



Dalkeith HS Bulletin

Friday 1 March 2024

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Mrs E. Ormerod
Head Teacher

Head Teacher's Update

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you all had a nice February holiday, although it may seem like a distant memory for you all now.

Polar Academy

Last week I interviewed 40 young people for the Polar Academy. All of the young people who put themselves forward should be so proud of what they achieved. I was taken aback by their honesty and confidence during these meetings. Polar Academy have since selected the final 15 pupils to take part in the expedition team. A huge congratulation to them all. We look forward to supporting the 15 pupils and their families through fundraising as a school community.

Alignment of the school day

A reminder that the authority wide consultation on the alignment of the school day is still live. This will close on the 8th of March. All parents were sent a document that outlines what these changes could mean for Dalkeith High School. I hope this has helped to make sense of the consultation in relation to our context. I want to thank those parents who attended our drop in sessions and to those who have already filled in the online survey. Pupils have been given time during their PSE classes to give feedback and staff were completing this survey on Thursday afternoon.

If you have not already done so, I would encourage you to give feedback by following the link below:

<https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/school-day-alignment-consultation/>

Staffing

Over the February holiday, my maternity cover post was advertised. This closes on Sunday the 3rd of March. Short list interviews have been set for the 13th of March. Our parent council chairs will be involved in the formal selection process. I will feedback more information on this in due course. Over the past couple of weeks, we have made some new appointments. Ms Erin Adam has been appointed as our new Business Teacher. Erin has been an NQT with us this year and we are looking forward to her joining our team permanently from August 2024.

We have also appointed two new, permanent Maths teachers. Both members of staff will join us from August 2024. I will share more information about this once pre-employment checks have been finalised. Finally, we say farewell to Greig Peden, Learning Support Assistant. I want to thank Greig for everything he has done for our pupils at Dalkeith High School. We wish him the best of luck in this new chapter.

Attainment meetings

I was delighted to meet with parent/carers of our S5 pupils who part of our mentoring scheme this year to discuss their attainment and set goals for the upcoming SQA exams. Thank you to our parents for making the time to support our young people in their studies.

A reminder to all pupils studying for their exams to create a revision timetable now and aim to stick to the plan over the coming weeks. I would encourage all pupils to take part in supported study. We will send out an updated supported study timetable next week to all S4 – S6 pupils. Information about SQA exam leave will be published towards the end of March, along with details of our employability programme and induction days for seniors.

S6 key dates

It is hard to believe that these dates are creeping up faster than expected. We are looking forward to celebrating our S6 year group but the three main dates for your diary are as follows:

S6 leavers day – 19th April – Pupils have decided to go to Foxlake to celebrate their time at Dalkeith. This will not be their final day at Dalkeith High School as SQA exam leave will start later than this.

S6 Leavers graduation and ceremony – 10th June (evening ceremony)

S6 prom – 14th June

Attainment

The Scottish Government attainment tool has now been updated with the leavers data for session 2023. I am delighted to report that all measures have seen significant improvement.

Literacy and Numeracy leavers attainment is significantly greater than all comparator measures and Level 4 and Level 5.

Attainment for all has seen significant improvement from last year. We are now above all comparator measures for our young people within the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% of learners.

Our attainment versus deprivation measure illustrates that our young people are attainment better at Dalkeith than in other establishments across the country, in almost all SIMD deciles.

Finally, our positive destination data illustrates that we have a positive destination rate of 96.46%. This is above all of our comparator measures. In addition, for the first time in 5 years our S6 pupils have 100% positive destination in 2023.

An absolutely, outstanding set of results for our school. A huge well done to our whole school community. Whether you are a parent/carers, pupil, staff member or partner – everyone has a role to play in these achievements.

Raising attainment in this way is really a team effort.

Have a lovely weekend when it comes.

Emma Ormerod

S1 Writing Challenge

Well done to Mrs McCabe's S1 class who recently took part in an "Alphabet Writing Challenge." They had to work in groups to write a 26 line story with each sentence starting with the next letter in the alphabet. Congratulations to Isla Madhra, Isabella Diffley & Rosa Gomez Candy who won the competition with their poem "Magpie." 2nd place went to Ollie MacIntyre, Peter Curry & Paige Kirkman and 3rd place went to Finn Hiskson-Oates, Charlie Smith & Harry Wallace. Well done everyone!



The Magpie

Awakening to meet the day, a magpie starts to fly away,
 Birch trees swaying in the breeze, the cold air makes the magpie freeze,
 Cautious of the deadly fox, the magpie starts to preen its locks,
 Danger lurks inside the den, as the fox approaches through the fen,
 Emerging from behind a door, the magpie hears a deafening roar,
 Fox is back, we must be quick the magpie steals the candlestick,
 Grabbing anything in sight, the magpie heads towards the light,
 Hoping it will get away to see the light of another day,
 I'm almost free the magpie thought, by the fox I will not be caught,
 Jumping out of the den, flying off towards the glen,
 Knowing that it is safe, the magpie returns to its happy place,
 Landing back upon the nest, it is now the magpie's time to rest,
 Morning dawns upon the town, leaves have fallen crispy and brown,
 Now it's time to fly away, there is no time to delay,
 Over sea and under stone the magpie leaves his faithful home,
 Prepared to go to unknown lands it catches a glimpse of golden sands,
 Quickly flapping its beautiful wings the magpie begins to sing,
 Rhythmic sounds fill the air, attracting the attention of a passing bear,
 Startled by the bear below, the magpie rapidly began to crow,
 Trying to escape the bear, the magpie soared higher into the air,
 Unwillingly it was forced to land, down onto the golden sand,
 Venturing was over for that day,
 Where it would end up, we could not say,
 X marks the spot where the magpie sleeps, behind the rocks the brown bear creeps,
 Yellow sands stained with blood, the bear lets the magpie fall with a thud,
 Zero was the magpie's name, but for its death we are all to blame.

Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland would like to capture feedback from as many Parents and Carers as possible to help inform their service developments and they would really appreciate it if you could complete the following survey:

<https://eu.surveymonkey.com/r/ParentsandCarersVoiceCIAGlink>

Scottish Schools Swimming Success!

Huge congratulations to Anna Lawson and Ritchie Saunders who represented Dalkeith High School at the Scottish Schools Swimming Finals in East Kilbride last Friday.

Anna finished 5th across Scotland in the 100m freestyle and Ritchie finished 6th across Scotland in the 100m and 200m butterfly.



The HIVE



Students in both classes in the Hive enjoyed a visit from PC Khindria, School link officer on Thursday 22nd February, when she came to talk to them about 'Keeping yourself safe'. The interesting and informative discussion covered topics such as anti-social behaviour and cyber-bullying.

Geography trip to Iceland

Pupils from DHS have recently returned from a once in a lifetime Geography field trip to Iceland! The trip started off with a bang on or flight into Reykjavik as we were lucky enough to fly over an erupting volcano! This was the perfect start to a brilliant trip. We arrived in Reykjavik at around 9am and spent the day visiting museums and touring the city. We scouted out some places to eat and managed to do some shopping for our lunches for the next few days. Over the next 2 days we visited a range of geographically important locations, such as waterfalls, a geothermal power station, the black sand beach and a glacier! It was incredible to see so much brilliant Geography all in one place! The final day saw one of the highlights of our trip, when the group visited the Sky Lagoon, a geothermally heated outdoor pool carved into the volcanic rock - it was really cool! The Geography department are hoping to run this trip again in around 2 years time so if your a keen Geographer then this could be the trip for you!

If you haven't done so already then check out our pictures on Instagram ([dhs-outdoor-learning](#)) or our viral video on twitter (@DHSDoE) with over 70k views!



Skiing!



A huge congratulations to Tristan Tiley who was competing at international level over the winter at the The Federation of International Skiing. This is quite a step up for him from racing in the UK and brought him into competition with adult full time skiers from all over the world. This school week coincided with the Scottish FIS races in Bormio, Italy, organised by Snowsports Scotland but with 100 competitors from e.g. Italy, France, Germany, Andorra, Chile, Japan, Switzerland etc. Despite the increased difficulty of the competition, Tristan finished in the top 50 of the 100+ starters in the race - such a fantastic achievement!



Drama

Over the last two weeks the Drama Department welcomed On the Nose Theatre Company who are a touring theatre company that creates educational and creative theatre performances, striving to create meaningful theatre for young people. The company facilitated two improvised theatre workshops to our NPA Acting and Performance and Higher Drama pupils. The first practical workshop focused on how to encourage pupils to exercise their improvisation skills along with a brief introduction to Frantic Assembly and their award winning theatre techniques that focus on storytelling through movement. The second practical workshop encouraged the pupils to explore forced theatre and resulted in both pupils and professional actors creating a short improvised performance.

On the Nose Theatre Company also took the time to speak with our pupils and provided them with advice on careers within the performing arts, and what steps the company took to establish themselves in a competitive creative environment. The company provided the pupils with lots of advice and encouragement going into higher education.

All of the pupils enjoyed working with On the Nose Theatre Company and found the workshops fun, informative and engaging. We hope to meet with the company again in the near future.

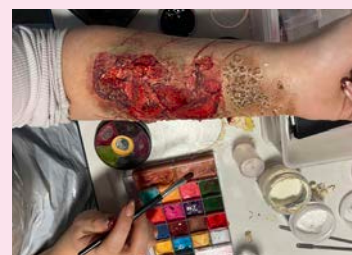
Make-up Effects!

The Expressive Arts Faculty welcomed Calum MacDonald from Gibbet FX into Dalkeith High School last week to work with some of our Art and Drama pupils. Based in Edinburgh, Gibbet FX has been working in the field of Practical Sculpture and Make-up Effects, Prop Making and Concept Design for over a decade. The work by Gibbet FX has been seen in several award winning films and music videos as well as theatre and on broadcast TV.

A series of three after school workshops provided senior pupils and staff the opportunity to learn and explore Special Effects Makeup and Prosthetics through hands-on practical activities. All those involved learnt a wide range of creative techniques which are used by professionals within the SFX industry.

During the first session, all participants learnt how to apply make-up to achieve the illusion and appearance of bruises, surface scratches and Zombie bites. Applying colour theory and learning how to manipulate the materials, they all achieved impactful and realistic outcomes. The second and third sessions challenged everyone to be more gruesome by working with liquid latex, porridge oats and two part silicone moulds. Building up a range of textures and colours, everyone achieved rather disturbing outcomes which resembled burns, skin infections, deep cuts and lacerations.

Mrs Zielinski (Curriculum Leader of Expressive Arts) expressed her gratitude following the workshops; "We were delighted to be part of a pilot scheme run in collaboration with Creative Scotland Screen Education and Gibbet FX. The sessions were hugely informative, fun and ultimately increased pupil and staff awareness of employment opportunities within the growing Scottish film and TV sector. We want to thank Calum for the excellent sessions and very much look forward to working with him again in the future".



Pupil Support: The Mercians



The Mercians are an up and coming band who have been touring the country delivering important messages around mental health and gender equality to young people. They were invited to DHS to perform some of their awesome tracks and deliver these messages on mental health to our S3&S4. The band were amazing at engaging the young people who had a fantastic morning. A massive thank you to the band who were excellent to work with. Thank you also to our young people who did themselves and our school proud.

Book Fair

The Library recently held a Book Fair where pupils were able to purchase books from authors such as Karen McManus and Liz Pichon. The pupils from Dalkeith and St David's High Schools really enjoyed the opportunity to use their £1 World Book Day tokens to purchase the books and raised £80 of free books for the school library.



Chemistry Challenge



Higher Chemistry pupils were trying to solve the ammonium hydroxide challenge. Well done Tisha who got closest to the answer! Pupils are on the countdown to the exams so enjoyed this little practical challenge on a Friday morning.



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