

FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Elgin Academy is a very good school. During his visit David Gregory HMIE commented that he had never seen such well behaved young people in any school he had visited. Our young people are polite and keen to learn. They are happy, feel safe and enjoy learning.

As parents and staff we are right to be proud of our young people.

In the recent HMIE inspection, three areas were described as good

- Improvements in performance
- Learners' experiences
- The curriculum

The HMIE inspection also identified areas for improvement. These areas were

- Self evaluation
- Meeting learning needs

Both of these were described as weak and the Senior Leadership team is committed to working with staff to ensure that these areas are addressed.

Please read the report carefully and not simply the press reports which can be misleading. I would also draw your attention to the attainment information and questionnaire summaries which are available as an appendix to the report.

The parent council has asked to include a letter to parents in this newsletter and I would direct your attention to it.

In the meantime I hope that the information in this newsletter will help to make you aware of the many good features of Elgin Academy.

I look forward to continuing to work together with parents and members of the community for the benefit of all our young people.



Headteacher

New state-of-the-Art Building for the Academy

The long awaited announcement on who would build the new Academy came on Friday 27th November when it was revealed that the successful bidders were the INPP consortium comprising the Aberdeen based building company, Stewart Milne, Operon Ltd from Leeds and International Public Partnerships. Building work is set to commence in the late spring/early summer and to be completed by January 2012. As well as classrooms, a games hall, gym, fitness suite and dance studio there will be a full size floodlit all weather pitch, as well as two grass pitches. The new school will also have enhanced facilities for the full range of pupil support and a community room which can be accessed by parents and local groups in and out of school hours. On Tuesday 8th December there will be a public meeting from 6pm till 7.30 pm when all are invited to meet the architects and contractor and comment on the plans. Throughout the school day all students will have the same opportunity.

Bin it to Win it – A Nintendo Wii

As part of our ongoing campaign to make Elgin Academy a litter free zone staff and senior students were given raffle tickets to hand out. Any student seen using the litterbins or picking up litter without prompting would have their name written on a ticket. The draw will take place on Tuesday 22nd December and the winner will take home a Nintendo Wii console and games. Thanks to **Mansell's** for their generous sponsorship of this event.

Remembrance Day

The staff and students of the academy stood in silence for two minutes on the 11th November to remember those who have given their lives in conflict. The end of the silence was marked by a very moving rendition of the Last Post by Peter Summers 3G.

St Andrew's Day

The St Andrew's Day celebrations went with a swing. Staff and students were welcomed to the sound of the pipes played by Chris Hyndman in S4, many staff and students wore kilts or splashes of tartan, the canteen served a special Scottish menu at lunchtime followed by musical entertainment by staff and students in the hall and some departments followed a Scottish theme eg Modern Languages where S2's were given quizzes/games in French/German to help them reflect on the influence of Scottish people/language in the world throughout history.

Elgin Academy Gets Glowing!

During the November In-Service days teachers at Elgin Academy received their introductory training in the use of Glow, the new Scottish schools intranet. Offering the communication and collaboration benefits of the internet, but in a secure password-protected environment, Glow has the potential to revolutionise Learning and Teaching in Scottish schools.

Once staff have been given a chance to familiarise themselves with the new technology, pupil rollout can begin in the new year. Further information about Glow can be found at:

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/glowscotland/index.asp>

Othello at the Citizens

60 of our Higher English students attended a drama workshop and matinee performance of 'Othello' at the Citizens' Theatre in Glasgow at the end of October. This was a really good opportunity for the students who attended as they are studying 'Othello' as part of the Higher course. Despite this being a very long day the students got involved in the workshop and were a credit to the school, both in terms of their attitude and their behaviour.

Artistic Talent!!

Pupils in Mrs Templeton's S2 classes were asked to design a postcard with the theme of Art to be used by the Art & Design department. The quality of work produced was excellent and made the selection process very difficult for the Art department. The winning designs have been made into postcards and will be sent home to individual pupils in recognition and acknowledgement of pupil achievements in Art & Design.

Congratulations to the winners:

Katie Yeats 2S
Laura Taylor 2S
Phillip Burgess 2S
Lorna Taylor 2M
Danielle Campbell 2M
Josh Cruickshanks 2M
Lauren Cooney 2G
Rebecca McHugh 2G

Advanced Higher Biology Class - Cancer Challenge

During October the Advanced Higher Biology class were set a challenge to raise awareness of cancer within the school. Abnormal cell growth is part of the Advanced Higher course and this year the pupils were challenged to link what they had learned in class with wider Health and Wellbeing issues at a whole school level. To support them in their task Dr Andy Schofield, from the University of Aberdeen, was invited in to the department as part of the Techfest activities to deliver a very motivating lecture on the topic 'When I grow up I want to be a Cancer Cell'.



Within the school Mrs Meisner annually encourages staff to support the 'Wear it Pink' breast cancer campaign and this session it was opened up to pupils. In addition over twenty male members of staff are supporting the 'Movember' campaign for Prostate cancer throughout November with the initial encouragement and example set by Mr Abenheimer.

The Advanced Higher pupils were able to link these initiatives and raise awareness throughout the school. Gregor Adamson and Emily Stewart developed and coordinated material for a corridor display. Jessica Knox, Grant Mills and Brittany Smith delivered a very informative presentation to all year groups at assemblies. Kayla Kilian, Stephen McInnes and Jason Stanley designed a poster for the 'Wear it Pink' campaign in school. Lynsey Blair, Helena Paterson and Heather Smith worked with Mrs Meisner on fund raising. Mrs Meisner would like to thank Walkers of Aberlour, Tesco and Marks and Spencer for their kind donations for the fundraising activities.

The class are to be congratulated on their efforts throughout this challenge; the total raised this session was £572.45. In addition their hard work helped to raise awareness amongst pupils of the importance of lifestyle choices in relation to health. The department hope to continue this theme next year and Dr Andy Schofield will also be returning to the school at the end of November to talk to the Higher classes on 'The Human Genome'.

Dates for your Diary

December 3rd –S1 parents evening
December 8th – New Building open evening
December 10th – “The Pampered Chef “ evening
December 14th – Christmas concert
December 15th – S1/2 Dance
December 16th - S3/4 Dance
December 17th – Senior Dance
December 22nd _ Bin it to win it Draw
 Christmas assemblies
 School closes

January 7th School opens
January 14th –S4 prelims begin
January 15th – S2 reports
January 25th S5/6 prelims begin
January 26th and February 2nd –S2 Parents evenings.

Christmas Concert

The annual Christmas concert will take place on Monday 14th December at 7pm. This is an event not to be missed as the standard of music in the Academy is extremely high. Tickets are now on sale from the Music department, £4 each or 3 tickets for £10.

Donations for the raffle would be greatly appreciated.

Raising Funds – your help needed

A Fundraising Group is being established in the school to raise money for school funds. Given the current financial climate, the school can no longer subsidise the numerous projects and activities that enhance students’ experience at Elgin Academy.

These include Activities Days, extra-curricular events and transport, achievement and attainment awards, residential trips and S6 celebratory activities. We already have a group of committed staff and pupils on this group and would very much like any interested parents/carers to join and help us. Our calendar of events for the coming session includes bag-packing, a cookery book, a sponsored school walk, a summer festival and a Burns’ Night Celebration. If you are interested in joining this group or feel that you could help in any way, please contact Mrs Salvage on the school number.

Fundraising Event

Elgin Academy’s first fundraising event of the year – ‘The Pampered Chef’ – is being held at school on Thursday 10th December. All parents and staff are invited along to an evening of cookery demonstration and entertainment with the opportunity to buy some fantastic Christmas presents for family and friends! Tickets cost £4 and include a small Christmas refreshment with all proceeds from ticket sales plus 15% of product sales going to school funds. Your son/daughter will be able to purchase tickets on your behalf from Mrs Salvage or Mrs Lawrie (reception); they will also be on sale at lunchtimes (12.40–1.30pm) in the main foyer - all support is much appreciated.

From the parent council
ELGIN ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

29 November 2009

Dear Parent Forum Member

HMIE Inspection Report – Elgin Academy

At the last meeting of Parent Council, the recently published HMIE Report was discussed at some length, with Mrs Cowie outlining the various aspects of the Report and the impact that this will have on Elgin Academy. Once agreed, the Notes of this meeting will be available on the Elgin Academy Website for your perusal.

It became clear during the meeting that one outcome of the Report for Parents is the concern that attainment within Elgin Academy is poor and for that reason, I am writing to you today in an attempt to alleviate your concerns regarding this very important matter. In attainment and achievement the academy was rated “Good”.

The figures which I am about to quote are readily available at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/scottishschoolsonline/> should you wish to confirm these.

The 20 comparator schools for Elgin Academy are mostly based in the Central Belt and generally speaking are some of the most successful and sought after schools in Scotland; as far as Moray Education Authority is concerned, Elgin Academy has one of the highest attainment rates.

For your information (and I apologise to those of you who are aware of this), Standard Grades, Highers etc are all levelled on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) – **4** = Int 1 A-C or SG 3-4; **5** = Int 2 A-C or SG 1-2; **6** = Higher A-C; **7** = Adv Higher A-C.

Percentage of S4 gaining 5 or more level 5 or better by end of S4 (Standard grades at Credit level)	2007	2008	2009
Elgin Academy	40	48	49
Comparator Schools	40	45	45
National	33	34	35
Percentage of S4 gaining 5 or more level 6 or better by end of S5 (Highers)	2007	2008	2009
Elgin Academy	11	10	12
Comparator Schools	13	13	14
National	10	10	10
Percentage of S4 gaining 5 or more level 6 or better by the end of S6 (Highers)	2007	2008	2009
Elgin Academy	17	23	26
Comparator Schools	26	25	28
National	19	20	20
Percentage of S4 gaining 1 or more level 7 or better by the end of S6 (Advanced Highers)	2007	2008	2009
Elgin Academy	10	19	18
Comparator Schools	16	17	18
National	12	13	13

What this means in layman's terms is that Elgin Academy, despite the content and outcome of the recent HMIE Report, is performing in most cases *equal to or above* comparator schools and in nearly every case *well above the national average*. The table also shows that over the past three years, attainment in Elgin Academy has been getting steadily better.

I hope that this has gone some way to alleviating some of the concerns you may have had regarding attainment in Elgin Academy.

The Headteacher and her staff are well aware of some of the failings of Elgin Academy and those which have been highlighted in the Report were already being targeted for development work. It is important that we as a parent body continue to support this work and ensure that the follow up Report for Elgin Academy reflects this.

Should you wish to discuss this any further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Jackie Andrews
Chair – Elgin Academy Parent Council