



Brannock High School



Head Teacher's Newsletter

December 2018

This term appears to have passed by quicker than most, with our School, as ever, being exceptionally busy with a wide range of activities and events offering a tremendous amount of rich and varied learning experiences for our pupils. Early in December we undertook our annual 'Attainment and Achievement Review' with colleagues from the North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) Education Continuous Improvement Service. This exercise again proved to very positive with high commendations afforded to us for the improvements that are evident in many aspects of our work. Importantly, positive trends are apparent in the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) Awards that have been achieved by our young people over the last three years. This is particularly so in relation to National 5 Awards achieved by our Fourth Year pupils and Higher Awards achieved by those at the end of Sixth Year. Praise needs to be afforded to all of our pupils for their very good efforts and indeed to parents and teachers who supported them throughout their learning and teaching experiences.

Achievements however should not always be judged purely on academic performance. Recent years have witnessed a wide array of other types of achievements being made by our pupils. These are important and often significantly influence the enhancement of personal skills and abilities in our young people, that are ultimately put to good use in later life, be it in work, training, or Further / Higher Education.

To this end, our School focuses greatly on preparing our pupils for the world '*Beyond Brannock*'. The Scottish Government's programme, 'Developing the Young Workforce ' (DYW), is one that we have endorsed fully. Its aim is to better prepare children and young people aged 3–18 for the world of work. Our evidence to date shows that we are making very good progress in this matter. Many of our pupils have acquired positive destinations on leaving school, as a result of our high commitment to integrated working with many educational providers beyond our school. In liaison with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) we are confident that our positive destination figures will have increased considerably since last year, sitting well in advance of our target figure of 90%.

A fine example of some of the innovative work we are doing can be seen in our joint project with Volvo / TEREX which this year included a November residential experience at Outward Bound Loch Eil. Staff from Volvo /TEREX accompanied our group and contributed to activities in support of developing skills in



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Science, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics. The venture was a great success and we look forward to further developing our links with our 'industry' colleagues in future years.



'Aspiring Engineers enjoy the Outdoors'

Wider achievements also continue to be promoted in our School, with accreditation afforded via SQA Personal Development and Leadership Awards, plus awards gained via external accreditation bodies. Almost all S1 and S2 pupils achieved the John Muir Award (Discovery and Exploration), courtesy of our interdisciplinary programme, 'Beyond Brannock'. 12 seniors achieved their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Evaluating and Supporting Mental Health

Supporting the Mental Health of young people is an issue that continues to be debated widely across society. The challenges that some of our pupils face are often quickly identified within School and it is important that we are best prepared to help counter such difficulties. This session we have introduced an evaluation programme utilising the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS). Accredited and supported by the Tree of Knowledge (school business partner), this year long evaluation is currently in progress within our school. Although it does not specifically identify patterns of behaviours, feelings, emotions, etc for individual pupils, the 'collective outcomes' of this work will allow us to focus more succinctly on the varying needs of our general pupil cohort across the School community. Further information on this important work will be shared with parents / carers at the end of the session.



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We are also very proud this year to be supporting a local voluntary organisation YAMS (You Are My Sunshine) who offer an outreach service to the community on a range of mental health matters. YAMS meet weekly on Monday evenings within the School from 6pm – 9pm.

Promoting Equality and LGBTI Alliance

Gaining Charter Mark Status last session for our LGBTI Alliance is also testament to the key roles and responsibilities undertaken by pupils across all year groups in this field of work. An 'Equalities Day' held in October was another highlight of many activities hosted by our LGBTI group. Great satisfaction remains evident for our group's efforts in gaining a place in the Finals of the Scottish Education Awards 2018.

Leadership

Early this session, twelve senior students undertook our third leadership project in liaison with Outward Bound, as part of our ongoing partnership programme (3 years) with the organisation. Pupils again were commended for excellent efforts throughout the residential experience.

Brannock Handsomely Supports Charities

MacMillan Nurses

Our annual Coffee Morning to support the work of MacMillan Nurses raised a superb £327.50p by sales and raffles across the school community. Organised by the Team of Additional Support Needs Assistants, the venture proved to be highly successful and enjoyed by all. Huge thanks to all who contributed so generously.

Beatson Cancer Charity

Senior Leadership Group Coffee Morning.

Another successful Coffee Morning was organised on Thursday 31st October by Senior students as part of their Leadership Course. Monies raised were forwarded to the Beatson Charity Organisation. Well done to all involved and thanks to those who made financial contributions !

Christmas Jumper Day

Wednesday 19th December witnessed many pupils wearing a Christmas Jumper in support of local 'Foodbanks'. Organised by Mrs Crawford and her enterprise group the venture was superbly supported with an amazing quantity of foodstuffs collected on behalf of the Motherwell Area Foodbank. Well done to all !



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'Jingle All The Way'

Yet again a highlight of our term has been our annual Drama Show, this year entitled 'Jingle All The Way'. With three performances held over the 18th and 19th December, our pupils yet again excelled in a host of creative disciplines. Large audiences thoroughly enjoyed the overall theatrical performances which also included musical inserts and dance routines. A massive amount of work was undertaken by our Creative Arts Department, led by Mrs Downie. A huge thanks to all who contributed and especially to the performers.



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Successes within our School however, are only made possible by hard work and sustained effort. I would like therefore to take this opportunity to thank all pupils, staff, families and friends of the school for their ongoing support. Brannock HS is very much a community school and we appreciate the efforts made by all within our wider school catchment area.

Some staff changes will be evident in the New Year. Mrs Janice Campbell, DHT, is retiring after 26 years of service to our School. I am sure you will join me in offering fond and very good wishes to Mrs Campbell in her future endeavours. Mr Des Bradshaw will undertake the duties of DHT Lower School on our return. We wish him well in his new Post. Mr Ross Elliot recently joined us as a permanent Teacher of Technical Education and we will say goodbye to Mr Bill Stott whose working efforts over the last two years have been very much appreciated.

To all connected with our school I wish you a Merry Christmas and a very happy and successful New Year !

Have a super holiday !

R Colquhoun



Note – School closes on Friday 21st December at 2.30pm and re-opens on Monday 7th January 2019 at 8.55am