



Hermitage Academy Parent Council AGM Monday 6th September 2021

Head Teacher's Report

Return to school

Our pupils have made a really positive start to the term at Hermitage Academy and the staff and I have been impressed with the focus and attitude that they have displayed on their return to school.

S1 in particular have made an excellent first impression and I have spoken to them about the importance of keeping this up in the weeks and months to come. I am very appreciative for the efforts of Mrs Harvey and the S6 guides for ensuring the positive start for S1.

COVID

The Scottish Government published the latest guidance on reducing risks in schools and this was implemented across the country on Monday 9th of August. Measures that were in place for Hermitage Academy before the summer holidays will remain for the first 6 weeks of term, with the next update expected before 24th September 2021.

Like other schools and businesses across the country, we are experiencing a much higher level of staff absence than we normally would at this time of year. We are working extremely hard to make sure that classes are covered appropriately and I am very grateful to Mr Munro for his efforts in coordinating this.

Staffing

We said goodbye and good luck to two long serving members of staff who retired this summer. Mrs Milloy has been an outstanding servant to Hermitage Academy having taught here for 35 years with 17 years of that time in the role of Principal Teacher of Art. Mrs McElroy has been a fantastic servant to the English Department and has worked at Hermitage Academy for 37 years. Both will be sorely missed by their respective departments, colleagues across the school and will be fondly remembered by current and former pupils alike. We wish both members of staff a wonderful retirement. We also wished Mr McKenzie the very best of luck as he took on his new role at Lomond School as PT of Pupil Support.

Mr Thomson (Business Studies) and Miss Paterson (Art and Design) are new faces to Hermitage and we are delighted that they have joined us.

We also have some of our existing staff taking up new posts in the school. Miss Cathro has been appointed as Acting PT English; Mrs MacKinnon adds another subject area to her remit to become Faculty Head of Art, Design and Home Economics and Mrs Khan has been appointed as Lead Pupil Support Teacher for Cumbrae House.

There has been some movement in the House Teams as well. Miss Elliot joins Davaar and will be covering for Mrs Henderson's maternity leave as PT Guidance and Raising Attainment and Mrs Purves will now share responsibilities with Mrs McGinlay for the young people in the C2 Cumbrae classes.

We are very pleased to welcome Mr Hotchkiss (Depute Head Teacher) back to the school following his secondment to the SQA last year. He will remain with the SQA for two days a week but be with us Monday-Wednesday.

National Qualifications

Huge congratulations to Matthew Dunn, James Grant and Amelia Murphy who have been named as our Cramb Medal winners this year for top academic performance in National Qualification.

Matthew, James and Amelia are part of a 20 strong group of young people in S5 this year who gained five straight As, including two young people who achieved six As.

All our young people presented for national qualifications this year should be commended for their efforts, especially in one of the most challenging years on record. Their collective performance is very impressive and we are extremely proud of each and every one of them.

It is difficult to compare the results this year to past performance due to the differing nature of how the alternative certification model was carried out. However, we are able to share how the school performed against national pass rates this year.

At National 4 we continued our long-standing pattern of a 100% pass rate, which is 13.9% above the national average. For National 5 we saw a A-C pass rate of 90.2%, 4.4% above the national average. At Higher our young people secured a A-C pass rate of 89.9%, which is 2.6% above the national average. At Advanced Higher our A-C pass rate was 93.1%, 2.9% above the national average.

Further analysis of the performance at National Qualification will be carried out once the Insight update is released later this month.

Our young people, and the staff supporting them, deserve immense credit for their efforts last session. It is extremely pleasing to see their hard work pay off.

We look forward to celebrating the wide range of successes that our young people have experienced as part of our virtual prize giving on Thursday 30th September 2021.

Wider Achievement Opportunities

On Friday 27th August, we held a virtual assembly during registration for all S3 pupils regarding the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) programme for this session. This year we will be offering 21 places for pupils to complete their bronze award, with the aim to expand our delivery of the programme in future school sessions. By working towards their DofE award participants will have the opportunity to discover new interests and talents and develop essential skills for life and work such as resilience, problem-solving, team-working, communication and drive.

We were pleased to share the clubs and wider achievement opportunities that are currently on offer at Hermitage Academy in the newsletter last week. We will provide the link in each

newsletter going forward so that young people, parents and carers can see new clubs and activities as they are added throughout the session.

School Improvement Plan

Following the work undertaken with stakeholders before the summer holidays the Pupil Captaincy team have been driving forward with Hermitage Academy's first ever Family Friendly School Improvement Plan. The team have been supported by Claire Mills from Sketchnote and are playing a pivotal role in shaping the document through very positive and creative discussions. This process continued to involve representation from Rights Respecting Schools as this will also support the school in achieving our Rights Respecting Gold Award.

We will be meeting again with pupil, parent and staff representatives as part of the Hermitage Academy Stakeholder collaborative next week to finalise the plan and to give the Captaincy Team the chance to share the family friendly version.

My thanks goes to everyone involved in this process.

Staff Development

Time on the in-service days at the start of the session were spent working collegiately with staff across the school to support professional development that will help us move forward with our whole school approach to Nurture. The Local Authority Education Psychology Team worked with school staff on the nurturing principles, which enrich the Argyll and Bute strategic approach to 'Our Children their Nurturing Education'. Further training was also delivered to focus on sharing best practice in Trauma Informed pedagogy.

The Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion faculty have been able to utilise the training on the in-service days to support the launch of our Promoting Positive Relationships Policy. This aims to help us acknowledge the excellent relationships we see across the school and recognise this on a period-by-period basis using the merit system. As well as merits contributing to House points, pupils will receive individual recognition for their efforts on a termly basis. Should pupils be receiving regular demerits, this would be communicated home via the PT Guidance & Raising Attainment. Pupils received a presentation on their first day back sharing the details of the approach and we will be seeking initial feedback from pupils, staff, parents and carers in October.

Mr D Morgan

Acting Head Teacher

Hermitage Academy