



Dear Parent/Carer,

I write to you as we near the end of a very busy and rewarding term. We had a great start to the session as we returned to an outstanding performance from our young people in their SQA exams, setting new records in S4 and S6. In particular, in S4 our lowest 20% doubled their performance and reversed a declining 5 year trend. It is important to raise attainment for all, therefore I was delighted that those achieving five or more awards at National 5 increased by 61%. This is a significant achievement. Even more impressive is the fact that the top 20% of learners in S4 were the top performers in the whole authority! I could go on listing the accolades of a tremendous year but I would need more room in the newsletter. All details can be found in the Standards and Quality report on our Glow Blog.

This session saw a massive increase in our stay-on rates. 92% of our S4 returned for a fifth year which is the highest achieved by 12%, similarly our S6 returners increased by 7%. This tells us we are getting things right at Kilmarnock Academy and providing a worthwhile curriculum for our young people. Another positive indicator is the largest S1 intake in the last 5 years, with several placing requests boosting our numbers. We are delighted to have such a positive story to share and when we consider that when young people do leave us that 95% leave to a sustainable and positive destination then we can be truly proud of our education provision.

Together as pupils, parents, staff and partners we strive for equity and excellence for all. It is not all about attainment. I commend this newsletter to you where you will find evidence of wider pupil achievement and participation. Kilmarnock Academy is a vibrant school which has the whole child at heart. More detailed information can be found on our school blog at <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/kilmarnockacademy/>. I would recommend checking the blog on a regular basis however the school will send texts to alert you to new articles and information. Instantaneous updates on school activities and events can be found on our Twitter account @KilmarnockAcad.

We have had a few staff changes I would like to let you know about. In Support for Learning, Mrs Dale, who we wish well, is now on maternity leave and we welcome Mrs Wood who will take up her duties on the 9th January. We say farewell to Mrs Thomson of the English department who finishes at Christmas to take up a post in South Ayrshire. I wish to thank Mrs Thomson for the impact she has had at the school and wish her all the best in her future career. We are delighted to welcome Mrs Wilson to the Home Economics department who started with us in November.

Finally, it is with great sadness, I have to inform you of the passing of Mrs Iona Neilson-Bell who we will miss dearly. Our thoughts continue to be with Mr Neilson-Bell and his children. Mr Neilson-Bell and I

would like to thank you all for your kind words and support throughout what has been a very difficult time. The young people and staff that attended the funeral service were a credit to themselves, their families and the school. Mrs Neilson-Bell lived out the school motto "Do Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly" (Micah 6 v. 8). I am proud to say that the young people also reflected the school motto and have been commended for the respect shown to the family. In the new year as a school community, we will consider an appropriate memorial.

Until then, on behalf of the staff of the school, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you all in 2017.

Christmas Closure

Kilmarnock Academy will close on Friday 23rd December at 2.30 p.m. and will re-open on Monday 9th January at 8.44 a.m.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Rose".

David Rose, Acting Head Teacher

K.A. ACE REWARDS ASSEMBLIES

The reward programme's purpose is to promote positive behaviour, in particular the values of

- Ambition
- Community
- Endeavour

Pupils gain merits by showing that they have embraced and accepted these values.

This is a highly competitive scheme, with 90% achievement required to qualify requires pupils to cooperate in such ways as being on time, wearing school uniform, behaving and working hard in their lessons. Those in S1, S2 and S3 who achieved the award in the second block will shortly be rewarded with the option of an Activity Afternoon when they can choose between skating or swimming at the Galleon, activities within the PE department at the school, or a film to be shown in the Assembly hall.

This follows on the successful Hallowe'en Assemblies run for those who achieved Block 1.



ACE Rewards Hallowe'en Assembly



Kilmarnock Academy are excited to be taking part in a 2 year European project funded by the British Council called, 'Sharing European Values using Film and Cinema'. Our school will work with schools in Vasto in Italy, Šiauliai in Lithuania, Goksun in Turkey and Mirandela in Portugal over the next 2 years to develop global citizenship, digital media and literacy skills, foreign language skills and a better understanding of Scotland's place in the world.



During November representatives from each of the 4 countries visited Scotland to begin work on the project. They were delighted to meet the Kilmarnock teaching staff and pupils, follow the town trail ably led by Ms Fullerton and Mr Dickson, visit the sights of Glasgow with Mr Kirkland and Mr Reid and learn all about Robert Burns with Mrs Mossie and Ms Fullerton. We have made a great start to the project and are now looking forward to the next meeting when pupils and staff from Kilmarnock Academy will visit the school in Vasto Italy to continue the good work. Over the next few months we will be working on preparation for the visit.



PARENT ENGAGEMENT

September and October saw us hold a series of family engagement evenings for our pupils who are sitting Highers this year. Parents and pupils were given important messages about the demands of higher courses and enjoyed inputs from various staff and pupils as well as Ayrshire College, SDS and Kilmarnock Academy Business Mentors. Feedback from these events was extremely positive and both pupils and parents appreciated the chance to engage with the school in a more informal basis.

PUPIL FORUM

This year the Pupil Forum was founded to increase the influence of pupil voice. We have had two meetings so far and they have given the members the chance to express any concerns they have. The main topic of the meetings was the improvement of the school toilets. Action has been taken and now there will be more access to the toilets and a senior toilet will be opened for a trial period.



Members of the Pupil Forum also voted on a proposed badge and uniform for the new school. The winners will be presented to a panel of judges along with other designs. Morrisons, Kilmarnock have kindly donated £50 - to the Pupil Forum. We have decided to spend this on badges and house noticeboards to raise awareness of the Pupil Forum in school, letting other pupils know what we have discussed. This is only the beginning for us and we look forward to taking more action in representing pupil voice in the year ahead.

ACTIVE SCHOOLS/VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Active Schools Coordinator, Kris Stewart, has been working closely with the PE department and together they have secured 2 Student placements within the school. Johnathan Learmonth and Mark Muir from Ayrshire College have been assisting at PE lessons and delivering after school basketball for the past 8 weeks. The students will deliver a multi-sport club to S1 & S2 in the new year. Kris and Mr Stevenson also selected the new Young Ambassadors and Sports Panel recently and they will be responsible for ensuring pupil voice is heard and also working towards sports Scotlands targets. Their next responsibility is to plan, organise and deliver the Learning Community Primary Basketball Festival on Monday 9th January between Loanhead, Bellfield and Kirkstyle. The winners of the festival will represent the Learning Community at the grand final at Ayrshire College later in the month as part of Active Schools new Competitive Sports Calendar. The YAs, Sport Panel and Students will also assist Kris in the new year to organise and deliver a transition event at the Ayrshire Athletics Arena for every primary 7 pupil due to attend the academy after the summer holidays. Finally, if you

would be interested in volunteering with Vibrant Communities please contact Kris Stewart via email at Kris.Stewart@east-ayrshire.gov.uk.

LIBRARY NEWS

As usual, there has been a lot going on in the library since we started back after summer. All S1 pupils have completed a library skills course since August. First, pupils learned how to find fiction and non-fiction books in the library and practised using books to find information. We then looked at how to use the internet for research. Finally, all pupils demonstrated their new skills by researching a topic to produce a PowerPoint. Well done to all in S1 and thanks to all members of staff in English, Science, Geography and I.T. for getting involved with these lessons.



The first library event of the year was a visit to the Edinburgh Book Festival in August for our S2 pupils. We saw two author events, after which pupils had the chance to explore the festival, visit the bookshop and meet the authors. In October, it was the turn of our S1 pupils. The winners of our scary story competition visited the Dick Institute to see children's author Danny Weston. Again, pupils had the chance to meet the author and ask questions after the event.



S1 and S2 book clubs started up in October. The groups meet after school once a fortnight. Pupils have the chance to make friends, share their interest in books and take part in library games. These activities are designed to encourage reading and to improve literacy skills.

In November, we celebrated Book Week Scotland by holding a Scholastic book fair and running a scrambled letters book quiz. Pupils and staff were also asked to post answers to some book-related questions on the library noticeboard.

Remember all pupils can use the library reading lists – available in the school library and on Glow - for suggestions on what books to read over the holidays.

STEM Event- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

S1 pupils enjoyed a day off normal classes to have a whole school day dedicated to Science. The day involved pupils taking part in group challenges. These included tasks on topics such as streamlining, bridges, conductors and insulators and reaction time.

Pupils had to take on a group role: team leader, timekeeper, scribe, creative director or resource manager.

All team members then had to collaborate on how they would go about answering their question; plan their experiments and then carry them out. The final part of the day involved them presenting their findings in a poster format as evidence of their day's work, which was then displayed. In class pupils then completed a report on their activity for application to CREST for an award.

All S1 pupils took part successfully and seemed to enjoy their day enormously and every pupil achieved a CREST Discovery award for their efforts. Well done to all!

22 NOVEMBER 2016 **MINISTERIAL EVENT**

Minister for Local Government and Housing, Kevin Stewart and East Ayrshire Councillor, Douglas Reid attended the opening ceremony of the new housing development at Hill Street, Kilmarnock. The development itself will consist of affordable housing units. The event was attended by pupils from Kilmarnock Academy, Hillhead Primary and St Joseph's Academy who were involved in painting the hoarding around the perimeter of the site. Each school was awarded a £250 cheque by Cunninghame Housing Association Ltd for their efforts; this was presented to the art and design teachers and pupils at the event by SNP Minister Kevin Stewart.



The Kilmarnock Academy section of the mural was designed and created by S3 and S4 art & design pupils and our school was represented at the event by S3 pupils McKenzie Alston, Nicole Bulloch and S4 pupils Kerryanne Ferries, Robyn Riddell & Karra Pope.



Well done to all the pupils involved!

PEER MENTORING

All S1 pupils have a mentor. The Prefects, House Captains and selected pupils in S5 were trained as mentors and then S1 pupils allocated to them. The idea is to help the new intake settle into life at Kilmarnock Academy. The senior pupils meet with the S1 pupils at appropriate times and spend 10 minutes chatting to them, noting any concerns to the Guidance staff for action.

WORK EXPERIENCE

The annual S4 work placement programme happened in September. As usual, the placements are provided by the Ayrshire Chamber, while some pupils find their own. The programme involves a 5 day placement which gives pupils the opportunity to go out into the world of work. The results vary – some pupils have the idea that a particular job is for them confirmed, while

others learn that perhaps the reality doesn't match their expectations.



MOCK INTERVIEW PROGRAMME

S4 pupils also took part in a mock interview in October. The Senior Prefect team were interviewers – fresh from their own experiences. Eleven interviews took place and the winners received a certificate.

Following on from that, the winners and runners up from S4 acted as interviewers this week when S2 pupils were interviewed for a job as a PE assistant to Mr Stevenson for after school clubs. There were 20 different interviews over 2 days and the successful candidates were announced on the day.

This was the first time, the mock interview process was taken down to S2 but the pupils dealt with the job application/interview very well. The Scottish Government has an initiative “Developing the Young Workforce” and we are doing our best to comply with this.

FUTURE PLANS

The Kilmarnock District Mock Interview Programme is being re-launched in January. S5 and S6 pupils from Kilmarnock Academy,

Grange Academy, James Hamilton Academy and Stewarton Academy will come together and apply for “jobs” from real employers. Companies such as Mahle Engineering, Ayrshire and Arran Health Board, East Ayrshire, Jeffersons, ETC Engineering and UWS are involved in the programme. Interviews will take place in March. Anyone who gets an interview will have done really well and to be the successful candidate against such opposition will be a superb achievement. Watch this space!

P7 EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES

On Wednesday 2nd November the European Day of Languages posters and bunting decorated the Assembly hall for a second time to welcome all of the pupils from our associated primary schools who will be coming to Kilmarnock Academy in August 2017.

P7 pupils enjoyed the same activities as the S1 pupils but we used different vocabulary. Senior pupils also helped pupils play a French version of Fruit Salad which everyone enjoyed. Pupils were able to buy a “pain au chocolat” at the end of the afternoon. The P7 pupils were very well behaved and participated enthusiastically in all the activities.

BUSINESS MENTOR

We are fortunate enough to have the support of several business mentors from local businesses who are coming into school on a regular basis to meet on a one to one basis with some of our S5 pupils to support them as they begin to think about the transition to college or the work place. We are extremely grateful to these

mentors who are really making an impact on the young people they are working with.

NEW SCHOOL

After consulting staff, pupils and parents Kilmarnock Academy’s selection of uniforms, badges and mottos have been sent away for consideration along with the winning entries from James Hamilton Academy.

PUPIL IMPROVEMENT GROUP

We now have up and running a pupil improvement group who are taking on board some of the targets from the school improvement plan. They will shortly produce their own pupil improvement plan which will allow pupils to have a much bigger say in how many aspects of the school can be improved.



FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

Pupils taking part in the Flexible Pathways Initiative which was introduced in Kilmarnock Academy for the first time this year have successfully finished their first extended period of work placement. They have each been attending 3 days a week a variety of placements, including The Avenue Nursery, KA1 Garage, Rugby Park and Scissor Sisters. Well done to all of them.

S1 DOMINOES COMPETITION

Well done to all S1 pupils who took part in the annual dominoes competition, enhancing their numeracy skills. Pictured are all the finalists and the 6th year helpers from Mr McClurg's class. The eventual winner receiving a voucher for a free dominoes pizza was Teigan Clark!



ENGLISH

This term we welcomed Ola Opaneke, student teacher, to the English department. Miss Opaneke came from Nigeria in 2010 to continue her studies and, after working in the finance industry in London, decided she wanted to follow a career where she could make a difference. She is currently at University of West of Scotland in Ayr. This was her first time “in the field”. She found many aspects of teaching in a Scottish school challenging but her refreshing outlook on life and the value she places on education served as a very positive message for us all.

Here’s what she had to say.

I was nervous when I came to Kilmarnock Academy – not just because I am black, but also because my accent is very different from yours. However, the pupils and staff were nice and welcoming.

If anything I was disappointed with the lack of resilience in some of the pupils. I felt sad

when they did not appreciate the opportunity handed to them on a platter of gold. This is why I had to tell them about my country and the government’s attitude to education. State schools are very poorly funded with many staff shortages. To get an education and the best chance parents have to pay for private education and make many many sacrifices.

My mother always told me “Opportunity comes but once so don’t take the chances you have for granted”.

Education is not a punishment; it is a privilege. Take this opportunity. Education is the very best legacy.

GEOGRAPHY

S4 Geography pupils spent a morning at Silverburn shopping centre carrying out surveys. They then made their way back to Kilmarnock where they carried out land use surveys and traffic counts. The data will be processed in a number of ways and analysed to show contrasts between the two sample areas. This work will allow the National 5 pupils to complete the assignment component of the course.



MATHS DEPARTMENT

Here are all the S1 pupils who managed to get 90% or more in their recent assessment (or as we say in the Maths Department $\geq 90\%$). Well done to them all – don't they look happy!



MODERN LANGUAGES

On Wednesday 23rd November 2016 54 pupils (7 S5/6 pupils from the Higher French class and 47 S1 pupils) walked from Kilmarnock Academy along to the Odeon Cinema to see a French film called "Avril et le monde truqué" or "April and the Extraordinary World". This is an animated film in French with English subtitles telling the story of a Paris without electricity and of a young girl's search for her lost parents. Everyone enjoyed the film and they were excellent ambassadors for Kilmarnock Academy as they sat quietly to watch the film and were sensible and well behaved on the walk to and from the cinema.



European Day of Languages was celebrated in Kilmarnock Academy this year on Tuesday 27th of September. S1 pupils spent their French period in the hall playing various games and singing songs in French. They played the French equivalent of Simon Says – "Jacques a dit" and sang a song with actions. Senior pupils were also in the hall and helped pupils play a French version of Fruit Salad using the same vocabulary. S2 pupils stayed in class and took part in a competition using booklets donated by the European Union. These booklets, called "Passport to Europe" are full of fun activities for young people and if they managed to complete a challenge to find as much information as they could about Europe, they received a prize. S3 and S4 pupils took part in a Euroquiz with general knowledge questions about Europe. Again, the winners got a prize. Pains au chocolat were for sale at break and lunchtime and proved very popular as usual. The Higher French class enjoyed "un petit déjeuner français" where they tasted various typically French foods.



S2 boys Callan Duncan, Taylor McIntyre and Ewan Rutherford put great effort into preparing a French quiz for 1B. Their presentation was interesting and well planned - an excellent example of pupils leading learning. The winners of the quiz were Callum Craig and Blair Phillips. All S1 pupils really enjoyed this experience.



PE DEPARTMENT

It has been a very busy few months down in the PE department so far this year with a large number of pupils representing the school at a number of different events and competitions.



MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Events the Music Department have been attending:

Christmas Concert:
Thursday 15th December,

Christmas Ceilidh:
Thursday 22nd December, Periods 5 and 6

Senior Choir updates:
Christmas Lights Switch on –
Sunday 27th November - 3.15pm
Kay Park Parish Church –
Thursday 8th December - Period 5 and
Visiting Argyll Nursing Home

Woodwind Ensemble updates:
Kirkstyle P.S - (including Crash, Bang, Ting project)
Loanhead P.S - Monday 19th December

In August we had the welcome addition of Mr Oates to our staff. August also saw the start of extra-curricular clubs

MONDAY	S1-3 Futsal (Mr Stevenson) 3:45-4:45pm
TUESDAY	Senior Volleyball (Mr Stevenson) Lunchtime S1-2 Boys Handball (Mr Oates) 3:45-4:45pm
WEDNESDAY	S1-2 Girls Handball (Mr Oates) Lunchtime S1-3 Multi-Sports (Ayrshire College Students) 2:45-3:45pm Primary Girls Football (Kris Stewart, Active Schools) 4-5pm
THURSDAY	Badminton Club (Mr Stevenson) 2:45-3:45pm
FRIDAY	Senior Volleyball (Mr Stevenson) 2:45-3:45pm on the 1 st Friday of the month

In September a team of S6 boys attended a 7-a-side football tournament at Doon Academy. We also had a squad of boys and girls from S1,2 and 3 compete in the East Ayrshire Cross Country at the Ayrshire Athletics Arena, with S2 pupil Kerry Gibson coming 2nd in her race. Our Sports Ambassadors, Joe Murphy and Ethan Tesfaye, attended the Young Ambassadors conference. October also saw S2 Emma Kavanagh and S4 Jamie McKinnon compete in the Ayrshire Schools Swimming Gala. Emma won silver in the 200m Breast Stroke.

November was a very busy month. We were joined by Miss Lawrie, a student PE teacher from the University of the West of Scotland, who completed a very successful teaching placement.

We had S4 pupils represent the school at badminton at the new



Ayrshire College. We also had pupils attend the opening of the new Youth Express Bus Launch. November also saw our S2 boys finally get to use their new strips courtesy of the KLIN Group in a 2-1 victory over Loudoun Academy.

So far December has brought a friendly tournament between Mr Stevenson's Badminton club and the club from James Hamilton.

We also had a visit from the primary 7 pupils from Kirkstyle, Loanhead and Bellfield as part of the school's transition programme with the feeder primary schools. The Social Dancing is in full flow

and the S1 and S2 pupils will have the annual Christmas Ceilidh to look forward to.

2017 looks set to be another busy year for the Kilmarnock Academy PE Department. In January alone we have a S3/4 Basketball Tournament, a S1/2 Netball Competition and the Giant Heptathlon. January also sees Mr Oates' football trip. 45 pupils and 4 members of staff travel to Manchester to go on the Old Trafford Stadium Tour then go across to the Etihad to see Manchester City play Tottenham Hotspur in the English Premiership.

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

In October, S4 Biology pupils spent a day carrying out fieldwork at Aird's Moss, East Ayrshire. Aird's Moss, owned by the RSPB, is part of the East Ayrshire Coalfields Initiative. It is an area originally covered by blanket bog, a habitat as rare as tropical rainforest. This special area had been extensively drained by farmers wanting to use the land to grow food crops. When the special nature and biological importance of Aird's Moss and other peat bogs was realised, conservation work was started to reverse the drainage and restore the bog with its unique combination of plants and animals.

This gave us a perfect chance to compare the effect humans have on their surroundings.

Pupils measured physical features such as pH and moisture content of the drained and undrained areas and took samples for further analysis back at the school labs. They also sampled and saw the contrast between the two areas when they counted the type and number of plants they found in each. We were fortunate with the weather considering the season and pupils

appreciated their packed lunches after a day in the fresh air!

In September, a group of S3 pupils travelled to Prestwick Airport in to take part in a STEM event. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths).

This particular event, run by SKYLAB, aimed to 'Guide and inspire young people into the STEM of aviation'.

Pupils took part in a number of activity workshops linked to the aviation theme. Everyone enjoyed the event and were a credit to the school.

Pupils were photographed with members of the Red Arrows Dye Team. These are the engineers that make the coloured smoke for the Red Arrows.

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING DEPARTMENT

We are looking forward to Christmas here in the Support for Learning Department and Mrs Duffy & Mrs Lambert will be running our annual cinema trip in a couple of weeks time. Our S1 pupils will visit the local Odeon cinema to view a Christmas film, all for the bargain price of £3 which includes a drink and a snack. The remainder of the cost is subsidised by the school to allow this trip to run at such a low cost.



Every year, this trip is very popular with our S1 pupils and behaviour is always exemplary. We are certain that this year will be no different!

The staff in the Support for Learning Department wish all pupils, parents and staff a very Merry Christmas!

TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT – DESIGN **ENGINEER CONSTRUCT**

Senior pupils in the Technical department are currently working alongside architects and other professionals to design their very own eco classroom and building. Architects responsible for the new Kilmarnock Academy have recently given a talk to the pupils about what they are currently doing and the pupils will visit the site of the new school in the new year. The course has opened up exciting opportunities for future careers for the pupils throughout the construction industry.

To view Department Photographs - see the school blog

<http://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/kilmarnockacademy/>



SEASON'S GREETINGS

Kilmarnock Academy wishes all its readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

