

Leith Links

October '10

 **Headteacher's News**

Our Open Afternoon/Evening on 7 October was highly successful with over 500 former pupils in attendance and positive coverage in the local press. I am enormously grateful to staff and to current pupils who worked hard to make the event what it was. We are still selling memorabilia connected to the anniversary and we would intend to market these at forthcoming parents' information and consultation evenings. They can also be purchased direct from the school at any time. We have copies of 'Memories of Leith', a book containing a collection of reminiscences from staff and pupils, past and present, illustrated in full colour and priced at £5; tea towels charting the changing school buildings over the last 200 or so years, priced at £3 (two for £5); aerial photographs of the current school building alongside the entire school population marking 'LA450' on the playing fields, priced at £5. All proceeds will go towards school funds (once we have covered costs) and I am sure that people associated with the school will appreciate these items. (Some of them might make lovely Christmas presents!)

I would also like to take this opportunity to give a brief analysis of our SQA exam results for 2010:

We sustained our Advanced Higher entries and our pass rate (82% compared to the national pass rate of 77.5%) and reached 12% of pupils attaining one or more qualifications at this level, including three S5 pupils, our best figure since 2005 which is a tribute to the hard work and commitment of pupils and staff. At Higher, eight S5 pupils obtained five passes which is 4% (7% in 2009). 13% obtained three passes (17% in 2009) and 30% obtained at least one pass (31% in 2009). Our combined pass rate (S5/S6) at Higher was 76% compared to the national figure of 74.6%.

Statistical and comparative analysis for Higher (S5/S6 combined) shows that in 19 subject areas - out of 20 for which such detail is available - pupils performed in line with or above expectations. (Subjects where pupils performed better than predicted were Administration, English, French, Music, RMPS.)

In S3 there were also some very creditable individual performances with eight pupils gaining Credit passes (or equivalent) in all the subjects in which they were presented. The overall figure for pupils gaining five or more Standard Grades at Credit/Intermediate 2 (a national benchmark) rose to 16% from last year's S3 total of 8%; that for pupils gaining five or more Standard Grades at General/Intermediate 1 rose to 59% (from 52%); and that for pupils gaining five or more Standard Grades at Foundation/Access 3 rose to 92% (from 85%).

Statistical and comparative analysis shows that in 10 subject areas - out of 15 for which such detail is available - pupils performed in line with or above expectations. (Subjects where pupils performed better than predicted were Business Management, Music and PE.)

Although there was no blanket presentation in S4, many pupils did build on their achievements in S3, including two who gained a pass in Higher Music, and the overall figures for national benchmarks were 5+ Credit/Int 2, 16%

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Useful Contacts

Senior Management Team

*Mr J M Simpson - Headteacher
Mrs D MacKinnon - Senior DHT
Mr D Peat - DHT
Miss S Cook - DHT
Ms M Peebles Business Manager*

Pupil Support

House Heads

*Mrs F Stevenson (Anderson)
Ms A Bridgeford (Barton)
Mrs K Fisher (Cowan)
Mr G Hansen (Port)*

ASL Manager

Ms C Prime

Community Programme Manager

Mrs C Carstairs

Important Dates for Your Diary!

Date	Event/Activity
November	
3	S3 Financial Education programme
11	Remembrance Service
16	HPV vaccinations (2)
22	P7 Parents' Information Evening
22-26	S4-6 Monitoring & Tracking reports issued
24	S4-6 (A/B) Parents' Consultation (4.30 -
29	6.30pm)
29 (-3 Dec)	Adult classes end
	S3 Prelims
30	S3 Monitoring & Tracking reports issued
	S4-6 (C/P) Parents' Consultation (4.30 -
	6.30pm)
December	
7	LA Council (7.00pm)
13-15	Concert Rehearsals
16	Christmas Concert
22	Senior Inter-House sports
23	Christmas Service
	End of Term 1



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Headteacher's News continued

(19% in S4 in 2009); 5+ General/Int 1, 67% (56%); 5+ Foundation/Access, 88% (79%). The figures for General and Foundation are the highest value at these benchmarks since 2005. 96% of pupils achieved English and maths at Foundation/Access and above, the highest value at this benchmark since 1999. These results contribute to evidence that our revised curriculum structure of early presentation is bearing fruit in raising individual and whole-school attainment. The figure at Credit obviously does not show improvement in S4 (although it does in S3) but the increased number of pupils who are set to be presented at Higher in S5, compared to previous years, should lead to increased attainment for these pupils at what is still regarded as the 'gold standard' in Scottish education.

We are successfully building on pupil achievement across the years from S3 onwards and the increasing results across the board in S3 this year are encouraging for what pupils might have achieved by the time they end their schooling. I have always argued that our revised curriculum structure should be judged on what qualifications individual pupils have achieved at their point of exit from secondary school. That is still in the future for most of the first cohort of pupils who have experienced this revised approach although there are figures to hand for those who chose to leave school in May at the end of S4. Of those pupils 53% left with five or more Foundation/Access qualifications, and 12% with five or more General/Intermediate 1 qualifications. These figures compare with 41% and 4% respectively in 2009, the last conventional S4 presentation.

The local authority is due to carry out its review of the school on 22 and 23 November, following on from the last follow-through report from HMIE in March of this year. Quality Improvement Officers will be looking particularly at our attainment levels as well as the level of consistency of learning experiences for pupils, visiting classes and meeting with groups of staff, pupils and parents. There is evidence this year of relative improvement in S3 and S4 as the revised curriculum structure works itself through. Although our S5 results have dipped, S6 results this session, under the old system as it were, do show improvements underlining that we are working at delivering success, whatever structures happen to obtain. I would hope that that might serve to reassure parents of current S1 pupils as we develop our approaches to Curriculum for Excellence and the future qualifications which lie at the end of that particular journey.

Alton Towers Trip



On Friday 8th October many pupils from classes such as Ad-

ministration and Business Education went to Alton Towers. We met at the school gates at 2:15 am!! It was a 7 hour coach journey and the whole bus was kept awake by Joe Monaghan and Jamie Martin talking about food, what fun!

When we arrived at the park the weather was bad however it did not stop us having a great time. Most people headed towards the big rides and only a few "chickened" out.



In the afternoon we had to meet for a presentation about the construction and finance of the park. We learned how the park uses advertising to improve their profits and we were shocked by the amount of money that was invested into each ride.

The new ride "Thirteen" was just opened a few months before we went so the queues were very long but it was worth the wait. Even Mrs Stevenson enjoyed it!

It was a long journey back home because we had very little sleep the night before. We would recommend everyone who has the opportunity to go does so. We would like to thank Ms Campbell, Mrs Stevenson and Mr Huxtable for giving up their time to come with us!

Laura Neilson and Sarah Mills

Leith Academy - St. Joseph's Demonstration School Partnership Visit

Part 1: Malawian Teachers visit Leith Academy

As part of our Scotland Malawi Link partnership at Leith Academy, we welcomed two teachers from St. Joseph's Demonstration School in Bembeke. Mr Ausensio Chimchenga and Mr Michael Kamanga were guests for 12 days in September.



During their stay both teachers were kept busy by a programme that involved visiting classes and experiencing day to day life at Leith Academy. They enjoyed a guided tour of the school by our Head Boy, Calum and Head Girl, Katie and were then taken on a tour of Leith by our prefects.



They accompanied a class on an excursion to Edinburgh Castle and visited the Borders' countryside and local points of interest within Edinburgh. They experienced seeing the sea for the first time and were amazed by traffic lights, washing machines, escalators and were amazed to see swans at Dunsapie Loch that no-one had stolen and taken home for dinner! They tasted traditional Scottish foods and experienced restaurant meals for the first time.

They also visited local primary schools and met with Ian Gilmour from South Leith Parish Church, our school chaplain. They experienced family life by visiting teachers' homes and were bemused by the active part that men take in homemaking here in Scotland. They were pleased that their visit had inspired our children to learn more about Malawian culture.

HAVE YOU TRIED RUGBY YET?



- S4 - S6 Monday 6.00pm -7.30pm
- S1 - S3 Wednesday 3.30pm - 5.00pm
- VENUE - PLAYING FIELDS AT LEITH ACADEMY (Academy Park)
- WHAT TO BRING/WEAR - Rugby or Football boots, Gum Shield, Shorts or Tracksuit trousers, T- shirt or Rugby top.



Why not give it a go - it's better than an Xbox!

Part 2: Leith Academy Teachers visit Malawi

When we first started to plan our reciprocal visit to Malawi, little did we think that it would take us nearly two years to organise. Having gone through a rigorous planning operation of form filling, applying for grants and risk assessments, we finally managed to book our flights to leave Edinburgh on 22nd September 2010. Having had vaccinations for everything from Swine Flu to Rabies and obtaining a medical kit large enough to equip a small hospital (which it actually ended up doing) we packed our bags and headed into the unknown.



We had met our hosts from Malawi when they came to visit our school in August and had some idea of what to expect, however nothing could have prepared us for the stark reality of life in Malawi. We arrived in Lilongwe airport in Malawi after 36 hours of flights and a stopover in Kenya. The drive to St Joseph's Demonstration School in Bembeke took over two hours and we travelled in stunned silence, as we began to take in the views of red dust and mud huts that spread out for miles. As we reached Bembeke turnoff, we left the tarmac road and headed up a dust track. We were wondering where we were going to be living! We arrived as the sun set and were relieved to spot some brick built houses. Our guest house was basic, but we were so delighted to find a flushing toilet.



The following day we were warmly welcomed by all the staff and pupils at St Joseph's. As we toured the school we were shocked to find classes of up to 101 learners with only one member of staff. It was clear to see that even basic resources such as paper and pencils were in very short supply. The classrooms have bare concrete floors and dark, drab walls. In some classes there were not enough desks or chairs for all of the learners, so a number have to sit on the floor. In winter this can cause the little ones to catch pneumonia. Most, with families who can afford it, wear a school uniform. However the clothes tend to be dirty and torn. Many come bare foot with improvised school bags made from plastic bags and string. They come though, with a willingness to learn and a happy, smiling face, glad to be one of the lucky ones who are learning. They know that coming to school is the one way they can help themselves to have a brighter future. Talking to these amazing young people shows that they have great hopes for the future and a willingness to work hard to achieve all they can in life. They have incredible respect for their teachers and behave very well. They all want to be in school.



Throughout our 12 day visit we visited classes and helped by supporting staff. We delivered workshops to offer ideas and good practice to our Malawian colleagues. By the end of our visit it was clear that we had made new friends and had developed a better understanding of both cultures. Our differences are many, but there are even more similarities. Like us they are just people wanting to live a better life in the best way they can. We had a unique opportunity to live amongst these wonderful people and be invited into their homes. They are deeply religious and have a strong sense of family which means most are looking after orphans of other family members who are victims of the AIDS epidemic sweeping the country. Sadly life expectancy is only 37 years, so they know they have to live life now. They make the most of everything as they have very little. As we left they gratefully accepted our bed linen, leftover toiletries, unused medical supplies, sunglasses and even broken sandals - they would be repaired and reused.

We hope to have a long relationship with St Joseph's Demonstration School and develop our link by fundraising for future projects. Their wish list is long and they have high expectations of our ability to help them. They too have much to offer our school by showing our pupils how to value their education. One day we hope to be able to take some pupils from Leith Academy to Malawi to experience the unique reality of a daily life in Africa.

Mrs Cairns and Ms Campbell

LEITH ACADEMY 450th ANNIVERSARY TEA TOWELS

As Leith Academy celebrates 450 years of service to the community, you now have the opportunity to purchase your very own Commemorative Tea Towel displaying the four buildings where Leith Academy has operated.

In the run up to Christmas and the festive season, these would act as a lovely yet conventional gift.

For only £3 each or 2 for £5, these are a simple way to contribute to the school and mark this historic occasion. The tea towels will be on sale every break time outside business education from the week beginning 8th November 2010.



LA vs RHS



First game of the season and Leith Academy Senior Rugby Team did themselves proud against a very competitive and strong opponent, the Royal High School. The boys were excited and ready for their first taste of school rugby this year and it showed as Leith were able to hold their own, and impress many Scottish Rugby Union officials who were watching this exciting match. Throughout the game, Leith stuck to their game plan, playing quick skilful rugby with fast passing and strong rucking, which was key to their great performance.

Leith played well and should be proud of how they played, however, Leith's reputation was reduced by the fact that Leith were only able to turn out 10 players for this match. Leith must be able to increase their squad size. Rugby is a great sport and very enjoyable. Through rugby, you become fitter physically, learn how to work as a team, become a stronger person mentally and much, much more! All pupils are welcome to training which is on Wednesday straight after school for all years and Monday night at 6pm for Seniors. Please see Mr Pye for details.

Report by Mark Rennie S6.

Skill Force Edinburgh and Forth Valley Project



Leith Academy welcomes Rik Corrigan and Derek Rhodan, from Skill Force Edinburgh and Forth Valley Project to work with a number of our senior pupils.

The pupils are working towards achieving the following: ASDAN Bronze, Emergency 1st Aid, Heartstart, ASDAN Experience of Work Award, Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and 2 weeks work experience placements.

Lord Selkirk and Douglas Osler (former head of the HMIe) visited the group on 3 September 2010. The pupils were taking part in a lesson on Camp Craft (Tent Erecting and Health and Safety).

