



# EA Elgin Academy

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Head Teacher: Margaret A Cowie BSc

**Our Ref :** MAC/WA

**Date :** 6 March 2009

To Parent/Carers of All Students

Dear Parent/Carer

## Newsletter March 2009

Elgin Academy never stands still. Indeed it is part of the privilege of working with young people that we are never bored. Much has happened since I last wrote to you just before Christmas.

### **Noises Off**

The first academy production in a decade, Noises Off, was a huge success with a full house on both nights, a cast of over a hundred students and a different set of principals each night. The standard of acting of our young people was truly awe inspiring and our thanks must go to all staff involved in making this production possible, but particularly to Miss Ogg, our Principal Teacher of Drama. We hope it will not be another 10 years till the next production.

### **Staff changes**

Mr Alastair Rossetter retired as Depute Head Teacher of the Academy at the February break after 19 years of service. In addition to work as DHT, Mr Rossetter had two periods as Acting Head. The most prolonged one was during the illness of the late Mr Norman Strachan but he also "acted up" during the period between Mr Brown leaving and my own appointment. We are very grateful to the years of dedicated service that he gave to the school and wish him a long and happy retirement. Mr Rossetter's place on the Senior Leadership Team has been taken by Mrs Lindsay Salvage, perhaps more familiar to you as Miss Malcolm, Principal Teacher of Physical Education. Mrs Salvage's appointment has left a vacancy in the PE department which is currently being filled in an acting capacity by Mr David Porter until a permanent appointment is made.

More promotions – Mrs Lesley Williamson who has been an active member of the English department, was promoted to Principal Teacher of English at Speyside High School and left to take up her new post at the February break.

Mr Allan Reid of the Physics department has been seconded by The Moray Council to train staff in the use of GLOW. For those who do not know, GLOW is the world's first national intranet for education which is currently being rolled out across Scotland.

The Modern Languages department is unfortunately suffering a staffing shortage at present due to the illness of Mrs Ann Drysdale and the fact that Mrs Lindsay Lyall has now gone on maternity leave. We are currently advertising for a teacher to fill the gap created and I hope to have a satisfactory solution soon. In the meantime we are grateful to supply staff and the hard work of the remaining members of the department who do their utmost to make sure that the students do not suffer.

## **PPP Update**

You may be aware from the Press that The Moray Council has now selected the two bidders who will compete for the contract to build the new Elgin Academy. Final tenders are expected in July and the Council hopes to appoint a single preferred bidder in September. It appears that the project is on track for our new school to open at Easter 2012.

## **A Curriculum for Excellence**

In line with all other schools, Elgin Academy staff is considering how best to implement the government's plan for the new curriculum for Scotland. This will involve major changes to the curriculum as we know it. To allow teachers to plan more effectively the government has granted three extra In-service days over the next three years. For Elgin Academy and associated primaries the first of these will be taken on **Thursday 4 June 2009**, so the school will be closed to students on that day. In 2010 and 2011 the extra day will be taken in November.

## **How Are We Doing?**

At this time of year we ask ourselves "how are we doing?" and "how do we know?". To help us answer these questions we need feedback from you, the parents, members of the community, members of staff and, of course, the students themselves. We do this in a variety of ways including questionnaires, focus groups shadowing classes, etc. However, we would like parents to help us by completing a very simple questionnaire which you will find accompanying this newsletter. Please give us your views and help us to improve Elgin Academy and the education provided for your young people.

## **Consultation on The Structure of the School Day in Secondary Schools**

You may also have read in the Press that The Moray Council is proposing that all secondary schools move to a 32 period week model (plus 10 minutes per day for registration). A paper by Mr G Sinclair, Head of Educational Development Services outlining the reasons for the proposals can be found on the school website.

Under these arrangements the lunch break would be shortened to 40 minutes and there would be two "longer" days with school ending at 3.40pm, and three "shorter" days ending at 2.50pm.

The authority wishes us to gather the views of parents to this proposal and to that end you will find a response form to the three proposals attached to the newsletter. Please return your completed response form to the school office along with the "how are we doing" questionnaire.

## **News from the Parent Council**

The Parent Council continues to meet to support the work of the school. A new plasma screen donated by the Parent Council is currently being installed in the foyer. This will allow us to post information on a daily basis for staff, students and visitors and to display some aspects of the work of the school. If this initiative proves successful it is planned to install a second screen in the canteen area where it will be more easily viewed by students.

The Council are planning to set up a new "200 Activities club" to raise funds to support the activities week held every May for S1-3 and the variety of school trips which enhance the experience of our students. In these days of financial constraint which affects every school this support is extremely welcome and I would urge you consider supporting the work of the school in this way.

Further details of the work of the Parent Council are available from the chair, Mrs Jackie Andrews who can be contacted via the school office.

The next meeting of the Parent Council is on Monday 27 April at 7.30pm in the school. All parent/carers are welcome to attend any meeting.

## Future Events

6 March	S6 Equal Opportunities Seminar
25 March	Company of Cyclists visiting the school
27 March	School closes for Easter Holiday
13 April	School opens
21 April	Senior Art Exhibition, 7-9pm
27 April	S3 exams begin
4 May	May Day holiday
4 May	Start of S4 study leave
5 May	SQA exams begin
12 May	S1 Parents' Evening
13 May	Start of S5/6 study leave
21 May	INSET day (School)
22 May	INSET day (Authority)
25 May	Activity Day
26 May	Activity Day
27 May	Activity Day
1 June	Start of new S1-S3 timetable
4 June	INSET day
5 June	S6 Prom
8 June	New S5/6 Induction
9 June	New S5/6 Induction
12 June	SQA exams end
22 June	Awards ceremony
24 June	P7 visit
25 June	P7 visit
25 June	P7 Parents' evening
2 July	School Closes

Yours sincerely



Margaret A Cowie  
Headteacher

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