

James Gillespie's High School



Newsletter

Message from the Head Teacher

May 2008

We are hurtling towards the SQA exams and hopefully our senior students are fully engaged in revision and study. I trust social lives are on hold and you as parents are enjoying the "learning partnership" you are currently engaged in. You will see from the back page that we have altered the exam leave periods to bring them in line with the Exam Calendar. I hope that does not cause any difficulty.

Since our last Newsletter we have had a number of events. The Cluster Science Festival was a great success, our students performed well in MUNGA (Mini U.N.) at Watson's, the Spring Fling was a wonderful evening and Diversecity with our Zwelibanzi visitors was superb. We are pleased to see that we were Edinburgh's top performing school in the published lists for 5-14 Attainment in English and Maths and in Highers attained last year. Individual efforts have also been impressive in the National Galleries Essay Competition with Phoebe Fisher, S2, the runner up overall in her age category and Annie Liddle, S2, Tommy Pia, S2, and Kate Williams, S3, all awarded merits. In the Pushkin Prize, Laurie Clarke and Tommy Pia, both S2, were two out of only ten winners in the whole of Scotland—a remarkable achievement. Poems by all of the above will feature in future Newsletters.

Our Amnesty International Group received a certificate for outstanding contributions for their "efforts for human rights beyond the limits of human endurance". Our Senior Football Team reached the finals of the Lothian Plate. All of this demonstrates, I hope that for all of us in Gillespie's, success is important in all areas of life and participation in a very diverse range of activities is encouraged

and leads to achievement as well as attainment.

I was thrilled to be told by Nigel Griffiths, M.P., that Archbishop Desmond Tutu had named our South African Project as a model of good practice and I am also honoured to be invited to 10 Downing Street to a Reception for the "Umthombo Street Project" in Durban which we have incorporated into our project after a recent visit in February. This project supports up to 2,000 street children who live on the streets of Durban and further extends our commitment to the Millennium Goal of fighting poverty wherever it exists.

I will update you all on our financial situation in my report to the School Council on 6th May. Suffice it to say that next year will be tough. We have had to find an additional £64,000 to meet the CEC cut of 1.5%. However in the Gillespie's fashion we will deal with that with as much damage limitation as we can manage and hopefully continue to provide for all our students the quality of education they are used to.



Mr. A. Wallace

Inside this issue:

Details of Biology Department study support.	2
MUNGA—what is it and how well did we do?	2
If "snozzcubmers" is the answer, what is the question? Find the answer in our article on World Book Day.	2
Information about School Council Meetings.	3
Read about our efforts to tackle global warming.	3

Special points of interest:

- ◆ Read in our Head Teacher's message the tremendous achievements our pupils have had in a wide range of events from success on the sport's field through essay and poetry competitions to the recognition of the work of our Amnesty International group.
- ◆ Important changes to the timing of our exam leave are given on the back page. These allow us to provide extra class time for our senior students.
- ◆ Remember to check out our website for even more information and a range of resources.

School News

Biology Study Support

Standard Grade - Study support sessions will be split into general and credit level and run weekly on Tuesdays after school. Pupils should check the notice board outside S8 for details and let their teacher know if they are going to attend.

Intermediate 2 - Study support will run on Wednesdays after school.

Students should check the notice board outside S8 for more details if interested and let their teacher know if they are intending to go.

Higher - Drop in session will run during lunchtimes on Wednesdays and Thursdays for any students who would like support with their revision.

Details will be on the notice board outside S8 and students intending to go are asked to let the teacher responsible for that session know.

If any students have any worries or questions regarding their coursework, please speak to Miss Pollock who can be found in the Science base or S8.

Ms. Pollock, PT Biology.

Modern Studies

A group of senior students represented Costa Rica in a Model United Nations Conference at George Watson's College on the weekend of March 14th and 15th. Students worked in Committees to debate and pass resolutions and responded to world crises as they unfolded. The students involved put considerable effort into preparing for the Conference in the weeks leading up to the event.

The MUN group meets in the Modern Studies Department every Thursday at lunch with Tom Sparks as its chairman. New members welcome S1 –S6

Costa Rica team 2008:

Tom Sparks

Andrew Ng

Habiba Islam

Sarah Williams

Rachael Mack

Other Events

- ◆ Students in S2 and Higher Modern Studies were visited by a political refugee from China who spoke to the class about her experiences as a victim of torture in a Chinese prison.
- ◆ The S2 election was a big success with a high turnout
- ◆ A group of S2s enjoyed a successful visit to the Scottish Parliament and took part in a question and answer session with a group of MSPs

Ms. Halliday, PT Modern Studies

World Book Day



We had an enthusiastic response to our literary treasure hunt where teams of pupils and staff (!) ran around the school looking for the questions e.g. "which vegetable does the BFG eat?" If you knew the answer was 'snozzcumbers' and could manage the other 11 questions then you had a chance of winning from the selection of mod-

est prizes. It was a fun activity and revealed strong competitiveness from S6 to S1 and various staff teams too. I hope everyone managed to spend their £1 voucher wisely.

Mrs. Inglis, Librarian.

Tesco vouchers Computers for schools

Over the past two years we have gathered and banked these vouchers in the hope of earning enough to exchange for computer equipment for the school but it is slow work! If you have any vouchers please send them in to the School Library.

Mrs. Inglis, Librarian



School Council News

School Council Meetings

Meetings are open to all parents and carers, and to students and staff with an interest. Parents with children attending the feeder primary schools are also welcome to attend.

The meetings will give you a chance to hear about the work School Council members have been doing, and the Head Teacher gives a brief report on current business in school.

You can bring along any ideas, concerns or simply questions - and from 7pm School Council members are available for informal conversations, tea and coffee provided.

If you have an issue for the School Council, you can email council@jghs.org.uk or leave a letter at the School Office, marked for School Council attention or just come along to a meeting. If you don't want to bring your points up in the full meeting, come along early to see us beforehand.

School Council Meetings

Tuesday 6th May

Tuesday 3rd June

7.30pm School Staff Room

Next School Council Meeting

At 8pm, the School Council meeting on Tuesday 6th May will be hearing from Mr Tom Rae, Deputy Head Teacher -

Home Study Policy

- ◆ Currently under review
- ◆ Update on situation
- ◆ The contribution of parents/families in supporting learners
- ◆ Consultation - next steps

all welcome, for any part of the meeting - hope to see you there.

If you need any assistance to make it easier for you to attend or participate, please let us know;

Ann Henderson (667 1646) and
Nigel Goddard (667 4033)

(on behalf of the School Council)

School Council e-mail: council@jghs.org.uk

Website: <http://council.jghs.org.uk>

Tackling Global Warming



Over two hundred P7 pupils from our cluster primaries came up to the High School in March for a morning of science. Each school gave a presentation, "Our Sustainable School", looking at making their school more energy efficient and "greener". Ideas ranged from solar panels on the roofs, wind turbines, digging up the school grounds to plant vegetables, keeping cows and using the methane for fuel to pupils who misbehave and teachers generating electricity by peddling. The pupils met their future classmates from the different primaries and took part in "renewable" bingo and a quiz to test their knowledge. The morning ended with a science show put on by Edinburgh University.

Many thanks to Grant Stott who compered the event.
Ms. Lyall, Physics Department.

James Gillespie's High School

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JGHS Diary

Tuesday, 29th April 2008
Wednesday, 30th April 2008
Thursday, 1st May 2008
Friday, 2nd May 2008
Monday, 5th May 2008
Tuesday, 6th May 2008
Tuesday, 6th May 2008
Tuesday, 13th May 2008
Tuesday, 13th May 2008
Wednesday, 14th May 2008
Monday, 19th May 2008
Tuesday, 20th May 2008
Wednesday, 21st May 2008
Thursday, 22nd May 2008
Friday, 23rd May 2008
Wednesday, 28th May 2008
Tuesday, 3rd June 2008
Thursday, 5th June 2008
Monday, 9th June 2008
Monday, 16th June 2008
Friday, 27th June 2008

JGHS Trust Meeting
First day of S4 exam leave
SQA Exams begin
S1 Pupil Reports issued
School closed, May Day Holiday
All resume
JGHS School Council Meeting (19:30hr)
S1 Parents' Evening (Practical Subjects)
First day of S5/S6 exam leave
First day of Higher lever SQA exams
School Closed, Victoria Day Holiday
Staff in-service day
Students resume
S1 Parents' Evening (Non-practical subjects)
S3 reports issued
S3 Parents' Evening
JGHS School Council Meeting (19:30hr)
New S5 students start new timetable
New S6 students start new timetable
P7 Parents' Evening
Last day of term

News Round-up

Important Examination Information

Exam leave for S4 starts on Wednesday 30th April, the last day of teaching being Tuesday 29th April.

S4 return on Wednesday, 4th June 2008 for the S5 Induction.

The first exam for some fifth year students is Music Intermediate 2 on Friday 2nd May.

Exam leave for S5 and S6 starts on Tuesday 13th May, the last day of teaching being Monday 12th May.

S5 return on Thursday, 5th June 2008 at 13:30hr for the S6 Induction.

This is a change to the exam leave from the school calendar to give 3 more days of teaching.

The students have an individualised timetable giving them the time of the exam, the room and seat number. These must be checked carefully as each year someone turns up at the wrong time! If an exam is missed through illness, a medical certificate must be brought into the school for the attention of Mrs. D Greig.

We wish all of our students good luck in their exams.

