



# Elgin Academy Newsletter

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## Head Teacher's News

Welcome to the third newsletter of the academic year, a year which is passing very quickly, with this edition of the newsletter giving a very good reflection of the busy learning environment provided at Elgin Academy. Thoughts are turning in S4 - S6 to the prelim exams, due to take place after Christmas – parents should have received a letter detailing arrangements for study leave. Our clear hope at this stage is that all pupils in these year groups are already engaging in study and revision in preparation for these important exams.

If you have been to the school recently, you will have seen how construction of the new building is progressing. Much work remains to be done in preparation for the move, but there is certainly a tangible growing sense of excitement in the school.

With best wishes for the rest of the term.

David Barnett  
Head Teacher

## Strictly Come Scottish Dancing!

Elgin Academy is a school full of talent and, for charity, we have decided to showcase some of that talent on the evening of Wednesday 14 December. We will be hosting our own version of the popular TV show, Strictly Come Dancing, but instead of rumbaing and tangoing we'll be reeling and two-stepping! Ten brave S6 and staff couples are about to embark on arduous hours of training, without resident dancing coaches, to ensure they put in the best performance possible on the night. Pupils will be able to follow the progress of our ten couples on the plasma screens and through regular updates in the school bulletin. Pick your favourite couple, watch their progress and come along on Wednesday 14 December to show your support and find out who will be named "Strictly Come Scottish Dancing" champions. All proceeds from the night will be donated to Children in Need.

More details will be issued shortly.

## New S3 Curriculum

All S2 parents have received a letter outlining planned changes to the S3 Curriculum, in line with Curriculum for Excellence guidelines. In concurrence with the Moray Council and Education Scotland (HMIE), we have produced a curriculum plan that captures the spirit of Curriculum for Excellence. This requires a major shift in perspective for all from the traditional views of the curriculum when the secondary phase was deemed to be too narrow-focused and exam-driven.

In previous years, a great deal of dialogue centred around attainment and the coursing of pupils for exams. Pupils (S1-S3) will now follow a Broad General Education (BGE) which will allow them to experience a greater depth and breadth of learning. In S3, all pupils will continue to study Expressive Arts, Language and Literacy, Health & Wellbeing, Mathematics and Numeracy, Religious and Moral Education, Sciences, Social Studies and Technologies. This equates to Maths (4 periods), English (4 periods), Modern Languages (2), PE (2), RME (1) Home Economics (1) PSE (1) and Technical (1). In addition, a degree of personalisation has been built into the curriculum as follows:

- Pupils will continue to study two Social Subjects, two Sciences and two Expressive Arts (2 periods for each)
- Pupils may also elect to study a third Science, Social Subject, Expressive Art, a second Modern Language or computing (2 periods)

Further information regarding this curriculum plan will be available at a Parents' Information Evening to be held in the school hall on Monday 28 November 2011 at 7.00pm. There will be an opportunity for questions and to find out how the experiences and outcomes within the Broad General Education (BGE) relate to the S4-S6 Curriculum.



*Pupils from Elgin Academy Lossiemouth High and Gordonstoun come together - see page 4*

# International Issues

Prior to the October break our pupils in S2 had an International flavour to their studies culminating in presentations at an assembly on the Friday afternoon. All departments took part and the themes included:

- Picasso's war paintings
- The effects of war on children
- Breads produced by cereals grown on different farms around the world
- Origins of games and the chance to play them- Gaelic football, Kabadi, handball
- Time differences between different countries and calculating journey times for global travel, organising a travel itinerary between different time zones, lowest costs, direct route....
- Sustainable resources in different countries
- International terrorism working with NATO and the European Union
- Different currencies and how they relate to the economy
- Organising a Fair Trade raffle
- Short performances on discrimination
- International business presenters addressing pupils in the hall
- Study of Samba rhythms
- Aid to Ashanti which examines different aid options for a fictional village
- Salsa dancing
- International writers
- Scots abroad

Feedback from the pupils suggested this to be a very positive experience - it is clear they were engaged in the activities and found them very enjoyable and rewarding.



# Elgin Academy Active Schools Programme

Activity	Day	Location	Dates	Times	Year Group	Cost
Trampolining (need 12 to run session)	Mon	Small Gym	31/10/11-12/12/11	3.30-5.00	S1-6	£12
Fit For Girls (Cheer/gymnastics)	Mon	Small Hall	31/10/12-12/12/11	3.30-4.30	S1-6	FREE or £1
Basketball Elgin Eagles	Tues	Small gym Games Hall	1/11/11-13/12/11	3.45-4.55 5.00-6.00	S1-S3 P5-7	£2 per wk
Netball	Tues	Games Hall	1/11/11-13/12/11	3.30-5.00	S1-6	£12
Badminton	Wed	Games Hall	2/11/11-14/12/11	3.30-4.30	S1-S3	FREE
Badminton	Mon	Games Hall	31/10/11-12/12/11	3.30-4.30	S4- S6	FREE
Girls' Rugby	Thur	Morrison	31/8/11-5/10/11	4.00-5.00	S1-3	FREE



## Swimming Success

A number of pupils represented Elgin Academy at the recent Moray Schools Time Trials event held at Forres Academy. The pupils swam very well with Elgin Academy gaining a number of medals and pupils also gaining new personal best times. The pupils were Erin Mills (2 Gold Medals), Oscar Heald (2 Gold), James Hartley (1 Bronze), Neil Hawco (2 Silver), Eilidh Sandison (Personal best) and Inez Holliday (2 Gold). A huge well done to all pupils on their performance.

## Men Should Weep Theatre Trip

Intermediate 2 and Higher Drama pupils attended the performance of Men Should Weep, in His Majesty's Theatre Aberdeen on Thursday 3 November. The pupils were treated to an excellent production by the highly acclaimed National Theatre of Scotland. This play depicts a working class Glaswegian family, facing the harsh reality of life in the depression of the 1930's. This sobering production was highly engaging due to its well developed characters and naturalistic staging. Pupils commented on how captivating this "slice of life" was and felt humbled by its harrowing contents, made all the more effective knowing the production was based on reality.

## Holland Trip

Preparations are continuing at pace for Elgin Academy's annual trip to Holland. Parents are reminded that the next instalment of £70 will be due on Monday 5 December. All cheques must be made payable to "Elgin Academy Theme Park Trip" and should be handed to Mrs Lestienne in the Music Department. The passport forms should also be handed in to Miss Brown before the Christmas break.

## Thanks from ASDA

Dear Elgin Academy  
We would like to say a massive thank you for all your help and support during the fashion show 21 October 2011. We managed to raise an amazing £2409, which will all go to the Tickled Pink campaign. The pupils that helped and performed were really professional and did a fantastic job in making the fashion show the success it was. We hope they get the praise they deserve. Thank you once again.  
Emma and Lynne  
ASDA Community Colleagues

## Forensic Chemistry

Dr Paul Henderson from Heriot Watt University will be visiting the school on Friday 2 December to deliver a talk on 'Forensic Chemistry' to our S4 Chemistry students. Chemical analysis of samples from crime scenes is one of the important parts of the forensic process. The analysis of traces of paints, pigments, inks, solvents, drugs, toxins, and gunshot and explosive residues has led to the solving of many crimes. The talk aims to link the study of analytical chemistry to its forensic applications.

## Amnesty International

Elgin Academy's Amnesty International Youth Group led by S6 students raised awareness about the organisation at the S5/6 Parents' Evening. A high level of interest has been shown, and we would like to thank parents for their support. We would also hope to hear from anyone who wishes to find out more about Amnesty International and the campaigns that we are in the middle of organising. We would appreciate any help we can get!

*Brekhna Aftab*

## Maths Study Club

The Maths Study Club runs on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in Mr McFall's room (Y2) from 3.30pm to 4.30pm and has once again been well attended by pupils in the senior school, although there is plenty of space for new faces in forthcoming weeks as our focus shifts towards the prelim examinations in January.

The purpose of study club is to give pupils the opportunity to increase their familiarity with exam standard questions throughout the course of the year. Pupils across all levels from S4-S6 are encouraged to attend. Teachers from the Maths Department will be on hand on both afternoons from now until the May exams to help with exam questions, homework and also to answer any queries that pupils may not wish to ask in class.

Currently, the study club also has a guest joining us on Wednesday afternoons. Ethan Hew, a P7 from West End Primary School, attended the club last year and is continuing his studies in Higher Maths this year, having already achieved a Grade 1 at Standard Grade. Ethan is also attending one Higher lesson per week with Mr McFall's S5/6 class and is making good progress with the course.

## Maths Puzzle of the Month

The Maths Puzzle of the Month has restarted this month! Look out for this month's display in the Maths Department and return your solutions to Mr MacAndie by Thursday 1 December to be in with a chance of winning a £10 High Street voucher. Open to all from S1 to S6.

## World AIDS Day - 1 December 2011

As part of the S4 curriculum pupils in Standard Grade Modern Studies have been examining some of the problems faced by people in Africa. As well as conflict and debt, social issues such as AIDS and HIV have hindered development to a great extent. With this in mind Miss Sharp's S4 class have been conducting some in depth research into this particular area and the results of their findings may be shared at the next house assemblies.

# Interfaith Student Conference

Along with a number of pupils ranging from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> year I have taken part in workshops about Interfaith Dialogue. Interfaith Dialogue is all about open communications between people with different faiths and with those with no faith. This is something very important for improving the world we live in as a lot of problems are caused by intolerance and lack of communication. Although Interfaith Dialogue is not a term commonly heard in Moray, it is of vital importance in the central belt of Scotland.

Dr Sier, who is the Senior Project Officer for the Scottish Interfaith Council, initiated and ran the workshops we took part in. She is heavily involved in the work done in Glasgow relating to Sectarianism. The aim of the Scottish Inter Faith Council is to raise awareness of the different faith communities and to build good relations between persons of different religious faiths through dialogue, understanding and co-operation.

Elgin Academy was invited to take part in two workshops along with Gordonstoun and Lossiemouth High School. The first workshop was held by a very welcoming Gordonstoun who supplied us with a hearty lunch before our session started. The aim of the first workshop was to introduce us to the aims of Interfaith Dialogue and to get us all communicating openly. Needless to say, we were all rather shy to begin with but by the end conversation was flowing freely between all schools. It worked very well because as well as having people from different faiths we also broke down the barriers between different schools. In a somewhat prejudiced view, we all had a certain idea of what the other pupils were going to be like, in particular those from Gordonstoun. This, of course, turned out to be completely wrong and we found that they really aren't any different from ourselves. We all felt the first session was interesting and eye opening and were keen to attend the second.

The second workshop was held at Lossiemouth High where we were again warmly greeted. We were able to see faces we recognised from our previous workshop and so the atmosphere was a lot more relaxed. We continued to learn a lot more about the benefits of Interfaith Dialogue and



how effective it could be internationally. We took part in a lot of discussion, hearing other peoples view on topics such as abortion, immigration and bullying. This exercise was really interesting and useful as we heard things from a completely different perspective than our own. It also encouraged people to speak openly, encouraged us all to listen carefully and in some cases come up with a carefully thought out counter argument. This was to be the final workshop although some pupils were to go on and run a workshop at a teachers' conference in Findhorn.

However, we felt that the planned events had come to an abrupt end without us being able to say goodbye to the friends we had made. However, one of our members, Rosemary Nicol, attended a meeting for the launch of the '*Interfaith Dialogue*' manual in Edinburgh along with students from Lossiemouth and Gordonstoun where they conducted a workshop on dialogue with the high esteemed attendees. The Moray pupils were well received as they made everyone think hard and sometimes, controversially. The three schools were a real credit to themselves, their schools and to Moray.

Mr Tsotsi, who had been vital to our invitation and attendance at the workshops encouraged us to take the initiative, and take the 'Dialogue' workshops further. We felt that the other schools had been very hospitable and yet we had failed to return the same courtesy so we began planning a 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop to be held at Elgin Academy. We set a date and asked Dr Sier if she would be willing in organising the materials for a final workshop. She was delighted at our interest and came back with the idea of

our final topic '*Speak Up, Speak Out*'. This linked in very well with our previous two. We successfully managed to get the conference organised with much credit due to Rosemary and Brekhna, our two sixth year members, who ran about frantically in their free periods to make it all happen.

On Monday 7 November we were proud to host Gordonstoun and Lossiemouth students. Our canteen staff put on a glorious spread and we got stuck into discussion. Although it was awkward at first as we had some new attendees it was clear our effort had paid off when people spoke up and everyone else listened intently. Although our topic may have been serious as we made reference to the holocaust and discussed some of the dire consequences that are a result of no communication; the afternoon was not without laughter. We were all very pleased at the outcome of the event and we heartily thank Dr Sier for giving us the chance to experience something so interesting and useful. I feel very lucky to have been able to participate in the workshops. They have taught me a great deal and given me a lot to think about. It was also really rewarding to meet and share ideas with new people; this has given me more confidence in this area.

The next steps now are to consider the Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2012 where Dr Sier is organising a gathering of reflection, learning and action for some 2000 pupils from and around Dundee area. We would like to give special mention to our new Head Teacher, Mr Barnett, for being so accommodating in organising this successful conference for the three schools.

*By Kirsten Cooper, 5S*

## New School Progress

Construction is now in full swing with the courtyard area being completed so the area can be closed off. Render to the outside of the building is now being progressed to completion, and the external areas at the Morriston Road elevation are being made ready for completion. This has unfortunately meant that onsite parking for workers' vehicles is now very limited, and this is having an impact on local roads. The contractor has provided traffic cones to preserve entrances to driveways and has reminded all site workers of the need to park with consideration but there is inevitably an increase in congestion.

Inside the building all cabling and wiring is being done in classrooms ahead of decoration, doors and frames, suspended ceilings and floor finishes. Temporary heating is being provided through the underfloor heating system and hot air heating to ensure that the building is at a suitable temperature and humidity for the finishing trades.

Planning has also started on the transition to the new school, and all staff at the school have now had the opportunity to visit the new building, and further visits will be organised as work proceeds. We will shortly be arranging a meeting with the contractor who will help to move all the boxes of teaching resources and other equipment from the old school to the new. While this process is similar to that being done at Keith Primary School, the scale is, of course, much greater. Work has also commenced on developing a Travel Plan for the school, and this will include a representative from Bishopmill Primary School who are in close adjacency to the new Academy.

In view of the delay to work at Keith, there is keen interest in the progress of work at Elgin to ensure that handover takes place on the target date of 26 February 2012, and the contractor's programme is being closely scrutinised.

There are regularly updates photographs including aerial images showing work being done on the schools on the project website [www.moray.gov.uk/ppp](http://www.moray.gov.uk/ppp)

*Andy Oliver  
James Cruickshanks  
PPP Project Team*

## National Enterprising Maths Competition

On 13 November, a small group of S3 and S4 pupils travelled down to Glasgow to compete against 57 other schools from all over Scotland in the Enterprising Maths Competition Final. The group was comprised of two 4th years - myself and Calum Ferguson - and two third years - Phiona Rolls and Scott Adams. We were accompanied and supervised by Mr Hume, and we also met up with the competing team from Forres Academy and their teacher. We stayed at the Heritage Hotel, near the university where the final was to take place. It was very nice accommodation and we thoroughly enjoyed our short stay there. We went out to dinner with the Forres group in the evening and spent the rest of the night in anticipation of what the next day would bring—none of us had attended this particular competition before so we were unsure of what to expect.

Soon after arriving in the hall where the competition was to be held, all of our qualms dissipated. There were over 50 schools competing and although we really wanted to do well, we were more intent on just doing our best and enjoying this amazing opportunity we had been afforded. The morning was mainly taken up by sheets of questions we had to work through as a team and answer as many as we could within a set time limit. Each year, the competition is given a theme, and this year was Greek and Roman Gods - the problem solving and situation questions were about characters from mythology, and we thought this made the competition a little more interesting. Between the two rounds of problem-solving questions, we had a practical round. We were given a bag of connectors and asked to make a model of the Rhombicosidodecahedron they had illustrated on a piece of paper, as well as answering the accompanying questions, within a time limit. The round after lunch

was a round where we had to move as a group to six stations individually and complete the puzzles there. We were given points according to how well we completed the tasks, like crazy jigsaws among others. The final round included all of the teams being split up into pairs, with one pair staying at the same table and the other being moved. It was essentially a relay round - one pair would complete a question, run to the desk of the teacher marking our group and ask them to grade it - if it was right, they were given another question that they had to take to the other pair from their team. We managed about 7 questions in the time limit, which we were quite proud of.

The final was sponsored by The Actuarial Profession, so the award ceremony commenced with a short presentation by an actuary. Then, every school was awarded with participation certificates for each team's members, and the school was given a small trophy. They then went on to announce the runners up and winning team of the final. We unfortunately had to leave a little early to catch our train, but were in time to pick up a copy of the rankings - we were placed 30th out of 57 schools. We all really enjoyed the trip and the competition itself, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in organising our travel, accommodation and all other aspects.

*By Sophie Huby, 4M*



*National Enterprising Maths Contestants  
Scott Adams and Sophie Huby*

**Attendance - Appearance  
Attitudes - Ambition  
Attainment - Achievement**



## Life Drawing

Three of Elgin Academy's S6 pupils attended a life drawing course at Moray Art Centre recently (Sept/Oct). The course offered them the opportunity to not only work in a modern art studio but also to gain instruction and advice on their drawing from a very experienced artist, Diane Maine. The pupils involved were Rachel Horsburgh, Laura McFarlane and Katherine Nicholson. A selection of their drawings are currently on exhibition in the gallery space of Moray Art Centre along with the drawings created by pupils from Forres Academy, Elgin High, Lossiemouth High and Keith Grammar. This was a fantastic opportunity for the girls - they gained a valuable insight into different drawing techniques and enjoyed sharing the experience with students from the Moray area.

## Modern Languages

On Thursday 6 October 2011, as part of Elgin Academy's S2 International Week, the Modern Languages Department organised presentations about the importance of languages in our local businesses to promote international trade. Melissa Cunningham of Johnstons of Elgin, Brian Robinson of Glenfiddich, Marion Walker of Marion Walker Marketing, and Angus Robertson MP all shared their experiences with languages and explained how crucial it is to study languages to enhance our young people's employability and to give our business the edge in international markets. An extra language can make or break a deal and increase chances of being hired. For further details contact Mr Lestienne, Principal Teacher of Languages at Elgin Academy.

## Parent Council

The Parent Council met on Monday 7 November. Caroline Hambly was selected as the new Chair. Amongst issues discussed at the meeting were progress with the new school, fundraising, the new S3 curriculum structure and the school dress code. The next meeting of the Parent Council is scheduled for Monday 30 January 2012.

## Cross Country Success

On Wednesday 16 November 30 pupils from Elgin Academy represented the school in the Cross Country Championships held at Morriston playing fields. The pupils were asked to run a distance between 3 and 5 kilometres depending on their age. All pupils gave a great account of themselves in the way they behaved and the effort they gave in their races. The highlight of the day was Rhys Phillips (S1) who won the S1/2 boys event. His fellow S1/2 runners also ran very well which gave Elgin Academy the winners' trophy in the team event at this age group. This was a great day for all competitors, who all performed admirably. A huge thanks must also go to Carol Lawrie who managed the team and co-ordinated all the results for the Academy's runners.



## Maestro Music

On Thursday 3 November, 40 of our S5/6 music students enjoyed a concert given by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in Aberdeen. The music featured was composed by five composers with five very different styles of composition and was designed to compliment work in class for SQA exams. Our students enjoyed the experience of seeing and hearing an orchestra playing live and have given very positive feedback.

## Remembrance Assemblies

Special assemblies were held on Friday 11 November to mark Remembrance Day. The assemblies included a presentation by five S6 students, focussing on lives lost in all conflicts. Thank you to Miss McNeil in the History department for her support. School chaplains also contributed to the assemblies. A two-minute silence was observed by the whole school at 11.00am, the end of which was marked by the playing of "The Last Post" by S5 pupil Peter Summers.

## Diary Dates

Tues 6 December 2011- S4 Parents' Evening  
Fri 9 December 2011- Farmers' Market  
Mon 12 December 2011 - Music Concert  
Wed 14 December—Strictly Come Dancing  
Tues 13—Mon 19 December 2011 - Parties  
Wed 21 December 2011 - End of term  
Thurs 5 January 2012 - Start of term  
Wed 18 January 2012 - S2 Parents' Evening  
Thurs 9 February, Fri 10 February & Mon 13 February—Mid-term Holiday

## November News

Mr Porter in the PE department and Mr Clark in the English department are each growing a moustache for the men's cancer charity Movember. Please feel free to support them by making a donation at [www.movember.com/m/2208436](http://www.movember.com/m/2208436) (Mr Porter) or [www.movember.com/m/2421298](http://www.movember.com/m/2421298) (Mr Clark).