

Hermitage Academy



Parent Council Meeting – 21st November 2022

Head Teacher's Report

Primary – Secondary Transition – Hooked on Hermitage

Last month saw S1 and S6 celebrating the end of the Hooked on Hermitage programme with both the fancy dress fun run and buddy ball. It was great to be able to acknowledge the excellent start that S1 have made to their time at Hermitage. My thanks to Mr Docherty for coordinating the events and for his leadership of the S1 transition process this year.

Open Evening

Being able to welcome so many of our families into the school on Tuesday 1st November for the return of our Open Evening was just fantastic. A special mention for our P6 and P7 pupils who came along to try out lots of the subjects and activities on offer. We loved having everyone with us and hope that those who joined us at the event enjoyed it as much as the staff and pupils did.

Parents Evenings

On Tuesday 8th November, we had our second in-person parents night of the year, this time for S3. The staff and I enjoyed welcoming S3 parents and carers into the school and discussing in partnership the progress of their young person.

Next week we have the S5/6 Parents Evening on Thursday 1st December. Although all the dates are on the school calendar and in the fortnightly newsletter, we have taken on-board some helpful feedback from the Parent Council and have added an additional reminder two weeks before the event that goes directly to parents and carers. This is in addition to the letter that goes out a week before the event inviting parents and carers to make appointments through the online booking system.

Prelim Examinations

Next month, S4 will have their prelim examination diet between 5th and 14th December. Mrs Muir, our SQA Coordinator held a special assembly for S4 last week to outline all the appropriate arrangements for our S4 students. Young people have received the timetable for the prelim exams and our young people who receive additional time or use a reader/scribe will receive their individualised copy later this week outlining the specific times and rooms etc. As per the calendar on the school website and in the newsletter, the S5/6 Prelims take place from 10th-20th January 2023.

Supported Study

Following on from the senior school tracking and monitoring reports that were issued before the October break, supported study sessions are now available for our senior pupils in departments across the school. Miss Stewart and Mr Docherty have been working with subject Principal Teachers to put together a timetable of the supported study offer and this was shared in the newsletter last

week. My thanks to our staff who give up their time to support our young people by putting on the sessions.

We hope to confirm before the Christmas break that we will once again be running our Spring Study School during the first week of the Easter break. We are just waiting on confirmation of the funding being made available through the Local Authority.

School Trips and Excursions

One of the most enjoyable things recently has been to listen to our young people talking so positively about the school trips that they have been part of. As much as trips are part of school life we are very aware that the cost of these can sometimes add pressure on our parents and carers, especially in the current climate. As we mentioned in the newsletter recently, if when considering whether your young person can attend a trip/activity or not, financial circumstances proves to be a barrier to their participation please contact us and we will do our very best to support you and your family. You can contact your young persons guidance teacher, Emma our family liaison officer or any member of staff, including myself, that you feel comfortable to approach. We are here to help you so please just ask.

Staffing

As you may remember, Mrs MacKay one of our Depute Head Teachers, has been seconded to the local authority over the last year. We are delighted to share that she has successfully been appointed on to the role of Education Manager on a permanent basis. Although we are sad to see Mrs MacKay leave Hermitage Academy, we are happy that she will still be working with the school as a member of the central education team. We offer her the warmest of congratulations and wish her all the very best for the future.

Following interviews and classroom observations recently, we are pleased to share with our community that Mr Marsden has been appointed to the post of Principal Teacher of Maths and Numeracy. Mr Marsden currently holds a similar post at Calderglen High in East Kilbride and we are very pleased to be welcoming him as part of the team. We are planning that Mr Marsden should be in a position to take up post after the Christmas break.

On the run up to the holidays Mrs Chapman will be going on maternity leave. With this in mind interviews and classroom observations took place last week for the post of Temporary Drama Teacher. Mr Powel, who has worked at Hermitage Academy before, was the successful candidate and we very much look forward to having him back with us. A big thank you to the young people involved in the interview process for both the Drama and Maths PT posts.

Huge congratulations to Mrs Harvey, Acting Depute Head Teacher for Bute House, who was last week successfully appointed to a new post at Uddingston Grammar School in South Lanarkshire. We are very sad to see Mrs Harvey leave Hermitage Academy but we are also delighted that she has secured this new opportunity, which starts in the New Year. Recruitment to Mrs Harvey's acting post will take place before the Christmas break.

Interviews take place later this week for the post of Principal Teacher of Nurture. This is a new role in the school, created to help support and drive forward our nurture and trauma informed journey.

ASN Developments

Sensory Space

Consultation around the sensory space has highlighted some great ideas about different furnishings and how to make best use of this new facility. This has included pupil focus groups, Educational Psychology support and parents and young people getting the chance to view the space

at the recent Open Evening. Mrs Henderson and Mrs Khan were at Parklands this afternoon to explore their Nurture Room provision. Mrs Kennedy has shared that the ASN working group are currently arranging a date so that they can come into school to see the space and have an important input to the process. We have money from the Local Authority to support with equipment in the sensory space and the ASN group will look at other funds available at their next meeting.

Age and Stage classes

Small group sessions focussing on Literacy, Numeracy, Physical Activity, Music, Travel and Tourism and Study Skills are currently being offered. S6 pupils are timetabled for a number of periods throughout the week offering tutoring to younger pupils. There has been investment in equipment and resources for the Life skills and personal development classes, which start next week with Mrs Henderson.

S6 and S1 paired reading has been extremely positive and productive this year and we also have a large number of other S6 pupils who have volunteered to work in Pupil Support with individual young people.

Digital Literacy

Danielle Pearson, who was previously one of our ASN Assistants 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. We were delighted that a number of pupils were able to showcase the technology at the open evening earlier this month and to demonstrate the impact the use of these technologies has been having on making them more independent learners in class.

ASN Clubs

The lunchtime club continues to be extremely popular and the use of two of the pupil support rooms has worked really well, allowing for a busy, activity based room as well as a lower stimulus room for those who prefer a quieter space. ASN Sports Club have continued with the support of Martin Caldwell at Live Argyll on a Tuesday lunchtime (table Tennis) as well as offering outdoor education options to targeted pupils focusing on an employability award. Duke of Edinburgh ASN provision is being arranged by Mr Toole and we currently have five S3 pupils who have this as an option in their timetable.

Christmas at Hermitage

The PTA Craft Fair at the weekend marked the beginning of the Christmas festivities at Hermitage Academy. A huge congratulations and thanks to the PTA members who along with the support of a number of our staff and young people put on a fantastic event. Gillian Simpson (Chair) has shared with me that they have in the region of £2000, which will make a huge difference to the club and activities on offer within the school.

It won't be long until the Christmas decorations are up in the school and we were happy to be able to share some advanced dates for Christmas events in the newsletter last week.

Christmas Concert – Monday 5th December (Evening)

Christmas Jumper Day (In Aid of Save the Children) – Thursday 8th December (During School Day)

Senior Christmas Dance (S4-6) – Thursday 15th December (Evening)

S1 Christmas Party – Friday 16th December (During school day)

S2 Christmas Movie – Monday 19th December (During school day)

S3 Christmas Movie – Tuesday 20th December (During school day)

Christmas for Africa Charity Talent Show (S1-6) – Wednesday 21st December (During school day)

Close for Christmas Holidays – Thursday 22nd December at 2.30pm (A change to the newsletter)