

Dalry Secondary School



Message from the Headteacher



What a busy and productive start we have had to session 2019-20. Our new S1 pupils have settled in well to secondary school life and are no longer getting lost or wondering what their next class might be. Along with the older learners, they have been encouraged to contribute to the 'pupil voice' and have elected their representative for the pupil council which has a vital role in suggesting improvements and contributing to whole school improvement.

During this term, we are delighted to have appointed Mr McFarlane as Principal Teacher of Pupil Support. Mr McFarlane will continue in his role as teacher of geography; personal, social and health education; and religious studies but has now also taken over all aspects of pastoral support. Mr McFarlane would normally be your point of contact for any matters relating to your child's well-being.

I have congratulated the S4 group who sat SQA exams in the recent diet and who are now settled as learners in Castle Douglas High School or have moved on to Further Education opportunities. All therefore, are maintaining their chosen positive destination. I have also congratulated our hard- working staff who play a huge part in preparing your young people to succeed. I would now like to congratulate the parent forum, as you too contribute significantly to the success your child achieves in their exams. Young people at Dalry Secondary continue to achieve excellent SQA examination results and are a credit to themselves and their families.

In response to parental feedback and as part of our school's improvement planning, this session we are introduce a monitoring and tracking system across the school. This is now well underway and you will have received a report on the progress your child is making either in the Broad General Education, (S1-S3) or in the Senior Phase, (S4). Our aim is that by the end of this session parents will feel that they have been kept more up-to-date with the progress their child is making within curriculum for excellence levels and towards achieving their SQA targets. The tracking and monitoring system will also allow us to identify any issues early and to intervene should any concerns be apparent that a young person may not be fulfilling their potential.

The school's parent council has previously supported our efforts to mitigate against many of the budget cuts that we are facing. In addition, we are very fortunate to benefit from the relentless fundraising efforts of FoDS who help us enhance the curriculum and offer extra-curricular opportunities we would not otherwise be able to do. Thanks to the excellent work of the parent council of CDHS who, following a successful bid for funding, have made it possible for us to be able to offer free transport to all pupil curricular and extra-curricular activities across the Castle Douglas/Dalry Secondary partnership for this session, while the funding lasts. It is important, however, for parents to be aware that this funding is currently for one session only and we could find ourselves back struggling to subsidise transport for session 2020-21.

A challenge facing the school, and highlighted to the Parent Council, is the 'cost of the school day' budget. This was a budget that was cut by the local council at the February 2019 budget setting exercise. This budget ensured that young people who were following courses in Home Economics did not have to pay for the food they were learning to cook and those young people who were following courses in Technical subjects did not have to pay for the wood or metal they were using in the classroom. For session 2019-20 we have received 50% of the 'cost of the school day' funding and for session 2020-21 this budget will no longer exist. In school we have been mitigating against these cuts by altering the curriculum we are offering. This means that in

Home Economics in the Broad General Education, S1-S3, more Health & Food Technology content has been introduced reducing the amount of cooking for the young people. The aim here is twofold, firstly to reduce the cost in terms of food being used and secondly to introduce a pathway for more young people to be able to attain a Higher grade pass in the senior school at CDHS as Health & Food Technology can be taken to Higher level but Hospitality only to National 5 level.

Unfortunately, the good work of the Parent Council is in jeopardy as the scheduled AGM had to be cancelled as there were no parent attendees other than Mr Johnstone. Without an AGM, there can be no Parent Council and I would urge you all, as members of the parent forum to consider stepping up to play your part to enable the school to have a Parent Council able to reflect the parent voice and to support the school in providing the best possible educational experience for your young people.

James Smith

Headteacher



WAA

The focus for our Wider Achievement Activities (WAA) Wednesday afternoons this term and next is in preparation for a whole school performance



of Cinderella. Aside from those working towards an outdoor learning qualification through the John Muir Award, the young people have taken on roles either performing on stage or providing back stage expertise. Rehearsals are well underway (oh yes they are!) and it promises to be a fabulous performance you won't want to miss. Thank you to the Fox and Hound Theatre Company for assisting us, providing their professional expertise. Further details to follow.

Meanwhile, this term the school is also running a John Muir award scheme which focuses on local conservation issues. The pupils have been learning about the importance of wild food in autumn to both the local animals and humans. As part of the conservation work, they have



been busy restoring the school pond, which has become very overgrown and have started clearing all the weeds from the old pond and started to think about an updated design for a new pond, including thinking about what wildlife would be attracted to the pond and how they can add different features to aid this.

We look forward to enjoying our new pond and the wildlife it attracts.

Pupil Council

Last session we had an active pupil council that met regularly and played an important role in helping us shape improvements to the school environment. This session we plan to extend this to include pupil voice in shaping and embedding our school improvement planning in a wider reaching way. This will be led by Mr Cathro who has now taken over as chairperson of the pupil council. We are very pleased that the young people have now appointed/elected their representatives for this session who will now fulfil their roles as leaders within the school community.



Heads of House and
Pupil Council
representatives
2019/20



National Poetry Day



This year is the 25th anniversary of the establishment of World Poetry Day and Mrs Newbery involved pupils in making some thoughtful displays of poetry getting us all to think about what truth means and how different perceptions can impact on our thinking.

Our school library is an invaluable resource and is available for supported study/homework completion during lunchtimes on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The well-being nook is also available as a quiet space with literature that promotes positive mental health.

Macmillan Coffee morning

On 27th September, S2 pupils organised and ran a hugely successful fund raiser for charity, which was also a great social event thanks to the support from the wider community and the primary school. There was a range of delicious home baking to enjoy over a cuppa and to take home as well as games, bric a brac and a fabulous themed cake. Sorry, with all the excitement of the event, we forgot to take any photos! The total raised was a fantastic £484.71.

Community Choir

We are delighted to have some new members who have joined our group of singers on Wednesday afternoons from 3.30 but we do have room for more! It is very informal and fun and a great stress buster after a busy day (or not). We have decided due to the commitment needed for the panto that we will have a break until after Christmas but thereafter, anyone of any age is welcome to join us. Thanks to Mrs St Joseph for giving her time to lead us in singing a great variety of tunes.



S1 Farm Visit

S1 pupils from Dalry Secondary School kicked off their geography studies with a visit to the impressive dairy unit at Littleton Farm.

Robert Dodds hosted a tremendous visit, leading the group around the dairy facility and renewables plant. Armed with clipboards and worksheets, the pupils had plenty of questions for Robert and, of course, Robert had all the answers! A lovely class from Dalry Secondary and a great start to a busy year of RHET farm visits ahead in Dumfries & Galloway. Many thanks to Robert for giving up his morning

to educate our young people. Thanks also for looking after our Coordinator, with the delivery of a welcome Cappuccino from Galloway Lodge Coffee shop before the school group arrived!

School Blog and website

Keep up to date with what's been happening in school via

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/dg/dalrysecondary/>

www.dalrysecondary.info

Headteacher/Depute Headteacher availability in Dalry School

Due to changes in teaching commitments, the times during which senior managers will be based on site at Dalry School will change and under normal circumstances will be:

Mr Smith Tuesdays

Mrs Gillies Monday mid-morning onwards
 Wednesday afternoons

Mr Cathro Wednesday mornings
 Friday mornings

At all other times Mr McFarlane and Mrs Acheson (Principal Teachers) will be fulfilling management roles.

Dates for the Diary

- S1-S3 Tracking reports issued Friday 11th October
- October holidays Monday 14th October to Friday 25th October
- Isle of Cumbrae (Millport) Trip – S3/4 Biology/Geography – Wednesday 13th & Thursday 14th November
- Do The Right Thing - S3 to CDHS – Friday 15th November
- Burns Trip (Dumfries) – S1 pupils joining with pupils from CDHS – Wednesday 20th November
- Cinderella Panto – 13th December
- Secondary Pupils School Dance – Wednesday 18th December