

GRAEME HIGH News



Issue 23 - December 2017

Christmas Message from our Headteacher

It has been another busy first half of the session with more changes to national qualifications and lots of excellent work and new programmes being undertaken by our Personal Support teams. We have also added a new 'Family Learning' tab to our updated website and I would encourage you to have a look at this. It's not finished, but we hope you will see improvements and like what you see.

I would like to thank parents and carers for their ongoing support, whether this is ensuring that your sons and daughters arrive on time, in full uniform and excited about learning or turning out for parents' evenings and school events. It is greatly appreciated.

I wish pupils, parents, carers, staff and our local community a very happy, peaceful and fun-filled Christmas and New Year. I look forward to seeing everyone rested and rejuvenated on Monday, 8 January 2018.



Book Festival



A group of S2 pupils enjoyed a trip to the Edinburgh Book Festival at the end of August. We were treated to a talk from horror writer Darren Shan who explained how he turned his love of the zombie genre into a critically acclaimed series of books. We also attended a presentation by Lauren James and Phillip Reeve who spoke about their success as science fiction writers and the importance of genre in writing. All of the Graeme High pupils who attended were a credit to the school and many left eager to read the new books they had chosen from the festival bookshop.

Mr Morrison



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Big Walk 2017

Our pupils and staff took part in this year's Big Walk earlier in the season with the weather being kinder to us than last year! A huge thanks to all the pupils who brought in sponsor money and helped us to raise the significant sum of £4300 for our Pupil Fund.



Active Schools – Developing Young Leaders

A number of our pupils have thrived in developing their leadership skills as part of the Active Schools coaching programme throughout the first half of the school year. Lindsey Blues and Leah Eddie (both S6) have represented the school across a number of sports and school events in their roles as Young Ambassadors, developing a range of leadership and management skills in the process.

Over the October break, Kim McAlpine (S6), Charlotte Deanie, Saskia Liddell and Sarahjane Polson (all S5) attended the Active School Coach Academy programme and were commended on their levels of engagement and organisation throughout. In addition, four pupils from S4 – Sophie Bell, Demi Bryce, Anna Crichton and Jessica Rae – attended a full day Competition Organiser Training course with the aim of developing a pathway to leadership opportunities within the school as well as promoting the values and ideals associated with regular participation in sport.



Swimming Success

Ellie Palmer (S3) represented us at the Central Schools Swimming Gala in November. Despite swimming against older competitors in the S3/S4 events, Ellie managed to win silver in both 100m Freestyle and 100m Butterfly events, and a hugely impressive gold in the 200m Freestyle. Ellie's fantastic performances were further rewarded with qualification into the Scottish Schools finals that will take place in 2018. A huge well done and congratulations!



Rights Respecting Schools in GHS

We are well on our way to becoming a Rights Respecting School!

Last session we were awarded with a Recognition of Commitment from UNICEF UK. This was only possible due to the hard work and dedication from enthusiastic pupils and staff. This year, as part of their leadership roles, our Captains and prefects are leading teams of pupils to help us achieve a Level 1 award from UNICEF and the FairAchiever award from the Fairtrade Foundation. They have been working hard to promote these through assembly presentations.

Following our extended form activities at the start of the year where we focused on Holocaust Memorial Day, the plight of refugees and the devastating effects of poverty in the UK, our pupils suggested fantastic ways that our school community could help those who are disadvantaged. This has led to the creation of three banks within GHS; a uniform bank, a toiletry bank and a textbook bank.

How can you help?

The Uniform Bank

Here at the Uniform Bank, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported our 'Warmer Winter' campaign. Former pupils including Buchanan Skip Hire Ltd have also donated generously to buy quality footwear and knitwear for the winter months ahead.

Having a quality school uniform is key to children feeling confident about themselves which in turn leads to improvements in attendance and achievement.

If you are a parent on a low income, please contact us for support. We stock both new and nearly new items of uniform including footwear and outdoor jackets. For more details see our Facebook page 'Graeme High Uniform Bank.'

Has your child grown out of any uniform items that could be used by someone else? If so, donations can be handed in to the main office and addressed to either Mrs McCormick or Mrs Heeps. Desired items would be:

- White shirts/blouses
- Black trousers/skirts
- Black knitwear
- School ties
- Blazers
- Black socks
- Black tights
- Underwear
- School bags

***If your child requires any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact either Mrs McCormick or Mrs Heeps on Graeme High School's phone number.**



The Toiletry Bank

This bank was inspired by news stories from Leeds that reported girls from low income backgrounds are missing out on their education during their periods as they do not have access to the sanitary products they need. It is our goal to make sure this does not happen in Graeme High. At our inset day on May 4th staff were asked to bring in a toiletry item donation at our 'Soup and Soap' event. We have collected a huge amount of donations, some of which have already been utilised by our pupils. If you are able to make any donations of the following items we would greatly appreciate it:

- sanitary towels (not tampons)
- shampoo/ conditioner
- deodorant
- shower gel
- toilet bags
- any unwanted toiletry item gift sets

Donations can be handed in to the main office and addressed to Miss Deans.

*If your child requires any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Deans on Graeme High School's phone number, or urge your child to speak to Miss Deans in Service.

The Textbook Bank

We currently have over 100 donated textbooks, past paper books and revision guides! Are there any at home that could be donated to us? At the moment we are particularly in need of N5, Higher and Advanced Higher books. We are striving to ensure that all pupils can access revision materials regardless of their economic background.

Donations can be handed in to the main office and addressed to Mrs Gallacher, Mrs Marshall, Miss Chalmers or Miss Ringrose.

*If your child requires any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Gallacher on Graeme High School's phone number.

If you would like any more information on Rights Respecting Schools, please visit <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/>. If you would like any additional information on the FairAchiever award, please visit <http://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/fairtrade-schools-awards/fairachiever-award/>

Thank you in advance,

Miss Mooty and the Rights Respecting Schools team

Graeme High is now a Mentors in Violence Prevention School!

This year has seen the launch of the MVP programme. We are delighted to join this global programme which is designed to encourage our young people to be empowered and active bystanders with the ability to support and challenge their peers to prevent all forms of bullying and gender based violence. The MVP Programme isn't a programme that teaches young people not to bully or abuse, it is a **leadership programme** that seeks to inspire individual leadership from young people faced with challenging situations.

So far this year...

- Key staff have become MVP trainers enabling them to support our senior pupils.
- Senior pupils have been trained to deliver awareness raising sessions to our S1's.
- Bespoke Graeme High posters have been



designed by an S6 pupil, **Ashleigh Crawford**, and these are now displayed throughout the school as well as being our profile picture on Twitter.



- Graeme High designed materials are to be used by all Falkirk MVP Schools and were shared at the Police Scotland National Violence Reduction Conference this month.
- Our Drama department are working on MVP videos which we'll share on our Twitter feed when ready.
- All Graeme High pupils have undertaken MVP activities in form class and signed our pledge to support the MVP aim of treating each other with respect.

If you would like to learn more about MVP please follow our Twitter feed @GraemeHSMVP or visit the MVP Scotland homepage, <http://mvpsotland.org.uk/>

If you believe that your child would make a good senior mentor and would like to discuss this further please contact the school and ask for Mr Ruddy.

French Trip

Earlier this year, 24 pupils and 3 members of staff from Graeme High School travelled by Eurostar to Créteil – Falkirk's twin town to the south of Paris.



The first evening we met up with members of the Twinning association to go and watch the firework display for the Fête de Créteil. The next day we visited the market in Créteil old town where we had the opportunity to use our French! In the afternoon we went into Paris to visit the Eiffel Tower, all the way to the top floor to see the stunning views of Paris followed by a boat trip along the Seine.

We spent the Monday in Créteil. We visited the town hall where we saw the Council chambers and the Salle de Mariage. Deputy mayor Madame de Fortescue took us through a marriage ceremony. In the afternoon we went shopping and to the cinema and in the evening we took part in a theatre workshop with the Créteil youth and student council. We then had pizza together and we taught them Scottish songs.



The next day we went back into Paris visiting Montmartre and the Sacre Coeur, Notre Dame, Musée d'Orsay and the Arc de Triomphe.

On the Wednesday we went to Disneyland Paris with Disney Studios being the definite favourite!

On Thursday we had a final trip into Créteil and an opportunity to meet up with some of our friends from the youth and student council before heading home.

Language Ambassadors

As part of our Leadership Academy we have 30 Senior Language Ambassadors. Our S5 Language Ambassadors supported a community event promoting linguistic diversity in the Howgate on the 18th November. As well helping with the organisation of the event they had the opportunity to take part in Gaelic and Scots taster sessions. They have also been involved in organising events for the European Day of Languages. Our S4 Language Ambassadors will soon begin working with pupils in our associated primaries starting with how Christmas is celebrated in France.



Business in Action

We have had a busy first term in Business Education again this year! Our department likes to give our pupils as many opportunities to show their entrepreneurial side and put their theory into practice as we can, so this year, not only have our S2 pupils continued on our now traditional "Sweet Thoughts" Christmas enterprise project, but our S3's are getting in on the act too!



In S2 our pupils have set up class businesses, decided on a company name, logo and slogan as well as coming up with product ideas, sourcing materials, working out cost prices and profit margins. They then produce a Christmas themed product to sell both in school and at the Christmas Fayre.

In S3 our Business classes have taken part in a 'Design a Sub' competition set by Subway where they are tasked with creating a new healthy sub or flatbread which could be sold in Subway stores. Pupils had to come up with a name for the Sub and ingredients which followed strict rules regarding saturated fat, fat, salt and sugar. They also had to create a marketing campaign which would appeal to their target market and decide how to spend their fictitious £20,000 budget. With a 1st prize of £1,000 of Amazon vouchers up for grabs the classes were very keen to get involved!

Our S1 classes have been hard at work on a course which blends both Admin & IT and Business skills where they build excellent ICT and researching skills to create a tourism leaflet for a local attraction. We have been very lucky to have representatives from The Helix, the Forestry Commission (who manage Callendar Woods) and Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway to meet with the pupils so the students could carry out real field research. Many of the leaflets produced have been of excellent quality. Well done to all S1 who have completed this project.

Our S5/6 Higher Business pupils were treated to a Business Awareness day hosted at The Park Hotel in September. The students heard from many inspirational business owners regarding their journey into business and



learned tips for success. The businesses challenged the pupils to come up with new ideas around the areas of marketing, IT and finance. An enjoyable and educational day was had by all and every pupil was a credit to the school.

Four of our S5/6 girls recently had the great opportunity of taking part in the first Future As5et conference run by Didasko, a financial education company, and Stewart Investors. This day was designed to encourage girls into jobs in the financial sector, and to inspire girls to realise that the world is their oyster in terms of opportunity. The girls found the day very inspiring, and particularly enjoyed hearing speeches from the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, and Chelsea Cameron, Young Scot of the Year.

A group of our S5 girls are taking part in this year's Young Enterprise programme and have set up their own business, Craft Creations, producing and selling a range of gift items including hand-made notebooks, chokers and bottle lamps. The pupils involved are very dedicated and are gaining or improving lots of skills. This 'learning by doing' experience is increasing their confidence and team building skills.

They have had a very successful start by holding 2 trade fairs and making additional sales within the school, and are hoping to build on this at the School Fair and at the Thistles centre trade fair. Thank you to all our business partners who make learning real for our pupils.



Christmas Extravaganza

This year, a bumper audience was treated to another record-breaking performance. There were more pupil performers than ever before and, including backstage and lighting crew, the total was over 200 pupils involved in the production of the concert. That's almost 1/5 of the school roll! Every House was represented from S1-6 across the 20 acts which performed. Although the concert only lasted a couple of hours, it was the culmination of weeks and months of practice on the part of the pupils and their teachers, and all at lunchtimes/after school as part of the amazing depth of extra-curricular activities which are available to pupils here at Graeme High School. So not only did we have a huge variety of music acts provided by the music department and their team of music tutors, we also had dance and drama acts. There's also a team of staff and pupil helpers who take care of 'the rest' – catering/programmes/front of house etc, without whom the show simply could not happen. It's hard to imagine how it could get any better but we say that every year and yet it continues to grow. Thanks again to all the parents who came to watch and for supporting their children in attending rehearsals throughout the year. See you all again, same time, same place, next year!!



GHS Family Learning Christmas Cake Competition

We were blown away with the standard of the entries for the Family Learning Christmas Cake competition! Cakes had to be made as a family team effort. This meant that at least two people from different generations had to be involved in the making of the cake - the idea behind this being that the activity encourages learning together, positive family relationships and of course baking skills! Judges had a very difficult decision to make with the criteria being presentation, theme, skill and overall appearance. After lots of deliberating, the overall winners were April Beattie, her Gran Rae and her cousin Emily age 4 whose cake showed fantastic overall presentation and modelling skills. And in the spirit of positive family living, the well-deserved team have won Cineworld tickets for four to see a movie of their choice. Thanks to all who took part... next stop the Great British Bake Off!

Learning together, or Family Learning as it's called in educational speak is a new Scottish Government focus based on research which identifies that families who learn together or actively support their child's learning are more likely to achieve better and be a major factor in improving attainment in Scottish schools.

This session Miss Burgoyne from the Home Economics department ran after school baking classes with pupils and their family members, even bringing in her own mum to help out. Fun and sharing of baking skills and knowledge from different generations was had by all. We have piloted an on-line booking appointment service with S5 and S6 pupils in order to make it easier for parents and carers to choose appointment times, and it will be interesting to get your feedback on how you think this has gone. We have also been working hard on updating our website and we now have a Family Learning tab which will direct families to all sorts of helpful links including advice on online safety, understanding teenagers, study tips, how the SQA works, family support and bereavement loss to name but a few. Next term we plan to send out Family Learning activity packs in areas such as Literacy, Numeracy, Health and Well-being and Creative Arts... more news to follow on this in the New Year!



CHALLENGE ENTERPRISE – 2017

This year 3 S6 Business Education pupils took part in the Rotary Club's – Challenge Enterprise weekend – Rebecca Cleary, Ashleigh Crawford and Fikayo Oluwasanmi. The weekend involved them getting together with other 17-18 year olds to complete a series of activities and lectures all centred around business and enterprise. The weekend included them coming up with a business idea for a product which they felt would take off in the market place. One exciting idea which Rebecca came up with was a "Fashion Finder" app which has since been marketed by Kim Kardashian. Pity you hadn't thought to copyright it Rebecca - we could be worth millions now!

All 3 pupils thoroughly enjoyed their experience and felt that it had impacted positively on them as it helped them to develop skills for work and life. All of the pupils talked about how it improved their skills in communication, team working, leadership and boosted their confidence.

The group worked together to produce an excellent PowerPoint Presentation about the weekend and the impact it had on them which Fikayo bravely presented to the Polmont Rotary Club at their weekly meeting. He was a real hit with them!

Well done to all 3 pupils, they were great ambassadors for the school and the Business Education Department.



Belfast trip

The English department organised for a group of pupils in S3-6 to head off to Belfast for a few days. This was in order to explore the context surround 'The Troubles' as this has been a prominent feature in our senior fiction. We crammed in loads of activities including walking tours, a visit to Derry and a trip to the Titanic museum. We even had time to squeeze in some ten pin bowling! The pupils were fantastic the whole time, and were an absolute credit to the school.



Big Book Bash 2017

#Beareadinghero

The English department organised the return of the "Big Book Bash" coinciding with Book Week Scotland – a week-long event to celebrate the importance of reading. Throughout the week 27th of November – 1st of December numerous activities were held throughout the school. The chosen theme this year was "Be a Reading Hero."

Form classes worked through an emoji quiz based on famous book titles. Some were definitely easier than others! Form classes were abuzz with both pupils and staff frantically trying to be the first to complete this.



On Tuesday the 28th of November a "Big Book Bash Quiz" was held in the hall for all S2 pupils. Pupils went head to head with each other to be crowned the winning group.

Pupils were given the challenge of coming up with a literary based group name with highlights including "To read, or not to read" and "The Cats in the Hat." The quiz consisted of rounds such as "Name that author" and "4 Pics 1 Book."

S2 pupils continued in the competitive spirit with a bookmark making competition. Teachers were blown away with pupils' creativity and found it almost impossible to select a winner from their classes. Ms Carroll will have the final vote on which bookmark is the best out of the entire year group.



S1 pupils completed colourful reading pledges throughout the week based on their commitment to reading. Some examples include "I will read to my little cousin" and "I will read for 30 minutes every day." The English department sincerely hope that these pledges will be fulfilled throughout the year!

On Thursday the 30th pupils from S2 and S3 hosted the school's first reading café. Teachers were invited along to read to the pupils and be read to, as well as discussing their favourite books. This was a great opportunity for teachers and pupils to engage with each other out with the classroom in a laid back atmosphere.

Friday the 1st was a dress up day for staff. Staff were invited to dress up as literary characters. SMT were transformed into characters from The Great Gatsby, Design and Technology became Mr Men and Social Subjects chose an Alice in Wonderland theme.



Poland Trip June 2017

Earlier this year a smashing group of 30 pupils and staff headed for Krakow. Pupils in S3 have been involved in a Holocaust Studies Interdisciplinary unit looking at pre War Jewish life, the factors in the rise of anti-Semitism and Hitler's rise to power and have tackled the issue of how this was allowed to happen in a modern democratic Europe. Pupils then looked at the importance of Holocaust Education and this has tied into work the school is doing on Rights Respecting Schools and Mentors in Violence Prevention.

This took in the wartime ghetto of Podgorze and Schindler's Factory, Old Town Square, University District, Wawel Hill and the Jewish District.

When we visited the Galicia Jewish Museum and we took part in a tour looking at the photo exhibits. The photographs allowed the pupils to look at the rich history of Jews within this part of Poland. Kamil, a pupil on the trip with us was able to use his Polish to translate some of the information in the photographs for the rest of the group. After this we heard a talk from a Holocaust Survivor about her experiences in Krakow during the war. She talked about the sudden change in her life, the ghetto and the impact on her family.

We also had a tour of Wawel Castle and cathedral, we had an amazing view of the entire city from the castle ramparts, we toured the tombs and found out about Polish Kings and leaders and the Nazi occupation during World War Two, we also saw a dragon!

During our visit to Auschwitz Birkenau, pupils found this the hardest part and the most emotional aspect of the trip. Established by the Nazis in 1940, Auschwitz-Birkenau has become a symbol of terror, genocide and the Holocaust. Although the exact number of victims is unknown, many Jews, Poles and gypsies died here.

Pupils were given time to question the guides and reflect on what they had witnessed. For many it really hit home about the work done in class.

Some pupil's responses, "Learning from history books is so detached until you visit here. Its almost too much to take in walking in the shoes of the millions who died so tragically."

Another pupil said "- it's as emotional as you would expect. Our guide was brilliant and whilst it was busy she kept us informed without rushing us. You just can't believe what other humans can do to each other! When we got to the gas chambers and the wall there were a lot of flowers and tributes. We were told that it was a sacred place and that we couldn't talk there.

Finally from another pupil, "Auschwitz is simply one of the most moving places I have ever visited. Visiting this place is a very educational experience to help us not forget of what we have

been capable of. This place is beyond any description I can write, it is an emotional place where every corner and building have a meaning. The history within the walls of Auschwitz speaks for itself and makes this an important place to visit."

On our last day in Krakow we went to the Oscar Schindler Factory and had an amazingly detailed tour. The guide was great and really knowledgeable. She said that our school group was one of the best behaved and most respectful school groups that they had ever had. The pupils were fascinated by the amount of things in the museum and asked great questions. After the tour we went to Hero Square and reflected on the art installation there to remember the Jews who had been rounded up for deportation. The overriding question was Why? Why would people do this to each other? And for that we had no easy answers, we talked about small kindnesses and not standing by to bullying and unfairness within school and our own lives.



Sports leaders

Cluster primary school cross country has been supported twice by our sports leaders over in Calendar park.

The leaders have also undergone training and assisted in the running of our cluster primary school Tennis Tournament at Polmont sports centre.

The sports leaders have also undergone bike training this term to support our primary cluster in delivering bike safety.

In addition we have made links with Laurieston primary 6's and 7's to run a swimming programme in Graeme High this term.

Lorna McPherson

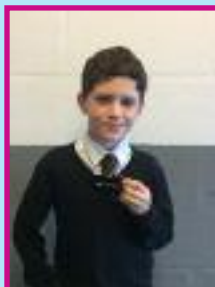


Pupil of the Month Prize Draw Winners!

Congratulations to our September-November Pupils of the Month!!

September:

Scott Wilson (L02) For excellent skills in design and manufacture. (Nominated by Ms. Lindsay)



October:

Alex Jenkins (ST04) For displaying fantastic effort and skill level in our first basketball lesson. (Nominated by Miss Power)



November:

Eilidh Davidson (M07) For fantastic essays in Higher Biology & a massive improvement from last year. (Nominated by Ms. Muldoon)



Well done to all the other nominees for their exceptional effort and hard work. Keep it up!



The Cloud



Graeme High School Nurture Newsletter- October 2017

The story so far...

This session we have welcomed nine S1 boys into our very first Nurture room. Together we came up with the room's name: 'The Cloud.' Our S1 pupils come to The Cloud every morning before school, during period one, as well as period five on a Monday and period two on a Thursday. We have been very busy this term and look forward to welcoming our S2s, S3s and S4s to The Cloud after the October holiday.

Parents Visit...

On Thursday 21st of September, we welcomed the parents of our S1 pupils into The Cloud. Our S1 boys had baked cakes and made sure that our Mums, Dads and carers had plenty of tea and coffee! Our parents were very impressed with The Cloud. Our parents and carers can come and visit The Cloud every Wednesday between 3 and 4pm.

Staff visit...

On Thursday 28th of September, we hosted an open day for staff to come and see what we get up to every day. We were delighted to see so many of our teachers and hope that they will visit us again soon!



What our S1 pupils have said about The Cloud...

It's a safe place and I know people care about me here.

You make friends here and if The Cloud wasn't here, I wouldn't feel very safe.

Because I'm quick-tempered I wouldn't have done very well without The Cloud.

Twitter...

You can find out what we're up to on Twitter! Follow GHS_TheCloud.

