

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter.

As a very busy term draws to an end, this *Spring Newsletter* provides an opportunity to look back at some of our achievements and events and to look forward to future developments. The Spring Term is always a busy one, preparing senior students for important exams and assessments. However, some staffing challenges have made this term more difficult than usual. I am most grateful to staff for their outstanding commitment - covering for colleagues in some subjects, making up staffing shortfalls in others, in order to minimise the impact on students. Despite these challenges, our young people have continued to benefit from an incredible array of wider achievement opportunities.

Please find below a number of stories gathered from across the school which provide a flavour of the great work being done by students and staff.

Work on school values and vision

We are continuing to develop our vision, aims and values and to build these into the life and work of the school. It was great to return, after the Christmas Holiday, to see our newly agreed values displayed in the public areas across the school.



Positive Destinations - 96.4%

Positive Destinations is a measure of how well students are supported into work, further and higher education or training. We are delighted to announce that this measure has increased to 96.4%. Although not reflected in recent

press coverage, this is the second highest in the City of Edinburgh and is testament to parents and students and to the outstanding work of our Pupil Support Team and our partners in Skills Development Scotland.

Career Ready Graduation – Thursday 28th March 2019

Year 2 students from the *Career Ready* programme graduated on Thursday 28th March. This is a two-year programme with each student completing several masterclasses and a four-week paid internship.

The graduation took place in Perth where students went on stage to receive certificates presented by Alistair Gaw and Jenny Laing from City of Edinburgh Council.



The four sixth year students have built amazing relationships with their mentors and each student has gained a wealth of knowledge and developed the skills, confidence and qualities required in the world of work.

My Wow Ambassadors

Our 11 MyWow Ambassadors have continued to support students, staff, and parents, with regards to gaining increased knowledge and confidence with the My World of Work Website. We have 88% of our students signed up which is the 2nd highest in the city. The fourth year Ambassadors are looking forward to taking over the leadership when our sixth-year students leave next year.

DYW Jobs Roadshow

52 students embraced the opportunity to attend the Developing the Young Workforce

Jobs Roadshow at Edinburgh Corn Exchange where they had the chance to speak to various employers, colleges, and universities. They also had the chance to engage in a CV workshop which enhanced their knowledge of applying for jobs.

Graduate Apprenticeship Event

5 fifth and sixth year students attended a brilliant event at Heriot Watt University to discuss the amazing opportunities relating to Graduate Apprenticeships. They learned about the great pathway to gaining a degree level qualifications whilst being paid and getting on the job experience.

Duke of Edinburgh

We currently have two highly motivated groups (almost 50 students in total) going through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Both our S3 and S4 groups are engaged in weekly activities and planning towards their final expedition. I managed to catch up with some of them as they were washing up, after making hot chocolate on camping stoves. That's right, *washing up* – perhaps DoE should be compulsory!

Linguists at the Modern Languages Business Brunch

Young people from 21 schools across Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders had the opportunity to engage with local businesses at Dynamic Earth on 15th January.

A group of S3 linguists from Forrester High were invited to attend to find out about the relevance of language skills in a work context. Companies attending included EasyJet, Edinburgh International Festival, J.P. Morgan, Scotch Whisky Association and The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland.



This was an amazing opportunity for some of our linguists and opened their eyes to the wealth of opportunities open for young people in Scotland with language skills.

Our young people had the opportunity to ask questions at stalls from the Asia - Scotland Partnership for the Environment, Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh Napier University, Farne Salmon, Historic Environment Scotland, Kath Lothian Languages, Macdonald Hotels and Resorts, Mitsubishi Electric Ltd, Plexus, Project Trust, Royal Navy, Skills Development Scotland and the Open University in Scotland.

Modern Languages Trip to the Apex

A group of language students made a morning visit to the Apex Hotel in Waterloo Place to find out how languages are used in the hotel group. It was highlighted that they have many guests and staff from other European countries and further afield, and that being able to understand and use a foreign language is a definite advantage. The students received an Apex rubber duck and some other goodies, complementary of the hotel. The students expressed how much they enjoyed their visit and were complemented by the Apex staff on their interest, engagement and enjoyment.



German Visitor

The Modern Languages department was delighted to welcome Mr Andreas Münzer from Munich for a period of 3 weeks. During his time at Forrester, he observed classes and, was able to give staff and students lots of interesting information about the part of Germany he comes from, sharing the

differences and similarities of schools in Scotland and Bavaria.

Music and Drama Showcase

Music and drama have been busy with SQA practical assessments over the last couple of weeks. Students have also had the chance to 'showcase' their work in two low-key, informal events. The *showcase* provides an opportunity for students to perform in public



and for parents to enjoy the pieces which we expect will lead to very good grades. As well as some exceptional performances from our S6 students who were taking a bow for the last time at Forrester, we had excellent contributions from younger students who are stepping up to fill the void.

BP Portrait Awards 2019

In February, Senior Art & Design students attended the exhibition held at the National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh, and got up close with works from some of the country's most prolific and up-and-coming figurative Artists. The experience was a great creative boost to students' own portfolios, which will be submitted to the SQA in the coming weeks.



Scottish Disability Sport Leader Training

On Friday 29th March, I was delighted to see four of our young ambassadors (Jamie Thomson, Jack Swan, Bethany Waters, Chloe Mathieson) participating in leadership training provided by Scottish Disability Sport as part of the *Para Sport Festival 2019*. I caught up with these four on Friday for Hot Chocolate and a chat.

Dance Show



Miss Christie and her team hosted another outstanding dance show over two nights in February. We had a *full house* both nights and were treated to some exceptional performances and choreography from our junior and senior dancers, as well as pupils from our feeder primary schools.

Author in Residence

This week, senior students in English have been putting the finishing touches to a range of creative pieces (from dark comedies to thrillers, from Mexican drug cartels to personal psychosis), supported by "Author in Residence", Victoria Williamson.



Work with Victoria will culminate with a showcase event for parents and families on Tuesday 23rd April from 10.45am-11.45am in the school library.

Children's Parliament 'What Kind of Edinburgh?' session at City Chambers 24/1/19

I was contacted earlier in the term by a teacher from another school who attended this event – she wanted to tell me how well our students had done. It's great when people go out of their way to complement our students and, therefore, is very worthy of mention.

LGBT plus History Month

Forrester High school staff, students and partners celebrated LGBT history month in February. Staff wore their rainbow lanyards with pride and students were taught about inclusion and diversity during Social Education and Tutor time. We also celebrated Purple Friday where students wore purple and rainbow colours in support of our Forrester LGBT staff and students. A true celebration of equality and diversity!

Escape, Connect, Relate project

Our fantastic Escape, Connect, Relate Ambassadors, Kez, Abi and Mia, have been working hard developing the leadership skills needed to aid the Library's Escape, Connect, Relate (ECR) bibliotherapy project. Together we are creating a bibliotherapy toolkit with teens across the city to support their mental health and the wellbeing of people around them.



To date, our Ambassadors have created themed displays on topics such as depression, anxiety, LGBTI and bereavement. After the Easter holidays they are planning several ECR

events for students in the library including: Story Cafes, Relaxation and Mindfulness sessions as well as one to one help with finding the right book for every student.

The toolkit will include fantastic new fiction and relevant websites, chosen to develop resilience in our young people, give them the skills to find help with issues they may be facing and promote positive mental wellbeing.

Individual Recognition

Judo – congratulations to **Paige Sweetland** for placing 5th in the British Schools Judo Championships.

Baird of Bute Canadian Science Scholarship – congratulations to **Rebecca Bean** who is one of only two young scientists selected from across Scotland to participate in the Baird of Bute Canadian Science Scholarship programme.

“The programme includes time at the Gunning Group at the University of Toronto ... one of the World's most celebrated bio chemistry research groups ... Participants will also visit several Toronto healthcare facilities and will complete a tailored laboratory programme in the world-renowned Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute ... The Baird of Bute Society Canadian Science Scholarship provides a unique opportunity for the participants to broaden and deepen their interest in and understanding of science before pursuing their own studies in a life science course at university.”

National Youth Choir of Scotland – congratulations to **Sarah Brown** who has recently been accepted into the National Youth Choir of Scotland – this is an outstanding achievement and a great opportunity to sing with Scotland's most prestigious choir. The National Youth Choir of Scotland is the main choir for 18-25 year olds from across the country and is highly sought after to give performances both at home and abroad.

Looking Forward

Summer 5k Run

After the success of our Christmas Santa 5k in December, we have decided to run a summer 5k on Thursday 27th June. This event aimed to show young people how participating in regular exercise can have a positive impact on mental health. This event will involve running around the school to a 5km distance. Our current record holder, Jason Howie, is the athlete to beat with an excellent time of 19 minutes.



Exercise is a great way to help relieve exam stress, anxiety, ADHD, trauma or just if you are having an off day. As well as releasing endorphins in the brain, physical activity helps to relax muscles and relieve tension in the body. This event will involve all S1-S6 students, staff and even parents if you want to come along and race your child? Come along and enjoy the fun!

Easter Study Support

I hope that senior students are able to make the best possible use of the time left in the build-up to final exams and assessments. Remember, there is still time to make a significant difference to grades, if your study is planned properly.

To help with final preparations, our expanded Easter Study Support has input from a wide range of subjects. The timetable, shared previously with students and parents, can be found at the link below.

<https://forresterhighschool.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Forrester-Easter-study-2019-.pdf>

Activities Week

Activities week will take place from 28th to 30th May. With a fantastic range of activities on offer (please follow link below), students should all be signed up to the activities of their choice. If this is not the case, please see Mr MacPhie or Mrs Ross for support or contact the school office.

<https://forresterhighschool.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Activities-week-2019-programme.pdf>

New Tracking and Reporting System

In May, we will introduce a new tracking and reporting system called EDICT. This will improve our ability to track young people's progress, S1-6, and to report this to parents.

Communication and engagement with parents

We are looking to develop a plan to improve the way we communicate and engage with parents and families and will be seeking your views and support in the new term. More information to follow!

Changes to the structure of the school week

After consultation with students, staff and the parent council, we have decided to re-structure our *Tutor Time* programme. Rather than having two twenty five minute sessions per week, we will move to a *Daily Morning Tutor* of 10 minutes. This change will take effect with the new timetable in June - more information to follow.

And finally ...

I hope that everyone has a great holiday and a well-deserved rest. Please remember, all staff and students return on Tuesday 23rd April. I look forward to seeing everyone back, safe and well.