



- Caring, Challenging, Creative



June 2016
Newsletter for the
Alford Academy
Community



Message from the Head Teacher

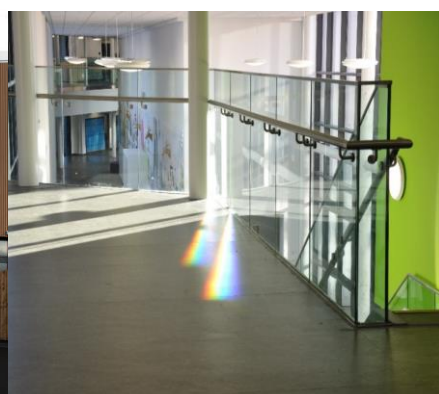
As another school session draws to a close I reflect on what has been another busy and highly successful year. Our annual Awards Ceremony on Wednesday 22 June showcased the numerous achievements of our pupils, not just academic achievements but also excellence in a wide range of activities in and outwith of school. In addition to the pupils who crossed the stage at the Awards Ceremony, hundreds more received awards at their House Achievement Assemblies this week.

The future of our school is very exciting. At the start of next session a new leadership structure will be in place to lead future development of our 3-18 curriculum. Over the next two years we will work even more closely with nursery and primary colleagues as we continue to plan our curriculum for all pupils from their early years through to when they leave school education. We will work together on our new campus vision to nurture, inspire and achieve.

I believe that what makes Alford Academy the success it is, is our positive ethos and our 'people' - pupils, staff, parents and the increasing number of businesses and organisations who enrich the work and life of our school.

We are an ambitious school community which values hard work and respect and has a clear vision for our pupils; young people who communicate well and are resilient, who achieve their very best during their time at school and beyond, who are proud of themselves and their school and have a civic pride in the rich heritage and culture of Alford, the north-east of Scotland and beyond.

Finally, I wish you all a very enjoyable summer and look forward to welcoming pupils back to school on Tuesday 16 August 2016.



Awards Ceremony Photo Gallery

Certificate winners



Trophies



Choir



Pipe Band





2016 Creative Arts Dux Shield was awarded to Lucy Smart for her outstanding commitment and effort in drama/music. She has led the after school drama club and been involved with the school choir. Lucy has excelled this year and plans to further her studies of performing arts at college.

2016 Sporting Dux Shield was awarded to David Gray. David is the top S6 performer in PE this session. David has and continues to improve his physical fitness in preparation for joining the Royal Marines.

2016 Academic Dux Shield was awarded to Cameron Grant. Cameron achieved 5 A Pass Higher awards in S5 and has worked on 4 Advanced Highers this session.

YPI

2016 YPI (Youth Philanthropy Initiative) winners Jennifer Cowe and Antonia Lawrence attended the National Celebration event at the Perth Concert Hall in June. The girls were successful in winning £3000 for their chosen charity Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland. A total of £3029.41 was sent to the charity this year. Well done girls!



Ghostly Goings On At Darkwood Manor – P7 Link Day

This year, our P7 pupils took part in an day of fun-filled activities hosted at the Academy as part of our annual P7 Link Day. Something strange was going on at the Manor and we needed it investigated.

Pupils worked in teams to build haunted houses, program Scratch ghostbuster games and wire up spooky electric lights. Five of our subject areas took part and helped to organise the resources for each team, while 15 of our S3 pupils set up the school theatre and managed the event on the day.

Our P7 pupils had a great day, made new friends and had a little taster of what Academy life will be like when they come back in June for a longer spell on Link Week.

Sincere thanks for an amazing day go to our fantastic S3 pupils and the teams of: Mrs Holt (Computing Science), Mr Cookson (Science), Miss Woolley (Technical and Art and Design) and Mr Trueman (Music and Drama).



S2 Computing Science Pupils Awarded Raspberry Pi kits!

In May, our team of S2 coders took part in a live stream of delivered by Coderdojo Scotland and hosted on Glow. Taking part in this event was Alford Academy's contribution to the Discovering Digital World 2016 initiative. Yougsters coded a web postcard and learned (just-in-time) how to program in HTML 5.0 and CSS.

For our contribution, Alford Academy Computing Science was awarded 10 Raspberry Pi Kits! We cannot wait to set the kits up with our new S1s and show how even the smallest of computational devices can be used in powerful ways to write code.



Former Academy Pupil Awarded Dr Morley Hutchison Prize

Former Academy pupil, Kristjan Holt, has been awarded the prestigious Dr Morley Hutchison Prize for outstanding academic performance in Year 3 of his studies in the School of Medical and Dental Sciences, Medical Sciences and Nutrition at Aberdeen University.

S3 Business Pupils Win Y-Factor!!

Well done to Mrs Taylor's S3 Business pupils who won the Y Factor final on Friday 10-06-16. The team heard that they had made the finals in May and won the event securing prize winnings of £500.00 by beating Robert Gordon's College and The Gordon Schools, Huntly. Our Business pupils gave award winning performances in: Product Design, Business Planning and a Dragons Den-style presentation for their App, Foodzstuff. All team members worked extremely well together, came up with innovative and creative solutions.



Alford Academy S6 Computing Science Pupil Wins RGU Youth Research Award

This term, the School of Computing Science & Digital Media at the Robert Gordon University invited all Secondary Schools in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to nominate Advanced Higher Projects in Computing for a new annual prize offered by the university. The main criteria for the award was that the project should demonstrate innovative, research oriented thinking and approach to tackling the core issues of the AH Project. A panel of judges comprising, Professor Chrisina Jayne, Head of the School of Computing Science & Digital Media, RGU, Dr. Wamberto Vasconcelos, Head of the School of Natural & Computing Sciences, Aberdeen University, Mr Tom Liversedge, Portlethen Academy, Aberdeenshire PSG and Mr David Strudwick, Cults Academy, Aberdeen City PSG voted unanimously that Alford Academy was this year's winner.

Our AH Project entry of Murray Steele, Alford Academy S6 pupil, tackled an innovative and challenging area of genetic algorithms applied to ecosystem development, where Murray designed and implemented an ecosystem simulation in Java.

Murray will be invited to join The Robert Gordon University Prize Day on 1st July to receive his award, alongside fellow Computing Science undergraduate and postgraduate prizewinners from the School of Computing.

Lunchtime Games in the Library

During Mental Health Week in May the library were keen to encourage pupils to ditch their technology and engage in traditional board games and alternative activities. Pupils were only allowed into the library over lunch if they were taking part in games, activities, borrowing/returning their books or enjoying some independent quiet reading. The activities were well received by all the pupils that took part, which included Mini Yoga, Mindfulness Meditation, craft, colouring, puzzles etc. Due to the success of the games and quiet reading opportunities it was decided this would become the 'normal' practice in the library over lunchtime.



Since then Diane Forbes (pupil support worker), along with the help of a number of pupils (her puzzle team), has completed around six jigsaw puzzles, one of which was a 1000 piece puzzle - it was 999 pieces actually as one piece had gone missing! However, the missing piece didn't spoil the excitement for those taking part as they were pleased and excited with their achievements and the end result. Diane and her puzzle team has since started another puzzle, this time only 500 pieces, and they aim to have this completed by the end of term.

The atmosphere in the library at lunchtime now is really positive and it is great to see pupils playing the games, communicating and socialising with each other instead of just sitting around playing on their handheld devices! Those who enjoy quiet independent reading are also enjoying the opportunity to utilise the library space.

After the holidays senior pupils will be offering an additional activity, this will be support in the library to younger pupils with their homework or research work. The exact days have yet to be decided, once the seniors have advised me of their availability this information will be shared with pupils in the daily bulletin.

Jackie Coroon

Network Librarian

Author visit

S3 pupils welcomed Scottish author Alan Bissett to the theatre at Alford Academy. Alan read an extract from his novel 'Boyracers' which was thoroughly enjoyed by staff and pupils alike. He then answered some excellent questions posed by pupils, who did an exceptional job of representing the school to our visitor.



P7 – Science Transitions

The Science Faculty have been visiting associated primary schools in order to develop transitions. Developing transitions with our cluster primaries is a priority of our Faculty Improvement plan and our aim was to work together with our primary colleagues to help pupils develop their scientific knowledge and skills.

Over the term we have visited 7 associated primaries, taking with us experiments and investigations for the pupils to experience. Feedback has been very positive and we wish to continue with this in the future.

Link week – CSI Alford

In keeping with the link week theme of Haunted House, P7 pupils were involved in a forensic crime scene investigation. The pupils were briefed on what had happened and were shown around the mock crime scene set up in our Faculty. They searched for evidence to find the murderer out of three suspects. During the week pupils analysed fingerprints, a footprint left at the scene and analysed clothing fibres which were snagged on the window sill. By gathering the evidence and experiencing the techniques behind forensic science, pupils were able to identify the suspect who carried out the crime!



I'm a Scientist get me out of here!



A range of pupils studying National 5 Chemistry were given the opportunity to be involved in a nationwide initiative called I'm a Scientist get me out of here. This programme is organised through STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, and it allows pupils to link school Science with real life applications.

Pupils were involved with a live chat with different scientists who work and study at university. The theme of our chat was Catalysis and the scientists involved are working at the cutting edge of their field. The live chat allowed our pupils to ask the scientists anything, ranging from details about their work, the paths they had taken to get there or even what their favourite band is.

After the live chat pupils could vote for their favourite, with the scientist with fewest votes being eliminated. At the end of the week the last scientist standing would receive £500 towards their work and the student who asked the best question would also receive a prize of £20.

The S4 pupils were engaged and motivated during this event and the questions during the live chat were both intriguing and fun highlighting the students curiosity. This was an activity that we would certainly repeat in the future.

S2 Hydrographic Society – Lecture at Aberdeen University

In May, twenty S2 Pupils attended a lecture from the Hydrographic Society where guest speakers spoke about their role as an Offshore Surveyor in the search for new oil pockets under the sea. The team gave interactive talks which were both interesting and inspiring, giving an insight into their careers and how it takes them all over the world. The highlight was a demonstration of the 3D camera used to detect oil pockets in the sea bed and pupils played a computer game to demonstrate searching for oil using a Robotically Operated Vehicle, ROV.

The pupils played against each other from different schools within Aberdeenshire and prizes were on offer for the best questions asked.



Young Engineers

On the 23rd March four representatives of 'Alford Academy Young Engineers' participated in the 'SCDI Young Engineers and Science Club North East Celebration 2016'. After a day out at the BP Headquarters in Dyce, Alford was awarded the 'Regional Young Engineers Club of the Year 2016' trophy, along with a certificate and a cheque for £250 to spend within the club.

To win this prize we took along a number of our projects and presented them to two judges. During our presentation we spoke about what we do as a club and what we get out of being a member. Some of the projects that we spoke about were; the F24 electric go-karts that we raced at the 'Greenpower F24' race in June where we ended up winning 3rd prize in the kit car section, our partnership with 'Bibby Offshore' on our ROV project that is competing in the 'MATE Regional ROV Challenge' this month, our work with the community and our visit from 'Stuart Mortimer', a master wood artist, and the work that he did with us.

We met and spoke to some of the employees at BP about their jobs and how they got there as well as speaking about the club. From this we learnt about how others got to where they are today, what subjects they took and if they went to university.

This experience is very valuable because we learnt a lot from employees and other engineers that are in the work place and it has inspired us to look for more careers within engineering.

Alford Netball Club

Alford Netball Club is a fun group of enthusiastic girls from S1-6 who represent the school in a sport they all enjoy.

In March the S1 netball squad went to Aberdeen to compete against other schools across Aberdeenshire. Our first game was against Westhill and we won 5-4. Two hours later and after winning all our games we were in the final against Mintlaw. Alford had an outstanding result, 12-2 to win the tournament.

Alford Netball Club has great chemistry which we have proven in the way we play as a team in all our matches. This term we played in a friendly against Aboyne which we won.

Next season will be exciting because we are entering the Netball Scotland Scottish Schools Cup Competition and we may get the chance to travel across the North of Scotland to play other schools.



Alford Girls are Victorious

Alford Academy Junior Girls' Football Team got off to a great start on Thursday 19th of May when they won their first ever team matches. The team of S1-S3 girls have been training every Thursday after school for the past 2 months and all that hard work paid off when they played Aboyne Academy in an after school friendly match. Four matches were played in total, with both schools fielding two teams and Alford won all four games which resulted in an aggregate score of 19-2. The matches were played in a great spirit by both schools and it was a proud moment for the Alford Girls' Football Team Coach, Mr McKinnie who praised the commitment and enthusiasm of the teams.



Basketball - Under 15s Boys' Cup

On 16th March the Under 15s Boys' basketball team from Alford Academy competed in the U15s Schools Cup Final against Wallace High School. The boys played some outstanding basketball and it was a very closely contested game with the final score was 51-48 to Wallace High. The atmosphere was fantastic and a group of Alford pupils went down to Grangemouth with the team to offer their support and cheer the team on. The team made a brilliant effort and demonstrated great sportsmanship. Alford Academy would like to thank their Coach, David Wyllie and the boys' parents for their support in helping the team reach the final of this event.



Under 15s Boys Football

The U15's made the historic first visit of a mainland team to the Island of Orkney in November of 2015. They were the first team to play an Orkney side in the Scottish cup. Unfortunately "sea legs and tummy" got the better of the lads and they were beaten on penalties. Despite this the trip was a fantastic success. A big thank you to the school and Alford Academy Parent Council for their support in helping the trip to happen.



Donside Juvenile FC – S2 Boys

The Donside Team which includes S2 Alford pupils had a great season playing at U14s and through hard work and great play gained promotion to the A League next season at U15 level. This is the squad's second consecutive promotion at 11-a-side having been promoted from the C League to A League in just two seasons.

In May some of the boys travelled with their coaches to take part in an international tournament in Vlaardingen, Holland. Donside are the first Scottish team to take part in the tournament and the hosts had to source Scottish flags to decorate the ground and the band had to learn "Flower of Scotland" for the closing ceremony. The trip was a great experience for all involved and the boys played teams from many different countries. At the closing ceremony the team were awarded with the Fair Play Award for the U15 age group which is a fantastic achievement.

Alford Pupil turns out for elite Liverpool side at the Norway Cup

S2 Alford Pupil Sandy Watt saved the day at the prestigious Norway Cup in true "Roy of the Rovers" style. Sandy plays for Lewis United who were taking part in the youth football tournament in Norway. During this tournament he was spectating with his friends at the Norway Cup All Stars team friendly against the Liverpool Academy team, managed by former Liverpool and England centre back Phil Thompson. After about 5 minutes play, Liverpool's goalkeeper was injured and unable to play and there was no sub on the benches. Showing true Alford spirit Sandy stood up and shouted "I'm a goalie, I'll play for you!" Phil Thompson welcomed Sandy on to the pitch where he then joined the elite Liverpool Academy team for the rest of the match. Sandy said afterwards "I thought I was coming just to sit and watch the game today. I never dreamt that I would be asked to play. I'm actually a big Liverpool fan so to have the honour of being called upon by a club legend like Phil Thompson was superb. It was a definite privilege to play today".



Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at Alford Academy is now in its' third year since reforming in 2014. In total over 100 pupils have embarked on various awards during this time; with 26 Bronze and 11 Silver awards having been completed, and with many more awards due to be completed in the coming months. Two groups of new S6 pupils have also completed their Gold practice expedition and will be aiming to fully complete their Gold Awards during their time at the Academy.

Regular training for expeditions occurs after school in the Autumn and Winter terms, and multiple expeditions have been undertaken during the Spring and Summer; to Glen Muick, Glen Tanar and from Aviemore to Braemar. As well as expeditions all pupils continue to learn new skills, complete many hours of a chosen physical activity and also have to volunteer for local projects, groups and organisations. As part of volunteering groups of our DofE pupils have also served refreshments at several evening school events.

The staff involved with Alford Academy DofE has increased this year, with Miss Shepherd and Miss Cameron, joining Mr Scott, Mrs Fraser, Dr Conway and Mrs MacDonald. All staff agree that DofE helps pupils gain valuable skills and life experiences and helps to build positive relationships between pupils and staff alike. In total the staff have walked an estimated 2 million steps with the pupil groups in the last 3 years, and look forward to a few million more in years to come.



Orienteering

Lots of fun was had by all on a beautifully warm and bright day at Deeside Activity Centre for the annual S1/2 Orienteering Event. Over 50 S1/2 pupils proudly represented Team Alford, competing against Banchory Academy and Aboyne Academy, and they were all a credit to themselves and the school throughout the event. A special mention to Lydia and Eleanor Cooke who finished 3rd in the S1 Girls event and to Lexie Ashcroft and Molly Hunter who finished 1st in the S2 Girls Event. It truly was a great day out for the pupils and teachers alike!!



Scottish Schools Relay Championship

Another successful day for Team Alford at the Scottish Schools Swimming Relay Championship in Edinburgh in June. Alford pupils qualified for 6 finals with the S3/4 girls securing Bronze in the Individual Medley. Congratulations to Lauren Leslie, Ciara Edwards, Orla Edwards and Catriona Imrie and all the other pupils who represented the school.



Cross Country Championships

It was a cold, sometimes wet, windy but fun day out at Balgownie for the Robert Gordons and Albyn Schools Invitational Cross Country Championships. A team of 34 pupils proudly represented the school at what is always a very well attended event with over 1000 competitors taking part! Team Alford once again managed to defy the odds by winning medals. Emma Calder, S2, won an individual silver medal in her event and the S2 team of Emma Calder, Julia Farquhar and Beth Stewart, secured a team bronze medal. A special mention to Duncan Rae, S1, who narrowly finished 4th after taking a wrong turn halfway around the course, who knows what it could have been otherwise! All the runners did fantastic and a big well done to them all for signing up and giving it a go! It was also the first major outing of our brand new Alford Academy running vests, which looked great on the course!



Parkour Trip

Another fine day in the sun for 16 Alford Pupils at Coatbridge Parkour Park! The pupils were put through their paces by 2 of Scotland's best Parkour coaches, on Scotland's first designated outdoor Parkour Park. After lots of jumping, climbing, swinging, landing, rolling and vaulting, it was time to head home!



Rock Wall club

Alford Academy has had a very successful first season on the new Rock Wall. Initially we had 5 taster sessions where 70 pupils were given their first experience on the wall. After this we started a club on Tuesday and Wednesday nights from 4pm – 5.30pm. Pupils could sign up for a 4 week block. They all quickly got used to the “ropes” and by the end of the 4 weeks were confident in climbing and belaying their partners. 2 routes quickly became the favourites 1) the overhang 2) the ledge where if successful they could have a sweet from the box placed on the ledge. Pupils and teachers had great fun during these sessions and all can't wait for next year's club to get started. Many thanks to Mrs Lennon, Mr McKinnie and Mr Cruickshank for their time and commitment to make the club so successful.



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 **Friday 8 July** for free delivery to school on Distribution Day **Thursday 11 August 2016** (please remember to use voucher code ALFFREE at check out). Staff from Academy Uniforms will be at Alford Academy (Dining Area) from 11 am to 12 noon on 11 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 2016/17

Monday 15 August 2016	In-Service Day – school closed to pupils
Tuesday 16 August 2016	Start of Term 1 (pupils)
Friday 7 October 2016	End of Term 1 (pupils)
10-21 October 2016	October holidays
Monday 24 October 2016	Start of Term 2 (pupils)
14 and 15 November 2016	In-Service Days – school closed to pupils
Wednesday 21 December 2016	End of Term 2
22 Dec 2016 to 4 Jan 2017	Christmas holidays
Thursday 5 January 2017	Start of Term 3
Friday 10 February 2017	Occasional Day – school closed to pupils
Monday 13 February 2017	Mid Term holiday
14 and 15 February 2017	In-Service Days – school closed to pupils
Friday 31 March 2017	End of Term 3
3-17 April 2017	Easter holidays
Tuesday 18 April 2017	Start of Term 4
Monday 1 May 2017	May Day holiday – school closed
Monday 5 June 2017	Occasional Day – school closed to pupils
Friday 30 June 2017	End of Term 4
3 July to 21 August 2017	Summer holidays

