



Kirkcaldy High School

Issue
107
Dec 2012

Community Newsletter

**Merry Christmas &
a Happy New Year**

Diary Dates

Fri 21 Dec – School closes early for the holidays.

Mon 7 Jan 2013 – Inset Training Day for teachers on "Curriculum for Excellence".

Tues 8 Jan – Pupils return to school.

Thurs 17 Jan – S1 Parent and Carer Evening.

Friday 18 Jan – S4 Report posted home.

Mon 21 Jan – S4 Information Evening – course choices and study skills, getting the most from S5.

Tues 22 Jan – KHS Parent Council and Association meetings. Please feel free to come along at 6.30pm.

Sun 27 Jan – Maths Department trip to Paris and Eurodisney – returning Wed 30.

Mon 4 Feb – S2 Learning Fair with a focus on personalisation and choice of courses.

Mon 11 Feb – S5/6 Prelim exams begin.

Tues 12 Feb – S3 Parent & Carer Evening.

Wed 13 Feb – Inset Training Day for KHS teachers and primary colleagues.

Thurs/Fri 14 & 15 Feb
– Mid term holidays.

The Rector writes ...

May I take this opportunity to wish you "all the best" for the festive season and the year to come? As always, we look both backwards and forwards at this time and I have to say that both viewpoints are quite attractive in terms of our school's achievements and potential to do ever better. Keeping it topical, you will no doubt be aware that the recent Inspection has gone well, with the school described as being "in good shape" by Councillor Bryan Poole, Fife's education spokesman and having been strongly commended in the Scottish Parliament by David Torrance MSP, in a special motion. We are pleased that recent progress has been recognised and equally content to take on board the advice offered by HMIe. However, we can't be complacent and will be working hard to make KHS an excellent school in all regards. For me, the most satisfying aspect was the recognition by the Inspectors that a great many of our young people develop over time to become "outstanding ambassadors" for their school and their community. That's quite a tribute, and it reflects a huge effort from all of us.

As you would expect, continuing to develop new courses which reflect "Curriculum for Excellence" remains a big priority and during the recent training day, we again got together with colleagues from the other second-

dary schools in the town to share ideas.

The big difference in qualifications comes with the "Nationals", which pupils will take from summer 2014. National 3 replaces Standard Grade "Foundation", National 4 is of a similar standard to "General" or Intermediate 1 and National 5 (the only qualification with an external exam) replaces "Credit" and Intermediate 2. In the spring, our S3 pupils will decide in which 6 subjects they will take their Nationals in S4.

With winter upon us I would urge that you sign up with "Fife Direct" to receive early notice by email or text message of any school closure, for example due to snow or other bad weather. Obviously, closure is always a last resort but we would urge all pupils, especially those taking exams next year, to be well prepared for such a possibility. This is where online resources such as "GLOW" or Scholar (with Heriot-Watt University) come into their own.

It has been a busy term in respect of staff changes. Firstly, many congratulations to Miss Diamond on her appointment as Depute Rector on a permanent basis. Following the retirements of Mrs Kerr and Mrs Archibald, Miss Diamond will soon be joined as a member of the Senior Leadership team by Mr Young, currently Principal Teacher at Bell Baxter High School in Cupar.

With Mrs Davidson now remaining as a temporary Depute Rector, we have Mr Farquharson and Miss Pitts taking up extra duties in Guidance and Miss Torp-Petersen becoming a temporary member of that team.

Mrs Porterfield has been appointed as Principal Teacher overseeing "Rights Respecting School" and Miss Higham is now Principal Teacher of "STEM" (Science, Technology and Engineering). We welcome Mr Kerr in PE, Mr Smeaton in French, Miss Donaldson in Art and Design and Mr Matuszak in Learning and Behaviour Development. Best wishes to all our new staff.

Finally, well done to Miss Sinclair, who will be moving to Lochgelly High School as a Principal Teacher on a temporary basis.

Merry Christmas and a
Guid New Year!

We're on the web ...
www.fifedirect.org.uk/kirkcaldyhs

Primary Open Evening is a Big Hit

Despite strong competition from Barcelona and Celtic, our recent showcase event was a big hit with over 200 families visiting the school to see classes in action and to meet staff. Parents and carers of next session's new First Year intake were impressed as they toured the school, commenting on the quality of the school's facilities, the commitment of the staff and the interesting lessons being delivered as part of "Curriculum for Excellence". For most, the explosive Science experiments were a highlight! Mrs Aitken (Senior Depute Rector) thanks the Prefects who were excellent hosts and guides, once again giving great service to the school. Very many seniors are well on track to achieve a Gold, Silver or Bronze Saltire Volunteering Award and the quality of their work was highly commended by school inspectors when they visited KHS in October.

The "Tempest" Goes Down a Storm!

Mr Parkinson, of the RE Department, offers an account of the Shakespeare Schools Festival last month: comic triumph as Stefano, the drunken butler and Trinculo. They were commended by the organisers for finding the laughs where many a performer doesn't.

"Tempest" could well describe the weather conditions on the way to Falkirk Town Hall. Driving rain, high winds, traffic chaos. It took us an hour and a half to get from Edinburgh to Falkirk, arriving minutes before the performances began.

Two other schools were represented, Falkirk High and Wallace High, performing 30 minute versions of Romeo and Juliet and A Midsummer Night's Dream respectively. However, the highlight of the evening was, of course, Elaine Bruce and Cheryll Garries' superb production of The Tempest. From the storm-tossed opening as Prospera and Ariel's magic blew the KHS crew from side to side, to the end, when, all things resolved, Prospera leaves magic behind, the audience were completely drawn in by this marvellous performance.

Jade McQuillan was, not surprisingly, a commanding presence as the exiled Duchess showing wizard scheming vengeance and showing mercy with real insight and skill. Alanah Watson impressed us all with her Ariel, playing this powerful, loyal and captive spirit, with energy, poise and style. Adam Campbell and Talia Toruntay were brilliantly funny as the lovers Ferdinand and Miranda, calling laugh after laugh after laugh from the audience, with their timing, gesture and expression.

Scott Binnie and Kieran Macdonald also pulled off a



ing the laughs where many a performer doesn't. Once again, Hale Denholm deployed her considerable comic talent to great effect as the monstrous Caliban. She had the whole house in fits. I was sitting next to a veteran of many shows who kept whispering, 'She's good, she's really good, that's brilliant' as Hale did her stuff.

In fact, the whole cast were hugely impressive. Megan Greer, Mark Dunsire, Christopher Duffy, Romy Sinclair, Siobhan Robb, and Rachel Dunlay all delivered the goods in important supporting roles, and they, together with the ship's crew, were praised for their disciplined, coordinated and well rehearsed work, especially for the impressive shipwreck at the opening.



Although it is a festival rather than a competition, our guys clearly delivered the best show of the night and the lady next to me commented 'The kids were really good, but to manage a performance like that you must have really excellent drama teachers'. We do.

Mrs Garrie and Ms Bruce are extremely proud of all the students involved, and are planning to perform a Shakespeare 'double bill' in school early next year, by presenting an abridged version of 'The Tempest' and 'Macbeth'. So watch this space for details closer to the time!

Many Thanks to MGt—Breakfast Club Sponsors

Many thanks to all at the local contact centre MGt for their continued support of our Breakfast Club. Last month, a group of senior Business Management students paid a visit to the Company's premises at John Smith Business Park to be presented with a cheque for £1000. This amount will go towards subsidising the price of breakfast in our refectory in the year ahead. For only 30p, pupils can enjoy toast, juice and cereal, ensuring that their day gets off to a nutritious start.



KHS has very good links with MGt and we regard the company as our chief business partner. HR Director, Moira Brown recently assisted with our Head Boy and Head Girl interviews and we have facilitated senior pupils gaining part time or holiday employment with the company. Jade McQuillan is pictured accepting the cheque from Mr Jonathan Guthrie, Chief Executive.



Wider Access to University Places



Pamela Forbes (below right) – former pupil of KHS and now a fourth year Classical Studies student, spoke recently at the University of St Andrews 600th Anniversary Appeal Dinner at Middle Temple Hall, London. She told the audience, which included the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, of how involvement with the KHS link programme with St Andrews opened up her eyes to a new world of possibilities.

Pamela said, "In my third year at KHS, I was selected to participate in a project named Working Together To Improve. I was asked to write a 3000 word essay and give a presentation on a topic of my choice. We were given the opportunity to go to St Andrews (which I had also never visited before, even though it was so close to my home), and to chat to students and staff at the university whom I stayed in touch with. The project gave me an insight into university life as well as boosting my confidence in myself and my own academic skills.

"By completing the project, I then knew that I had the potential, and most importantly, I now had the drive and support in place to apply to competitive universities. I also knew from that point onwards that St Andrews was the university I wanted to attend!"

She said receiving a scholarship had allowed her to become a student ambassador and progress to become Vice Principal Ambassador for Widening Participation – helping prospective students from similar backgrounds to her own, come to St Andrews. She added: "With finance being one of my fears in applying to university, and the ease that came over my mind when I was granted a yearly scholarship, I know how important these donations can be in allowing great people to attend St Andrews. "My scholarship has definitely broken down barriers for me and I feel that investing in scholarships generates a full circle of benefits.

"My decision to apply and go to St Andrews was the best decision I have ever made and I have never looked back."

The school continues the "First Chances" link with St Andrews and some of this year's graduates are pictured above left – Ben Ramsay, Christopher Duffy and Santoshi Kaur. See more on this theme on Page 9.



The Nine Lives of Roddy Hogg

Recently, S1 pupils were treated to a performance by the Baldy Bane Theatre Company. 'The Nine Lives of Roddy Hogg' is a short play, recommended by Road Safety Scotland, and delivered by a small group of young Scottish actors.

Organiser Mrs Ritchie, PTC Guidance, said that the audience was captivated as the foolishness of Roddy's actions became more apparent and finally culminated in life changing events. We have also been dealing with road safety at Assemblies this month.

Ten S6 pupils attended an information event at Victoria Hospital on Tuesday 6 November. This event showcased the volunteer opportunities in the NHS Fife Operational Division.

Staff and volunteers were on hand to talk to the pupils and members of the public about the different roles that volunteers can take on, in a range of areas in the hospital setting. There are over 500 volunteers working across sites in NHS Fife with a further 400 volunteers working through other organisations such as the WRVS and the Red Cross.

Our pupils were really inspired by the event and are either organising to become volunteers, or are already volunteering. They are helping out on general hospital wards, at ante-natal classes, and as children's play assistants. Taking on this rewarding role will allow them to make a difference to the people they help. It will raise the pupils' self esteem, self confidence, and enable them to further develop a wide range of skills and personal qualities further.

If you have been inspired by this article, please check the website www.nhsfife.org/volunteer.

Book Week Scotland



KHS celebrated Book Week Scotland in style in November by inviting the Scots Makar, Liz Lochhead, to talk to pupils. Lochhead – Scotland's National Poet – addressed a group of more than 100 KHS pupils, as well as visitors from other schools. She recited several of her poems, including 'Kidspoem / Bairnsang' in which she celebrates the Scots language. She also performed her own favourite, 'Poem for my Sister' and a poem she wrote for the children's panel 'Trouble is Not My Middle Name'. She talked about growing up in Motherwell, and her subsequent success as a writer. Lochhead encouraged pupils to enter into 'conversation' with her and was open to questions. At the end, she stayed behind to meet pupils, sign books and have her photograph taken. KHS Drama pupils, who had studied her play 'Perfect Days', were delighted to meet the

writer and ask about her work. Overall, this was a fantastic opportunity for pupils to see one of Scotland's best known writers.

In addition to this, Matthew Fitt, published novelist and poet, also visited KHS during Book Week. Fitt, an expert in the field of Scots language education, ran workshops on Scots for groups of S2 and S3 English pupils. He worked with S3 pupils to teach them the difference between Scots and slang, encouraging them to be proud of their heritage and their language. In the S2 session pupils collaborated to create a poem entitled 'My Scotland'; they also took part in a Scots version of the 'Hokey Cokey' and they listened to Greek mythology – in Scots! Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the interactive and energetic nature of his workshops. The afternoon was rounded off by an impromptu duet when Mr Fitt was joined by the Rector Mr Allan in a rendition of Michael Marra's 'Hermless' – the alternative Scottish National Anthem – much to the delight of the audience.



Children In Need

Thank you to everyone who bought cakes, Pudsey wristbands/keyrings/bandanas etc. Our Charities Committee and Rotary Interact Club got together to coordinate fund raising. With donations from the staff breakfast on the In-service Day our total is just over £300.



Pupil Led Sports Clubs

Kieran Farmer (S6), of the Sports Committee, reports on some new and exciting clubs on offer for pupils, run by senior pupils. There are many activities which should appeal to all interests. Monday: S1-3 football after school on the astroturf. Tuesday: S1-6 Girls Fitness Evening after school in the fitness gym. Wednesday: S1-3 Badminton at lunchtime in the games hall. Thursday: S1-6 Basketball club at lunchtime in the games hall. KHS promotes pupil leadership and several seniors, including Kieran, have gained coaching awards.

Kirkcaldy Schools Careers Convention

There was very a good attendance at the convention last month and Mrs Davidson (Depute Rector) pays special thanks to Aaron Black, Michael McDuff, Sandy Wallace and Darren Watson, who helped with the event, held at Adam Smith College. Best wishes to Michael, who has since left school to take up an apprenticeship!

FoKHS News

FoKHS began the academic year with a new chairman, Harry Kerr, replacing Bob Docherty after 10 years of tireless service. Janet Bishop replaces Margaret Fraser as Secretary, who has moved south to live. Other office-bearers are: Vice-Chair, John Beck; Secretary, Janet Bishop; Treasurer, Ron Moodie; Joint Membership Secretaries, Sheena Scobie and Colin Johnston.

Membership currently stands at around 100, but we could do with more members, in order to maintain the support the FoKHS give to the School. Last year £3500 was donated towards the refurbishment of the hall, a long-term project we are keen to support on an on-going basis. An annual donation is given to the KHS Pipe Band, and this year is no exception, as the band went to Ingolstadt for the 50-year anniversary celebrations. FoKHS also has agreement with the School, to pay 50% of the cost of the upkeep of the Peace Garden, a worthwhile investment to make the front of the School more attractive from the road.

The support is not just financial, however, and members are involved in mentoring, scribing in exams, invigilation, chaperoning and bus-driving, whenever needed.

Last year's fundraising ceilidh was a great success, and plans are well underway for a similar event on 8 March 2013. Bert Pozzi will again provide the music, and Valente's the fish suppers. We ask you to support the evening - tickets will be on sale in January at £12 each, or £100 for a table of 10. It will be a great night!

If you are interested in supporting FoKHS, please email Janet Bishop: jb.bishop@btinternet.com

Italian Adventure— October 2012

Over the October break, our pupils and staff survived two visits to Italian volcanoes. 36 pupils and teachers Mr Parkinson, Miss Kelly and Mrs Lawson accompanied by Mr Kirkcaldy, Library Assistant, climbed Vesuvius, explored the Bay of Naples and endured the sulphur stench, boiling mud and jets of super-heated steam in the Solfatara crater at Pozzuoli.

Although Vesuvius hasn't had a major eruption for quite a while, pupils were nonetheless nervous about it as they had already visited the ruins of Pompeii, seeing the devastation volcanoes can cause and being particularly moved by the half dozen or so plaster-encrusted, 2000 year old, human remains encountered around the site. The earth didn't move but hearts did.



"STEM" - Science Technology & Engineering News

Recently, pupils competed against Forfar Academy for the Top of the Bench Chemistry competition, with Ewan Rae, Erin Sandilands, Talia Toruntay and James Farmer involved. It was a close run battle with KHS taking the early lead, but we were just beaten 28-30 in the last round.

Two teams of 4 S3 pupils competed in the Renewables Challenge at Adam Smith College last month. They were competing against 9 other schools from across Fife to design and build ships and air ships fuelled by hydrogen. They worked extremely well, got rather wet in the process and did well to come third in the ship building competition where they had to construct a ship to carry aid packages across a river.

Also, Miss Higham (Principal Teacher of Science and STEM) reports that the Science Club goes from strength to strength. They are pictured with their home grown Christmas tree!

Meanwhile, Dr Murray's Chemistry pupils were delighted to receive a cheeky response from the BBC's Jeremy Paxman after they wrote to him recently about a failed experiment featured on "Newsnight". Thanks Paxo!



We Shall Remember Them



On Friday 9 November we held a two minute silence and a special ceremony at our War Memorial as a mark of respect for those who have fallen in war. With well over 200 names, our memorial is thought to be the largest school memorial in Scotland. We were honoured to be joined by Major Mark Griffin of the Royal Engineers, a bomb disposal expert who has seen active service in Iraq and Afghanistan. After a few words from the Rector and a poetry reading by Jade McQuillan (Head Girl), wreaths were laid. In the run up, the Charities Committee had organised the sale of poppies and we were very pleased by the number of pupils who chose to respect the memory of those who have given so much. Two days later, at the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, KHS was represented when Jade and Lee Pirie (Head Boy) joined pupils from the other High Schools in the town to take part in the parade and lay a wreath at the Kirkcaldy War Memorial, as part of the official service organised by the British Legion. Lee is pictured with Major Griffin.

In The Swim!

Congratulations to the following pupils who represented Kirkcaldy High School at last month's Fife Schools Swimming Championships, achieving an excellent 4 Gold, 3 Silver and 5 Bronze Medals between them:

- Stephanie Campbell - 100m Backstroke - Bronze, 200m Backstroke - Bronze, 100m Breaststroke - 5th
- Rachel Smith - 200m Individual Medley - Gold, 100m Freestyle - Gold, 200m Freestyle - Silver
- Megan Jones - 200m Freestyle - 5th
- Lauren Kerr - 100m Breaststroke - Bronze, 200m Breaststroke - Bronze
- Rebekka Robertson - 50m Butterfly - 7th
- Callum MacGregor 100m Butterfly - Gold, 200m Butterfly - Gold, 100m Freestyle - Silver
- Andrew Campbell - 200m Backstroke - Bronze, 100m Backstroke - 5th, 100m Freestyle - Silver

Our "Outstanding Ambassadors"

Our pupils are proud of their school and positive about their learning according to Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education, who noted many key strengths during a recent visit. Expressing overall satisfaction with the quality of the school, they were confident that self evaluation processes and plans are leading to improvement and they will make no further visits in connection with the inspection, which took place in October.

Other strengths of the school, noted by the Inspectors include high achievement in out-of-class learning, high quality pastoral care, very good community partnership working, staff who listen to and involve pupils and the Headteacher's leadership of an improving school.

Responding to the inspectors' findings, Mr Allan, Rector, said that he was delighted that the many improvements implemented have been recognised. "I must pay credit to our young people and their families, along with our partners in the community, who work with us to provide an excellent school experience. Our school aim



is to ensure a happy and successful learning community, meeting needs and serving ambition. It is good to have such a strong endorsement of our work. The staff here are fully committed and the Inspectors commended our ability to work well together to plan further improvements. We are already taking on board the useful advice they have offered," he added.

In their report the inspectors noted: "The school's key processes for evaluating its work are very well established and as a result, numerous aspects of school life are improving. Teachers provide professional learning opportunities for each other, take on leadership responsibilities and work with other schools". They also note a "positive climate for learning" and said that the school's approaches to evaluating its own work were "strong, with some very good features".

Young people with additional support plans are making good progress. Exclusions have reduced and attendance has improved. The proportion of those going on to "positive destinations" eg university, college, training or work, is above the national average. Young people achieve well over a range of sporting, cultural and citizenship activities and many benefit from commitment to "school service", a large proportion achieving Saltire Volunteering Awards.

Teachers have made "good progress in taking forward

Curriculum for Excellence". This remains one of the school's main challenges. Ensuring that standards are maintained at a time of great change is always difficult, but we are collaborating with the other schools in the town and with partners in Community Learning to enhance our courses and delivery. The school is particularly pleased by the high satisfaction levels noted by pupils and parents, which come from the extensive questionnaires conducted by the inspectors. The figures, available on the HMIe website, are very high and well above the national levels. The school greatly appreciates the support of families and the local community.

Lorraine Wilkinson, Chair of the Kirkcaldy High School Parent Council, said she was very

pleased with the positive inspection report which recognised many qualities across the school. "Led by a strong management team, KHS staff are developing the capacities of Curriculum for Excellence in every child, as well as core values of respect for self, oth-

ers and learning, in a positive and meaningful way", she added.

Cllr. Bryan Poole, Chair of Fife Council's Education, Children, Young People & Families Policy Advisory Group, said: "I'm very pleased to see that Kirkcaldy High School is in good shape and well prepared to continue its improvement journey. Having met with Mr Allan recently, I know that he and his team are passionate about fairness, ambition and opportunity for all young people, whatever their background or specific needs. I'm confident that the school will continue to flourish and deliver for Kirkcaldy".

Summing up, Mr Allan commented: "Kirkcaldy High values respect for self, others and for learning. The inspection has identified these key principles as having an impact, and the inspectors note they are reflected well in our curriculum. I am particularly pleased that our young people have been described as outstanding ambassadors for their school and community. So many visitors come away with this view and I'm glad the inspectors share it".

PHOTOGRAPH: Some of KHS' "Outstanding Ambassadors" - Head Boy and Girl with their Deputies preparing to deliver an assembly. L-R Imogen Logan, Sean Plumridge, Sandy Wallace, Jade McQuillan (Head Girl), Lee Pirie (Head Boy), Kirsty Wilson.

Higher Communication Out & About

POLMONT—S6 pupils Chloe Cooper, Nicola Johnston, Megan Walker and Emma Robertson organised a trip to Polmont Young Offenders to help assist with their projects. They were joined by the 3 Advanced Higher Modern Studies pupils Darren Burza, Sean Reid and Luke Connor. When the pupils arrived at the prison they met the Education Officer Andy Masz who chatted to the pupils for over an hour. He provided them with lots of useful information which has been of great help to their projects. They are now looking forward to their trip to Cornton Vale in January to compare the two prisons.

KIRKCALDY SHERIFF COURT—On Tuesday 13th November, a group of 8 Sixth year pupils from Communication 4 English visited Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court. In the morning the pupils were given a tour of the court where they got to see two of the main court rooms. Later on in the day the pupils had the opportunity to have a chat with the Sheriff who informed them of the workings of the court. After the chat with the Sheriff the pupils attended a few court cases which really helped them to understand how the court works.

Rotary Interact Hi 5

Kirkcaldy Rotary, Kirkcaldy Raith Rotary and Roteract clubs as well as Interact clubs from Kirkcaldy High School and Viewforth High School came together to enjoy a very successful evening of games, laughter and serious competition at times. Pupils were commended on their enthusiasm and active participation.

The Interact club have also been supporting local children by dressing as elves and collecting donations with the Rotary clubs, wrapping Xmas presents and helping out at their Xmas party. They have done very well giving up their time for others as well as having great fun.



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S1 Photo Competition

Very well done to all S1 who took part in the "Learning Plus" Competition organised by Miss Murray.

It was very close but the judging panel (Head Boy, Head Girl and the Rector) selected Gael Hopton's view of KHS as the winner. The theme was "Autumn" and the runners up were Brandon Smart and Luke Fleming.

Gael wins a £10 voucher and the runners up £5 each. Also Gael's photo will go on our website front page and feature in our prospectus.



Black Watch Study Day

By Emma Duncan and Elizabeth Jenkins (S5)

On Thursday 22nd November pupils in our Higher History Class were joined by pupils from Glenrothes High for a study day held in KHS by the Black Watch Museum. The whole day was about a unit that we have been studying in class - 'Scotland and the Great War 1914-1928'. We all received hands on experience with primary and secondary evidence from the Black Watch staff. We saw World War One weapons first hand and some of us even tried on soldiers uniforms!

Using a 3-dimensional map, the staff were able to illustrate where significant areas were situated in relation to the battlefields and give the pupils an idea of how the soldiers were deployed. They were also given a unique chance to use weapons (which were disabled prior to the visit!) and learn how other equipment worked. Furthermore, the pupils had the opportunity to watch actual footage of the women at work in the hospitals, including the famous Elsie Inglis performing surgery on wounded soldiers. Then Mr George Webster from St Andrews University gave a presentation "Haig: The Man Behind the Mask of Command" which gave the pupils an insight into General Douglas Haig's background and extensive information regarding the arguments for and against the effectiveness of his controversial role during the war.

Kirkcaldy High School in the Sunday Papers

Earlier this month, the Sunday Herald ran a story about widening access to university places and featured KHS' close links with St Andrews University. Four of our pupils were interviewed by Judith Duffy and photographed by Stewart Attwood. This follows recent coverage of former pupil Pamela Forbes, who is the University's wider access "ambassador" and recently featured in the press and on TV. See also page 4. Now read on ...

Mohsin Muhammed visited St Andrews for the first time when he attended a summer school at the university this year. The 17-year-old, who goes to school just 20 miles away in Kirkcaldy, admits that he had no idea what to expect.

"I thought it would be a bit like what you see in the movies," he said. "The main reason for going was no-one in my family had been to university before or experienced any higher education. It was just an experience for me to learn what university was like."

Muhammed has now applied to study medicine at the university – something which he says he may not have considered if he had not attended the summer school.

His school, Kirkcaldy High, actively encourages its brightest pupils to visit and learn about St Andrews in the hope of opening the door to higher education to more youngsters. But serving a catchment area which has a "significant" amount of deprivation – around one-quarter of the school's 1100 pupils qualify for free meals – means this not always an easy task.

Rector Derek Allan said: "Many of our kids who are certainly smart enough to consider university as an option don't for either economic reasons or just from lack of confidence.

"There is economic deprivation, but there is also deprivation of ambition ... this is an issue."

Allan said around 25% of pupils went on to higher education, while 33% went onto further education.

But he added: "We think there is a percentage of those who think college is their limit and we could raise their aspirations. "We think the university does well to try and connect with local working-class kids and when they do, they do it well. But clearly the figures show

there is still an issue."

Kirkcaldy High first set up links with St Andrews around eight years ago and now takes part in a Fife-wide project called First Chances, where third year school pupils get the chance to take part in a residential three-day course at the university and work on a project with the help of students.

Lee Pirie, 17, who is in sixth year at Kirkcaldy High and applying to study international relations at St Andrews, said taking part in the project had strengthened his motivation to go to university.



"St Andrews has got such a good reputation it was daunting at first," he said. "But when you get there it is really welcoming and it was down to earth."

Fourth years Ben Ramsay, 14, and Santoshi Kaur, 15, said they enjoyed taking part in First Chances but are likely to study elsewhere as they want to take courses which are not available at St Andrews.

Ramsay, who wants to study drama and performing arts, said: "When you think about the students [he met at St Andrews], you know they have done well, so it is like role models. You see what they have done and it gives you an idea of what to aim for.

St Andrews does film studies, but that is more for directing and the writing side of things. I asked them and they said if you want to act, you are better looking for the actual acting side from a course."

Kaur said she didn't have any idea of what St Andrews would be like before she went on the course.

"They give you a lot of advice and you get to see a lot, so it was really good," she said.

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ASDA's Big Litter Pick 2012

Recently, local ASDA store Manager Stephen Gallagher and ten colleagues from the store met up with over sixty KHS pupils to take part in The Big Litter Pick. Supported by Fife Council workers, the "Wombles" started at Mid Den across from the High School and also picked up litter on areas on the fringes of Dunnikier Park. Kirkcaldy MSP, David Torrance, and the Rector, also gave up time to support this Asda Community Initiative and Stephen Duffy from Fife Council helped out by providing equipment and uplift of black bags. Many thanks to ASDA's Jean Ritchie, who is an excellent link person, involving KHS in worthwhile community projects and in other joint enterprises. Early in December, eight S4 pupils joined store staff to pack bags for the STV "Text Santa" Appeal.



Christmas Concert

Our annual Christmas Concert took place last week and was very well attended and very well received by parents, pupils and special guests. Mr Britain (PT Music) had put together a varied programme, with excellent support from Mrs Thomson of the Music Dept, Mrs Parkin of Modern Languages and instructors Mrs Anthony, Mr Cuthbertson, Mr Knussen, Ms. Hall and Mr McDonald. The show was introduced by Mrs Aitken (Senior Depute) and compered by Jade McQuillan and Lee Pirie (Head Girl and Boy). It really was a first class show ... well done to all involved.

Programme	
Wind Band	Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree, Flute Sundae
Vocal ensemble	Walking in the Air, Angels' Carol
Heather Hopton, Megan Smith, Grace Pierce	God Rest ye Merry Michael (Jackson)
Jazz Ensemble	Son of Mr Green Genes, Blessed Relief
String Orchestra	Scottish Medley
Wind Band	J.W.B. March from First Blow, White Christmas
Louise Wallace	Christmas Lullaby
Nikki Robertson, Alannah Watson, Becky Clark	Dance a Cachucha, Polly's Variations
String Ensemble	Pachelbel's Christmas
Wind Band	Frosty the Snowman, "I Gotta Feelin" by Black Eyed Peas
Rock band "The Horizon" - Jack Bryce, Liam Napier, Sean Plumridge, Alex Wilson	"Run" by Snow Patrol
String Orchestra	Jingle Bells, Mary Had a Baby, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Rocking Carol, We Wish You a Merry Christmas
S4-S6, vocalist Alannah Watson	Mamma Mia
Wind Band	We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Safe Drive—Stay Alive

Senior pupils were particularly enthusiastic about their Personal and Social Education experiences earlier this month. S5, led by Miss Pitts (PT Guidance), went to the Rothes Halls to be part of the hard-hitting 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive' presentation while S6 participated in 'Pre-Driver Training,' organised by Mr Farquharson (PT Guidance). The purpose of both sessions is to raise awareness of the dangers on roads and to make pupils think carefully about road safety as well as their responsibility towards others when driving, or as a passenger. The 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive' Roadshow is a thought provoking event designed to shock the pupils into thinking about their actions when driving. We would like to thank the organisers for giving our pupils an invaluable experience.

Product Design University Challenge

Our Product Design classes recently took part in a visit to Dundee University to experience the award winning program that it has on offer. See photo below with teacher Mr Fulton and some of the pupils. The visit took in a tour of the art college's excellent facilities before the pupils experienced a day in the life of a first year university student, through a variety of activities intended to develop their skills in design, communication and teamwork.



One such task was to design and build a device to protect an egg as it was dropped from a fourth floor window with the intention to have it land in one piece (hopefully!). To do this the pupils had only a few basic household items and half an hour, making teamwork and communication essential. Needless to say the two teachers on the trip were unsuccessful, but a few of the pupil groups had better luck!

AH Modern Studies Visit to Parliament

On the 16th of November our Advanced Higher pupils went on a visit to the Scottish Parliament building as part of their course. The day consisted of firstly attending a short introduction with a short briefing for the day. After this, a debate around a number of issues such as prison sentencing and social media was held. This involved the pupils giving their opinion through an interactive voting system. Following this they then went to a different part of the building where a number of workshops were set up. These included advice on writing dissertations and information regarding the Scottish Youth Parliament. The final part of the day was a question and answer session with Kenny Macaskill, the Justice Secretary for Scotland. During this session a number of pupils, including our pupils, had the chance to ask questions relating to their course and to justice issues. This was again very useful as our pupils collected a range of information which they have been able to include in their dissertations. See the photograph — Sean, Darren and Luke are clearly captivated by the quality of the debate!



Data Security & Internet Safety

Kirkcaldy High School, like all Fife Council organisations, takes data protection very seriously. Despite this, a data breach occurred earlier this term regarding the sharing of password information. Those affected by this have been already been contacted by the school and we would wish to reassure all parents/carers that measures have been put in place to ensure that there is no recurrence of this situation. Any pupil breaching our rules concerning the use of computer equipment will be liable to serious disciplinary action.

The school and the KHS Parent Partnership have been very active in promoting internet safety and security. Perhaps you attended our CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) workshop earlier this year, when experts on cyber-bullying gave some helpful advice? Please remind your child that they should keep passwords and personal details securely and respect the details of others as private data.

Every Penny Counts for Water Aid



Recently, KHS Business Management pupils, under the guidance of Mrs Nelson, Principal Teacher of Business, Enterprise and Computing, had a visit from Sandy Lonie, of the international charity Water Aid, which provides wells and pumps in parts of the world with no access to clean water. Earlier this session, the class decided that they would like to raise money for a charity and chose Water Aid, after learning that 4000 children die each day due to a lack of clean water. The pupils collected change from classmates in empty water bottles placed in classrooms around the school and raised awareness by holding special assemblies. £280 was raised - enough to provide 3 pumps providing clean, safe water for 60 families in Africa. Pictured with Mr Lonie and a demonstration pump are Judy Bell, Ryan Wallace, Megan Stevenson, Sarah Cameron, Kirsten Gourlay, Ross Ogden and Kyle Fenton.

Carols at St Bryce



On Sunday, 2nd December, Mrs Thomson took a group of senior pupils to St Bryce Church to take part in a concert organised by the Rotary Club of Kirkcaldy. The Kinghorn Singers sang a selection of seasonal Christmas songs and carols, while the pupils - Becky Clark, Nikki Robertson, Alannah Watson, Jade McQuillan, Jamie Clark, and Christopher Duffy - performed a number of pieces on xylophone and marimba with backing of drums and guitars and vocals. Wesley Wood also performed two solo pieces on the piano which were very well received by the audience, who enjoyed the entertainment provided by our pupils and the choir before tucking into mince pies and mulled wine after the concert. Mrs Thomson is pictured with Alannah and Becky.

Sports Shorts ...

Many thanks to Mr McDonald of the Maths Dept for organising trips to Murrayfield to see Scotland host the "All Blacks" and South Africa. Sadly, the strong support from the KHS contingent did not bring success in either match. Unfortunately, the same has to be said for the trips to Hampden for the football World Cup Qualifiers, run by Mr I'Anson (CDT) and Mr English (PE). Draws against Serbia and Macedonia were not the start the Tartan Army hoped for.

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"Jump" is a Great Success at Glenrothes

Mrs Turnbull (Principal Teacher of Expressive Arts) is very proud of the school's involvement in "Jump" - a dance show staged at the Rothes Halls at the end of November in conjunction with the National Theatre of Scotland. Over 100 KHS boys took part in the auditions for the show, which is based on "parkour" or free running and seven pupils were selected for the national company - the largest single group from any school. Very well done to Darren McCallum, Mason McKenzie, Jamie Greig, Ruairaidh Agnew, Sam Haxton, Cameron Brady and Dylan Hemsley. Dylan, Darren and Jamie are pictured in the official poster down by the River Forth.



The show fused physical theatre, storytelling and the movement discipline of parkour into a fluid, and freshly devised, theatrical production. It was more of a gig than a show, with the story of young men as they journey from boyhood to manhood. Using the grace, flow and style of parkour, the KHS boys explored the challenges and obstacles they face growing up. It was brilliant.