



# Head Teacher's Update

March 2018

## Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach our Spring holiday period, I would like to wish all pupils sitting SQA Examinations next term the very best of luck. The partnership between home and school is crucial in the next few weeks to ensure that all senior phase pupils are adequately prepared for exams.

## Easter School

Please note that there is no Easter School this year. Study classes have been available in a range of subjects throughout the year and many pupils have benefitted from these. Members of staff are always willing to help pupils prepare for final exams and pupils can use both Edmodo and Show My Homework Apps during the holidays to plan their study routines.

## Easter Assembly

This will take place in St George's Church on Thursday, 29 March 2018 at 11.30 am. As always, parents/carers are welcome to join us at the church. Where pupils do not attend for religious reasons, we are able to make alternative provision within school.

## Study Leave

Study leave for almost all pupils in S4-S6 begins on Tuesday, 8 May 2018 and runs until Thursday, 31 May 2018. The new school timetable starts on Monday, 4 June 2018. Pupils who are mainly being presented for National 4 qualifications will receive a personalised timetable for this period, as they are not required to sit the same number of exams. Instead, they will have the opportunity to develop employability skills to prepare them for their next steps to employment of further education/training.

## Staffing

Welcome to Mr Chris Drummond who has recently joined us as a full time Teacher of Technical Education.

We would also like to welcome Karen Jones, who has joined our school Administration Team and also Kirsty Nicholson who will join this team in the next few weeks.

We are just about to recruit new staff to begin with us in August and shall provide you with names after the Spring holiday period.

## Achievements

This term we have been amazed at the number of pupils involved in extra-curricular activities, which have enabled them to develop confidence and skills in various areas ranging from sport to debating. At Dumfries Academy we encourage young people to take part. We also value the amount of support given to young people by parents and carers to enable them to attend clubs and competitions. We have many pupils who have experienced success at local, national and even international level and we would encourage you to share these successes with us. We endeavour to share them in our termly Focus, the local press and our Twitter and Facebook pages. Some photographs are included in this newsletter.

## Employability

You may have noticed that we have been working with many local employers recently. Ms Murray, Youth Guarantee Co-ordinator, has helped develop really positive links with a number of businesses and organisations and pupils have gained insight into the retail industry, courses available at the SRUC (Barony College) and the construction industry. We have also held individual option choice

interviews for pupils in S3-S5. These have been very helpful in allowing pupils to make better informed choices of courses for next session.

### **Dumfries Learning Town**

We are very pleased to inform you that we will be recruiting an Acting Depute Head Teacher for a period of up to 23 months. This is to help with developing a leadership model for 'The Bridge'. This is the new building out at Cuckoo Bridge that will provide increased opportunities for pupils across the burgh to take a wider range of subjects and courses that are difficult to provide separately in each of the four secondary schools. As time moves on, The Bridge will increase provision further to include more subjects, enterprise projects, community groups, short courses, adult learning and training. In the first two years, our Senior Management Team at Dumfries Academy will play a key role in developing the use of The Bridge.

Although we have no news on funding for our refurbishment, we are committed to working with other schools in the burgh and to make good use of The Bridge and its specialist facilities to improve provision. Our school is in good shape in terms of its ethos and environment and we are committed to planning a refurbishment that is on a par with recent projects of this kind.

### **Communication**

We recently extended an invitation to parents to attend Focus Meetings on the subject of communication. If, for whatever reason, you were unable to attend, we include a comments slip with this letter that can be returned to the School Office by Friday, 20 April 2018.

We will shortly be issuing a questionnaire on school improvement priorities for next year and also how we might spend our Pupil Equity Funding to help close the gap in educational attainment between children from the most and least well off families.

### **And finally ...**

All schools in Scotland are now measured on how well they are doing in four areas:

### **Attainment for All Literacy and Numeracy Positive Sustained Destinations Closing the Gap**

We recently received updated data to suggest Dumfries Academy is doing really well in all four areas.

- Over 94% of pupils are going into positive destinations on leaving school (above the national average and in line with the local average).
- The percentage of pupils achieving National 4 and 5 in Literacy and Numeracy by the end of S5 is better than our schools with a similar intake and has continued to increase in the last three years.
- Around 80% of those sitting exams in Dumfries Academy are doing better than children who have a similar profile nationally and locally.
- We are also doing really well in closing the attainment gap, whilst also ensuring that our pupils from backgrounds that are more affluent are doing much better than the national average.

Yours sincerely

*J Dillon*

Mrs J Dillon  
Rector





Dumfries Retail Project



Girls Football



S1 Boys Cross Country



Senior Basketball Team



P6 Maths Circus



Reading to Troqueer Pupils on World Book

## Parent Council Fundraising Lottery Winners

### January 2018 Draw

First Prize - DAPC 00020 Gordon McKenna

Second Prize - DPAC 00097 James Elder

Third Prize - DAPC 00118 Ann Thompson

### Forthcoming Events

30/03/2018 – 13/04/2018	Spring holiday
23/04/2018 – 04/05/2018	The Sustrans Big Pedal
26/04/2018	UKMT Maths Challenge (Individual)
30/04/2018	SQA Exam Diet begins
04/05/2018	S6 Leavers' Ceremony
07/05/2018	May Day holiday
08/05/2018 – 31/05/2018	Exam Leave
10/05/2018 – 12/05/2018	London Trip
16/05/2018	Parent Council Meeting
22/05/2018	S1 Parents' Meetings
28/05/2018 – 31/05/2018	S1 – S3 Activities Week
29/05/2018	S3 Celebration of Achievement
01/06/2018	Inset Day (pupil holiday)
04/06/2018	New Timetable
06/06/2018	Salter's Chemistry Festival
07/06/2018 – 08/06/2018	Junior School Show (Peter Pan)
13/06/2018	Junior Award Ceremony
20/06/2018 – 22/06/2018	P7 Induction Days
21/06/2018	P7 Welcome Evening
22/06/2018	Royal Highland Show Trip
02/07/2018 – 20/08/2018	Summer holiday
17/08/2018 – 20/08/2018	Inset Days