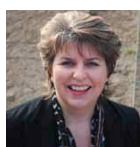




- Caring, Challenging, Creative



SUMMER 2015
Newsletter for the
Alford Academy
Community



Message from the Head Teacher

As another school session draws to a close I reflect on what has been another busy and highly successful year. Our annual Awards Ceremony on Thursday 25 June showcased the numerous achievements of our pupils, not just academic achievements but also excellence in a wide range of activities in and out of school.

Our school continues to work through a period of significant changes to our curriculum, new campus and staffing. We continue to focus on our individual pupils and their learning, encouraging them to believe in themselves, making sure they know exactly what they need to do to improve, inspiring and helping them to achieve. Highlights this session include:

- our transition to a new school week and the timetabling work around this.
- the outstanding work of our Student Council, who led the refresh of our school uniform and were actively involved in numerous consultations about the new campus from choosing colour schemes to selecting furniture.
- the two videos clips showcasing excellence in Technologies at Alford Academy which are now on the Education Scotland website in the Journey to Excellence series. A well-deserved recognition of the work of Mrs Holt, Miss Woolley, their teams and external partners. Please find below links to the clips which I strongly encourage parents to view. The first film illustrates the rich range of young people's technologies experiences and achievements in Alford Academy and the second film sets out in greater detail how the school has used partnerships with business and higher education to enrich its technologies programmes and raise young people's ambitions.

<http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/videos/technologiesinalfordacademy.asp>

<http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/videos/AlfordAcademyfilm2Page.asp>

I feel very proud to be the Head Teacher of Alford Academy and thank staff, pupils and parents for their hard work and support.

Finally, I wish you all a very enjoyable summer and look forward to welcoming pupils back to school on Tuesday 18 August 2015.



Our new Student Executive

David Gray Depute Head Boy

Cameron Grant Head Boy

Ellen Davidson Head Girl

Alicia Smith Depute Head Girl

Alford Academy pupils and staff visit their new campus

On Friday 19th June Morrison Construction, the main contractors for the new Alford Community Campus, opened the gates to the new site and invited all the pupils and staff of Alford Academy to a walk-through of the new campus.

This was no small challenge for the construction team, who halted their work for a couple of hours and laid out an escorted “safe passage” route through the new campus, in order to allow approximately 700 of us to walk through their construction site in safety and without need of the usual protective clothing.

Staff and pupils were escorted in groups through the campus and were able to view the new classrooms, theatre, sports halls, dance studio, pool, library and dining area.

The visit gave rise to great interest and excitement. In particular, we were delighted that this coincided with Link Week, which meant that our P7 (soon to be S1) pupils could join us on this whole school “gander up the road”.

The sense of light and space made a big impact on pupils, and there were also lots of positive comments about the campus colour scheme which can now be seen on a couple of the feature walls – natural blues, greens and heather purples, to reflect the colours of the landscape within which the Alford catchment lies.

Many thanks to Morrison Construction for all their efforts in facilitating such a great opportunity for our pupils and staff, and for being so cheerful and welcoming on the day.



Inspiring Aberdeenshire Event at Haddo House

Four of our pupils visited Haddo House for the Inspiring Aberdeenshire Event on Thursday 11th June.

Murray Clark and Lucy Smart, as part of the “Pupil Voice”, addressed guests, which included Senior Officers and Elected Members of Aberdeenshire Council. The “Pupil Voice” is an initiative where students from all over Aberdeenshire encourage others to have their say and have a positive impact on education within the shire.

Bethany and Shona Stuart were there to showcase their project as part of the Archivers’ Group, who have been documenting the history of Alford Schools over the past 2 years. They were able to talk about and show their findings to the guests, who were very impressed and complimented them on their hard work.

Salsa Drumming in the Library!

To celebrate the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) 'Make a Noise in Libraries' event (yes, there really is such a thing!) the library organised a drumming workshop delivered by Mrs Canning, Teacher of SFL. A group of visually impaired adults from the Alford area attended along with a small group of Alford Academy pupils. This intergenerational event was a great success and Mrs Canning taught the group how to play a Salsa drumming sequence in a very short period of time, and the sound was amazing. A big thank you to Mrs Canning and her pupils for making this a fantastic and fun afternoon for all taking part.



Famous Author Visits Alford

S2 pupils had the opportunity to meet the Grampian Children's Book Award winning author Dave Cousins when he came to visit the school. The pupils were given a great insight into his journey to become an author and his inspiration for his early books.



Parent Council Fundraising

The Parent Council Fundraising group continues to raise money for the Academy. Amongst other things it has helped to fund new laptops, the school newsletter, the awards ceremony and water for the sponsored walk. Pupils are also now invited to apply to the Parent Council for funds for projects/activities in the school.

The Parent Council runs a monthly lottery and has also set up an account with the website www.easyfundraising.org.uk. Raising donations for the school through easyfundraising has been made easier using their fundraising reminder app, which can be downloaded from the site and reminds you each time you visit an online retailer. Contact David Wyllie at David@Brackla.com for more details.

Fundraising for British Heart Foundation

Alford pupils, Lyle Hendy and Jake Newby met with Dr Jack Taylor of the British Heart Foundation to present him with a cheque for £850 which was raised by pupils and staff in memory of Mr Coston, PT Faculty Drama, Music and Media at Alford Academy.



Attack of the Giant Robot Chickens

Pupils at Alford Academy had the full red carpet treatment in March at the grand premiere of their very own film. A special event was held in the Alford Library to celebrate the achievement of a group of S1 pupils and to showcase their book trailer film, produced as part of a nation-wide Scottish Book Trust competition. Since the end of last year, pupils from Miss Leslie's English class have been working hard with Network Librarian, Jackie Coroon, to produce a trailer based on local author Alex McCall's award-winning children's novel 'The Attack of the Giant Robot Chickens'. The process of making the film proved a steep learning curve for the pupils with many new skills developed along the way. Pupils took full responsibility for the production of the film and were involved in the scripting process, acting rehearsals, filming with green screen technology, and editing the final product. Props were made at home, lines were conscientiously learned and innovative ideas were applied to create the effect of giant killer chickens rampaging through the streets of Aberdeen. Pupils wrote 'job applications' to apply for acting and crew roles and also produced written materials to appear in their very own 'programme' booklet on the night. They were even lucky enough, during filming, to get to grips with some real-life chickens!

The premiere proved to be a big success with positive feedback - the pupil's trailer was described as "one of the most creative" the competition had ever seen.



Rights Respecting School Award

Alford Academy and Primary School are working towards gaining the Rights Respecting School Award, which recognises the commitment to putting the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child at the heart of all that we do in the school. In May we achieved the UNICEF Recognition of Commitment in recognition of the work that we have done so far. We are now working towards Level 1.

There are a number of positive outcomes from working on RRSA. Some of them are:

- Improved attainment
- Improved self esteem
- Improved relationships and behaviour

The artwork produced by the Skills for Work and Princes XL class is now on display at the vehicle entrance to the new school. After a discussion with Mr MacLean, pupils decided to focus on the right to freedom of expression.

We have a committee consisting of members of the school community. We are working to ensure that we will meet all the standards and are focused on the rights of the child and the rights respecting behaviours that go along with them. If you would like to be part of our journey to a Rights Respecting School please get in touch with Lynne Smeaton or Lisa Lees.



Our school community was deeply saddened to hear about the sudden death earlier this year of a well-respected teacher, colleague and friend, Mr Michael Coston.

Michael joined the Alford Academy team as teacher of Drama in December 1999 and was promoted to the post of Principal Teacher of Drama in 2001. In 2013 he was appointed to the post of Principal Teacher of the Drama, Music and Media Faculty, for which he had an ambitious vision for the future.

He was a great teacher with a unique style. With his passion for and knowledge of his subject, he knew what he wanted to get across to his pupils and was so creative in his approaches and a truly innovative teacher.

Pupils were at the heart of all he did. Through his creativity and infectious enthusiasm he made learning fun and encouraged the pupils to value themselves and others. He made a difference to the lives of so many young people at Alford Academy and the tributes received from pupils past and present have been full of warmth, affection and thanks. He is greatly missed.



Awards Ceremony 2015 Gallery



Stuart Lawson – Sporting Dux



Nathan Vickers – Creative Arts Dux



Thomas Allerton – Academic Dux



Claire Ross – Winner of the William Ledingham Trophy for Public Speaking and the Helen Wilkinson Trophy for Endeavour



S3 Awards and Prize Winners



S4 Awards and Prize Winners

Alford Young Engineers Club session 2014-2015

The Alford Young Engineers Club continues to go from strength to strength – in March they won the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Challenge Trophy at the **2015 Engineering and Science Club Showcase Event** and in June they won the runner up trophy for the best Go-Kart at the **IET Formula 24 race** held at the Grampian Transport Museum. The team are hoping to build on this success and do even better next year!



Academy Ski Success (by Callum Duff)

On 29th January Alford Academy entered four teams into the Scottish Schools Ski Association Qualifier race at the Lecht. 16 racers were competing in 4 teams - male and female in both experienced and novice categories. 17 medals were won in total from the Individual and Team events. Tabby Allan, Amelia Allan and Emma Calder took the top 3 places in the girls' experienced race. Kirsty Birnie and Emma Ferguson took second and third place in the girls' novice race. Struan Pryde represented the boys on the podium when he took third place in the novice race. In the team event the experienced team of Tabby, Amelia, Callum Duff and Stuart Lawson won their category. The novice female team also won their category. Both of these teams progressed to the Scottish finals at the Nevis range which took place on the 19th March and competed against teams from all over the country. This was serious competition with many of the best skiers in country attending. The Female team of Kirsty Birnie, Emma Calder, Emma MacPherson and Iris Beswick just missed out on a podium place by only one second from the combined times, a fantastic performance from the team, especially with no previous racing experience! The Mixed team of Tabby, Amelia, Stuart and Callum had another great performance coming fourth in their race. This has been an amazing season for all of Alford Academy's skiers and the team look forward to unleashing potential in younger pupils for victories on the snow in the seasons ahead.

Basketball

This year the school basketball team has been competing in the U15 Boys competition and won the Grampian Regional League section with wins over Aboyne Academy, Banchory Academy, Cults Academy, Kemnay Academy, Mackie Academy and The Gordon Schools.

In the quarter final with Dumfries Academ , the Alford boys won a hard fought match by 32-16 to set up a semi-final appearance for the second year in a row.

The team travelled down to Grangemouth Sports Complex on Tuesday 10th March to play North Berwick High School. A very close first half saw Alford leading by 27-26 points. However a strong 3rd quarter for North Berwick proved to be decisive and North Berwick went on to win 61-47.

It has been a great season for the team, reaching the semi-finals of a national competition, with an initial entry of 61 schools from across Scotland.

Some of the players have also been playing for the Alford Basketball Club U14 team who won the North of Scotland League and Grampian Cup.

Finally, we are delighted that following a nomination from the Academy PE department, David Wyllie, the Basketball Team Coach was selected as Coach of the Year at the Aberdeenshire Sports Council Awards in March. A proud moment for him and his team.



Senior Boys Football

The senior boys had another great season. Unbeaten in the Aberdeenshire League, they finished 2nd overall. James Duncan was top scorer with 6 for the season. Player of the season was Stuart Lawson who is also our Sporting Dux for session 2014/15. The team also reached the semi-final of the North of Scotland Cup.



Under 15s Boys Football

This season has been full of ups and downs for the U15s. After a difficult start to the season with departures in cup competitions the boys ended the season strongly in the league. The turning point came at the same time as the arrival of their new kits. The final game of the season saw the Alford boys make the long journey to Fraserburgh to end the season on a high with a 2-1 win with the goals coming from Ian Chalmers and Liam Dinnie. Lead Teacher, Mr Findlay wishes all the best to the S3s moving up to senior level and looks forward to welcoming in new players to the U15s next season.



Aberdeenshire Active Schools Giant Heptathlon

On 19th February, a team of 14 athletes (7 boys / 7 girls) took part in this annual competition at Aberdeen Sports Village. The girls' team came 9th and the boys' team won the Bronze Medal. Congratulations to all pupils for performing extremely well at this highly competitive event.



Duke of Edinburgh Award

This year 16 pupils achieved their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards as part of the Alford Academy DofE group. To get the Award pupils had to successfully complete practice and final expeditions, and also spend a total of over 50 hours learning new skills, volunteering in the community and participating in a physical activity. The expedition section required pupils to train during Tuesday lunchtimes for about 3 months, so that they could safely plan and undertake their two day walks, including carrying all equipment, cooking for themselves and camping out overnight. Ten of these pupils have now started their Silver Awards and have been fundraising through the sale of a Duke of Edinburgh Cookbook and bag pack.

The DofE group has welcomed a new set of 30 pupils to the Bronze Award this year. These pupils have now completed a practice expedition between Balmoral and Glen Muick, a journey that started with one group actually seeing the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh. Pupils stood respectfully, fully kitted out with backpacks, maps and waterproofs as the Duke of Edinburgh slowly drove the Queen and other members of the Royal Family to Crathie Kirk. Another group had a very creative time as they filmed a movie at various locations on route. This was during the second of 6 planned expedition weekends this year, where over 40 pupils and 6 staff will walk approximately 2000 miles in total. As well as being a real challenge and very enjoyable, DofE Awards are seen by further education establishments and employers as valuable achievements, demonstrating the commitment and contribution of young adults to improving themselves and their community.



Silver Duke of Edinburgh Practice Expedition

Between 19 and 21 June, 12 S5 girls undertook their first Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards Practice Expedition. Starting from Feshiebridge, their 3 day expedition took them into Inshriach Forest to Loch an Eilein and Loch Morlich, through the Ryvoan Pass and Abernethy Forest and onto Loch Garten with a finish at Boat of Garten. Two days of dry weather and one of torrential rain but spirits remained high and the girls performed extremely well together individually and as a group. Well done to the Thunderbirds (Sian Allerton, Elle Anderson, Claire Bellarby, Kirsty Birnie, Emily Strachan and Kate Wilson) and the Seven Dwarves (Natalya Brentnall, Rachel Edgar, Aoife Goodin, Elise Mouat, Rosie Riley and Iris Beswick)

Scottish Schools Swimming Relay Championships 2015

24 pupils participated in this year's event at Tollcross International Swimming Centre in Glasgow on 17 June. All the swimmers did exceptionally well with most reaching their finals. A special mention goes to the S1 Girls' Relay Team of Iona Pryde, Emma Calder, Annabelle Wright and Lexie Ashcroft, , and who won double bronze medals in the 4x 50m Medley and 4x 50m Freestyle Relays. Congratulations to all who took part.



Robert Gordon's College and Albyn School's Invitational Cross Country Event

In March a team of 21 pupils from S1-5 participated in this annual event, competing against thousands of pupils from across the City and 'Shire. The whole team did fantastically well, doing themselves and Alford proud. A special mention to our medal winners, Emma Calder - Individual Bronze Medal Winner, Jack Gillespie- Individual Bronze Medal Winner, S1 Girls' Team Silver (Emma Calder, Annabelle Wright and Beth Stewart) and the S3 Boys' Team Gold Medal Winners (Struan Pryde, Tim Shoreman and Sam Hunter). A fantastic achievement for our school to have so many medal winners!



School Uniform

A reminder to parents that blazers and knitwear can be purchased online at www.academyuniformsltd.co.uk – online orders must be placed prior to **Monday 6 July** for free delivery to school on Distribution Day **Thursday 13 August 2015** (please remember to use voucher code ALFFREE at check out). Staff from Academy Uniforms will be at Alford Academy (Dining Hall) from 11 am to 1 pm on 13 August to distribute pre-ordered blazers and knitwear – they can also answer any queries and deal with any exchanges on that day. Items can also be ordered online at any time and sent to home address if preferred (please note a delivery charge is payable).

Term Dates Session 2015/16

Just a reminder that from August 2015, the pupil school day will change to 8:40 am to 3:40 pm Monday to Wednesday and 8:40 to 2:50 pm Thursday and Friday.

Monday 17 August 2015	In-Service Day – school closed to pupils
Tuesday 18 August 2015	Start of Term 1 (pupils)
Thursday 8 October 2015	End of Term 1 (pupils)
Friday 9 October 2015	Move to new Campus – school closed to pupils
12-23 October 2015	October holidays
26-28 October 2015	Move to new Campus – school closed to pupils
Thursday 29 October 2015	Start of Term 2 (pupils)
16 and 17 November 2015	In-Service Days – school closed to pupils
Tuesday 22 December 2015	End of Term 2
23 Dec 2015 to 5 Jan 2016	Christmas holidays
Wednesday 6 January 2016	Start of Term 3
Friday 12 February 2016	Occasional Day – school closed to pupils
Monday 16 February 2016	Mid Term holiday
16 and 17 February 2016	In-Service Days – school closed to pupils
Friday 25 March 2016	Good Friday – school closed
Friday 1 April 2016	End of Term 3
4-15 April 2016	Easter holidays
Monday 18 April 2016	Start of Term 4
Monday 2 May 2016	May Day holiday – school closed
Monday 6 June 2016	Occasional Day – school closed to pupils
Friday 1 July 2016	End of Term 4
4 July to 12 August 2016	Summer holidays