



Ayr Academy Newsletter



Introduction by Mrs Laura Traynor

Christmas, 2021



Seasons Greetings!

Welcome to the December 2021 Christmas Newsletter. I think we will all agree this has been a particularly strange year given the current Covid situation. We have had to cancel many of our planned activities and outings but the staff and pupils have been working hard to ensure that school life remains fun and exciting. Over this first two terms we have been involved in many different learning activities and development opportunities for both staff and pupils including Children in Need, LGBTI and other special events.

We have done many different Transition activities including a virtual challenge day where the current P7 pupils are looking at designing their very own S1 tie, I am looking forward to seeing that. They have also met, virtually, a number of Ayr Academy staff to ensure they know some familiar faces when they transition to us in the Summer. As staff, we have also met to develop a collegiate approach across the cluster to literacy and reading, in particular, all great work in driving our vision- Believe...Achieve.

Ayr staff have been extending and sharing their knowledge in Learning and Teaching through a number of planned observations, collegiate meetings and QI code tasks. Our big push this session is to develop independent, empowered learners and we are working hard behind the scenes to ensure we are really focusing on this.

The podsquad have been busy interviewing members of staff and putting together podcasts to share their amazing work. I have no doubt we have a few budding journalists amongst them who are not afraid to ask challenging questions. Their work has been absolutely fantastic and we are so proud of the quality of podcasts they have produced.

We have a number of pupils working with both our EWO's and the Campus police officer achieving awards and clearing up our community at the same time- great job!

Our S1 and S2 pupils have been working outdoors with the Music department doing their John Muir Award. Some lucky S2's had a Dolphin House leadership experience and a number of our S2-4 pupils continue to develop their Skills for Work through the workout programme, which formally focused on S4 but has now extended to include S2 and S3.

As with every year we have been developing our courses and pathways for option choices beginning in the New Year and our house system continues to build not only identity to our pupils, but also a community feeling supported and encouraged to aim high.

In the New Year we continue to gain traction towards the SQA assessments, offer option information meetings and enhanced transition for pupils moving to Ayr Academy.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your support throughout this year and offer you our very best wishes for a fantastic Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

*Merry
Christmas*

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- 22nd December—School closes at 2.30pm
- 6th January – Pupils return to school
- 11th January - S3 Parents Evening (TBC)
- 18th January—S2 Options Evening
- 18th January—Primary Challenge Day 3
- 21st January—Senior Reports
- 27th January—S3 Options Evening
- 31st January - S2 Parents Evening (TBC)

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#believeachieve





S2 Pupil Success

Congratulations to Ewan Reeves 2G2 who earlier this year passed his 'B' model flying exam which is the 2nd of 3 competency based exams. This means he can now fly his models at public shows. Ewan then had the opportunity to go down to Wales and fly a 6th scale 17ft wingspan Lancaster bomber that has 4x 38cc engines and weighs about 55kg! This has been a goal of his for 4 years and he is delighted to have finally done it. Well done Ewan!



Learning Council



The Learning Council met recently to evaluate our Pupil Improvement Plan. The Learning Council means that all pupils get a say in their own education within Ayr Academy.





SQA Exams 2022

Before we know it the SQA exam diet will have begun, the first exam for our pupils is on Wednesday 27th April 2022.



The full SQA exam timetable can be accessed by going to the following:

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/nq-2022-exam-timetable.pdf

Preparations continue to be underway within school and pupils are encouraged to attend supported study and ensure they are studying at home. Obviously with the nature of the covid pandemic, things can change very quickly and if there are any changes to the examination diet, you will be informed as soon as possible through the normal methods.

Halloween in the School Canteen

Our amazing dinner ladies had a Halloween Bake Off and each came up with their own terrifying treats for sale. All cakes were very popular with the staff and pupils of Ayr Academy.





Captaincy Team 2021-22



Although our captaincy team have been in position since August, this is their first time in a school newsletter!!

School captains: Beth McNae & Olivia Cosgrove

Vice Captains: Amy Dempsey, Reece Taylor, Beth McMaster, and Emma Smith



Christmas Holidays

The school will close for the Christmas holidays at 2.30pm on Wednesday 22nd and re-open on Thursday 6th January at 8.45am. Please check Twitter, emails and texts in case of any change to these dates as a result of the current pandemic.

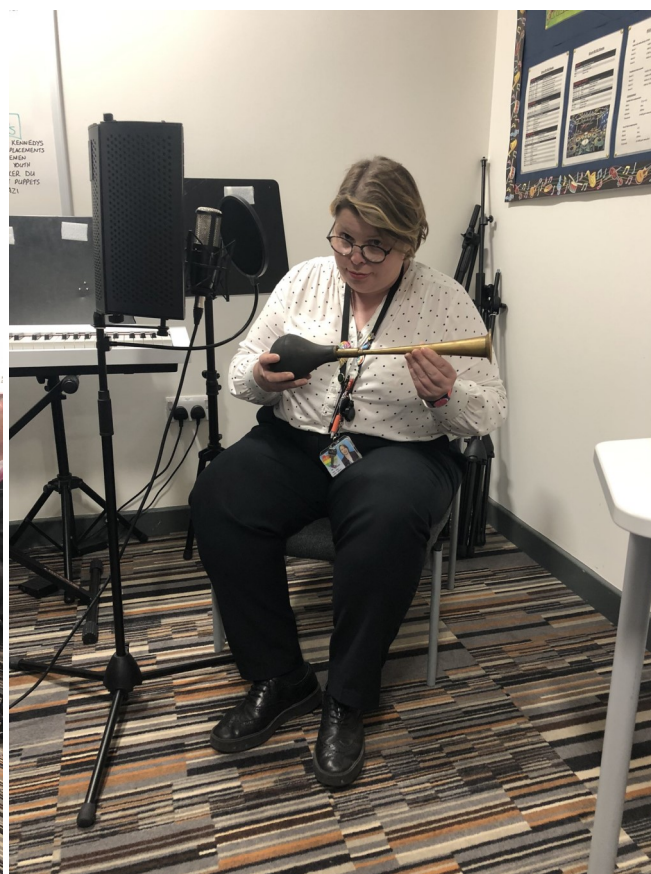




On the Ayr 'Pod Squad'

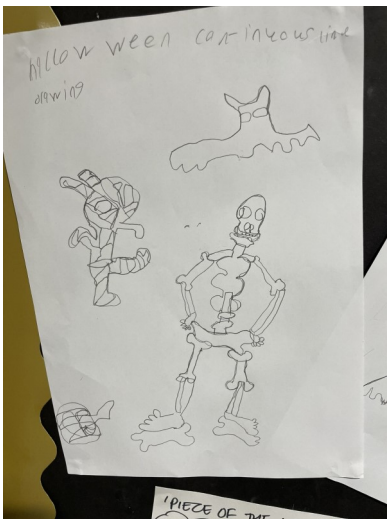
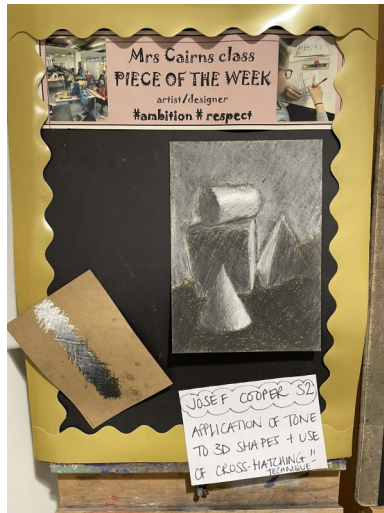
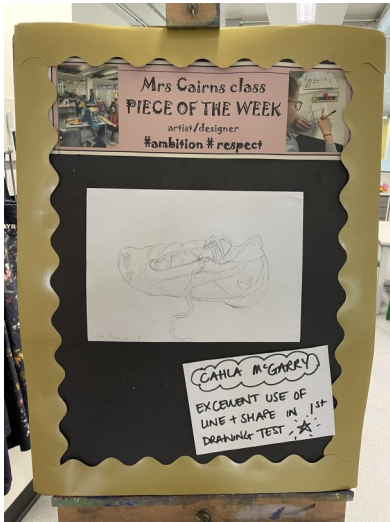


Over the past few months our Pod Squad has successfully interviewed a variety of different people within Ayr Academy from the Headteacher, Mrs Traynor, to Mr Smith, an NQT. This is a pupil run initiative, from the invitation to attend an interview to the final broadcast. Well done to our pod squad!!

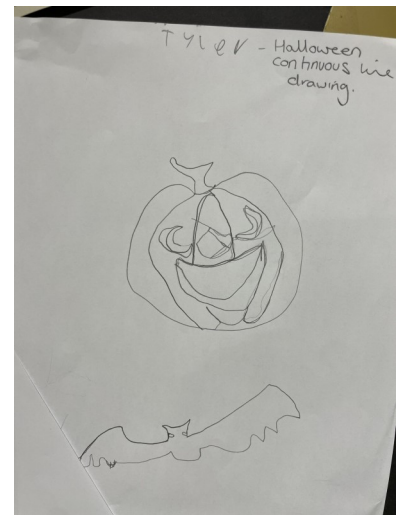




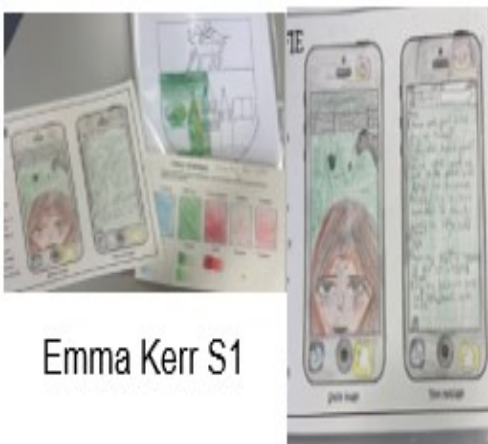
Art Pieces of the Month



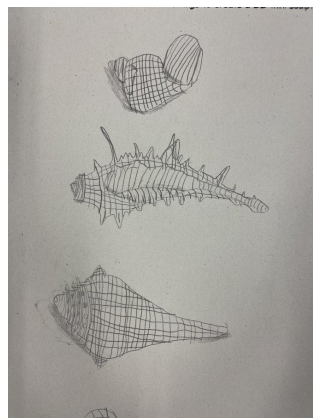
Ryan McClure S1



Tyler Pester S1



Emma Kerr S1



Kai Logan S1

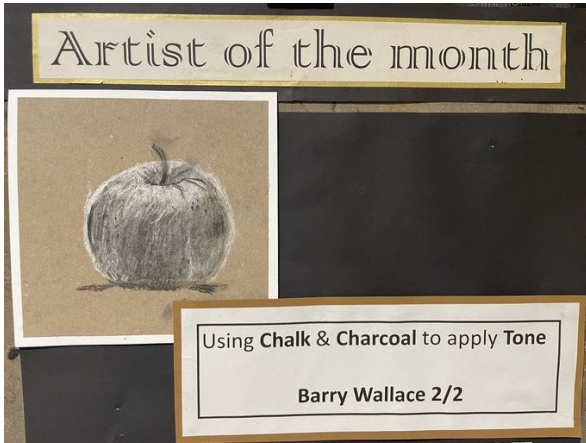


Marcus Conway S1

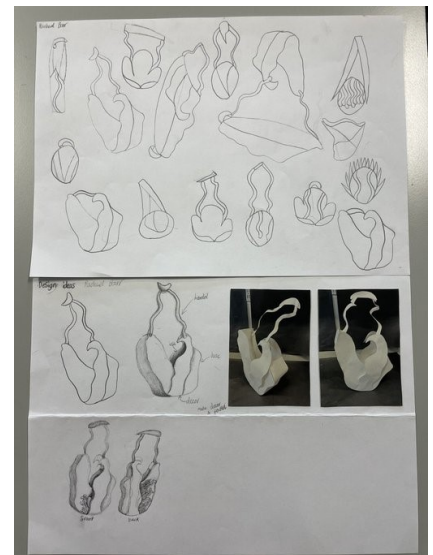
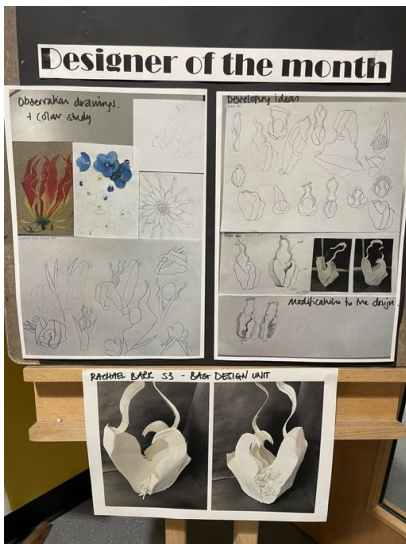




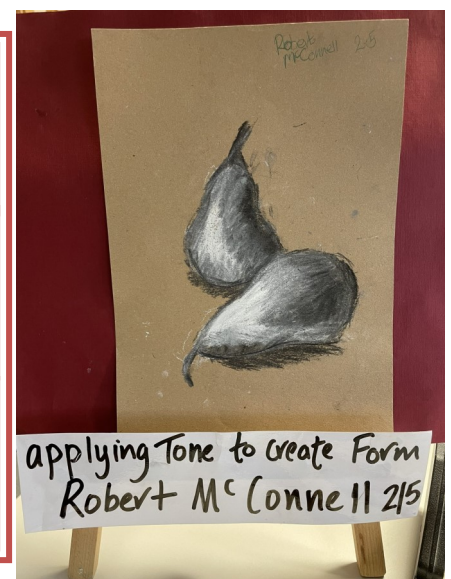
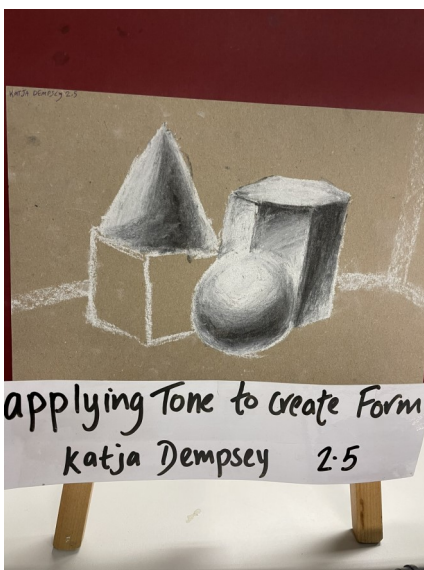
Art Pieces of the Month



Barry Wallace S2
Artist of the Month



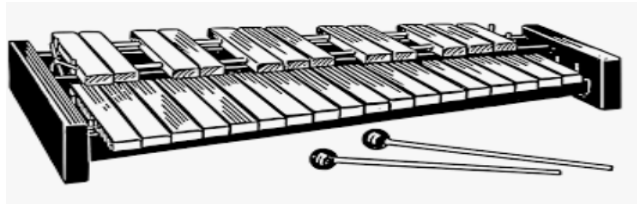
Rachael Barr S3
Designer of the Month





Music—Beat Buddies

“Beat Buddies is a groundbreaking, new, inclusive music education project based in Scotland’s central belt.” and they visited Ayr Academy for an afternoon full of percussion fun with the amazing 1G2. The confidence and concentration displayed by our pupils was incredible!





Duke of Edinburgh's Award - South Ayrshire Coastal Rowing Intergeneration Project



Background: The Scottish Fisheries Museum in Anstruther Fife, started an initiative in 2009 to reintroduce the inter community rowing competitions that for many years were a strong feature of life in the coastal communities of Scotland. This project also had an additional purpose of resurrecting the building of traditional coastal rowing skiffs, which once was a feature of many Scottish coastal communities over the past few hundred years.

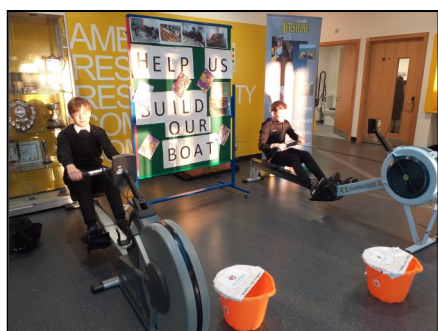
The aim of the Scottish Coastal Rowing Project is to provide a relatively inexpensive entry to the sport by using a design which can be built by the communities who will be rowing the boats, rather than buying completed boats from professional boat builders, now known as the St Ayles Skiff.

South Ayrshire Council Duke of Edinburgh's Award development Worker Vincent McWhirter is taking this project forward by promoting and developing this initiative in all South Ayrshire coastal communities, with schools and communities in Troon, Maybole, Girvan, Ayr, and Prestwick. Sponsorship from private Companies, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Ayr College, enthusiastic individuals and South Ayrshire Council has already enabled six boats to be purchased and built over the last ten years.

Since May 2011 pupils and enthusiastic members of the public, in local communities, have completed five boats so far, building a St Ayles Skiff in school at Carrick Academy in Maybole, Girvan Academy, Prestwick Academy and two boats in a donated boat shed in the Troon Marina.



The Troon boat was the first boat to be built in 2011 with an enthusiastic group of mostly retired men working over five months starting in May with local Duke of Edinburgh's Award Silver candidates. The pupils helped build their first boat in the evening and during school holidays which upon completion was called "Marr Voyager" after having a competition in the town. The final name came from a local Marr College pupil.





Duke of Edinburgh's Award - South Ayrshire Coastal Rowing Intergeneration Project



Other schools followed soon after with a completed boat from Carrick Academy in Maybole, launched in June 2012 called "Carrick Maid", and a second Troon boat in October 2012 called "Ailsa Lass" with Girvan Academy launching their boat in June 2013. Prestwick academy completed their boat boat in 2015 building it in the Maritime Museum in Irvine. All boat building projects worked with volunteer members of the public and with pupils completing their Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Troon, Carrick, Prestwick and Girvan now have established coastal rowing Clubs which row every week with clubs competing at several coastal rowing events throughout Scotland including the first world Championship in Ullapool in July 2013, in Northern Ireland in 2016 and Stranraer in 2019.



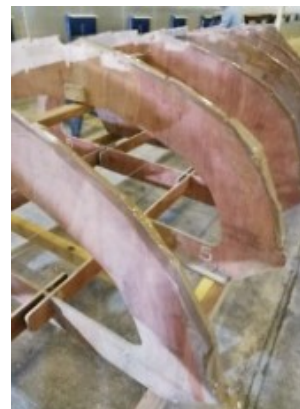
The dramatic growth in the boat building project and in coastal rowing has generated interest throughout the world with boats now having being built in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Holland and England. www.scottishcoastalrowing

Ayr Academy Boat building Project 2020/21

Ayr Academy boat building project is underway with a group of targeted pupils, local parents and community volunteers starting to build a boat for Ayr. Funding was gained from the DofE Diamond Challenge fund and Ayr College Community fund which allows enough funding for two boats to be built this year. Pupils supported by the school parent council committee at the 2019 School Christmas fete also had a promotional stall raising money to fund the project and start a club.

Vincent McWhirter

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Manager





Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree...



A huge thank you to Mrs Cairns, PT Art, the janitors and all the elf helpers for putting up our magnificent tree again this year. It is a huge focal point for the school and definitely shows Christmas has arrived!

Merry Christmas

Children In Need Day



A massive well done to the leadership team for their efforts with raising money for Children in Need. A total of £770.49 was raised!!

Thank you to everyone who contributed!





Construction

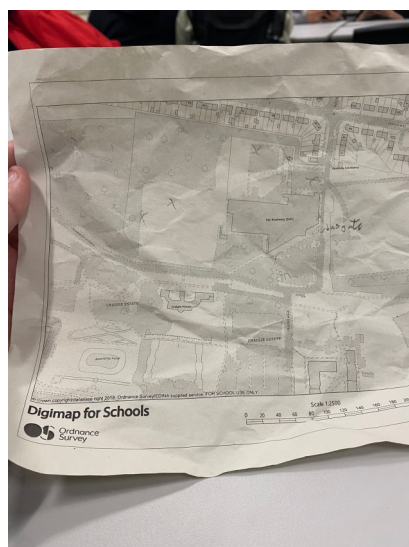
Our Construction groups are on fire at the moment, from making concrete slabs and garden ornaments to monoblocking! We have the builders of the future in our midst. With the partnership with Heron Construction, who are currently building the new sports facilities beside the school, pupils have been spending time on a proper, working building site. Exciting things to come!





John Muir Award

The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme focused on wild places. It is inclusive, accessible and non-competitive, though should challenge each participant. The Award encourages awareness and responsibility for the natural environment through a structured yet adaptable scheme, in a spirit of fun, adventure and ex-



All S1 and S2 in Ayr Academy are working towards their Discovery Level John Muir Award.

So far they've been doing things like researching and presenting their findings on John Muir himself, exploring outdoors and taking photographs of their Wild Place to make an Art Exhibition, learning how use a map and plot points on it and more recently some pupils have been using VR headsets to "visit" conservation areas around the World. Given the glorious outdoor setting at Ayr Academy, this is the perfect award for our pupils to work towards.





Remembrance Day 2021

Our two School Captains attended a service at the Cenotaph on 11th November to pay their respects to the fallen. They are pictured alongside their contemporaries from other South-Ayrshire secondary schools.

Senior pupils in the run up to Remembrance Day sold poppies around the school in aid of the Earl Haig fund.

We will remember them.



MacMillan Coffee Morning



The Macmillan Coffee Morning took place in October, brilliantly organised by our Senior Charities Committee and Ms Burne. Home baking, coffee and some friendly quiz competition..what more could you possibly want? Thanks to everyone who donated, it really was a big success!



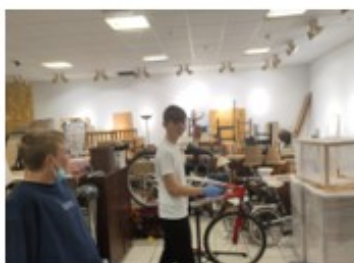


Community Learning and Development

We are fortunate at Ayr Academy to have links with a variety of different organisations who work alongside us to provide an excellent CLD programme for our pupils looking to go into certain areas in the world of work.



Barista



Bike Maintenance



Hair and Beauty



Nail Bar





Christmas Doors

This term saw the return of our annual Christmas classroom door decorating competition! The quality of entries this year was phenomenal and gave the judges a lot to think about. First place was awarded to Nurture, second place to Mr Menzies and third place to Mrs Cairns. Well done to everyone involved!



Christmas Door Winner 2021 - Nurture



2nd Place – Mr Menzies



3rd Place – Mrs Cairns





Christmas Card Competition

Each year Mrs Cairns runs a Christmas Card Competition for S1. The winning card will be used as the official Christmas Card for Ayr Academy for that year. The quality this year was outstanding and it was a hard job to choose a winner!



The competition winners!

Well done!

Ayr Academy Christmas Card 2021



The winning design by Logan Jenkins, as judged by Mrs Traynor



The runners up were Eibhlinn Pearson, Cody Goetz and Lacy Graham whose designs also feature on the card.



Christmas Card Competition 1G2

Mrs Cairns decided to run a separate competition for class 1G2 and was amazed by the excellent work produced! Rosie Hillhouse was chosen as the winner with Lexi Dempsey and Tyler Logan close runners up. Well done 1G2!



School Counsellor

We are very fortunate to have full time counsellor services within Ayr Academy. Maria, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Alan – Monday and Fridays

There are 3 red post boxes around the school, based outside, office, guidance office and counselling office for all pupils to self-refer themselves to the service. Pupils can also be referred by any teaching staff

The service is a great resource for the school community and is very much in demand. Pupils can access support for their mental and emotional well-being any issues that maybe causing upset or stress. Some pupils access the service for their personal development.

Feedback from pupils has been very positive, including:

1. I feel so much better about myself
2. Did not think talking could help so much
3. I don't get so anxious and when I do I can manage it better
4. It feels good to be listened too
5. Because I am managing myself better, I am managing others and situations better.
6. I don't worry as much





Library News

INTRO

It's been a busy term in the library. We celebrated Book Week Scotland in November by launching the new titles in our Read Woke challenge as well as a variety of activities within the English department. We've also teamed up with our English department to launch our new Reading For Gold challenge with S1 and S2 which will see pupils earning rewards the more books they read. Moving forward we have lots of exciting things happening in the new year including virtual author events, Teen Book Awards, Shelf Help relaunch and big project with our cluster primaries – more details coming soon!

Remember to follow us on Twitter @AyrAcademy_Lib



ACCELERATED READER

All S1 pupils are taking part in Accelerated Reader this year. The programme is run via the English department and the library but all departments are encouraged to let pupils take quizzes if appropriate. House point will be awarded for various milestones and achievements. This year pupils are also able to take quizzes from home. Pupils will have a weekly Accelerated Reader period in order to participate. As this is part of the curriculum, pupils are expected to be reading at home.

Accelerated Reader is a computer-based programme that encourages pupils to read books at an appropriate level and then challenges them with quizzes to test their understanding of the literature.

Pupils will undertake at least three “Star Tests” throughout the year to establish reading ranges and monitor progress. After each test, pupils will be given a reading range as opposed to a mark and this will enable them to select appropriate books according to their ability. As a general guide, pupils should select books at the lower end of their range and, if they do well in the quizzes they can progress through this range. However, pupils are not restricted to this and we would encourage them to read as much as possible. Both fiction and non-fiction books are included in the Accelerated Reader section of the library.





Library News

READ WOKE

In May 2021 our library team launched an authority-wide reading challenge across all South Ayrshire secondary schools. This project is funded by the Scottish Government through the Scottish Library and Information Council and is focussed on celebrating diversity and reading books that educate us on a number of social issues, rights and responsibilities.

The Read Woke challenge is open to all staff and students and branches from a movement started in the USA. The concept is to challenge us all to read books outside of our social norm and to broaden our understanding and engagement with social justice issues. As we read books written from different viewpoints and experiences than our own, we gain insight and empathy.

To take part:

- Read books from our Read Woke Booklist
- Give a quick review of the book on the website
- Earn a pin badge when you complete 4 and 8 reviews.

The challenge is already proving very popular, with Ayr staff and students reading and reviewing lots of books so far. We also have a few badges earned this term already! The discussions arising from the books have proved very insightful and feedback from everyone that has taken part so far has been extremely positive.

For more information on all the books included and how you can get involved – check out our website: www.ReadWokeSouthAyrshire.co.uk

In the meantime, check out some of the feedback so far!

"I love this project! It's such a great way of encouraging students to explore books they might not ordinarily pick up or have access to and encouraging them to discuss the diverse perspectives in them, while also learning about what can be harmful for people of diverse backgrounds and the injustices they might face in society. I hope all schools across the country follow in South Ayrshire's footsteps. This initiative is much needed to help build empathy and understanding." **A. M. Dassu - Author of Boy, Everywhere**

The Stars Are Burning Brightly By Danielle Jawando "This is a very good book. It was very intense and sad at times, but I think that it gets the message it was portraying across well. I would definitely recommend it." **S2 Student**

Rat By Patrice Lawrence "I found Rat a lovely read about a boy who only wanted to protect his Mum. A great story about love, poverty, crime and family, well worth a read." **Staff Member**





House Points


**KEEP
CALM
AND COLLECT
HOUSE
POINTS**

Our House Points competition within the school, which encourage positive behaviour and attitudes on a daily basis, continues to go from strength to strength under the capable charge of Mr Roy.

Points can be earned in various ways and there will be a reward for members of the winning house at the end of the summer term.

Points can be won on an individual basis or as a house group, but all points contribute to the house total.

Currently, the leaderboard is as follows:

Galloway – 9715 points

Carrick – 9820 points

Kyle – 9335 points

Pupils can earn the following points individually through:

- Attendance
- Representing the school
- Extracurricular activities
- Pupil of the Week—nominated by each class teacher
- General excellence in subjects
- Any appropriate achievements outwith classroom learning
- Awards at prizegiving

Points can be earned as a house group:

- Inter-house games in the PE department
- Punctuality
- Uniform

Good luck to all three houses!

