

Nicolson Notes Nov. 2012

Official opening



The official opening of the new Nicolson Institute building took place on Tuesday, 2nd October. The Leader of the Council, the Convenor, the Rector and the Chair of Education paid tribute to all involved in delivering the project on time, on budget and to such a high standard. After a moving rendition of Highland Cathedral by piper Ruairidh Urpeth and the school's brass band, precentor Angus Nicolson and his psalmody group sang a Gaelic psalm. Professor Donald Macleod then performed the official opening by unveiling a plaque and delivered a thought provoking speech. Refreshments were served for invited guests and staff in the canteen area.

Earlier in the day, all pupils and staff gathered on the Springfield North terrace for a ribbon cutting ceremony carried out by the youngest pupil in the school, Heather Tiernan, 1S1.



Dr. Murray

Congratulations to our Rector, who has now completed her Ed.D thesis. This has earned her a Doctorate in Education which will be awarded at a graduation ceremony at the University of Glasgow on the 30th of November.

School grounds



The creation of bus park, car park and playing field facilities is proceeding apace at the rear of the school. All demolition work has taken place and contractors are currently laying paving and tarmac on pedestrian and vehicular accesses. It is anticipated that this phase of construction will be completed by the Christmas holidays.

Canteen arrangements

In many ways, the school's canteen service has become a victim of its own success with more pupils opting to make use of the servery or Grab and Go facility than was previously the case. Initial teething problems with regard to the time taken to serve all pupils have been addressed. As pupils become more familiar with the system and staff tweak arrangements the operation is becoming more efficient. We would like to thank the canteen staff for their patience, diligence and ability to keep on producing a wide range of quality foods during a period of transition.

Break times

In order to enable more pupils to buy and consume hot snacks during the morning break, the interval has been extended by five minutes and the dinner break shortened by the equivalent amount of time. This will give the pupils a 20 minute interval from 10:50am to 11:10am and a 55 minute lunch break from 12:55pm to 1:50pm. A trial period of these arrangements commences on Monday, 5th November. This initiative may also assist in

addressing the litter problem which we face as pupils rush to finish off snacks whilst moving to class.

School Improvement Plan 2012-13

The School Improvement Plan for session 2012-13 is now available on the school's website. This provides information about progress with last year's projects as well as details of the six main projects for this session which are:

Planning for the Senior Phase and new qualifications

Moderation / sharing standards

Provision for able pupils

Pupil engagement / involvement

Learning and teaching – Sharing good practice

Raising attainment.

Tracking and Target Setting

We would like to thank parents of S4, S5 and S6 pupils who assisted them in completing the Tracking and Target Setting forms which were issued in late September. This exercise was designed to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential. It encouraged them to reflect meaningfully on their own performance in SQA exams, identify strengths and development needs and plan for the future. Guidance staff and Senior Management team members found the process both useful and informative as it gave them an opportunity to review pupils' performance in a more focussed way and discuss issues of concern with them on a one-to-one basis.

Curriculum Development

If you have been wondering what teachers were getting up to during the additional inservice days which they had to attend this session, we can assure you that the time was well spent.

With Standard Grade and Intermediates 1 and 2 courses about to disappear for senior school pupils, teachers have to revamp all their plans and assessments for the new National 4 and 5 courses which will replace them. In doing so, they have to ensure that they are building on pupils' experiences of the S1 to S3 Curriculum for Excellence courses whilst preparing them for the challenges of what will be the revised Higher syllabus.

It is indicative of the amount of work involved in this task that the government has felt it necessary to grant extra days during which staff can work together to address these issues.

School Choir

As you may be aware, the school was unable to have a choir competing at The Royal National Mod this year. There were a number of reasons for this.

Travelling to the mainland to compete at an event such as the Mod no longer has the novelty value it once had as many of our pupils are on the mainland or indeed abroad several times a year. Senior pupils are under pressure to attend after school study support classes on a weekly basis as never before as competition for college and university places becomes intense. There is a broader range of after-school clubs available to pupils to choose from than in most schools of a similar size and many senior pupils have after school work commitments which they cannot give up due to the current economic climate.

Despite these factors, we are currently trying to re start the choir. The initial focus will be on preparing items for the Christmas festivities and there will be an element of drama involved as well as singing in various languages. We will be meeting on Thursday lunchtimes, at 1:20 and we would appreciate support from parents in encouraging pupils to participate.

Pupils' success

Football

We were delighted to hear that some of our boys have distinguished themselves on the football field recently to such an extent that they have been invited to play for mainland teams.

Colin Maclean 5A2 has been playing very successfully for Brora Rangers and managed to score two hat-tricks in consecutive games.

James Macleod 4M2 has also been playing for Brora Rangers as a goalie.

Michael Macmillan 3M2 and Eachainn Miller 3S2 were selected to play trial matches for Ross County and Eachainn also made it into the North of Scotland Under 15 team.

It is great to see island youngsters doing so well and much credit should go to volunteer coaches from the school's staff and from the wider community who have brought them to such a high standard in the game.

Rugby

The number of pupils participating in the school's rugby activities continues to increase with about 40 girls now turning up regularly for training.

The first in house School of Rugby match involving S1 and 2 pupils took place on Saturday 3rd Nov. with the S2s winning 9-3.

Mòd

Fhuair grunn de sgoilearan Sgoil Mhicneacail air adhart aig Mòd Dhùn Omhainn aig àm nan saor-làithean.

(Several students from The Nicolson performed with distinction at the Royal National Mod in Dunoon.)

Meala-naidheachd air:

Catriona Bain – 1st Sgeulachd

Lauren Anne Maclean – 1st Keyboard & 2nd Melodeon

Isabelle Bain – 1st Bible Reading, 2nd Conversation, 2nd = Psalm precenting

& 3rd Traditional singing

Màiri MacIannan – 1st Melodeon, 1st Prescribed singing - Silver Pendant ,

& 1st Traditional singing

Alison Macinnes – 2nd Prescribed singing

Katie Graham – 1st Psalm precenting

Angus Nicolson – 2nd = Psalm precenting

Golf

Adam Longdon 4F2 continued to show his prowess at golf recently when he represented Stornoway Golf Club at Royal Dornoch. He teamed up with two Orcadians to represent the Scottish islands and they won the Junior Pro Am competition. Adam also represented his club in the Donald Ross Trophy event held at Royal Dornoch in October.

Both Adam and Mark Morrison 1M2 are being trained in strength, conditioning and coaching by The Scottish Institute of Sport along with Mr. Beattie of the PE Department, Euan (Moley) Macleod and Norrie Mackenzie.

Highland Dancing

Several pupils are to be commended for their performance in the Western Isles Highland Dancing Competition held in Tong Hall on Saturday 26th October 2012. Top places were taken by:

Leah Mackay 1G1 – 3rd

Darrah Mackenzie 3G2 – 1st & 3 seconds

Megan Crawford 3F2 – 4 firsts, 3rd

Amy Macleod – 1st

Sports Ambassadors

Jenny Mactaggart 5A2 and Jason Guilmartin 5F2 have been nominated as Sports Ambassadors this session. They will be aiming to promote involvement in sport and recreation amongst their peers in conjunction with Active Schools.

In all probability, other pupils who are worthy of a mention in relation to individual or group achievements have been missed out. We apologise for this in advance! It is very difficult to keep track of all the activities which take place in such a large school so we would be obliged if pupils, parents or staff could let either Mr. Maclennan or Mrs. Cunningham know of anything which should be included in the next issue of The Nicolson Notes.

Young Writers

Thirteen pupils from The Nicolson Institute distinguished themselves in the '*Young Writers Competition, Publishing Children's Poetry for Two Decades*' recently when their poems were selected for inclusion in the anthology '*Express Yourself – Scotland and Northern England*.' The book will soon be available in libraries across the United Kingdom and the school will receive a complimentary copy. There were thousands of entries from throughout the UK and overseas. Pieces for publication were selected on the basis of perception, imagination, expression and creative use of language.

The successful pupils were: Helen Mackay, Whitney King, Naomi Coghill, Isabelle Graham, Abby Pickard, Nadia Mackin, Katie Emmott, Sophia Mackay, Rachel Maciver, Hannah Mackenzie, Alison Macaskill, Rebecca Skelly and Abbie Mackay.

Le Chèile

Rinn Isabelle Bain 4A1 agus Iain Boyd 5A1 uabhasach math anns a' cho-fharpais bhliadhnaile, Le Chèile, ann an Dun Eideann air a' mhìos a chaidh. Bidh sgoilearan bho sgoiltean a tha a' teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann an Alba agus Eirinn a' dèanamh òraid mu chuspair sam bith a ròghnaicheas iad fhèin. Fhuair Isabelle duais airson an neach-labhairt a b' fheàrr.

(Congratulations to Isabelle Bain and Iain Boyd who participated in the annual speech making competition between Scottish and Irish pupils. Isabelle took the best speaker prize when the students met in Edinburgh last month.)

Fasan



Fhuair ochd sgoilear deug eadar an treas agus an siathamh bliadhna aig a bheil ùidh ann an ealan, fasan agus Gàidhlig cothrom mìorbhaileach toiseach na Samhna. Shiubhal iad gu Inbhirnis airson latha a chur seachad còmhla ri Sandra Mhoireach, tè a tha aithnichte air feadh an t-saoghail airson a bhith a' dealbh aodaich ann an clò Hearach do dhaoine ainmeil leithid na ban-rìgh. Seall i dhaibh a h-uile ceum a tha an luib a bhith a' cruthachadh 's a' reic aodach fasanta agus thug i seachad stiùireadh a bhios air leth feumail a thaobh nan cùrsaichean a tha iad a' leantainn san sgoil.

A thuilleadh air a sin, thachair na sgoilearan ri Juilie Fowllis, seinneadair òg Uibhisteach a tha air ainm eadar-nàiseanta a dhèanamh dhi fhèin an dà chuid air sàilbh a guth agus an aodaich a bhios Sandra Mhoireach a' dealbh dhi à clò Hearach.

Tha sinn airson taing a thoirt do Chomunn na Gàidhlig airson an turais a chur air chois agus airson na tha iad a' toirt do thaic dhan sgoil ann an iomadh dòigh.

(Thanks to Comunn na Gàidhlig for organising a day long masterclass for 18 S3 to S6 pupils who are interested in fashion, art and Gaelic with international clothing designer Sandra Murray. Pupils were also fortunate enough to meet international singing star Julie Fowlis for whom Sandra designs stage wear using Harris Tweed.)

Fàilte

Welcome to the following teachers who have joined the staff this session:

Ms Alison Kennedy, Gaelic

Mr Malcolm Macdonald and Mr Calum Mackay, Technical

Mrs Katy Mackenzie and Ms Stephanie Sargent, English

Mr Iain Nicolson, Support for Learning

Ms Muriel Macleod, Maths

Ms Avril Duncan, Music

Mr Eddie Rogers, PE

Mrs Louise Reeves, Modern Languages

Mrs Ruth Campbell, Home Economics

Mr Brian Jones and Ms Laura Maynard, Art

Mrs Peigi Mairi Nicholson, Science

Probationers

We would also like to welcome the six probationer teachers who have joined the staff this session. They are:

Ms Melanie Cottam, Maths

Ms Seonaid Cunningham, Religious and Moral Education

Ms Donna Macdonald, Gaelic

Ms Shonagh Maclennan, Gaelic

Mr Carl Roberts, English

Ms Jill Nitchie, English

Mr Scott Robbie, Technical

Condolences

We would like to take this opportunity to express our condolences to Ms Janis Brand and Mr Peter Dickie on the passing of their respective mothers and to Mr Douglas Neally on the passing of his father.

Get well wishes

Best wishes to Mrs Isobel Macdonald, Auxiliary, who is currently unwell. We hope to see her back at work in the very near future.

Congratulations

We congratulate the Gaelic Department on their personal efforts to boost the number of prospective pupils for Gaelic medium education.

Mrs Ruth Craigie and her husband Gordon are now the proud parents of a baby boy, Seumas Angus.

Mrs Lindsey Mackenzie and her husband Graeme are equally proud to be the parents of Ruairidh Alexander.

Sin sibh fhèin. Cumaibh a' tighinn iad!