200.

Scotmid 



Mearns Academy

Production of

Disney

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

ON STAGE!

© Disney

14th - 16th January 2020 at 7p.m.

Tickets £10.00, Conc. £6.00

available from Mearns Academy reception from 8.30-4.30 Mon-Fri, payment by cash or cheque (payable to Mearns Academy) or online at www.eventbrite.co.uk (booking fee will be applied)

Raffle & refreshments available on the night

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 Robble 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

SOCIAL SUBJECTS

Poland/Auschwitz Trip

In November 14 pupils were accompanied by Mr Fleming and Ms Leigh to Poland. The main purpose of the trip was to visit Auschwitz and to learn about conditions within sections 1 and 2 of the camp. However, the group were also given opportunities to explore Krakow.

After a short two-and-a-half-hour flight from Edinburgh to Krakow the group arrived at the hotel. The accommodation was a short walk away from the main square and was in a perfect location to explore the city. Our first day was well planned and saw us visit Oscar Schindler's factory in the morning. We received a guided tour and the group learned about the History of Jews in Krakow and how the Nazi party gradually removed Jews from Krakow. The tour was well received by the group and they gained a great deal of knowledge about the sacrifices made by Oscar Schindler in saving many Jewish families. Following this we booked a hop on-hop off bus trip round Krakow, which was a great way to see the main sights of this stunning city. For the rest of the day, the group explored the area around Krakow's beautiful main square and there were plenty of opportunities for food, sightseeing and shopping.



The next day was an early start for our visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau. We visited Auschwitz 1 and were given a tour of the buildings in this part of the camp. Inside was a collection of artefacts left at the camp by Jewish families. This part of the camp was emotional, and the group was exposed to images and items that made the Holocaust more personal.

The guide then took us to Birkenau, the second section of Auschwitz. This was the extermination part of the camp and the guide gave us an insight into the process and conditions faced by individuals when they arrived.



SOCIAL SUBJECTS

The trip back to Krakow was in silence as the group reflected on what they had just seen and experienced. The guide told us that we were the best school group she had shown round Auschwitz; the pupils were a credit to the school and themselves.

The remainder of the second day was spent exploring the amazing city of Krakow. We visited Wawel castle and were given an excellent tour and learned about the rich history of the castle. The group were then given free time to explore the Cloth Hall and pick up souvenirs. We visited an authentic Polish restaurant at night and the meal was very well received.



The final day was spent visiting the main shopping mall and exploring the city with scooters. Overall, all pupils on the trip were polite, respectful and did Mearns Academy proud. The group will organise a presentation to all assembly groups on their experiences at Auschwitz, during Holocaust memorial week in January.



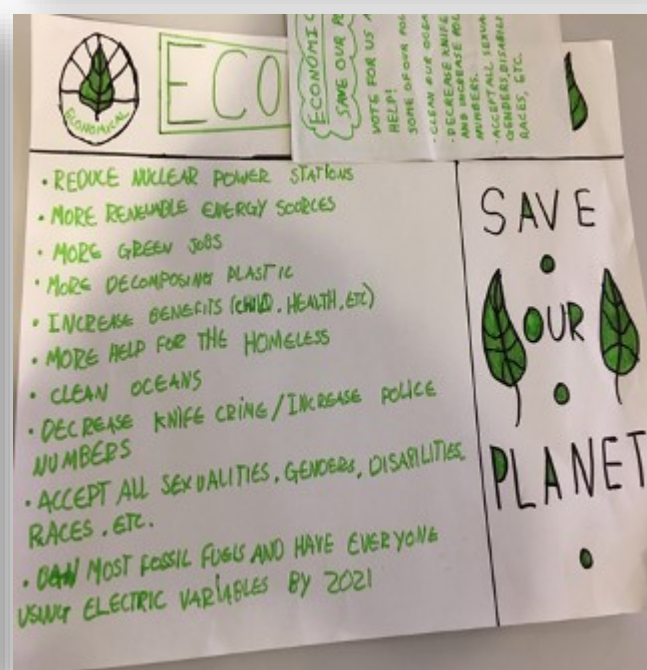
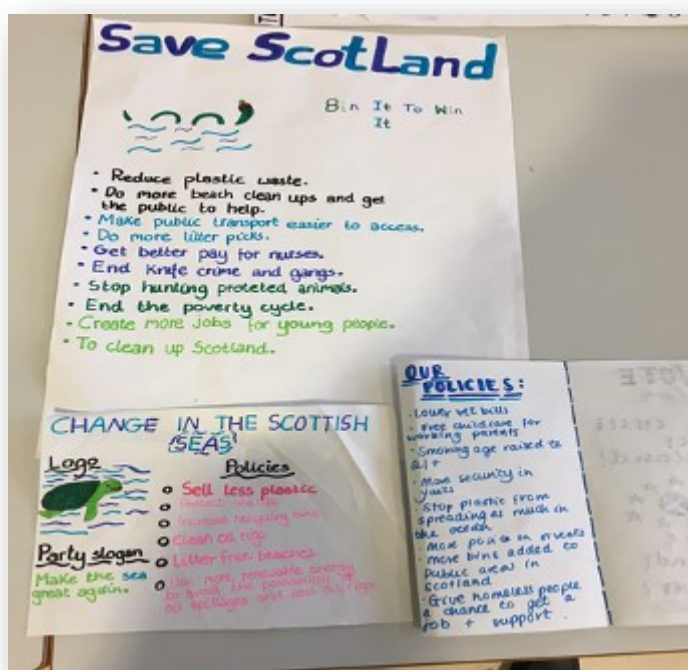
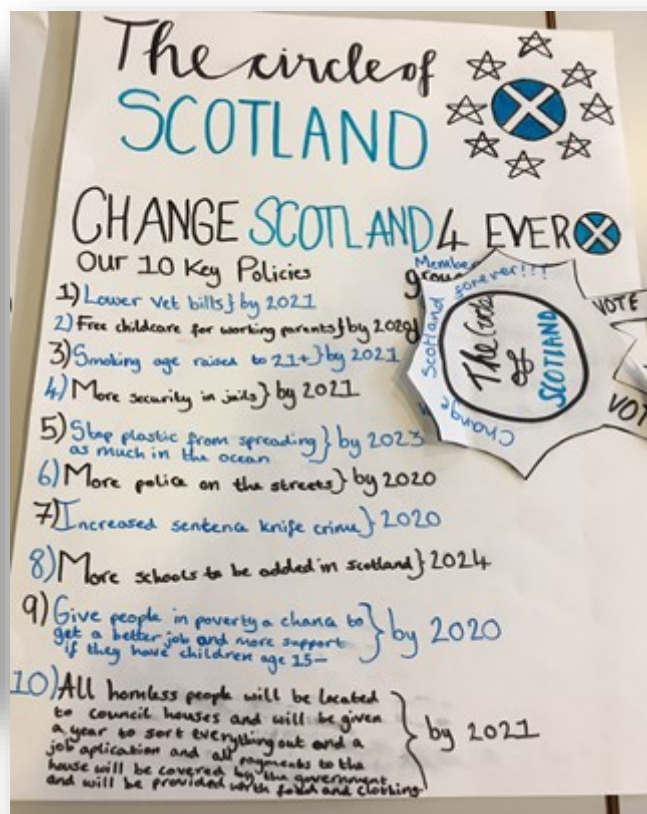
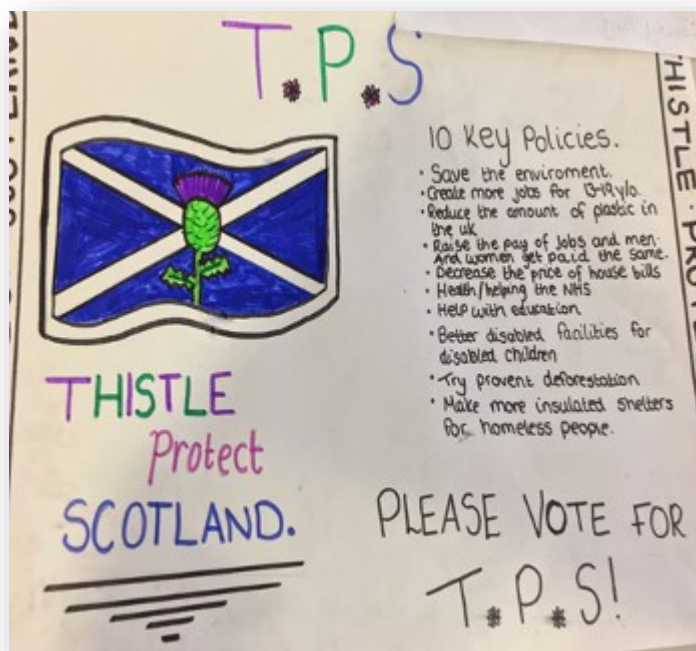
S4 Modern Studies – Edinburgh Trip

One of our S4 Modern Studies classes visited Edinburgh high court to experience a live court case. Pupils attended a case where they were able to witness court proceedings and hear closing arguments of a case. Pupils found the experience very rewarding to their education about crime and law in Scotland. In the afternoon we attended the Scottish Parliament to sit in on the afternoon's debates. Pupils saw MSP's debating the state of the Scottish ferry services which at first you would not think would cause much excitement, but it got quite heated between the MSPs, adding some drama to our afternoon.

SOCIAL SUBJECTS

Modern Studies Department

Two classes (2S2 and 2S4) were given the opportunity to participate in a mock election. This experience gave learners the chance to create a political party and produce a range of policies. Below are some examples of the work produced by some of the political parties.

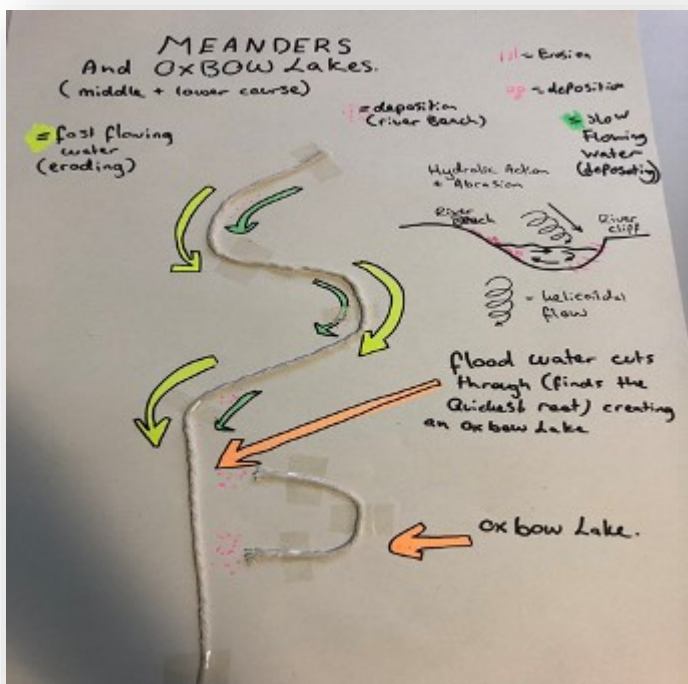
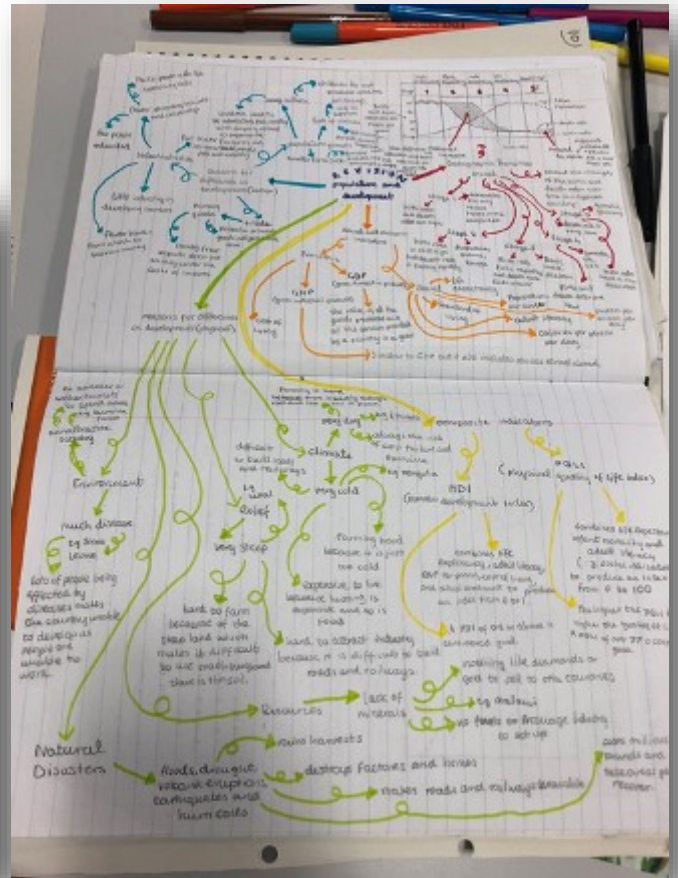
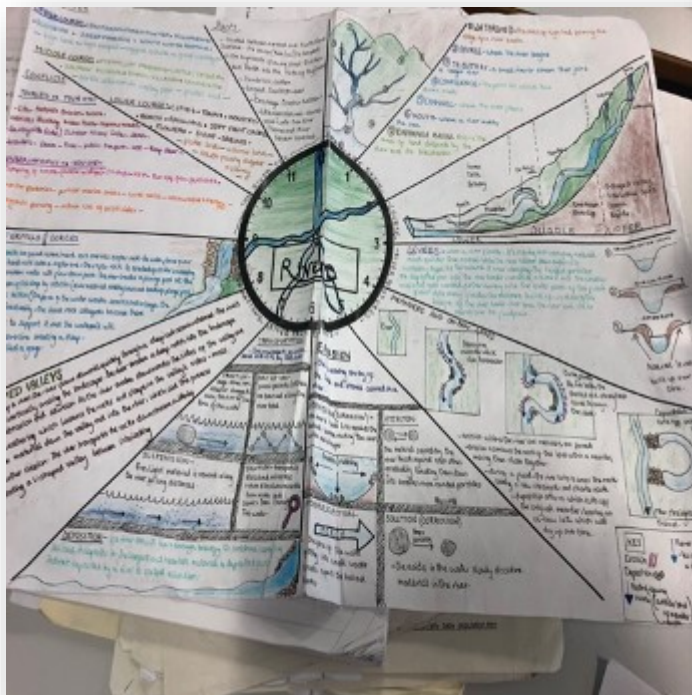


SOCIAL SUBJECTS

Geography Department

Learners within National 5 and Higher Geography have produced a range of impressive revision materials. Below is a selection of pupil work. Mrs Carlson has an active Twitter page and updates it constantly. She also managed to win a free book for the department.

Follow Mearns Geography on Twitter.



S1 FRENCH

S1 French classes have been learning about the Francophone world. Each pupil researched a different French speaking country or town over a six week period then presented their findings as a power point or poster to a small group of their classmates. The pupils provided each other with feedback on the content of the presentation and their presentation skills. There was some fantastic work undertaken and lots of new facts learnt! Bravo!

Les Pays Francophones - Feedback

Name of presenter: [redacted] Country: Togo

Two things I learned from this presentation:

- 1) The capital is Lomé
- 2) there are many reasons you can go to Togo

Two things I liked about this presentation:

- 1) He is very descriptive
- 2) He got the reviewers involved with the powerpoint

One thing which would make it better:

- 1) Read behind the laptop

Reviewed by: [redacted]



CHRISTMAS DANCES

This year's Christmas Dances were once again a big success with over 60% of the pupils attending one of the dances. In no small part because of the time and effort put in by parents/carers being taken around shops for outfits or Kilt hire. When you see them all 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.

Once again I got 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.

D Hope



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

8 pupils - Corrine Turner, Catriona Bird, Ngaire Barr, Madison Diack, Robbie Burnett, Josh Horsfall, Suzanne Forrester and Aiden Hay - attended BBC Young Reporter Event in Dundee earlier this month as part of our Non-Fiction focus where they learned to develop their writing, editing and broadcasting skills. There were workshops in podcasting and broadcasting, a trip to a Gaming studio to take part in some Virtual Reality, and a talk from the Minecraft designers and artists.

The trip was deemed a success by all, and watch this space, as podcasting and voxpop due to hit the Academy next year!

HEALTH & LEISURE - HOME ECONOMICS

Mearns Masterchef

Earlier this term we had the Mearns Masterchef Heat followed by the final where pupils had 1 ½ hours to make a two-course meal for two people which cost less than £10. This year for the first time we ran the Future Chef competition alongside the Rotary Young Chef Competition and our two winners were Ellen Bennett (S2) and Ben Walker (S5). Our judges consisted of a Chef from Ballater, and representatives from Macphie and the Rotary and they had a very difficult job deciding on our two winners. Well done to everyone who took part.

Christmas!!

Pupils have been preparing themselves for Christmas over the past few weeks in the Home Economics class:

S1

Over the past 3 or 4 weeks all S1 pupils have been learning and developing new sewing skills. They have done this by completing a hand-sewn Christmas stocking which they should have home with them by the holidays. Many pupils have never sewn before so hopefully this experience gives them all the confidence to sew on a button or their hem if the need should arise. Below is a selection of 1C2's stockings.



HEALTH & LEISURE - HOME ECONOMICS

S2

Once again all S2 pupils took part in the Yule Log Challenge and the standard of entries this year was fantastic – some really innovative and imaginative designs that our judges found difficult to judge.

The winners were as follows:

2C1 – 1st Verity, 2nd Ellen, 3rd Robbie and Euan

2C2 – 1st Danielle, 2nd Islay, 3rd Charlie B.

2D2 – 1st Ellie-Jane, 2nd Brandon and Rowan, 3rd Kyla

2J1 – 1st Allanah, 2nd Aaron and Jessica, 3rd Daisy

2J2 – 1st Harvey, 2nd Abigail, 3rd Georgia

2T1 – 1st Vlada, 2nd Hope, 3rd Grace

2T2 – 1st Emily, 2nd Kaiden, 3rd Kyle



S3

S3 Hospitality pupils made and decorated gingerbread biscuits which hopefully made it home for you to try. A great effort with a tricky task.

It really has been a busy few weeks in the run up to Christmas.



Here's to next term being a little less sticky!!

More photos and up to date news can be found on the Mearns Academy Health and Leisure Facebook page.

Merry Christmas to you all.

TERM DATES

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

UKULELE GROUP

We are a group that gathers every Thursday lunchtime. We play a selection of songs from Christmas to pop songs. We go out and play at local places. Just last week we went to play at Mearns Court Sheltered Housing. They all enjoyed it and we shared some nice homemade tablet!

It's very enjoyable and anyone can come along no matter what skill level you are at. We will be playing at the Christmas service on the last day of term and we are all excited. But the best thing is we all have fun.

Billy McBain



CO-OP CHRISTMAS CRACKER DONATION

We were delighted to have been chosen to receive the Christmas Cracker Food donation this year from the Co-op. This was greatly received and will go to help a few groups and families. Over the last few weeks the co-op and their staff have donated quite a few items to the food larder. We are greatly appreciative to the Co-op for their generosity.

