



		LETTER FROM THE HEADTEACHER
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Uniform Policy	3	<p>The daffodils at the front of the school are in full bloom and clocks have just “sprung” forward heralding the approach of Spring Break as yet another busy term in our school draws to a close.</p> <p>Another packed Newsletter, featuring a number of new activities, is a measure of the continued high levels of success in our school. I am sure as you read the newsletter you will continue to be enormously impressed by the talents of our pupils and staff in a wide range of fields.</p> <p>You will be aware that you are always given an opportunity at Parents’ Meetings to complete a self-evaluation questionnaire to share your views on the work of the school. The results of the questionnaire completed by S1-S6 parents at the relevant Parents’ Meetings this session are published in the Newsletter. As you can see a large number of questionnaires were completed, hopefully ensuring that the views expressed are representative of parents in all year groups. I am delighted with the continued high level of parental satisfaction with the work of the school expressed through the questionnaires.</p> <p>I am pleased to note from the questionnaire evidence that parents continue to approve of the improvements we have made in the standard of our school uniform. We have maintained our high standards, throughout this term, even during spells of inclement weather, and I thank you for your support in this matter. It is vitally important, as we move through next term and start to focus on our preparations for the new session in August that we persist in our combined determination to maintain our current high uniform standards. I have again included an extract from our Uniform Policy in the Newsletter for your information. I am confident that if pupils, parents and staff continue to work together we can look forward to sustaining our current excellent uniform standards.</p> <p>As part of our school uniform arrangements we have in place a blazer recycling scheme. If you have a blazer which you no longer require we would be delighted if you could donate it to the school in which case we will find it a new owner or alternatively try to arrange an exchange for a more suitable alternative.</p> <p>We recently had another round of House Assemblies and I am delighted to again congratulate everyone associated with Wallace House on winning the Dalgleish House Cup for the third time in four years. Can any of the other five Houses win the Cup back from Wallace’s increasingly tight grip? Well the race for the next House Cup has already begun and I am sure everyone in our other five Houses will be working as hard to try and win the Cup as Wallace will be to retain it.</p>
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<p>How to contact us 0141 577 2300 08:20am - 4:30pm (3.15pm Fridays) Fax 0141 577 2314</p>		

Letter from Head Teacher continued...

Each House also presented cheques to their favoured charities using the money raised during Charities Week. A total of £6,000 was presented to ten different charities. In addition a further £2,100 was donated to the Save the Children Philippines Appeal and £2,250 was donated to our main partner charity the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice making a grand total of £10,350. Congratulations to our whole school community on a wonderful fund raising effort.

Things never stand still in our school and we are continuing to work hard to prepare our S4, S5 and S6 pupils for their forthcoming SQA exams, which this year start just after the end of the Spring Break. Our S2, S4 and S5 pupils have completed their course choices for next session and we are already gearing up for the start of the new timetable for all pupils in early June. In addition, as our S6 pupils get ready to leave us we are also starting to prepare the Transitions Programme for our new S1 pupils for next session.

I will again take this opportunity to request that parents help us to ensure the safety of our young people by doing everything they can to reduce traffic congestion at the start and the end of the day and use the drop-off areas appropriately. As the weather improves could your child walk or cycle to school? Hopefully we will soon see bikes in the bike shed - it would be wonderful to see it full.

You will see from the Newsletter that the annual PTA Quiz Night is scheduled for Friday 16 May. As well as raising money to support school funds this is always a great evening of entertainment. It would be great to have a full house. I look forward to seeing you there.

Can I draw your attention to our school website as an ongoing source of valuable information on events in the school. The address of the website is shown on the front page of the Newsletter.

We always welcome feedback on the Newsletter or indeed on any other aspect of the school. You can share your views with us via the return slip at the back of the Newsletter, via the school's email address or by any other means of communication that suits you.

Finally, school closes for the Spring Break on Friday 4 April at 2.45pm. We re-open at 8.45am on Tuesday 22 April. I hope you and your family have an enjoyable holiday.

School Uniform Policy

Following extensive consultation with pupils, parents and staff the uniform for all pupils at Mearns Castle High School is as follows:-

Blazers

A black blazer (woollen or polyester) with a Mearns Castle High School badge is compulsory for all pupils. Blazers should be worn to and from school. Blazers must also be worn in school at all times but can be removed during lessons.

During inclement weather, pupils can wear a black outdoor jacket over their blazer. Outdoor jackets must then be removed in school and stored in lockers. If appropriate, blazers should be correctly braided. Braiding arrangements are available on our school's website: www.ea.e-renfrew.sch.uk/mearnscastle.

Skirts

Two styles of black skirt are compulsory: box pleat or straight.

Dependent on a pupil's height, skirts should be between 18" – 22" in length. As a rule, skirts should be worn no higher than 2" above the knee, with plain black tights or black knee high socks.

Trousers

Girls can wear black, formal boot-cut trousers. Boys must wear formal, black school trousers. Trousers must be worn up to the waist. If a belt is worn it must be all black with a plain buckle.

Shirts/Jumpers

A formal white school shirt must be worn, tucked in. A plain black v-neck jumper or cardigan, where the tie is clearly visible, can be worn.

Headscarves

If girls are choosing to wear a headscarf for religious reasons it must be a plain black headscarf.

Ties

An appropriate school tie must be worn up to the neck and properly tied with the school badge clearly visible.

The following school ties are available:

S1/S2/S3	-	red tie
S4/S5	-	blue tie
S6	-	black and red tie

Colours ties are available in all styles for pupils who have achieved School Colours.



Footwear

Formal all black school shoes with a black sole and black laces, if appropriate, must be worn.

Physical Education Kit

Pupils in S1 to S6 must wear a red Polo shirt. A customised version of the red Polo shirt is also available for pupils studying Higher PE. All pupils must also wear either black tracksuit trousers or black shorts.

All items of Mearns Castle High School uniform are available from:

Mans World
192 Fenwick Road, Giffnock
Glasgow, G46 6UG
Tel: 0141 638 7689
Email: admin@mansworldglasgow.co.uk

More information on our school uniform standards can be found on our website. If you wish further advice in relation to our school uniform requirements please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Tel: 0141 577 2300
Email: schoolmail@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk

We look forward to working in partnership with pupils and parents to ensure a consistently high standard of school uniform for our school.

Mearns Castle High School
S1-S6 Parents' Meeting Self Evaluation Session 2013-14

No.	Question	Total Agree Strongly	Total Agree	Total Disagree	Total Disagree strongly	Disagree %	Agree %
1	Our school is a safe place	400	211	1	1	0.3%	99.7%
2	Our school takes an inclusive approach to pupils, staff and parents	401	210	2	0	0.3%	99.7%
3	The learning and teaching in our school is of a high quality	403	209	1	0	0.2%	99.8%
4	We are motivated and enthusiastic in our learning	396	214	3	0	0.5%	99.5%
5	People in our school are honest and sincere	395	213	4	1	0.8%	99.2%
6	We show a pride in our school	453	160	0	0	0.0%	100.0%
7	We are ambitious and have high expectations of what we can achieve	472	141	0	0	0.0%	100.0%
8	We are determined to reach the highest standards of attainment and achievement	419	190	4	0	0.7%	99.3%
9	Relationships are positive in our school	353	254	5	1	1.0%	99.0%
10	We encourage a healthy and active lifestyle	343	257	11	2	2.1%	97.9%
11	Our learning and teaching is enterprising and creative	328	277	8	0	1.3%	98.7%
12	We care for the environment in and around our school	345	258	8	2	1.6%	98.4%
13	Our school develops successful learners	389	223	1	0	0.2%	99.8%
14	Our school develops confident individuals	383	226	4	0	0.7%	99.3%
15	Our school develops responsible citizens	374	234	5	0	0.8%	99.2%
16	Our school develops effective contributors to society	364	241	8	0	1.3%	98.7%
17	The staff in our school office are approachable and helpful	377	210	22	4	4.2%	95.8%
18	Our school currently has a high standard of school uniform	385	218	10	0	1.6%	98.4%
19	The school keeps me well informed about my child's progress	336	262	11	4	2.4%	97.6%
20	I feel the staff really know my child as an individual and support them well	332	272	9	0	1.5%	98.5%
21	The school has good arrangements for children moving between year groups and leaving secondary school	322	268	23	0	3.8%	96.2%
22	My child benefits from school clubs and activities provided outside the classroom	330	251	30	2	5.2%	94.8%
23	The school is well led	415	195	3	0	0.5%	99.5%
24	Overall, I am happy with Mearns Castle High School	265	132	0	0	0.0%	100.0%

Library News

by Miss McEachern

World Book Day

The Library and English Department joined forces once again this year to celebrate World Book Day in grand style on Wed 5 March. All S1 pupils dressed up as their favourite characters from books, comics, graphic novels and film/TV adaptations. The response was fantastic with costumes ranging from Batman to The Incredible Hulk, The Three Bears to The Cheshire Cat, Katniss Everdeen to Carrie from Carrie's war.

As well as dressing up, pupils also took part in the Big Book Quiz in the theatre.

House teams battled it out over six rounds which included spelling, class book questions, genre/music, film observation, book/author and character spotlight questions. It was a hard-fought contest, but the ultimate victors were Gleneagles, winning 100 valuable points for their House and a £5 book token and certificate for themselves. So well done to the Gleneagles team:

Jamie Hobson
 Mark Hannah
 Iona Gibson
 Hafsa Haroon
 Marina Gladkikh
 Vivian Gounari
 Rebecca Goldie
 Max Irving-Robertson



The afternoon ended with the fancy dress winners of each class coming forward for the final judging. It was very difficult for the judges – Mr Hale and Ms Lewis - to choose between such wonderful costumes but the eventual winners were as follows:

1st Prize – Aimee Logan as a Flapper from “The Great Gatsby” (£15 book token)

2nd Prize – Olivia Miller as “Cat in the Hat” (£10 book token)

3rd Prize – Poppy Robinson as “Where’s Wally” (£5 book token)

We all had a great afternoon and S1 are to be congratulated for their behaviour and enthusiasm.



Ski Team News

by Mrs Little

Congratulations to Owen Vinter, Kate Taylor, Scott Wylie and Jimmy Fitzpatrick who won the mixed category of the Scottish Secondary Schools Alpine Series on 13th March 2014.

The team were up against tough competition, displayed good sportsmanship and were a credit to the school.



Young Ambassadors by Darren Martin (S6)



This year Kirsty Miller and myself were selected to be our two Young Sport Ambassadors after an interview process. Many very worthy candidates were interviewed and the panel which included Mr Gibson and Ms Lewis selected us to take on the role. We are mentored by Mrs Neil who helps give us ideas and 'encourages us to influence younger kids to have a more active lifestyle' and have been assisted by Gemma Burnett and Ross MacKenzie who are our Vice Ambassadors. Our role is to promote sport and healthy living in the school environment. Within our role we have attended National Conferences and had a great experience talking to high performing athletes and other Young Ambassadors. The conferences allowed us to share our ideas with other Young Ambassadors and for us to pick up ideas from others. To introduce ourselves and promote the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, we have presented during assemblies for the junior years. We have also had meetings with other Ambassadors from our local area and our Active Schools Coordinators to get a more in depth look at what others are doing. We have set up a noticeboard about who we are and what our role involves to allow us to be easily approached. A sports results noticeboard that is updated regularly has also been set up. This is to keep pupils posted about the results from all the different teams in a variety of sports and to celebrate the successes in sport. Kirsty is running a girls lunchtime club where she instructs fitness classes to get girls more involved in sport, which was one of our main aims for the year. I coach younger pupils at a lunchtime volleyball club to pass on my skills to others and to develop younger teams to compete in the Scottish cup. Future events coming up are the Inter-School Mini Commonwealth Games and the Queen's Baton Relay which we are planning to be involved with. We have enjoyed our time as Young ambassadors and we hope we have influenced younger children to become more involved with sport.

**Young
Ambassadors**



Social Subjects Showcase

Social Subjects

Geography History Modern studies

As part of their final rotations in Social Subjects, S2 pupils have been completing skills based units of work. Below are some examples of projects that the classes have been completing.

Geography

As part of the S2 skills block, Geography pupils have been exploring the issue of litter in the school and the local area. As part of this topic, pupils have developed their field work skills by conducting an environmental survey of the worst areas of the school affected by litter. To help renew our Green Flag, the class have also conducted a litter pick whilst noting the most common types of litter being dropped. The class designed and presented a new initiative of how to reduce chewing gum litter in the school and East Renfrewshire which provided an opportunity to further develop their thinking and presentation skills.



Modern Studies

For their S2 Skills unit, one Modern Studies class had initially examined the issue of child soldiers. The class considered themes of global connectedness and how even some simple actions here can ripple out to impact areas suffering from conflict worldwide. This was further reflected on through examining the aims of the charity WarChild. Through building an awareness of the charity in the school through visual displays, the pupils are now working together towards the completion of the *WarChild Cookbook*- a selection of ideas for charity fundraisers which would give other groups full and detailed instructions on how to run a range of charitable events.



Social Subjects Showcase continued

Modern Studies

By taking part in the S2 skills block, Modern Studies pupils have been learning about the plight of child soldiers. As part of this topic, pupils have researched a variety of different countries that still use children as soldiers. Through collaborative work in groups, pupils have produced a news script based on the research they carried out. To develop presentation and ICT skills each group used the school radio station to produce an informative and hard hitting recorded radio show on child soldiers.



History

The 1960s unit focuses on research and presentation skills. Pupils carry out introductory research to set the scene about significant events and culture from the 1960s. Pupils discuss people who can be considered as 1960s icons and each pupil chooses one of these icons to research in the library over three periods. The research is based on the five Ws: Who? Why? When? Where? What? Pupils are tasked to create a poster of their chosen 1960s icon with the poster variety ranging from Jimmy Hendrix or Martin Luther King, Jr. to Mary Quant or George Best.



Hockey/Gymnastics News

by Mrs Neil

Hockey

The S1/2 mixed hockey teams have had great success this season. We had three seven-a-side mixed teams participating in games against Williamwood, Eastwood and Woodfarm High Schools throughout the year and have been victorious in all. All pupils showed great team spirit and outstanding sportsmanship during all of their games. Our Senior Boys Team participated in the Hutchesons' Grammar School Invitational Tournament for the first time this year. It was a 5v5 tournament with new rules where players could shoot from anywhere in the attacking half making for very fast paced,



exciting games with a lot of scoring opportunities. The boys, captained by Ross McGinness, were a credit to the school and succeeded in gaining 6th place overall. Hockey is proving to be a very popular sport with both boys and girls in Mearns Castle. Our Hockey Club runs on a Monday night on the astroturf and we are always looking for new players from S1-6 to join. Well done to all the players who have shown dedication and commitment on a few very cold, wet nights and a special thank you goes to S6 pupils Hannah Livingston and Ross McGinness who volunteer at the club every week.

Gymnastics

We had four teams participating in the Level 2 Regional Competition held at Williamwood High School in February. One of the teams consisting of Joy Fitzpatrick S5, Jodie Cameron, Rachel McCallum and Alice Miller (all S3) won the bronze medal at the competition. This success allows the team to qualify for the Scottish Schools Competition on 6th April. Our Level 3 team, Silvia Gherman (S6), Mitchell Smith, Sunny Ward and Jacqueline Lightbody (all S2) will also compete on 6th April. These pupils qualify to compete at Level 3 as they have all represented Scotland. Each pupil will individually perform a floor routine and two vaults.



Good luck to our teams competing in Perth on 6th April.

Senior Volleyball Club News

by Mr McKenna

We have had a very successful year with the Senior Volleyball players and exciting times ahead with three players going to represent Scotland at the Small Countries European Championships.

Darren Martin is going to Luxemburg to play for Scotland Young Seniors Men's Team and Priya & Raveen Gill are going to San Marino to play for the Scotland Young Seniors Women's Team, please read their articles at the end of this report.

In the Scottish Cup this year our Senior Girl's Team beat Woodfarm High School in the quarter final and lost narrowly to last year's Scottish Champions, Marr College in the semi final.

The Boys team are playing in the Scottish Plate event. They beat Aberdeen Grammar School in the quarter finals. They then beat The Gordons Schools, Huntly in the semi finals and are now playing Craigmount from Edinburgh in the final. Our best wishes go to the boys in the Plate Final.



Raveen and Priya Gill

Over the past two years Raveen and I have pushed ourselves to our limits and trained with lots of dedication in order to be prepared for the Scotland Young Seniors trials. We have competed in London and Sheffield in a range of competitions to improve our performance. This experience has led to us both being selected to play in the Small Countries European Championships in San Marino and I am delighted to be selected as Vice Captain of the team. Since the selection to the team we have dedicated our lives to volleyball. We train three times a week with our club, play matches on a Saturday and finish the week with a six hour training session with the Scotland team on a Sunday. Hopefully this hard work will pay off when we compete in San Marino.

By Priya Gill S6

Senior Volleyball Club News continued by Darren Martin

For two years I have been a member of the Scotland Young Seniors (U20's) Volleyball squad. The squad have trained regularly to develop the skills and structures required to compete at international level. In January 2014 the squad were reduced from 25 players down to 17 in preparation for a power league set-up where a Scotland Blue and a Scotland White team compete against each other and also play against division one teams. In the last power league we played against the senior Scotland team where we pushed them right to the edge. We had a match point against them, but unfortunately just lost out. The purpose of the power league was to look at the squad to allow a team of 12 to be selected to travel to Luxembourg to compete in the Small Countries Division European Championships. Fortunately I was selected as part of the 12 and will be going to compete in the finals as a middle blocker against Luxembourg, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Anti-Bullying Competition by Miss Cartledge

Well done to all S1 pupils who took part in the Anti-Bullying poster competition in PSE.

The winners are:

1st Place - Marina Gladkikh from Gleneagles (40 points)

2nd Place - Charlotte Fleming, Sophie Fletcher and Sophie Donaldson from Balmoral (30 points)

3rd Place - Chloe Nicol and Olivia Miller from Ramsay (20 points)

3 House Runners Up:

(10 points each)

Eilidh Steven, Sara Sadiq and Isla McMillan from Sutherland

Nicola Cole, Lori Cook and Lisa Cole from Caledonia

Louise Whyte, Casey Williamson and Sasha Wood from Wallace

Well done to all pupils

Winning Poster
By
Marina Gladkikh



Mearns Castle PTA



Mearns Castle High School organises events throughout the school year. The aim of these events is to raise funds but also to provide an opportunity to bring the wider school community together.

Recently PTA funds have contributed towards

- Benches for outside
- Honours Board
- Plasma Screen for Gym
- Two Speakers and Tripods
- Fitness Suite Equipment

Without support from the wider school community this would not be possible. PLEASE come and support events like the upcoming ever popular quiz night which will be held on:

Friday, 16 May 2014 at 7.30 pm

PTA QUIZ NIGHT

Ticket Price £5

(includes pizza)

Licensed Bar

Please support our school by coming along to what promises to be a fun evening!!!



The PTA is always in need of help to organise events or to help provide refreshments at Parent Meetings, Information Evenings and Concerts

If you would like to help please contact the school office or email:

parentcouncil@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk



Modern Languages Department News by Mrs Naddell

Visit to Heriot Watt University

Twenty three S5/6 pupils who are studying French and/or Spanish at Higher or Advanced Higher level are going to visit Heriot Watt University at the beginning of April to form part of the audience for a multi lingual debate. Students who are in their last year of the translation course at the university will provide simultaneous translation in several languages as the speakers in the debate will deliver their views in their native language (e.g. French, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin). The audience participates in the debate by listening to arguments, putting questions to the speakers and electronically voting on the motion. The motion for this year's debate is *"this house believes that the fragmentation of existing member states could endanger the future of the EU.* Hopefully some of our pupils will feel inspired enough to use their language skills!

S3 Visit to Paris

The "annual" S3 visit to Paris will take place between the 19th and 25th of June this year. A total of 94 people will head off to Paris in two coaches wearing, on many occasions, the light blue baseball caps which have now become a fixed feature of the trip. Even if we ourselves are not always keen on wearing them we certainly give the Parisians a sight to behold as the mass of blue caps is seen walking down the elegant Avenue des Champs Elysées! We will visit the main monuments including the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, the Louvre and the Sacré-Coeur but the Astérix Theme Park on the last day always provides the greatest thrills as pupils are desperate to ride the many big rides available to them!

S3 Competition : Vive la Francophonie!

Every year in March, French speaking countries throughout the world celebrate "La Francophonie". This year, the Institut Français d'Ecosse organised an online contest about "la Francophonie" for S2/S3 pupils in Scotland. Two of our S3 classes, split into teams of 10, entered the competition this year on Thursday 20 March. This was a good opportunity to use important skills for life and work as a team, using ICT and French skills, whilst having fun.

The aim of this online contest was for each team to find out the right answers as quickly as possible, using a variety of sources. Topics concerned French speaking countries around the world, and touched on sport, food, language and many other categories.

Our IT suites were busy as beehives, as our teams worked very competitively to find the correct answers – it has to be said that some questions were extremely difficult! Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience which they found both exciting and exhausting.

Results of winning teams will be published on 21 April, so let's wish our six MCHS teams "Bonne chance"!

Modern Languages News continued

By Amy Bruce S3

French Competition

On Thursday 20 March 2014, our S3 class took part in a French competition called "Vive la Francophonie". We were put into three teams of ten and I was the team captain for one of the teams. At 1pm, all team captains got an email, which contained a quiz. The quiz had different questions arranged into sections for example, Food, Sport and Geography. Then we had to answer the questions in French, giving the correct answers after doing our research using library books and the internet. We split the questions up, letting each person find the answer to one question. After we had finished, we had to send the email back to the Institut Français d'Ecosse before the time was up. The experience was very stressful, as we had to complete the quiz in a specific time! The experience however was very exciting, competitive and also a lot of fun! Let's hope our team wins!



Business Live! And ICT Live! Conferences in Disneyland Paris March 2014



S3 pupils from the Business and Computing Department travelled to Disneyland Paris by Eurostar on 1 March 2014. The purpose of the trip was to attend the Business Live! and ICT Live! conference which involved entrepreneurs and industry experts sharing their live experiences with the pupils. The speakers included Fraser Doherty, Mark Pilkington, Ian Livingstone and Kate Russell. Pupils enjoyed attending the conferences and have benefited from hearing the speakers' stories. Whilst staying in the Disney's Hotel Cheyenne the pupils also had the opportunity to spend time in the Disneyland parks where they had a lot of fun, going on the rides, seeing the parades and meeting the Disney celebrities. The trip was a four day event where both staff and pupils thoroughly enjoyed themselves, having a blast in Disneyland Paris.



Health and Wellbeing by Mrs MacPhee

Pupil Health and Wellbeing Survey 2014

Currently our aim in Mearns Castle High School is to give pupils more opportunity to be involved in improving Health and Wellbeing.

Week beginning the 24th March 2014 Mearns Castle High School pupils were given the chance to take part in a Health and Wellbeing survey.

In August 2014 we plan to form our first pupil Health and Wellbeing Improvement Team. The role of the group will be to actively promote Health and Wellbeing within the school and help improve areas of concern raised by pupils themselves.

Coming Soon To Mearns Castle High! "Free Your Feet"



"Free Your Feet" is a national whole school walking challenge for secondary schools. Mearns Castle High School S1, S2 and S3 pupils will take part in this event during national "Walk to School Week" 12th May to 16th May 2014. Last year during "Walk to School Week" we saw a significant increase in the number of pupils walking to school and consequently a healthy reduction in traffic around the school. We hope for a similar improvement this year and we would ask you to support this event to increase pupils' physical activity level by walking from home, walking from a drop off point, walking to the bus stop or cycling to school. With your help, we hope to improve the health of your son(s) and daughter(s).

Debating News by Mr McGowne

MEARNS CASTLE AT THE CAMBRIDGE UNION



On Saturday 1st March, **Niamh Grahame** and **Aaron Taylor** (both S5) competed in the **Cambridge Union Schools Debating Competition Finals Day**. Niamh and Aaron are the first ever Mearns Castle team to achieve this. This was due to both qualifying from an earlier Regional Heat held in George Watson's College in Edinburgh back at the start of January. Both debaters competed against some of the best teams in the UK on the day. The subjects for debate included: the rise of Facebook, the possession of Nuclear Weapons and the imprisonment of Juvenile Offenders. Niamh and Aaron received very creditable speaker and team points after the four rounds of debating. By the end of the day Mearns Castle had achieved mid-table respectability and achieved two 2nd place calls in the first and third debates. This was a fantastic achievement and great credit is due to both debaters for representing the school and competing so well against top class opposition.



Aaron and Niamh in Selwyn College

Debating News continued

Junior Debating



The International Competition for Young Debaters (ICYD)

On Saturday 8th March, two intrepid Mearns Castle Junior debating teams competed in the Regional round of the ICYD competition at the Old College in Edinburgh. This is an annual short preparation debating competition organised in alternate years by the Oxford and Cambridge Unions for debaters under the age of 15. This year's competition is being organised by the Oxford Union. Mearns Castle were represented by **Rhona McCalman** and **Kirsty Sutherland** in one team and **Elizabeth** and **Victoria Groom** in another. Both teams debated in three rounds with the top six teams being selected to compete at the Oxford Union at the start of May. As always, both teams debated to a high standard with Rhona and Kirsty only narrowly missing out on reaching the Finals. Kirsty achieved very high speaker points during the day.



However, both Elizabeth and Victoria produced some top class debating and were selected to compete in **Finals Day** in the **Oxford Union on Saturday 3rd May**. This is an incredible achievement in what is essentially the girls' first proper short prep university style debating competition. Details of Finals Day will appear in the next newsletter.

Debating News continued

ESU Junior Debating Competition

The English Speaking Union Junior debating competition continues apace with the first two rounds now completed. Mearns Castle was represented by three teams in the second round. Elizabeth and Victoria Groom, Rhona McCalman and Kirsty Sutherland all proposed the motion with Grainne Parkinson and Anjali Kashyap opposing. All three teams competed in two separate debates held in Hutchesons' Grammar School. All three teams debated the motion - *This House would abandon the one child policy* to a high standard but in the end Elizabeth and Victoria qualified to compete in the next round to be held at the beginning of May. Great credit is due to Rhona, Kirsty, Grainne and Anjali for getting this far in their first ever ESU competition. Senior debating awaits all three teams after the summer.

The Durham Union Debating Competition



The Mearns Castle Durham teams:

Kirsty Scott, Catherine Marney, Aaron Taylor and Niamh Grahame in the

The Debating roadshow continued into March when Mearns Castle once again competed in the **Durham Union Schools Debating Competition**. This is billed quite rightly as the '*World's biggest residential debating competition*'. A total of 133 teams competed this year making 2014 the biggest Durham competition ever. Teams from all around the UK compete over five rounds on the Saturday and Sunday before the top 16 teams break to the final rounds. Mearns Castle was represented once again this year by **Kirsty Scott and Catherine Marney (both S6) and Niamh Grahame and Aaron Taylor (both S5)**. The motions were as challenging as ever. Topics ranged from '*selecting only those born in their country for international sports teams*' to '*the desirability of setting classes in schools*'.

Debating News continued

As always, both Mearns teams debated to a high standard against some serious opposition. Durham hosts the best schools in the country with many coming from some of the top independent schools. Both teams finished high up the final points table with very creditable speaker points and both received very favourable feedback from some high quality judges. Roll on next year!!!



Debating Round Up.....

Mearns Castle also competed again in two national long preparation debating competitions this year.

Aaron Taylor and Niamh Grahame (both S5) reached the Regional Final of the Donald Dewar Memorial Debating Competition run by the Law Society of Scotland. Aaron and Niamh came through two rounds of debating to reach this stage but were narrowly beaten at the semi-final stage. Both debaters deserve great credit for coming this far and for representing the school in the manner that they do.



Finally, a mention to two debaters in their final year of Mearns Castle debating. **Hayley Russell and Max Merrill** competed well again to reach the third round of the ESU Mace. They were narrowly beaten at this stage with a judging decision that could only be described as *'interesting'*.

However, both Hayley and Max deserve a huge mention and a massive thanks for representing the school in so many competitions over the years. Both have been attending debating club and competing for the school since S2. Max's notable achievements include reaching the ESU Mace final in 2012 with Stephanie Ross of that year's S6. Hayley's achievements include reaching the short list for the Scotland National team, finishing 4th on the 2013 Glasgow University Union speaking tab and reaching the final of the St Andrew's University competition in 2012. Both Max and Hayley were members of the Mearns Castle team that qualified for the European Youth Parliament National Forum held at Liverpool Hope University in 2012. Both have also competed in too many competitions to count. Both will be missed by the younger debaters in the school and, incidentally, by their debating coach.

Good Luck to all Mearns Castle debaters in the remaining competitions before the summer.

BSKC News
by Mr Stewart

BSKC

BRITISH SCHOOLS KARTING CHAMPIONSHIP



Congratulations to Mark Ross, Josh Lightbown, Jehanzeb Mobarik, Alice Carter, Chris Griffiths and Josh McLuskie who represented the school in the British Schools Karting Championship. Forming two teams, we took third place and fifth place in the regional finals!

Congratulations to all for the excellent performance and the sportsmanship displayed. Another trophy has been added to the school's display cabinet!

S1/S2 Code Breaking—CryptoCrackers by Miss Drummond and Miss Clark

Our 'Cryptocrackers' have continued to meet every Tuesday lunchtime in Room F15. Our dream team, consisting of Punim Fotedar (S1), Marina Gladkikh (S1), Andrew Dover (S1), Craig Methven (S2) and Eilidh Hamilton (S2), have enjoyed taking part in the Alan Turing Cryptography Competition which is run by the School of Mathematics at the University of Manchester.

Each week, the pupils have had to work together, combining their knowledge of code breaking with their problem solving skills, to crack the latest code in "The Tale of the Lovell Legacy". The team finished in 34th position on the leaderboard – an outstanding achievement considering over 600 teams from across the UK were competing.

Our next big challenge will be taking part in a live Cryptography Day in the Alan Turing Building at the University of Manchester on the 30th of April. We look forward to meeting other teams from the online competition and taking part in some new code-breaking challenges.

Chess Club News by Miss Drummond

We are delighted this year to have welcomed so many new members to the Chess Club. It is particularly encouraging to now have a regular group of female members, showing that chess is not just a sport for boys!

Congratulations are due to Jack Little (S1), Jack Bell (S1) and Punim Fotedar (S1), who finished 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively, in the school's chess league.

With the Glasgow Schools Chess League not running this year, we participated in a new competition, the Delancey UK Schools Chess Challenge. This is a national tournament consisting of seven in-school rounds leading to qualification for the Megafinal, and possibly the Gigafinal and Terafinal thereafter. Greig McKay (S3) demonstrated fine skills and experience to finish 1st in the school – well done! Greig is now eligible to compete against the top players from other schools in the Megafinal. The following runners up also showed strong performances, leading to their qualification to proceed in the competition: Jack Bell (S1), Amaan Chaudry (S1), Grant Ewing (S3), Punim Fotedar (S1), Marina Gladkikh (S1), Vivian Gounari (S1), James Howard (S3) and Tom Pound (S3).

A big thank you to Sam Cassie (S6) and Ross Mullen (S6) for helping out at the club and sharing their technical expertise with the new S1 members, who can now apply 'en passant' and 'castling'. Two players have even succeeded in reaching check-mate in four moves (although one of these, admittedly, was accidental).

The club meets Thursday and Friday lunchtimes in room F7. New members, of any level, are always welcome to drop in.

Student of the Year Culinary Arts by Mr McKenna



Congratulations to Scott Jackson in S5 who was presented with the student of the year at the Commercial Culinary Arts Banquet on Thursday 27 March 2014 at Eastwood House. This is a fabulous achievement for Scott and is testament to his hard work and dedication he has shown to the course this year.

East Renfrewshire Council in partnership with West College Scotland and En Croute Catering provide S5/6 pupils with the opportunity to gain the British Institute of Innkeeping Awarding Body Level 1 & 2 and the REHIS Health & Safety Certificate

MENU

Trio of Seafood Tastes

Chicken and Haggis Ballotine

Served with Potatoes Dauphinoise and Seasonal Vegetables

(V) Pesto Linguine

With Roasted Mushrooms, Pine Nuts and Fresh Parmesan Shavings

Banoffee Pie with a Difference

Tea and Coffee

Served with a Sweet Treat

Fishing Trip

By Mrs McKeeman

The trip was for S2 pupils, Roan MacDonald, Sean O'Brien, Thomas Paterson and Cameron Peat. They had been part of a fishing group run by the Campus Cop, David Cunningham and others which included pupils from Eastwood and Woodfarm High schools. They went to Galston on Tuesday 25th of March to Arran Trout Fishery for a day's fishing with coaches to offer advice. The boys each caught a trout.



School Clubs/Sports News by Mr Brown

There has been a lot going on this year with clubs both at lunchtime and after school, along with our regular school representative teams.

We have had a number of really positive additions to our school clubs programme this year.

We started a cricket club this year for S1 and S2 – local coach Ammar Ashraf has been leading a group of 12 pupils and we hope to continue this club into the summer term. We hope that the players will get some competitive matches before the end of the year.

We have also had a fantastic response to Mr Wyroslawski's first ever Lacrosse for girls club – in the first term we had over 50 girls signed up for this. The club continued in the second term with slightly fewer numbers but is still going strong.

As a follow on from our inter-disciplinary project this year with modern languages, we have been offering a handball club for students on a Tuesday lunchtime.

Our table tennis club S1-S3's has recently expanded due to popularity, now running on two days per week on a Tuesday and Thursday lunchtime.

Girls football has taken off this year with a very successful club on a Thursday lunchtime – the junior girls also played the first competitive match representing the school. Well done girls.

On a Friday after school we have a very successful badminton club with over 55 pupils attending every week. Also on a Friday we have been running a brand new dance club coached by local expert Kirstin Campbell.

Friday is a popular day for activity as we have also started a lunchtime gymnastics drop in club where gymnasts ranging from beginners to experts come together to develop their skills and confidence.

Table tennis club



School Clubs/Sports News continued by Mr Brown

Cricket club



Sports teams

We have so many sports teams here at Mearns Castle that it is hard to keep up with all of them although our Young Ambassadors have been working to update the departmental results board on display outside the old gym.

Here is a brief rundown of our sporting achievements this year, apologies in advance to anyone I have missed.

Football

We have had a busy year with our football teams with our Senior Team getting to the last 16 of the Scottish Cup and our U16 and U13 teams getting to their respective league playoffs. Well done to all our footballers.

Volleyball

The Captain of our boys Senior team, Darren Martin, has been selected to play for Scotland U18's in April at Luxembourg. Well done Darren.

Skiing

Our Skiing team this year won the Scottish Secondary School Alpine Series competition in March. Well done to all who contributed to this victory Kate Taylor, Owen Vinter, Scott Wylie, Keri Anderson and Jimmy Fitzpatrick,

Our Pupils also represented in both boys and girls at the British Championships in Gloucester in November. Well done to Kate Taylor, Scott Wylie, Owen Vinter, Zak Vinter, Keri Anderson, Jimmy Fitzpatrick, Joy Fitzpatrick and Victoria McKinlay.

School Clubs/Sports News continued by Mr Brown

Zak Vinter and Keri Anderson are currently representing Scotland at the World Schools Skiing Championship in Spain. We wish them all the best.

Curling

MCHS Curlers qualified for the finals this year at Murrayfield ice rink on 14-16 March. Unfortunately they were beaten on the day by the better team but it is still a great achievement.

Well done to Carolyn Baird, James Strang, Mairi and Heather McDonald. They all played really well and the parent coaches tell me they were very proud of their team.

Scottish Schools athletics

Scottish Schools Cross Country Championships

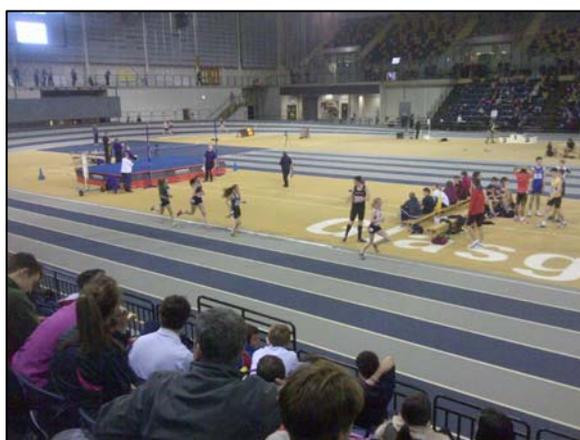
Congratulations to all the runners who took part at a very windy Irvine! All runners competed exceptionally well with some truly outstanding performances against the best runners in the country. Special mention must go to Nikki Miller who came second in the Girls' Group C race and Holly Still who came 4th in the Girls' Group B race. Both girls have now been chosen to represent Scotland in the forthcoming Home International in Bolton on the 22 March. Congratulations to both girls.

Mr Macfarlane

Scottish Schools indoor championships

Well done to all pupils who represented Mearns Castle at the championships inside the new Emirates Arena – Great performances from all our pupils and a number of personal bests - but well done in particular to Niamh Grahame and Holly Still. Holly achieved a Bronze medal in the 1500 and Niamh managed to get a Bronze medal in the 200m.

Scottish Schools Indoor Championships – Holly Still



School Clubs/Sports News continued

Badminton

Our Junior and Senior badminton teams won the East Renfrewshire Quaich competition – well done to our teams.

Senior Boys

- 1) David Currie
- 2) Graeme O'Neil
- 3) George Burns
- 4) Craig Stout

Senior Girls

- 1) Gemma Burnett
- 2) Kate Taylor
- 3) Laura Miller
- 4) Joanna Burns

Junior Boys

- 1) Greg Burnett
- 2) Jack Fletcher
- 3) Zak Taylor
- 4) Nev Cohen

Junior Girls

- 1) Helen Stout
- 2) Jill Strang
- 3) Heather Osborne
- 4) Marina Gladkikh

Tennis

Our Boys and Girls teams are in the last eight of their respective Tennis competitions – although we have not been able to play any matches. Both the boys and girls have received a walkover or a bye in each round so far!

School Clubs/Sports News continued by Mr Brown

And finally!

At Mearns Castle we love to celebrate the success of our pupils and staff. In Physical Education we like to specifically celebrate success attached to sporting achievement.

We have three routes for this:

Stars of the future

S1-S4 : All pupils who participate in sporting events or achieve some form of success can bring in photos and a short explanation of what they have achieved and they will feature in this gallery.

Pupil Hall of Fame

S5-S6 : All Senior pupils who are representing their country at an International level are eligible to enter our Pupil Hall of Fame. Current inductees are David Clark (Hockey, Scotland) and Andrew Mullen (Swimming, Scotland and Great Britain).

Former pupils and staff Hall of fame

This Gallery located in the Open Area, acknowledges former students and current/former staff who have performed to a high level on the sporting stage.

I am looking for help with all of these areas and would appreciate any new nominations for any of these Galleries from parents and pupils.

Commonwealth Games

By Mr Shaw

Our aim is to get the pupils, staff and parents of MCHS excited and inspired by the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. That's why we are trying to raise as much awareness and create as many opportunities as possible for participation in events and activities related to the Games. After the Easter holidays - an eight week Commonwealth Games after school club will be starting that gives pupils of all ages and abilities the opportunity to try out as many of the Commonwealth Sports as possible.

A letter containing more information will be distributed nearer the time. A list of activities/ events the school is/ will be involved with in relation to the Commonwealth Games is provided below.

- Whole School Interdisciplinary Commonwealth Games Day
- Non-uniform/ Sport Your Trainers Day
- Commonwealth Games workshop at Drumchapel Table Tennis Club
- Commonwealth Games badminton workshop at The Emirates Arena
- Velodrome Experience at The Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome
- Commonwealth Games themed School Sports Day
- East Renfrewshire Secondary Schools Commonwealth Games Day
- P7 Transition Day - 3 Commonwealth Sports during PE
- and many more.

Young Football Journalist of the Year 2013/14

By Mr Murphy (PE)

Over 30 pupils in S1-S3 entered the competition which began with pupils being tasked with submitting a 500 word report based on any televised game of football. The pupils were given some hints and tips from various sources including PE and English departments as well as some input from the school librarian. The pupils involved were then given a deadline to submit their first report by 6 December 2013. Most of the 33 pupils managed to achieve this with a very high standard of written work.

All of the pupils involved were then given the opportunity to attend a session lead by Andy Devlin who spoke about requirements of a journalist and gave some insight into some of the highs and lows of journalism. It was an excellent afternoon and all of the pupils really enjoyed hearing from someone who does the job for a living! They managed to ask many questions including who the most famous person he has ever interviewed was - Mohammed Ali or Bill Clinton was the answer! I do not think you get much more famous than that.

From the initial reports eight finalists were then identified. A massive congratulations to all of those eight pupils - Callum Russell, Alistair Pearson, Caitlin Rutherford, Evie Oliver, Ruaridh Wong, Drew Tomkins, Vivian Gounari and Mark Hannah. The eight pupils attended a live SPFL game with Partick Thistle v Aberdeen on Saturday 22 February. Mr Murphy (PE) and Mr Phillips (Computing) both attended the game with the pupils who were a credit to Mearns Castle High School. They managed to watch the game in the Directors Box! A huge thank you to all of those at TFD tours and Partick Thistle for arranging this day for the young journalists.

We now await the final reports and two winners will be identified - one S1/S2 winner and a winner from S3. Good Luck to all eight finalists and well done to all of the pupils who took part. It was a very difficult decision for the judging panel to narrow it down to eight finalists and it is anticipated that the winners will be equally as difficult to identify!



Trenderprise



By: Managing Director Andrew Bell S6



Trenderprise" is the name of the Mearns Castle High School's Young Enterprise Team for the term 2013-2014 . Our main business aim for the year was:

"to provide a range of high quality silicone wristbands incorporating quirky and modern slogans targeting the seasonal market and teenage trends".

The unique aspect of quirky slogans provided a modern twist to our wristbands that differentiated us from our competitors and retained the interest of the teenage market. We also wanted to make a profit whilst gaining hands on experience of running our own business.

Selling MCHS bands in school house colours proved popular with pupils as each purchase gained house points allowing pupils an opportunity to contribute towards achieving the School House Cup.

Our marketing team came up with some hilarious slogans for our Christmas themed wristbands including "Merry Wristmas" and "Winter Wonderband".



We negotiated and secured a sales pitch at The Avenue Shopping Centre to promote our Christmas wristbands. The sales event was a fantastic success resulting in a total of 259 bands sold during the course of the day.

The team presented an excellent performance at the Young Enterprise Renfrewshire Area Finals competition where 20 schools compete for a range of awards. Trenderprise were successful in collecting awards four categories:

- Best Regional Team Award
- UWS Marketing Award
- Runners up for Best Report
- Runners up for Best Presentation

Overall a great achievement for the team, that reflects the hard work and effort from the team throughout the year. After a year of challenges which has proved both successful and profitable the business has now been wound down. All remaining stock has been donated to the S1 Junior Enterprise Scheme, so house bands and points can still be purchased. We wish to thank all parents and pupils who have supported us throughout the year. Our thanks also to the school staff, business advisors and Renfrewshire Area Board, who have provided us with this memorable opportunity in our final year at MCHS.



House Cup News

by Mrs Crilley



Our House System has continued to flourish this year with a strong S6 Leadership team of House Captains and S6 prefects. They have been great role models for the junior pupils and members of their House. Since returning to school in August 2013 students in Mearns Castle have been striving to gain points for their House in order to hopefully win the Dalgleish House Cup. On Friday 28 March 2014, The House Cup was presented for the fourth year to the winning Wallace House during an Assembly.

We are proud to announce also that this year we had two inaugural inter-house sports tournaments, our first being The Dodge Ball tournament introduced and managed beautifully by Derek Scott in S6 from Sutherland House, this was a great success and was won by Ramsay House. Secondly, Alison Lambie and Laura Young from Wallace House managed the senior boys' Football Tournament with the six Houses competing against each other for six consecutive

Fridays after school. Their organisation was superb and they even organised a trophy to be presented to the winning House! This will now be known as The Lambie & Young Trophy.

Our House Flags were unveiled at the House assemblies and each House is proud of the design of the flags. It MUST be noted here that Emma Park in S4 contributed greatly to the design of each flag. The flags will now be displayed in the open area and very soon the House who won this year's cup will hang their flag on a flag pole outside our school.

Throughout the year various competitions, sporting events, enterprise, citizenship, and artistic achievements have taken place to allow the students to gain points. Our pupil praise cards have continued to be a great success and these are now displayed in the open area.



The 12 sixth year House Captains embraced their positions and responsibilities and worked tirelessly to lead their House, setting excellent standards to their peers and younger students. They have worked closely with their House Prefects to produce House Newsletters and deliver outstanding Assemblies.

At an earlier assembly all pupils were given the opportunity to vote for their chosen charity from the money raised from Charities week. As a result of this pupil consultation, eight representatives came from various charities to talk briefly about their charity, thank our students and receive their cheque.

It is now over to our S3 Vice Captains to take the lead and produce and deliver the next House Assembly as well as their House newsletter.



ONLINE PAYMENT FACILITY PAYMENTS REMINDER



East Renfrewshire Council has developed an online payment facility to make it easier for parents to pay for school trips, school meals etc. With the 'Payments 4 Schools' service, you are able to pay online via the School or Council website instead of sending your child to School with cash or cheques.

The 'Payments 4 Schools' service is part of the Council's wider public service excellence programme aimed at offering an increasing range of services online. In addition to giving access to services at a time that is convenient to all, it will also help to save money.

To use the online payment facility visit the School or Council website and click on the 'Pay' icon, school meals online, school payments. The system will then take you through the payment process. All major credit and debit cards are accepted, with the exception of American Express (AMEX) and Diners (DINE) cards. **NOTE: There is no administration charge for Switch/debit transactions however a 2% bank administration charge will be added to all payments made by credit card.**

To make a payment you will need to know your child's Scottish Candidate Number as this is the number that is needed for the field 'please enter a pupil reference' on the payment page. If you do not know your child's SCN please contact the School Office who will be happy to help (0141 577 2300).

Comments Slip

Pupil's Name: _____

Year Group: _____

We welcome any feedback on the content of the Newsletter or indeed any other aspect of the work of the School. If you wish to make an electronic reply please do so by following the link below:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/MearnsCastle/contact-us/>

Comment:

Parent's Signature:.....

Parents Name (please print):.....

