



## SQA Results

The Higher results in S5 showed a marked improvement this year, with 18% passing 3 Highers at grades A-C, compared to 14% last year, while 9% achieved 5 Highers, compared to 4% last year. Special mention here for Vicky Balmer and Lynsey McClintick who both achieved five 'A' grades at Higher. Four of Vicky's Highers were top band 1 passes, as were three of Lynsey's. Kirsty Mills achieved four As and one B, with all four A passes being at band 1.

A number of S4 pupils also achieved outstanding success in this year's SQA exams, notably Iona Paterson and Alan Baird, who both achieved 8 band 1 Standard Grades. Close behind on 7 were Katie Balmer, Thomas Cox, Stewart Gibson, Emma Harvey, Roslyn Henry and Neil McDonald. Overall, the S4 results were similar to those of the last few years.

## S3 Parents' Information Evening

An information evening for parents of S3 pupils took place on Wednesday 20 September, attended by over 80 parents.

The evening was introduced by Authority Manager/Head Teacher Mrs J.M.Pallett. Member of staff presented information on Scottish qualifications, learning and teaching, homework, target setting and tracking and pupil support. School Board Chairman Seamus Donnelly also addressed parents.



Seamus Donnelly Addresses S3 Parents

Staff were available afterwards to answer parents' questions. Refreshments were provided by the PTA. Evaluation forms showed that this was a very successful event.

## Welcome

We welcomed no fewer than thirteen new members of the teaching staff in August.

Mr G. Benson has joined us from Dalbeattie High School as a Depute Head Teacher.

Mr. Benson started his career as a Chemistry teacher in South Shields, before teaching in Maxwelltown High School from where he moved to Dalbeattie. At Dalbeattie High School he had spells as both a Guidance and Curricular Principal Teacher before becoming Acting Depute Head. He also had two periods of secondment - first to the national Higher Still Development Programme and then as a Regional Development officer promoting 'out of school hours learning'.



Mr.G.Benson

Mr Benson is a keen sportsman, with particular interests in sailing and golf.

The Mathematics Department welcomes no fewer than five new teachers: Mr C.Davis, Mr J.Paling, Ms A.Stewart, Mr J.Stobo and Mr I. Watt. Mr.Davis previously taught in Canada. Mr.Paling returns having spent time in the Academy last year as a student on teaching practice.

We are joined in English by Mrs F.Fay (who was also with us as a student last year) and Mr I.Curtis, in Science by Mr K.Gordon, in PE by Mr A.Richards, in Modern Studies by Ms K. Walker and in Religious and Moral Education by Mr A.Johnston and Mr M.Laine

Amongst the non-teaching staff we will shortly be joined by Mrs M.Arnold as an ICT Technician, replacing Mr N.Lock, who has retired.

We are glad to welcome all these new faces and wish them a happy and successful experience in their work at Stranraer Academy.

We also currently have two student teachers with us, Dr L.Adams (Biology/Chemistry) and Miss K McDowall (Mathematics).

**S4 Parents' Night will be on Monday 30 October in 'B' Block  
Appointment sheets will be sent out after the October holiday.**

## S6 Enterprise

Members of the S6 Enterprise class have recently been painting the foyer and some of the corridors in 'B' Block. Between now and Christmas they are planning a series of fundraising ventures to allow them to create a social area with soft seating in unused corridor space in 'B' Block.



S6 students decorating 'B' Foyer

## Extra-Curricular Activities

Miss Taylor of the PE Department has taken over from Miss Bryce as the school's Sports Coordinator.

Rugby training for S1-S4 boys has re-started with Mr. Richards as coach, assisted by Gideon Hunter from Wigtownshire Rugby Club. Girls' netball is due to start after the October holiday. It is hoped to start girls' swimming sessions – any parents out there with experience as a swimming coach who might be interested in assisting? – Miss Taylor would be delighted to hear from you.

Girls' football, hip-hop dance and badminton are amongst the other activities currently on offer.

Stranraer Academy is the Dumfries and Galloway pilot school for the national "Girls in Sport" initiative. In connection with this the school is currently bidding for funding to improve some facilities with the aim of encouraging more girls to participate in physical activity.

## Coffee Morning

Two senior students, Kangni Qiu and Chuan Tangchitvittaya are organising a staff coffee morning on Friday 29 September, to raise funds for MacMillan Cancer support.

## Former Pupils

Scottish internationalist Kevin Kyle moved from Sunderland to Coventry City in August for a reported fee of £600,000.

Two of our former pupils are now professional rugby players with the Border Reivers team. Internationalist Craig Hamilton (27) moved from Glasgow Warriors during the summer. He was joined by prop forward Bruce McNeil (23) who was awarded an apprentice contract.

Alan Little, a well-known foreign correspondent with the BBC, addressed a full house of over 300 people when he recently spoke on 'Spain 1936-2006' as part of the Wigtown Book Festival. In a wide-ranging talk he charted Spain's progress from dictatorship to democracy, including many fascinating insights into current political trends in Europe.

Between September and December another former pupil, Miss K. McDowall, will be working as a student in the Mathematics Department. Miss McDowall is completing her teacher training with Stirling University.

## Other School News

- Three S4 pupils-Ryan McCutcheon, Peter O'Hare and Reece Simms—have just completed a week's work experience with the Army.
- The Music Department is organising a residential weekend in November for S1 pupils interested in singing.
- Miss Taylor and Miss McCourtney are organising this year's S6 Year Book.
- Results of SQA appeals for Higher and Advanced Higher courses arrived on 27 September.
- Results of Intermediate and Standard Grade appeals are due on 10 November
- The Baldy Bain Theatre Company gave two performances on the theme of road safety in September—one for all S1 pupils and one for all S5.
- In addition to its very successful Students' Council, the Academy is now introducing Year Group Councils, with every class represented.

*Don't forget! All pupils have a Work Planner in which they are expected to note homework issued. Parents are encouraged to check these regularly.*

## YOUNG WRITERS' FESTIVAL 2006

Aonghas MacNeacail is the Writers' Fellow in Dumfries and Galloway Schools in 2006-07. He has just completed a two-and-a-half week spell working with pupils in Stranraer Academy. Through his work in schools he aims to 'encourage a joy of words, reading and creative writing'. Aonghas is a well-known poet, journalist, researcher, broadcaster and scriptwriter, who works in both Gaelic and English.

As part of the Young Writers' Festival 2006, Stranraer Academy was very fortunate to welcome several other writers during the last week of September, who ran a series of workshops with S1, S3 and S5 pupils.

The writers involved were Des Dillon, Linda Cracknell, Alison Prince, Liz Niven, Anita Govan, Alan Bissett and Liz Niven. Liz was impressed with the response of the pupils. "They are obviously keen on reading," she said. "And they had lots of questions for me about being a writer." Principal Teacher Mrs J. Law described the whole experience as "inspirational". "It has been wonderful to be involved in the Festival. The writers have done great work with our pupils, and I am especially pleased that all the first years have taken part."



Aonghas MacNeacail helps a young writer to hone his work.

### Tree of Knowledge

This company specialises in presenting workshops to a range of people including schools and industry. The S1 pupils at the Academy have taken part in workshops to do with motivation, community and setting goals. On 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October our S2 pupils will be taking part in workshops designed to help pupils make option choices with confidence.

In February 2007 our S4 pupils will be taking part in a workshop called "Laugh in the face of exams," looking at effective ways to study and to prepare so that facing examinations becomes less of a fear.

### Coming Soon—CafeDG—A New Eating Experience

School meals are changing to meet the demands of the student market and to raise the nutritional content of the meals to comply with the 'Hungry for Success' recommendations. Students now are looking for more variety, a faster service and good value for money, and we aim to provide just that. They can choose items from the main menu or opt for one of the new meal deals ranging from £1.35 to £1.50. We hope students will like the changes and that parents will encourage them to use CafeDG and the Cashless Catering Service. For more information please contact Alan Mawson, Catering Development Officer, 01776 707505.

### School Uniform

Thanks to parents for ensuring a near perfect turnout of pupils in school uniform since the start of term. In the first four weeks of term, Depute Head Teachers made over 250 classroom visits and found only a handful of pupils not correctly dressed. The Student Council recently looked at samples of black zipper cardigans as possible alternatives to the current school sweatshirts and fleeces. It is expected that consultation will take place on any changes that the Student Council recommends.

### MATTHEW NEELY—FORMER RECTOR



Matthew Neely

We are sorry to record the death in July of Matt Neely, a former Rector of Stranraer Academy.

Originally a Chemistry teacher, Mr. Neely started as Rector in August 1979, having served as Depute at Inverurie Academy, Aberdeenshire. Chris McCron, Depute Head during Mr. Neely's time, recalls him as "very supportive and approachable – a first-rate colleague and an excellent person to know."

Matt Neely was well known for his concern for all pupils at all stages, taking a particular interest in the Aird Unit. He established the Support Unit and was determined that its role would be to provide support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties rather than being seen as a 'sin bin'. He remained in post after the onset of MS, never allowing his physical incapacity to compromise his leadership of the school, eventually making the difficult decision to retire on health grounds in 1988.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Mr. Neely's family.

# Stranraer Academy :: Dates for Your Diary

## OCTOBER

Tuesday 3rd	S1 Parents' Information Night
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 6th	S1 Newcastle Trip 2
Friday 6th	End of Term
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 20th	Holiday
Monday 23rd	Start of Term
Tuesday 24th	School Board Meeting
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> - Friday 27th	S1 Newcastle Trip 3
Friday 27th	S2 Interim Report posted home
Monday 30th	S4 Parents' Night
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 3 November	Work Experience for some S4 pupils

## NOVEMBER

Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> – Friday 3rd	S1 Newcastle Trip 4
Friday 3th	S4 Early Warning reports posted home
Thursday 9th	S5/6 Parents' Night
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Results of appeals for SQA Standard Grade and Intermediate courses announced.
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup>	S3 Interim Reports posted home
Tuesday 21st	School Board Meeting
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 29th	Pupil Holiday

## DECEMBER

Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 15th	S4 Prelim Examinations
Thursday 7th	S1 Interim Reports posted
Friday 8th	S5/6 Interim Reports posted
Wednesday 13th	S1 Parents' Night
Tuesday 19th	School Board Meeting
Friday 22nd	End of Term

Stranraer Academy Parents' Newsletter—Published September, December, March, June  
Comments and suggestions welcome—contact Mr. M. Warren (Depute Head Teacher)

## Parents' Nights 2006-07

	Interim Report	Full Report	Parents' Night
S1	7 December 2006	14 May 2007	13 December 2006
S2	27 October 2006	2 March 2007	7 March 2007
S3	10 November 2006	15 June 2007	30 January 2007
S4	3 November 2006*	26 January 2007	30 October 2006
S5/6	8 December 2006	30 March 2006	9 November 2006

\* S4 'Early Warning' Report—subject reports sent only where there is a specific concern.

### Contacting school

The first point of contact if you need to get in touch with the school is normally your child's Pupil Support Teacher. Pupil Support Teachers normally teach for at least 15 out of 30 periods. If they are teaching when you phone they will not be able to speak to you, but will call you back as soon as they can.

