



MINTLAW ACADEMY

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An Introduction from Mrs Duthie, Head Teacher . . .

Well, here we are at the end of another very full term. Staff and pupils alike are certainly looking forward to a well earned break. January saw our S4-6 students prepare for and sit their prelim exams, a key part of their progress towards the SQA examinations in May. A key event in February, just before the long weekend was our annual Burns Supper. Senior pupils and staff enjoyed a superb evening at the Ban Car Hotel in Lonmay. The outfits, speeches, meal and dancing to the Garioch Band all contributed to what was indeed a memorable evening for all concerned. Once again our thanks go to Mrs Duncan for the many hours spent in organising the event in advance.

Post the February long weekend, parents and members of the Community Learning and Development staff were invited to join school staff to engage in an activity focused around our 3 year cycle of Improvement Planning. It was good to get the opportunity to engage across these groupings to evaluate where our strengths as a school and next steps for improvement lay. Pupils have now been involved in a similar exercise and the joint process will inform Mintlaw Academy Improvement Planning for the next 3 years. Once finalised, a copy of the collated document will be available to view on the Mintlaw Academy website.

On the 20th and 21st of February we hosted our first P7 tours. These tours offered our P7 parents the opportunity to tour the school campus during a working day, going into classes and discussing ongoing learning with both staff and S1/2 pupils. Evaluations hailed the pilot as a great success. Just under 40 parents attended the tours and feedback cited a calm atmosphere, caring staff and an extensive range of activities as key strengths. We hope to offer the same opportunity to next year's P7 parents and I am very confident we will see even more parents visit us across the two days.

Towards the end of February and into March, Senior Leadership staff met with all Principal Teachers to consider prelim results. One outcome was to identify particular youngsters who may benefit and set up a mentoring programme to support any youngsters PTs felt could benefit from further support with revision technique. The programme is now up and running and, in conjunction with an extensive programme of revision support from faculties and departments across the school, will hopefully support our seniors to achieve their full potential in May.

On the 8th of May, Mintlaw Academy had a visit from Mr Sullivan, assessor for Customer Service Excellence. Mintlaw was delighted to be awarded the Customer Service Excellence award last session. The award, primarily geared at highly successful businesses, recognises a high degree of satisfaction on the part of "clients" in our case namely pupils, parents and staff. Due to the prestigious nature of the award, establishments are visited annually to ensure they still meet the fairly stringent criteria for success. I am delighted to share with you Mr Sullivan was delighted with the school's overall performance. Following meetings with staff, pupils and parents and an extensive tour of the school with our Head Boy and Head Girl, he was able to share that he was very impressed, our "partial compliances" were reduced from last year's 6 to four, and that he planned to award us a "Compliance Plus", which is an area of particular strength, interestingly for Performance Management and collaborative planning across the school, both areas I highlight above.

Thursday 16th March saw our S3 Youth Philanthropy Initiative finalists present to a team of judges with £3,000 in prize money up for grabs for the successful charity. All six teams performed very well on the night but the winners, a group of four S3 girls on behalf of SANDS, a charity who support families dealing with the tragedy of the loss of a baby in the very early weeks of life, left not a dry eye in the house. We hope to share their inspirational presentation at a year group assembly early next term.

In conclusion, I would have to mention two key events as the term draws to a close. Friday 24th saw the school join forces to celebrate Comic Relief. Staff and pupils alike dressed up as a fictional character or dressed down for both Comic Relief and our own school fund and I am delighted to say raised an impressive £1,300.00 in total! Well done to all! Alice in Wonderland . . . Three Blind Mice and the Farmer's Wife . . . Ghostbusters . . . and that was only the staff. Pupils S1 - S6 demonstrated real creativity with prizes for winners in all age ranges. Brucklay took the House prize for most effectively face painted Principal Teacher of Guidance.

Last Saturday over 100 of our youngsters took part in Rock Challenge, an annual event aimed at supporting young people and them being involved in their own production from conceptualisation through to the live performance. The challenge is also to be the best that they can with no reliance on substances of any kind. Mintlaw's production, dedicated to the life of Muhammad Ali was very strong in terms of choreography, set and costume took home a most well deserved third place overall.

And finally, can I take this opportunity to wish our entire Mintlaw Academy community, pupils, parents and staff, a wonderful Easter break. It's been an exceptionally busy three months since Christmas and time now for everyone to recharge their batteries and return, refreshed and really to face the challenges of Term 4!

Higher Biology - Highland Wildlife Park trip

K Urquhart

Our Higher Biologists recently visited the Highland Wildlife Park, Kincaig with Mrs Urquhart, Mr Walsh and Mrs Bell. Pupils had a tour of the park and got the chance to see some real 'biofacts' such as horns, fur and a polar bear tooth. They were then given a lesson on animal welfare, conducted an animal behaviour study and an enclosure evaluation. Animals observed included Japanese macaques, wolves and tigers. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed their day...and the animals enjoyed their company too!



Burns Supper

D Duncan

The evening of Thursday 9th February saw 140 staff and pupils of Mintlaw Academy gather at the "Ban-Car" Hotel at Lonmay, our chosen venue for many years, for the 26th annual Burns Supper. The chatter of excited, happy voices filled the hall, where the S5 and S6 girls in their glamorous dresses provided a sparkling rainbow of colours and styles, their gorgeous hairstyles and makeup worthy of any catwalk! The gentlemen, too, looked very handsome in their kilts and suits, prompting Mrs McCluskey in her speech "Reply from the lasses" to comment on how well they had scrubbed up. We were extremely grateful to her for delivering this speech, in response to Lewis Chalmers' highly entertaining "Toast to the Lasses", as she stepped in at the last minute when the previous speaker withdrew. We were extremely grateful to S3 pupil and piper, Jamie Kindness, our original piper was unable to attend. He set everyone's feet tapping in great style. Jamie was actually on his way to piping practice at Fraserburgh, so we really appreciated his making the detour to allow him to save the day! Similarly, our Serving Wench, Anna Strachan, had an interview on the day and, fearing that she might be late, had a stand in in the form of Daniela Phelan just in case! That's forward planning at its best! Luckily, Anna made it and carried the haggis gracefully to the table, where the "Address" was energetically and authoritatively delivered by Euan Ross, who definitely "cut her up wi ready sleicht". The Selkirk Grace was then given by Justine Phelan, who coped very well with the Scots language in which it is written! The company then enjoyed a traditional meal of haggis, neeps and tatties, apart from a few haggis -o -phobes, who had alternative menus. Mr Gale doesn't want anyone to know that he had pie and chips, but since he was helping provide the entertainment, accompanying the beautiful singing voice of Rebecca Payne, he was a special case! Mrs Duthie, at her first Burns Supper since returning to Mintlaw Academy, delivered "The Immortal Memory" with her usual poise and expertise in public speaking. The Chairperson for the evening was Hannah Corbett, who had her work cut out keeping the speeches running smoothly and Jack Donald very ably, in his own impeccable style, gave the "Votes of Thanks." The event was organised by Mrs Duncan, ably supported by Mrs Noble and Mrs Ritchie handled ticket sales.

Before the evening began, the "Snowflake Raffle", organised by the PTA, was drawn.



Celebrating Success!

N Grant

One of our S4 pupils, Euan Thoirs was at the Aberdeenshire Sports Council awards on Friday evening.

He was nominated in 3 categories : Young male of the year , disability sports award and rising star categories

Euan was up against some very strong competition including many who were part of GB squads and potential Olympic team GB squads for the future.

Euan won the Disability Sports Award and was recognised for his achievements in the other 2 categories.

Euan's wheelchair basketball team "Grampian Flyers" were also nominated and recognised for team of the year award.

Well Done Euan! A great achievement and we are all extremely proud of you.



Mintlaw Academy Therapeutic Garden

A McKeown

The staff and pupils at Mintlaw Academy are currently busy planning a Therapeutic Garden for the school grounds. Inspired by the roof garden at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and sensory garden at Aden Park, the garden will be a welcome additional resource for the school and community, functioning as a reflective space promoting positive mental health awareness, outdoor learning zone and conservation project for pupils and community groups. We also hope primary school children in the local area may find this space beneficial as an extra resource in learning about wildlife, eco principles and mental health awareness. The academy pupils will be involved in the construction and development of the garden - earning some invaluable skills and qualifications along the way and are excited to get started! Currently focussing on raising money and equipment for the project to help us get going we are keen to hear from our local community and businesses for ideas and support.

We are delighted that our project has been selected by the Tesco 'Bags of Help' scheme where we could win up to £5000. Our project is currently featured in Banff, Fraserburgh, Huntly, Keith, Turriff and Buckie stores and the money would make a huge contribution towards the project so if you happen to be doing your shopping in any of the stores above and receive a green token, please vote for us!

If you would like to be involved or hear more about the project please contact Mr D Coull or Mrs A McKeown at Mintlaw Academy, 01771 622994.

Charities

R Sneddon

Charities have managed to raise £1300 for Red Nose Day/School Fund on Friday 24 March 2017 when pupils and staff were encouraged to come to school dressed up as a fictional character, a huge thank you goes to everyone for their wonderful effort in donating and buying cupcakes on the day. Also on the day those pupils who made the effort and dressed up gathered in the social area where prizes of Easter Eggs were handed out by Mrs Duthie who also judged the brave Guidance teachers face painting for Red Nose Day, they were all winners and many pupils gathered to support their guidance teachers. The overall winner was judged to be Mr Kilpatrick of Brucklay house, who won an Easter Carrot, full of chocolates, which he so kindly gave to his Senior Pupil who painted his face. Other good news from the Charities was in RMPS the S1 pupils produced work for the charity Show Racism the Red Card, and as this goes to print Sarah Duncan and Emma Connah were selected to attend the finals at Hampden Park, Glasgow. Sarah and Emma came overall 2nd in the national competition, so well done girls! S1s are in the process of letting Mr Sneddon know what charities they would like to raise money for in the school for the future charities group, so if any other pupils would like the charities committee to consider any charity for fundraising please drop by and let Mr Sneddon know.



Mintlaw Academy's Art Exhibition

C McHugh

Showcasing Art and Design students work from National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher, as well as Higher Photography, the annual exhibition is an opportunity for parents and the public to view the highly successful work of Mintlaw Academy pupils. The exhibition provides an occasion for the students to take pride in their hard work through the display as well as participating in the organisation and implementation of the event. The open evening of the most recent exhibition was very well attended and included a speech by the head teacher and the raffling of three prints of students' work. Notable figures in attendance included Provost of Aberdeenshire Hamish Vernal and his wife; Dr Eilidh Whiteford MP; and local councillors. They were delighted with the presence of both current and former pupils, whose artworks were being exhibited, and commented upon the high standards achieved by the young people.



YPI Final 2017**N Grant**

This year all of our third year pupils took part in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) which is sponsored by the Wood Group. YPI encourages pupils to investigate social issues in their own community and research charities that provide support to people living with these issues. In groups pupils then had to select a social issue and charity that meant something to them, visit the charity and make up a presentation about them. We held heats within the classrooms and each group battled it out in the hope of reaching a place in the final where they had the opportunity to win £3000 to hand over to their charity.

Six groups made it through to our final which was held on Thursday 16th March supporting the following charities: LGBT Youth, Kayleigh's Wee Stars, CLAN, SANDS, Befriend A Child and Friends of Anchor. Families and charity representatives were invited along to the evening which was a huge success with the pupils showcasing their excellent presentation skills and group work. The pupils really had put a great deal of work into their presentations, making up videos, animations, interactive quizzes and reading out personal stories. The level of improvement in their presentation skills from the heats to the final was amazing to see and the pupils delivered their presentations with confidence.

The six final groups should all be extremely proud of themselves but in the end there had to be a winner and this was the group who supported SANDS - Stillbirth & Neonatal Death Charity. The girls (Rhimini Kerr, Chloe Adams, Amie Brighton & Abigail Elliot) were hugely compassionate about the issue and the charity as two of the girls in the group had been personally affected by tragic events within their families. The girls displayed admirable strength reading out stories and showing photos of their siblings, it was a very emotional presentation and I doubt there were many dry eyes in the audience. The girls were delighted with their win as they were able to hand over £3000 to SANDS which will be put towards the toadstool garden in Aden Park and the purchase of cooling cots to be used in the local area.

Overall YPI was a huge success again this year, raising awareness of local issues and charities and developing lots of key skills within our pupils which will help them with later life.

Mintlaw Academy PTA**PTA Committee**

The Mintlaw Academy PTA would like to thank all who took part in their recent Snowflake Raffle by either selling or buying tickets. The draw raised an incredible £1396.

The next fundraiser is the Annual PTA Duck Race to be held on Wednesday 24th May in Aden Park. Ducks cost £2 each with £10 to the winner of each race. Race sheets and ducks can be obtained from Mr McLean in Technical or from any PTA committee member.

Many thanks from the PTA Committee for your continued support.

Exam Timetable

The Easter holidays are a crucial time for pupils in S4-6 preparing for their exams. The dates of the exams are on the SQA website and pupils have been issued with a booklet 'Your Exams 2017 - what you need to know' to help them prepare. This has advice and information to help pupils fulfil their potential in the exams. On the back cover of this booklet there is a tear off card for pupils to record their personal details and Scottish Candidate Number (SCN). They should complete this card and bring it to every exam. If, for any reason, a pupil does not have a copy of this booklet they should see Mr Oldham at the beginning of next term.

The exam timetable for the school will be on the exam notice board before the end of Term 3 and this will have the start and finish times of the exams on it. Pupils will be issued with their personalised exam timetable during the first week back after the Easter break. This will show their seat number and room as well as the times for the different exams. Pupils with Additional Assessment Arrangements (AAA) will be issued with a personalised exam timetable by the Additional Support Needs (ASN) department which they should follow. A letter has been issued to all pupils in S4-6 giving details and dates of study leave and induction for new S5 and S6 pupils. Assemblies at the beginning of Term 4 will also be used to go over exam procedures.

Revision

A structured programme of revision must be undertaken over the Easter holidays. Pupils should be doing a number of hours of revision each day over the break and in the lead up to their exams. They should vary the subjects that they revise as well as the activities that they do when they are revising. They should be active when they revise - attempting past papers, making summary notes, or listing key terms and definitions are all examples of effective revision strategies.

Past papers and mark schemes are also available from the SQA website. Please use the past paper finder available at the following address:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers/findpastpaper.htm>

In order to help pupils plan their revision every S4-6 pupil sitting exams this session has been issued with an SQA Exam revision planner. An electronic version of this can be found on the school website. Pupils will be encouraged to use this to break down what can seem a daunting task into manageable 'chunks'. As a starting point pupils are asked to think about how they performed in the recent prelim examinations and target those units or topics where they feel that their knowledge, understanding and skills are not as strong as they need to be. They should then decide on what would be the best revision strategies to tackle these.

Exam results

These will arrive in the post on Tuesday 8th August by first class mail. We would encourage all pupils to register for 'MySQA'. Details of how to do this are in the 'Your Exams' booklet issued to all pupils. In addition, all S4-6 pupils have recently received a leaflet specifically about this service. Pupils should go to www.mysqa.info in order to activate their account so that results can be emailed or texted to them directly on the 8th August. In order to register they should have their Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) and a unique email address. They must register by 5.00pm on Monday 17th July.

Results Services.

SQA's Results Services have replaced the Appeals Service for all National Courses where an exam or coursework contributes to the final grade. More detail about the two services can be found at

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/65428.html>

Should you have any questions or concerns relating to these 'Results Services' please contact Mr Oldham: the SQA Coordinator for the school.

Study Leave

The last day for pupils in S4, S5 and S6 to be in school will be Friday 28th April. Study leave for S4, S5 and S6 will therefore begin on Tuesday 2nd May. 'New' S5 and S6 pupils should return to school after their last exam and begin their new timetable. Timetable change will be on Monday 15th May. Induction will take place on Tuesday 6th June for S5 and S6 pupils. Monday 5th June is a school holiday.

(S4 - S6) Senior School Uniform**N Robertson**

Academy Uniforms will be in school on Wednesday 26th April to measure and size students currently in S4 who will be staying on for S5 or any S5 student progressing to S6 who wishes to replace their blazer.

All S5 and S6 pupils are required to wear a blazer as part of the senior uniform. They can be purchased for £43.50 per blazer (minimum £10 deposit, the remaining £33.50 to be paid upon collection of blazer).

Pupils wishing to purchase a blazer should take in their £10 deposit on 26th April. Blazers may also be purchased online from Academy uniforms. Pupils forgetting to take their deposit can still pay online and arrange for free delivery to the school using MINTLAWFREE code, a note with the size required will be provided to all pupils fitted on Wednesday 26th April.

Blazers may also be leased from the school for £20 with a £10 returnable deposit.

Please note, current S5/S6 pupils leasing a blazer and leaving school this summer should return their blazer on Friday 28th April or hand in to the office during study leave.

(S1-6) Recycled Uniforms**N Robertson**

If you have any school uniform items; shirts, trousers, jumpers or blazers, that are still in good condition but are no longer of use to you, please hand in to the office.

S1- S2

As part of the core health programme for schools, S1 pupils will be offered an introductory health assessment appointment with the School Nurse. This includes a distance vision test and a colour vision test. Details of the assessment can be found in the leaflet "An introduction to your child's named school nurse" which was issued earlier this term.

There will be a catch-up session for pupils who missed HPV vaccination on the 7th June.

All pupils

Can we ask that parents remind their children of the importance of good hand hygiene to prevent the spread of illness. We also advise that children remain off school for at least 48 hours after symptoms have settled with any vomiting and diarrhoea illness.

If any pupil has to take medication at school, please note that written consent is required. Forms are available from the medical room.

Online payments for school meals and consumable charges**N Robertson**

Pupils use their National Entitlement cards to make purchases at catering counters and can put money on their card via the Revaluation units at the Academy. Parents can also top up or credit pupil's cards online (and view what pupils have purchased), using the online payment facility via the Aberdeenshire Council web page Pay option. Parents are required to register onto the facility using the "MyAccount" portal, instructions are available on the Aberdeenshire Council School Meals web pages. Once successfully done this will take you to the iPayimpact facility, where you will require the unique reference code to link to pupil's accounts (separate codes for each pupil). These codes will be re-issued to parents after the Easter holidays. Consumable charges will be added in due course using this facility, allowing parents to pay online if they wish, as you do for school meals.

For more detailed information on paying for school meals online, please view this web link - <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/meals/cashless-catering-in-secondary-schools/>

Alerts System - Aberdeenshire Council**N Robertson**

If you used to receive email alerts from Aberdeenshire Council, (e.g., school closure), "MyAccount" has been introduced which will allow you to receive notifications but also provide access to other public services using a single username and password. To receive notifications you must register at <https://mygov.scot/myaccount/> and then select the alerts you wish to receive. If you pay for school meals online then you will already have a "MyAccount" setup and can use the same login details to access the new system.

Absence Procedure**Office**

Could parents/carers please call the academy to report an absence as soon as you can that day. You can call **01771 620000** and leave a message at any time. Please leave pupils name, class and reason for absence. Thank you in advance.

Follow us on Twitter!**L Simpson**

A number of Faculties and Departments now have Twitter accounts, with news, photos and updates of the wide variety of activities and achievements of our pupils and staff.

Mintlaw Academy	@MintlawAcademy
Developing Young Workforce	@MintlawDYW
Home Economics Department	@MintlawHomeEc
Music Department	@MintlawMusic
Science Faculty	@MintlawSci
Social Subjects Faculty	@mintlawsocsub
Support and Challenge	@Mintlaw_SandC
Technology Faculty	@Mintlawtech

Celebrating Success**N Robertson**

Staff will soon be nominating for our Awards Ceremony which will take place on 15th June 2017. Throughout the year, we also like to share pupil and staff successes through our good news bulletin on the website. If you have any such news to share, please let us know by emailing mintlaw.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Groupcall messenger - improving how we communicate with you**N Robertson**

We will write to parents next term about Groupcall messenger and how it should improve communication, for example, you will be able to directly reply to texts from the school and we won't be so restricted in the length of text we can send. We will need up-to-date contact information for parents, including mobile numbers and email addresses. Look out for this next term.....

PTA Mega Draw Winners



	January	February	March
Prize £70	Sheila Keith	Jodie Burnett	Edna Pearson
Prize £35	Rona McDonald	T Donaldson	Malcolm Whyte
Prize £15	Mrs E McLean	John Willox	Charlene Duthie
Prize £10	Angie Crighton	Edna Pearson	Paula Rawson

Dates for your Diary 2016/17

Start of Term 4	Tuesday 18 th April
May Day	Monday 1 st May
SQA Exams Begin	Tuesday 2 nd May
Timetable Change	Tuesday 2 nd May
SQA Exams End	Friday 2 nd June
Occasional Day	Monday 7 th June
Awards Ceremony (tbc)	Thursday 15 th June
P7 Visits & P7 Parents Evening	Wednesday 21 st June
P7 Visits	Thursday 22 nd June
P7 Visits	Friday 23 rd June
Activity Week - Workshops	Tuesday 27 th June
Activity Week - Trips	Wednesday 28 th June
Activity Week - House Challenge	Thursday 29 th June
End of Term 4	Friday 30 th June
In Service	Monday 21 st August
Start of Term 1 - 2017/18	Tuesday 22 nd August