

Hermitage Academy



Parent Council AGM – 12th September 2022

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 Mr Docherty, House Teams and the S6 Buddies for ensuring this successful start.

Staffing

We said goodbye and good luck to five members of staff who retired this summer. Mr Hotchkiss, Mrs MacAulay, Mrs Cowan, Mrs Lightfoot and Mr Turnbull. Mr Turnbull spent all of his 47 years in teaching at Hermitage Academy. We are extremely proud that Mr Turnbull's legacy will live on at Hermitage Academy when we open our Barista Café 'Turnbull's 47' later this year. We thank Mr Turnbull for everything he has done for the school and he like his fellow retirees will be greatly missed by their respective departments, colleagues across the school and will be fondly remembered by current and former pupils alike. We wish all members of staff a wonderful retirement.

Miss McLeese (Technical), Mrs Dempster (Maths), Mrs Little (Maths), Mrs Judge (Social Subjects), Mrs Sweeney (PE), Mr Gibson (Science), Mx Steed (English), Miss MacDonald (Art), Miss McSporrán (Music), Mr Thomson (PT Guidance for Cumbræ) and Mr Crawford (Lead Pupil Support Teacher for Bute) are new faces to Hermitage and we are delighted that they have joined us after extensive recruitment in the summer term. Existing staff Miss Mullherron, Mrs Callaghan and Mrs Marshall have been appointed as Acting PT Guidance and Raising Attainment. With Mrs Kennedy's appointment to Acting Depute Head Teacher in Charge of Pupil Support, Mrs Henderson will be Acting in the role of Faculty Head of Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion. We are delighted to welcome back Mr Allan to his post of Principal Teacher of English and Literacy. Miss Cathro, who has been acting as PT for the last year will remain in post one day a week.

National Qualifications

All our young people presented for national qualifications this year should be highly commended for their efforts along with the staff and parents/carers who supported them, especially in an extremely challenging year. 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 performance over the past couple of years 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 and local 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 85.07%, 4.27% above the National Average and 6.45% above the Argyll and Bute Average. At Higher our young people secured a A-C pass rate of 84.78%, 5.88% above the National average and 5.27% above the Argyll and Bute average. At Advanced Higher our A-C pass rate was 86.96%, 5.66% above the National average and 3.24% above the Argyll and Bute average.

Further analysis of the performance at National Qualification will be carried out once the Insight is released later this month and updated again in February. Our young people 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 Celebration of Achievement Event on Thursday 22nd September 2022.

Wider Achievement Opportunities

Last session we introduced the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) programme into the school and the course was successfully completed by all participants to bronze level. In the second year we will expand our delivery of the programme by adding silver and the two-day expeditions that come with it.

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. Well done to the pupils who got involved at the clubs sign-up event in the main playground recently and a huge thank you to all the staff and senior pupils who are giving up their own time to organise and run the clubs for our young people.

We are delighted that we are able once again to have a School show back at Hermitage Academy and the rehearsals for the production of Sunshine on Leith are in full swing. The Show will run for three nights from Tuesday 4th October to Thursday 6th October and tickets are on sale from the school office. We are delighted that we will also be able to welcome pupils in from all our associated primaries for the final dress rehearsal.

School Improvement Plan

The Self-Evaluation Team have reviewed the 2022/23 SIP and we are currently working with feedback from the local authority following our submission. The SIP operates on a 3-year plan and we are now in year 2. We have managed to make considerable process in our first year and we now look to continue with this. We will be looking to engage with our school community on informing approaches to Family Learning. We will share this with you in due course and will follow this up with a jamboard session with our wider stakeholder forum.

ASN Developments

Sensory Space

The structural work for the sensory space is just about complete and Lesley Gibson, our link Occupational Therapist visited the school on Thursday to discuss with Faculty staff how best to utilise the space available. Lesley provided a number of suggestions and Mrs Henderson & Mrs Khan are currently arranging for our young people to have an input into this process through focus groups. Lesley will also be delivering a session to Faculty staff in calming-sensory techniques.

Age & Stage timetabled classes

Small group sessions focussing on Literacy, Numeracy, Social/Life Skills and Physical Activity are currently being built into the timetable. Lead Pupil Support Teachers as well as staff across the school from a variety of disciplines will support learning and teaching of these small groups. We envisage the young people participating in many of these sessions will be able to achieve literacy and numeracy awards as well as Personal Development, Travel & Tourism and Youth Achievement Awards. The Faculty is also currently arranging to introduce small group Art & Music ASN sessions.

S6 and S1 paired reading launched on Thursday, when S1's met with their S6 reader. A number of other S6 pupils have also volunteered to work in Pupil Support generally and will be helping in assigned rooms and specific young people where appropriate.

ASN Clubs

The lunchtime club is now so popular, we have extended it to the use of two of the pupil support rooms, allowing for a busy, activity based room as well as a lower stimulus room for those who prefer a quieter space.

ASN Sports Club has resumed with the support of Martin Caldwell at Live Argyll on a Tuesday lunchtime. DofE ASN provision will also be timetabled this session with a protected seven places. PE staff will be supporting this.

Digital Literacy

Danielle Pearson (previously one of our classroom assistants), was recently appointed as Lead ASN with responsibility for developing digital ASN support. Danielle has been working with a targeted group of young people developing their skills utilising digital supports such as the C-Pen, Immersive Reader and Speech to Text technology. Danielle has been sharing with Faculty staff the impact the use of these technologies has been having with these young people, making them more independent learners in class and enabling them to complete literacy based tasks, which they had previously found very challenging.

Thank you

I would like to finish by thanking representatives from both the Parent Council and the PTA for the support that they have given to the school this year. We are really excited to build on the excellent S1 Social that took place recently and look forward to working with Gillian Simpson (Chair) and the new PTA committee throughout the year ahead. Our outgoing Chair, Penny Crisp, deserves a huge vote of thanks from our entire school community for her endless commitment to supporting the school and the young people within it. Thank you Penny.

I would also like to thank Stella Kinloch and the entire Parent Council Committee for all their hard work over the past 12 months. The effort and support that they have given the school is very much appreciated and I would like to specifically acknowledge their commitment to supporting interview panels, the communications team, ASN Development, the stakeholder collaborative and Information sessions regarding both the empowering educators consultation and P7 transition.

Thank you all.

D Morgan 12/09/22