

S3/4 Award Ceremony – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008

This time last year I stood at the S3/4 Award Ceremony and it was the first time I had had an opportunity to meet with parents having only just taken up post.

The twelve months since have been interesting, to say the least.

HMIe came back and the report was positive – all seven action points deemed to show good progress.

As you are all aware, staffing has proved problematic this session. It has been difficult to attract unpromoted staff to Stranraer. However, I'm pleased to say that I'm expecting 13 new staff to start in August and hope that staffing will be much better next session.

In the course of the last 12 months we have seen a number of retirements, including Ann Higgins, Bruce Kerr, & Linda Johnston all of whom had been in the school for more than 20 years. I wish them well in their retirement.

I have appointed a number of staff to permanent promoted posts this year – Andy Law & Helen-Marie Bradley as Depute Headteachers, Fiona Bryce, David Hyslop, Pamela Livingstone and Claire McCourtney to Principal Teacher of Pupil Support posts, and Carrie White to the post of Principal Teacher of Science. I hope you are all aware that it was necessary to re-structure the Pupil Support department because of the reduction in the number of PTs we are allowed – you should all have received a letter telling you who your child's Pupil Support teacher now is.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all staff – both teaching and non-teaching – for their hard work over the past year. The promoted staff, in particular, have worked well beyond the call of duty covering extra classes, giving up their management time, and providing work for other classes within their faculties. Thank you all very much. I'd also like to thank Aileen Irvine for her support while in the Acting Depute head post and Douglas Halliday & Kerrie Biagioni for carrying out Acting Pupil Support roles.

I'd like to mention one other member of staff – Gordon Smart. Gordon is the school timetabler and organises cover for absent teachers. He has had to revamp the timetable numerous times this session when we haven't been able to get staff and the task of ensuring classes are covered has not been an easy one, so thank you to Gordon and his assistant, from the school office, Helen.

I look forward to the future with confidence – the new building is well on its way. The existing one is being refurbished and when we return in August we will hopefully see some of the benefits. The refurbished 'Social Subjects' pod will re-open. Changes being made to the roof and floor of the street during the summer will, hopefully, help to regulate the temperature better too.

Until the new building is complete, we still need to use B & C Block. At long last, security to these Blocks is being improved. A door entry system is being installed so, from August, all doors to B & C Blocks will be locked during class time. To gain access to the school office you will need to use the door outside this hall or the one nearest the new building which will have a buzzer and camera for entry.

You may be aware that the Scottish Government issued more details on the new Curriculum for Excellence last week. This will be at the forefront of our thoughts over the next 12 months as we are expected to start implementation with the new S1 in 2009 with the first new exams being sat in 2013. The Parent Council will be involved in our discussions.

To all the parents: thank you! Without your support, your children would not be sitting here tonight picking up their awards. I firmly believe that to get the best for our pupils require a partnership between the school and home. To assist that, we are hoping to 'beef up' our targeting & tracking system next session enabling us to give you more up-to-date and accurate details of your child's progress throughout the year.

I would also like to thank you and your children for wearing the school uniform. It really does make a difference – for security and equality. You may have seen an article in the Free Press about School Uniform. I'd like to stress that we are not changing the Uniform – the uniform is still the same – white or royal blue polo shirts and black trousers for S1 to 4 – black polo shirt & trousers for S5/6. What will change is that we will have additional garments, such as royal blue jumpers & tops, some with hoods, available to wear on top.

Thanks to the pupils: This is your award ceremony – to thank you for all their hard work and effort over the past 12 months. So well done!

Finally, thanks to all those named on your programmes who have contributed to the organisation of tonight, especially Mike Warren who has been responsible for the whole thing. Thanks you Mike.