



Successful Learners • Confident Individuals • Responsible Citizens • Effective Contributors

Message from the Principal

As we publish our first Newsletter of 2015-2016 session we can reflect back over a very positive year at Castlebrae CHS.



Picture copyright and courtesy of The Edinburgh Reporter

Attainment and attendance has improved and our learners are visibly more confident and proud of their school.

Moving from primary to secondary is a huge milestone and an exciting time in young people's lives. We are delighted to be part of that milestone and we are so pleased that the S1 have had such a positive start. This was celebrated by having a pizza lunch (courtesy of Pizza Express) for pupils and their parents/carers.

As we move towards the Christmas break, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our school staff and partner agencies, who have ensured our learners have enjoyed a wide range of experiences and activities throughout the curriculum.

I thank you for all your support and as the newly appointed permanent Principal of the Castlebrae Learning Community I look forward to the continuous improvement we can make over the next year.

Attendance and Attainment Rises!

We are delighted to report that recent statistics show improvement in both our attendance rates and in the attainment of our young people. The drive to improve attendance is a vital priority for Castlebrae as our pupils need to be in school every day if they are to achieve their potential and meet the high expectations being set for them as learners. Our aim for this session is to reach the Authority's target of at least 93% and by the October half-term we were at 92%. For our relatively small community, it only takes a few pupils to be absent to have an impact on our statistics. We are making good progress, but know there is still work to be done to ensure we improve even further towards greater success.

Following the SQA diet of exams last May, the data on results was published and there were significant improvements in attainment for many important benchmark areas. The full attainment report is available on the school website, but some key facts are:

By the end of S5, those achieving 5 or more awards at Level 4 or more rose from 56% to 76%.

By the end of S5, those achieving 5 or more awards at Level 5 or more rose from 15% to 28%.

By the end of S5, those achieving 1 or more awards at Level 6 or more rose from 6% to 56%

By end of S5, the percentage achieving Level 4 or 5 in Literacy & Numeracy increased by 4 times!

We are extremely proud of the achievements of our young people, but we know we can do even better and look forward to celebrating continued success.



A Voyage of Discovery

Three of our young people joined a crew on a Tall Ship and sailed over 200 miles in extremely challenging conditions around the West Coast of Scotland. Over the course of the week Jordan Elliot, Morgan Sword and Johanna Moffat gained leadership and personal development skills by hoisting quarter tonne sails, reading sailing charts, taking charge of a 6 million pound round-the-world yacht, communicating with coast guards and being entertained by dolphins and porpoises.

Skipper Stevie said that our students were one of the best crews he has ever sailed with! A fantastic achievement.

Mathematics

Whodunit vs Primary Detectives

Castlebrae High school welcomed all the Primary 7s from Niddrie Mill, Newcraighall and Castlevie for a great morning of solving problems and detecting. They were given an experience never to forget. In teams, the pupils worked together in order to find out who-dun-it. By following mathematical clues, measuring angles, breaking codes and using coordinate directions, they successfully uncovered the identity of the wanted person. Senior pupils helped the smooth running of the morning and there was fun had by all.

There was great detective and teamwork throughout the morning with the presence of young problem-solvers.

The future will be safer with them on the case!



English Department

National Poetry Day

The theme of National Poetry Day this year is 'Light'. Some of our first years have taken advantage of their new iPads to write their own poems on this theme and present them using the Tellagami app.

Their poems were displayed in school after the autumn break and will appear on the website soon - so look out for budding poets!

Castlebrae Launches its Partnership with Stirling University

On Thursday 1st October, a Business Breakfast was held to launch Castlebrae's partnership with Stirling University. James Donald, our Community Learning Development worker, explains the rationale behind this innovative collaboration: The partnership between CCHS and University of Stirling started on Thursday 1st October with an informal breakfast with Tracey Kerr (Widening Participation Manager from Stirling Uni), Student Ambassadors from the University and the parents and carers of the eleven Castlebrae S2 students involved. This provided an opportunity for Tracey to give an overview of the forthcoming programme of events which have been specifically tailored for Castlebrae.

One of the reasons CCHS has partnered the University of Stirling is due to its track record in attracting first generation students. Around 67% of its students are the first in their families to attend University and as a result Stirling has established unrivalled levels of support for its students.



Creative and Aesthetic

Paolozzi Prize Competition Winner, Keith Preston S6

Keith was entered in to this year's Paolozzi Prize Competition and Castlebrae were delighted when Keith was announced overall winner of the 'Overcoming Barriers' Award at this year's prestigious Award Ceremony. Keith and his family were invited to The National Gallery on The Mound, on Wednesday 3rd June, where he was awarded his prize by Richard Demarco. Keith was awarded a cheque for £250.



Our Partnership with The Edinburgh International Festival Continues to Grow...

The Edinburgh International Festival have delivered a number of successful projects that have included all pupils and staff at the school. The Guerilla Knitting Project worked with S1-3 pupils to create an exhibition that is currently on display at EIF's headquarters, The Hub. Some of this knitting can be seen in and around the school building too.

On Saturday 15th August, the premiere of the film, 'From Castlebrae With Love' was held at The Hub, the

home of The Edinburgh International Festival. The film, made over the course of a number of weeks, is a simple but powerful and emotive insight into the hopes and dreams of our community. Fergus Linehan, EIF Director, introduced the film to an audience of special guests, students and parents and spoke passionately about the innovative partnership with Castlebrae. Depute Head, Vincent Spicer, described how the film expertly portrayed the potential of a community that was now working together with EIF in creative and exciting ways to harness and unlock that potential. A huge round of applause greeted the end



of the film and there was a genuine sense of pride and passion in the film's overarching message; that we should all work together to give our young people the best chance possible of achieving success.

Some of our senior students were taken to the wonderful production of The Magic Flute on 27th August. Everyone was captivated from the moment the curtain went up to the second finale, and were even bursting into classical songs on the minibus on the way home! A thoroughly enjoyable evening's entertainment for staff and students alike!



Making Movies

We are currently working in partnership with **Screen Education Edinburgh** for a 10 week period with our National 5 Creative Industries students to deliver some of the main NABS of the course- including Skills Development and the Creative Process.

MUSIC

Opera Experience

On Monday 24th August the music department was visited by performers from the Edinburgh International Festival who introduced a group of senior pupils to Mozart's Opera The Magic Flute. This workshop gave the pupils an insight into the story, music and songs from the opera. A group of 10 senior pupils then travelled to the Festival Theatre to watch a performance of the opera which was performed by the Berlin Opera Company on the Thursday evening. All pupils were captivated from the moment the orchestra struck up, the lights dimmed and the curtains opened!

S1 Orchestra Trip

On Monday 31st August the whole of S1 travelled to the Ross Band Stand in Princes Street Gardens to watch a performance by the Edinburgh Secondary Schools Orchestra and Scottish Chamber Orchestra Vibe project. The sun was shining and pupils got into the festival spirit enjoying the fireworks inspired music. This was a great experience for an S1 to watch a live orchestra and band perform and we will hopefully see some of those pupils on stage in a few years!

Keeping in touch with the music department

To keep in touch with the music department check out our twitter page and music blog. This will provide you with up to date information on the department and share the success of our talented pupils. You will find us @castlebraemusic on twitter and castlebraemusic.wordpress.com



Drake Music Partnership

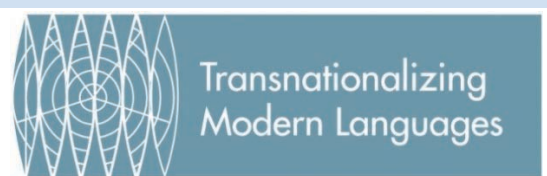
The music department started working with Drake Music Scotland in 2014, creating an S1 rock band who worked alongside a Drake musician to rehearse each week a variety of popular songs. The group successfully performed during the Christmas concert and awards ceremony. The department and Drake Music were keen to continue this strong partnership and have started a project with the new S1 intake. This now involves a set of five pupils working with Drake Music in their studio each week at Art Space.

The pupils are enjoying working in a high tech environment and are learning to perform on guitar, keyboard and drum kit in a group. Look out for their debut performance later in the year.

Creating Conversations

On June 11th, the Art & Design department hosted a **Creative Conversation Breakfast** with our partner TML from St Andrews University. We were joined in the morning by Gillian Tee and many others from The City of Edinburgh Council, who listened as we shared the experiences of working creatively in partnership over the course of the year. This partnership provides us with real investment and we were able to create a ceramic studio in an underused area of the Art & Design Department. Through the project we were able to work collaboratively with our ESOL students from Edinburgh College, sharing conversations and working creatively on a joint project to make ceramic tiles to cover the undercover walkway of our school.

There will be an exhibition of our work in February 2016 in St Andrews, and all our Creative Industries students and ESOL students are working towards this.



Home Economics

Red

'Red' is up and running again and our new team are working really well. As part of their Skills for Work course in Hospitality, these students run a Bistro on a Tuesday lunchtime where staff and visitors can enjoy a tasty meal. This allows the students to develop their skills in food production and service. If you would like to be added to our mailing list or book for lunch please email us on castlebraered@gmail.com.



On another beautifully sunny day the 'Red' team served a lot of happy customers at the Portobello Village Show which was held in Rosefield Park. Our stall is becoming quite a feature of the Show with customers returning year after year to sample our produce.

Taking part in this requires a great deal of commitment from the students who give up their weekend, coming in to school on the Saturday to bake fresh bread and decorate cakes and then running the stall on the Sunday. A big well done and thank you to everyone involved.



Future Chef

As runner up in the national final of FutureChef 2015, Jai Parsons was invited to demonstrate some of his dishes at the Scottish Learning Festival which was held in Glasgow recently. This was a fairly daunting task but Jai tackled it with his usual flair. The aim of this demonstration was to promote the FutureChef competition and give people an idea of what it involves. Those in the audience who tasted his food were certainly very impressed.

As a result of taking part in the competition last year we now have a close link with Prestonfield House Hotel and Jai has secured a part-time job in the kitchens there. This is giving him valuable experience and an opening into a career which he is hoping to follow when he leaves school.

We are about to launch FutureChef 2016 and will be looking for two students to represent the school in the Edinburgh and Lothians heat which will take place in a local college before Christmas. Look out for further news of our progress through the competition this year.



We also had a successful coffee morning in aid of MacMillan Cancer and raised £400.00.



The RED Team cater for many events which take place in the school.

Guests were particularly impressed with the amazing presentation and service at the 'Creative Conversations' Breakfast.



Castlebrae's New Nurture Group Creates its own Bubble

Following the training of a number of CHS staff in the creation of a nurture group, the first group was established in June. For the start of this session a dedicated room was transformed to reflect the principles laid out in the nurture group training. The nurture room represents a joining of home and school where the two can come together in a calm, structured environment. The aim is to improve confidence and self esteem, tackle difficulties with literacy and numeracy and to work on social and learning skills. Individualised targets are set and the young people support each other to find solutions to difficulties they may be experiencing. The benefits of this strategy are already being noticed across the curriculum. There are now three groups running and the students speak very positively about their experiences in the room they have called 'The Bubble!'



SkillForce Provide a Licence to Thrill!

Four of our students took part in a very successful overnight residential stay in Dundee as part of their SkillForce programme to develop skills in teamwork, map-reading and navigation.

As you can see, the boys were treated to a night at the cinema, as their effort and commitment had been so outstanding. Our SkillForce Partners, Derek Rhodan and Anna Anderson said, 'The trip went amazingly well and the students were a credit to themselves and the school.'

Go, Go, Go Green Power at East Fortune!

On Sunday 6th September, a group of our students travelled to East Fortune racetrack to race their Green Power Car, built by them with the support of Edinburgh College and sponsored by Lamborghini. The event was part of the Green Power Trust's challenge, with the aim of inspiring future engineers.

The Castlebrae team joined teams from the College, as well as other teams from as far afield as Germany and Poland, in a test of endurance for the electric powered cars. Our team of 6 students – Chelsea Reid, Susan Dodds, Sean McGinnis, Callum Garriock, Callum Jordan and Brandon Mould – made an early start as checks and tests of the car were needed before practise runs on the circuit. Two races, each 90 minutes long, took place with our 6 budding Grand Prix drivers dividing into two teams of 3. Reaching speeds of 30mph, the challenge was to see how many laps of the East Fortune circuit could be completed. This was a fabulous event for our young people, who were thrilled to be driving the car they had built and to top it all, the Castlebrae Team WON Best Newcomer AND first prize in their event category! Fantastic! The drivers were already planning possible improvements to the car for next time, meaning this fantastic partnership will continue and our team will go on developing their skills and knowledge in Engineering, gaining accreditation and awards for their hard work.



Former Pupil Stories

NATASHA McLEOD

My name is Natasha McLeod and I am a former Castlebrae pupil. I stayed on at school until my 6th year and achieved four Highers- English, Product Design, Biology and Art and Design. I then went on to study at Stirling University where I undertook a course in English Studies with Professional Education. I thoroughly enjoyed university, especially my teaching placements which allowed me to make sure that I definitely wanted to be a teacher. I am now in my probation year at Lasswade high school in Midlothian, which is very different to Castlebrae as it has around 1500 pupils! Castlebrae is a great school with lots of support, I realise this even more now that I am in a very big school and feel like a small fish in a big pond!

DAMIEN MASON

After leaving school I studied a number of different things from music to science and eventually settled on studying theology. I spent four years studying Divinity (or theology) at Edinburgh University and it was during this time that I decided I wanted to become a priest in the Church of England. I had always felt drawn towards doing something

related to ministry within the church, as I had been an organist in various churches since I was about 14. However, I felt I needed more time to explore my calling to this kind of life.

From Edinburgh I went to live and work in a parish in North London and spent two years there as a Pastoral Assistant gaining lots of experience of working with people and discerning my vocation. During this time I got married to Hannah whom I met in 2008 when we were both reading theology at Edinburgh who was teaching in London during this time. In 2013 I was selected for ordination by the Bishop of London and was sent to train for ordination in Oxford. I studied for a Masters in Theology at the University of Oxford for two years which formed part of my training for ordination in the Church of England.



In July 2015 I was ordained in St Paul's Cathedral as a Deacon, to serve as a Curate in a parish in London where I will be for the next three years. Next year, I will be ordained as a Priest by my bishop. Hannah works as a teacher of Religious Studies in London.

Community Office Info

Castlebrae offers a wide range of adult education classes. Staff are committed to offering a supportive and positive learning experience whilst providing adult that offer learning opportunities in a relaxed and friendly environment.

We run a varied programme for adults and our current classes include; Spanish, Art, Cookery, Woodwork, Instrument Making, and ESOL

For further details on classes, fees or general class enquiries, please contact Donna Hollands or Sandra Donaldson on 0131 661 4049 or visit the school website Community pages www.castlebrae.org.uk

Enrolments take place at the School Community Office before the start of the class each term or can be made online at www.joininedinburgh.org/castlebrae with the exception of the ESOL class. Please see below for details.

ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language)

Monday-Thursday 12.30pm-2.30pm

This is a mixed level class and can provide an opportunity to gain British Citizenship. Students interested in this class should contact Edinburgh College for further details, enrolment and fees on 0131 535 4630



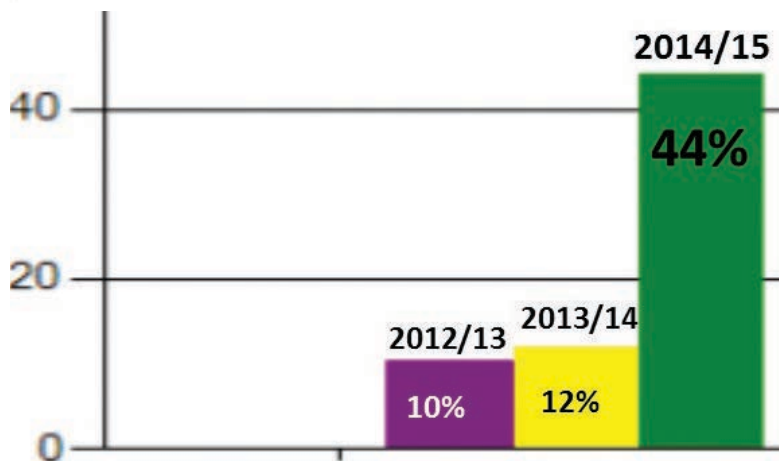
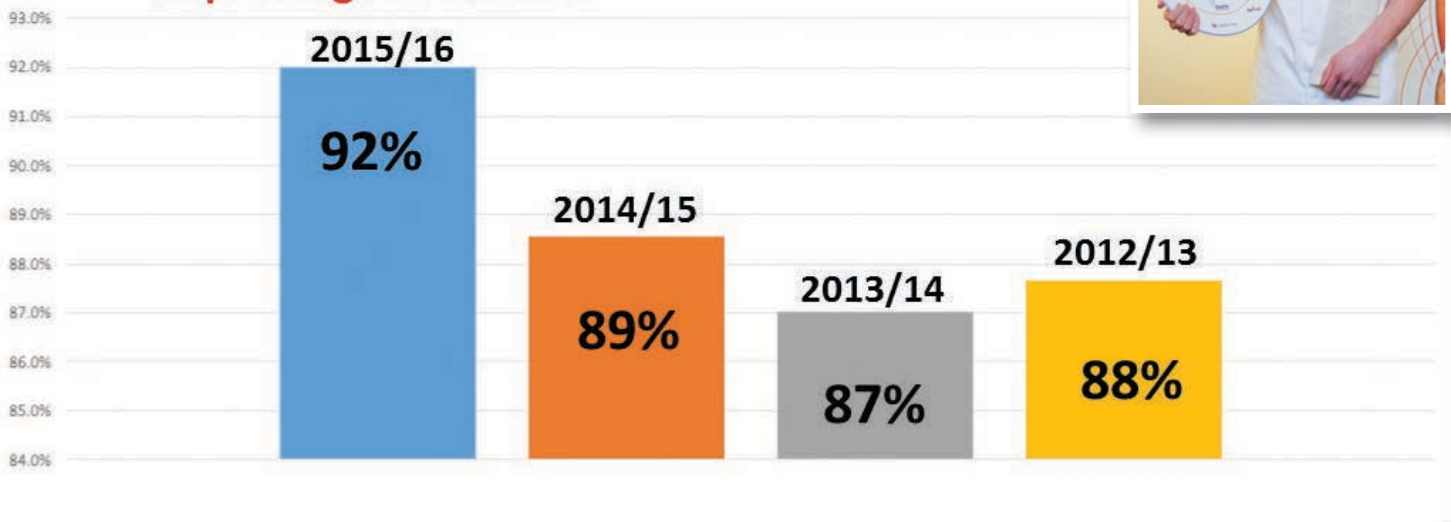
CASTLEBRAE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

An Ethos of Ambition: Determined to Succeed

“Our vision is to provide a curriculum that will help all learners achieve their potential. We encourage our young people to work hard so that they have the confidence and motivation to make the most of all opportunities and to experience success.”



Improving Attendance



The graph above shows how our attendance so far this session has improved on past years.

The graph to the left shows the percentage of our students who by S5 have achieved Level 5 in Literacy and Numeracy. We increased this by 32% this year!



We're Online with The Chronicle!

<http://chronicleonline.net> is the community website for East Edinburgh and news from Castlebrae already features strongly within the site's posts.