

First Minister's Reading Challenge at Dean Park

Dean Park were recently invited to host a visit from the First Minister to share our pupils' journey participating in the FM's Reading Challenge, and to speak about the launch of the new FM's Reading Challenge evaluation document which Scottish Book Trust has just produced. They had enjoyed reading our school submission last year and noted our links with the local library and with Harmeny School. Our pupils also attended last year's celebration event at the Hub in Edinburgh.

Unfortunately, at the last minute the First Minister was called away to London and was unable to attend, but local officers of the council and Scottish Book Trust joined us as planned.

The morning began with a Robert Burns poetry recital, then children from each year group presented the visitors with their storyboards, displaying written work and drawings based on their class's book. A second group of children showed their Reading Passports to the visitors and discussed their favourite books with them. The visitors also heard about our paired reading project, where children from Dean Park read with children from Harmeny School. This was so successful that instead of lasting a few weeks as planned, it carried on for two and a half terms!

It was a very enjoyable morning for everyone and a great opportunity to showcase the children's literacy work. The visit will hopefully inspire the children to continue reading for pleasure.

Tracy Kiggins, PSA
Dean Park PS



Together at Forrester we ... respect • believe • achieve



I am very pleased to share the wonderful collegiate initiative that Forrester staff, pupils and parents have been working on for the past year. January 2019 saw the launch of our new vision and values artwork, which can now be seen throughout the school. These colourful values underpin the relationship-based approach the school is committed to implementing in the classroom and beyond. Thank you to all those involved in the project.

John MacPhie SDO, Forrester High School



Success at the Scottish Schools' Swimming Championships

We are delighted to share the success of two Dean Park pupils at the recent Scottish Schools' Swimming Championships in Glasgow.

Ellie in P7 and Josh in P6 were selected to represent Edinburgh in this prestigious national event, which took place at Tollcross International Swim Centre in Glasgow on Saturday 26 January.

Josh, aged 10, the youngest in his category – the Boys' 12 years and under 50m Breaststroke – achieved a personal best time in his heat, which saw him through to the finals. He had yet another fantastic swim and placed 9th in the final. To put this in context, that is 9th in Scotland in this age group and event – an amazing achievement for Josh and he should be rightfully proud of this result.

Ellie, age 11, qualified for two events at the national competition. However, rules dictate she can only compete in one, so her chosen event was the Girls' 12 and under 50m Freestyle. Ellie breezed through to the finals where she was victorious in her swim, winning first place. This seeds Ellie 1st in Scotland for her age in this category. An exceptional achievement we're sure you'll agree.

Josh and Ellie shared their success with the upper school at song practice and showed off some of the attire they received as finalists in the competition. Both were incredibly modest about their achievements, but we as a school recognise their commitment and dedication to the sport and we are exceptionally proud of them.

Rehana Shanks, Head Teacher, Dean Park PS



Public Libraries Update

Oxgangs Library is continuing to support young people with High School work placements and Duke of Edinburgh schemes. The last high school placement was very successful and we will soon be connecting with Firhill HS. Our current DofE student is hosting Bookbug sessions on Saturday mornings, and we are currently chatting to another DofE student about assisting with their Silver Award.

Wester Hailes Library is running a course in film-making for young people with Screen Education Edinburgh. The first 2 sessions have each been attended by 10 young people, who have been getting to grips with film-making equipment and have had 'hands-on' experience of creating short animations using Play-doh characters. Future sessions will give them further opportunity to share an enjoyment and appreciation of film, whilst gaining skills and experience in practical film-making as well as developing social and personal skills. They are making use of Edinburgh Libraries' screening kit and film-making equipment, awarded through Public Library Improvement Fund from the Scottish Library and Information Council.

The Children's Art Club for ages 8–11 currently being piloted at Central Library has entered its second term and the children have really enjoyed trying their hand at a variety of different disciplines, often using recycled materials. We've got some great ideas going forward and we'll be exhibiting some of the wonderful work produced at the end of the school year.

Public Libraries staff

Mother Tongue, Other Tongue

Craigroyston Community High School has a hard-working and passionate Higher / Advanced Higher Spanish class. As they are always keen to try new things, their teacher entered some of them into the 2019 Mother Tongue Other Tongue poetry competition run by SCILT. The competition celebrates our multicultural society and encourages pupils of all ages to write in their home language or a language that they are learning.

The quality of work they produced was wonderful, and the school is immensely proud of Alexandra Grimaldo (S5) who has been awarded 'highly commended' in the mother tongue category for her beautiful poem. There are only four winners selected in S4–S6 from all of Scotland so this is an enormous achievement for her.

Her poem will be published and she will receive a copy of the book at an award ceremony in Glasgow in March. Alexandra's poem is entitled 'No Soy Ficticia' (I'm Not Fake.) Alexandra says she wrote the poem because 'Sometimes people have an idea about how you should be and they don't understand that you don't match what they want... Girls in particular are faced with an 'ideal woman' in the media and other girls can be very cruel if you aren't like that. I don't understand why because we are all the same gender and should support each other. Everyone should be free to be themselves.'

Alexandra is delighted by the news!

**Lorna Henderson, CL MFL
Craigroyston CHS**

Rights Respecting Schools at LSPS

At Longstone Primary School we have been working very hard to make our school an even better place to learn and thrive through our work towards becoming a Rights Respecting School (RRS).

We have a RRS group which leads the work of the school, made up of pupils from every class. The group meet regularly, which they really enjoy, and work with Mr Hawkey and Mrs Masson towards goals that help us move forward in achieving our next steps towards achieving the next RRS Award.

To start off, we signed up to become Rights Committed and we worked hard to try to raise awareness across the whole school community, pupils and families alike, of the rights of the child and our plan to become a Rights Respecting School.

We created our RRS group, made up of Rights Respecters and we made our families aware of the work we were doing through our school newsletter and website. Each class within the school has their own Charter based on the rights of the child which we update at the start of every school year.

We have had lots of opportunities to share our ideas and initiatives at assemblies. These have included a Tidy Cloakroom initiative and a 'Right of the Month' when pupils focus on a different Right each month and can enter our competition to help us share our understanding and encourage everyone to participate in learning more about our rights.

We have looked at the Global Goals and participated in the World's largest lesson, sharing these goals across the school with class-led assemblies to ensure we are thinking globally as well as locally. We see how the Rights of the Child are inextricably linked and woven through the Global Goals.

Just recently, we have successfully achieved the first stage of the Rights Respecting Schools Award, meaning that we are now



Bronze: Rights Committed and working towards our next goal of achieving Silver.

We are very proud of our achievements to date and hope to continue to work successfully in our school in support of UNICEF's work in ensuring the rights of children are upheld, not only in our schools here in Scotland, but for all children across the globe.

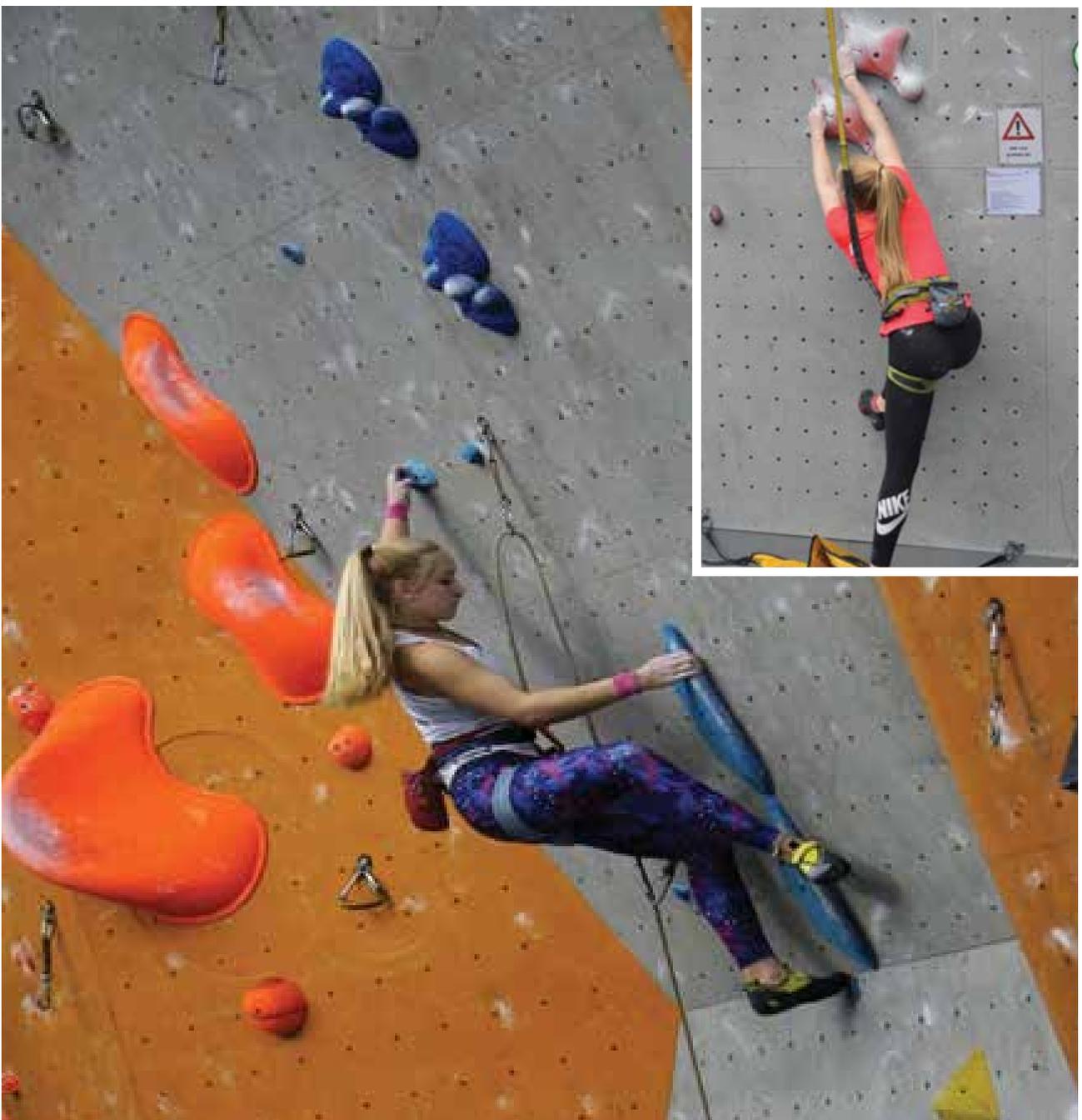
**Sonia Masson, DHT
Longstone PS**



Aimee is Climbing to the Top

Congratulations to Balerno CHS Head Girl Aimee McRae. Since taking up climbing 3 years ago, she has broken 2 British records and become Scottish Youth Speed Climbing champion. She also competed in the European Youth Speed Climbing Championships in Italy where she was placed in the top 20, making her 30th in the World Ranking.

**Neil McCallum, Head Teacher
Balerno Community High School**



Early Years Conference 2019

‘Quality: Let’s Talk!’

500 Early Years Practitioners from across the sector gathered at Dynamic Earth for the annual Early Years Conference on 7 January. This year’s inspirational keynote speech was delivered by Julie Fisher, focusing on the research project that resulted in her book ‘Interacting or Interfering?’

Julie Fisher is an independent Early Years Adviser and visiting Professor of Early Childhood Education at Oxford Brookes University, and has experience both as a local authority adviser and as a Head Teacher. The insights she gave into high quality interactions with young children were illuminating, and the positive feedback from the delegates demonstrated how much they valued the opportunity to hear Julie speak.

Our second speaker, Jackie Maley from Education Scotland, gave us key messages from inspections, and there was a lively marketplace of stalls with opportunities for delegates to share good practice, discover materials and resources to help develop practice, and find out about further training opportunities.

Altogether, this was an exciting start to 2019!

Gillian O’Rourke
Early Years QIO



A Win for Kaimes

Kaimes achieved 1st place in the 1st Regional Table Cricket Competition and qualified for the National Table Cricket Competition in Perth which takes place on the 8 May at Bell's Sports Centre. There were seven pupils involved: five from S6 and two from 4B class.

Congratulations to Andrzej Sagalara and all of the Kaimes learners for this achievement, and good luck in the finals!

Anna Gray

Quality Improvement Manager for Special Schools and Additional Support for Learning



LGBT Bronze Award for Queensferry High

Fantastic news ... we have recently heard that our portfolio was presented to the LGBT Scotland panel and we have received a very strong LGBT Charter Bronze award! This is in recognition of all the work that young people and staff have collectively engaged in with regards to LGBT community rights, embedding of school values, anti bullying and the promotion of the equalities agenda. What a great example of a whole school community coming together to make a difference in the lives of our young people.

Silver Award here we come!

**Jenny Smith,
Depute Head Teacher
Queensferry HS**



Topping Out of New School

The Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, visited Queensferry High School on 24 January to take part in the 'topping out' ceremony. This is where the last section of concrete is filled in on the top floor of the school. Pupil representatives from each year group were invited along to witness this event and help Mr Swinney seal the last piece of the upper floor. Also in attendance

were Councillor Alison Dickie, Vice Convener of Education, City of Edinburgh Council; David Wilson, Morrison Construction and Roddy Clark, Hub South East.

Mr Swinney was keen to hear about the design of the new school and how it would be of benefit to learners as well as the wider community. He would like to come back to see the school, once it is completed.

**John Wood, Head Teacher
Queensferry HS**

St Catherine's Nursery Grant

After an application and screening process, St Catherine's Nursery Class were delighted to receive a Scotmid Community Grant of £500 to extend our fruit provision in our Nursery Class.

This money will be used to allow the children to experience a wider range of fruit, including the more exotic and unusual. This grant will pay for our fruit project in its entirety for the rest of the school year and beyond. We hope to invite parents in to the Nursery Class to see what we have planned and also hope that this will be the beginning of a successful (and healthy) project. We are delighted to be the recipient of this grant award.

Paul Hunter, Head Teacher, St Catherine's RC PS

Diving Gold for Lucas

Congratulations go to Lucas Thomson, an S6 pupil at Balerno CHS, on his recent successes in diving.

As well as being named Young Sports Personality at the recent Sunday Mail Scottish Sports Awards, the young diver also won a stunning gold at the World Juniors, a silver and two bronze medals at the European Juniors, and was named in the Scotland squad for the next Commonwealth Games.

At the Scottish Diving competition Lucas also won the Scottish title in the Men's Platform event to bring the meet to a close.

After picking up his medal, Lucas said that although he was happy with the performance, he still has things to improve. 'It feels really good, it makes all the

hard work pay off. There's still things to work on, one dive in particular, but I'm very very happy with the rest of the meet. It's really just about working on the technique. It's only quite recently that we moved all our dives up again for the new season so it's all about getting back to where we were last season.'

He added that he plans to introduce a new armstand twist for the next competition and a new Reverse 3 1/2 somersault dive. We wish him well for the future!

Neil McCallum
Head Teacher
Balerno CHS



Children's Mental Health Week

At Fox Covert Primary School, we are dedicated to raising awareness of mental health, the importance of mental and emotional wellbeing and equipping our pupils with the tools that they might need now, or in the future, to support their wellbeing.

As part of our commitment to raising awareness and encouraging all our young people to talk about mental health, we held a Mental Health Week focus week coinciding with Children's Mental Health Week from 5–8 February. We have 6 members of staff who are trained Scottish Mental Health First Aiders, who planned a week packed full of activities for staff and children to encourage our learners to talk about mental health.

During this week, we welcomed a range of specialists in the field of mental health to our school. We learned a range of mindfulness techniques, enjoyed learning massage techniques, explored the impact of social media and linked this with positive body image, listened to talks from the Samaritans, learned from Therapets how pets can support wellbeing, explored emotions, learned about nutrition and the role it plays in keeping mentally healthy, worked out in fitness sessions and so much more. You can check out more photos of what we got up to on our twitter @ FoxCovertPS.

We hope that the sessions have given our learners an increased awareness of the importance of proactively taking care of their mental health and has shown them that it is always good to talk, and that we are always here to listen.

Amy Gray,PT
Fox Covert PS



Children's Mental Health Week



Pandamania

The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) welcomed the two giant pandas eight years ago. These iconic animals, Tian Tian, whose name translates as Sweetie, and Yang Guang which means 'Sunlight', have inspired the educational RZSS team to develop a series of cross curricular materials to help Primary and Secondary school pupils to learn more about Chinese culture. They also look at the Mandarin language, Chinese geography and wildlife, focusing on the giant pandas. They examine the difficulties this species faces with its habitat threatened, as well as the real danger of extinction.

This week nineteen pupils from the Edinburgh Chinese Hub based in Leith Academy and five students from St Thomas of Aquin's High School in Edinburgh, attended the RZSS educational center in order to trial a series of resources referred to as Beyond the Panda boxes.

These resources have been developed and designed to allow learners to study and explore a range of topics around the panda and its habitat in China. Among the range of resources, there are topics such as endangered species, which are explored through interactive games and puzzles.

Panda in its Habitat looks at the difficulties pandas face in communicating with each other. Students can also examine real skulls, bamboo and other artefacts used to conduct research on these mammals.

One of the activities that captured the students' attention was the series of cards that explain how these solitary animals live and the reason they have to be kept apart for most of the year. The children were engrossed as they read the games cards explaining that the gestation period for these giant animals was only 80 to 320 days and the tiny babies are just between 15 to 17 centimetres long.

Activities of this kind appeal to young people, as they are able to relay scientific information

through games as well as developing language skills through some of the Chinese character games.

During this training day, the pupils learned a wide range of facts that have been put into a real life context in this well designed educational mobile library. They learned how to identify Mandarin words and Chinese characters and gained an insight into Chinese history and geography, all through games and interactive activities.

The pupils that took part in this training will be able to cascade their knowledge down to other pupils from their own schools as well as other schools within their clusters and beyond.

Some of the comments from the pupils who attended this training are:

*Going to the zoo and learning about the panda and its environment through games was great. Going afterwards to see the real Tian Tian was awesome. I love this kind of activity because I am very keen on languages and animals. **Mariana S3***

*I was delighted to take part in this Panda box training. It gave me the opportunity to understand some facts about the pandas as well as Chinese vocabulary and expressions in Mandarin. It also showed me the importance of Chinese culture all around the world. **Emma S4***

*It was a wonderful opportunity to see Edinburgh Zoo decorated with mythical creatures as it gave a real oriental atmosphere. We learned a lot about the various regions, cities and history of China and at the same time, we had great fun. The Chinese Hanban teachers assisted us when support was needed. We also saw the real pandas and learnt about them in detail. This trip gave us the perspective that pandas are a strong part of China's history. I would strongly recommend if other pupils have the opportunity to take part in this Panda box training. **Max S5***

*My classmates and myself attended the Panda box training at Edinburgh Zoo on 31 January. We learnt how giant panda bears live. It was a great experience as we effortlessly got the information through jigsaws and board games. **Krishan S5***

M Montenegro
St Thomas of Aquin's HS



Pandamania



