



St Thomas of Aquin's High School In Focus Newsletter ~ June 2016



Message from the Head Teacher

Dear Parents/Carers

I extend a warm welcome to all pupils, parents, and staff to the summer edition of In Focus.

The summer term is always a busy time of the year with the completion of the SQA exams, the start of the new timetable, the planned fieldtrips, and welcoming all the Primary 7 pupils to the 3-day visit.

There have been a number of changes to staffing since our last edition of In Focus. Mr Madden, Curricular Leader of Religious Education, is leaving us to take up a teaching post in Fife. Ms Cairney, Teacher of Religious Education, has left St Thomas' and will be leaving Scotland to take up a teaching post in Kenya. Mrs Callion, Chemistry Teacher, is taking a year's maternity leave and we wish her, her husband, and baby Cameron all the best. Mr Hare, PE probationer, will be leaving the school in June and we wish him all the best in his next post. Mrs G Johnson, Temporary Teacher of Biology will be leaving us to take up a post in Currie Community High School and we thank her for all the work she has put in this year. Ms A. Luque, Temporary Modern Languages Teacher, will be leaving the school to take up a post at Clifton Hall. Kirsten Craig, Classroom support assistant, will be leaving St Thomas' to take up her Degree at Edinburgh University. Fr Scally will step down from the role of School's Chaplain, and Rev Nicky Welsh has been appointed by His Grace, Leo Cushley. We thank Fr Scally for all the work and support he has offered the school. Finally, Lisa Armstrong, Clerical support assistant, will be leaving St Thomas' in June to take up her position with Health and Social Care in July. On behalf of the community of St Thomas' I wish her all the best. We wish all of our colleagues every happiness and success in their new schools. I have been interviewing candidates for a number of positions at the school and I can now update you with the staffing positions:

Subject	Successful candidate	Start date
Chemistry Teacher Temporary	Ms S Cammack	August in-service
Business Studies Probationer	Ms C Thomson	August in-service
Maths Teacher Temporary	Mr H Davidson	August in-service
English Teacher Temporary	Mr C. Pollard	August in-service
Physics Teacher Permanent	Mrs P Ritchie	August in-service
Curricular Leader of Religious Education	Mr C Wotherspoon	August in-service
Depute Head Permanent	Ms M Gardner	24 June

Biology Teacher Temporary	Ms K Henderson	August in-service
Chemistry Teacher Temporary	Mr M Wilson	August in-service

The 2016 Iceland trip has been a great success. I would like to thank Ms Quigley, Mr Linden, Ms Nicholson, and Mrs McKernan for their excellent leadership and management of the trip. The pupils had a great experience and the pictures and videos I have seen not only showcase what a fantastic experience the trip was but also what a credit the young people are to the school and to their families.

The S1 Lagganlia residential returned to St Thomas' on Friday 24 June and once again the pupils who participated experienced an action-packed fieldtrip. I would like to thank Ms Whiffen, Ms Cairns, Mr Murray, Mr Rizza, Mr Hare, and Ms Main for all their organisation and support. I hope the S1 residential continues to grow to a point where the entire year group are at Lagganlia. The 2017 trip has already been booked and will take place in the last week of the 2017 summer term.

On Thursday 16 June, the final of St Thomas' Youth Philanthropy Initiative took place with six S2 finalists presenting on behalf of Make a Wish, Care and Repair, Equality Council for Scotland, Kindred Advocacy, One Parents' Families, and Bloodwise charities. The pupils excelled with their presentation and animation skills. The passion with which they pitched for the £3000 prize for their identified charity was quite outstanding. The winning team of Alicia Pyzik, Catlin-Rose Brock, Kasia Bilka, and Daniela Strand for the Make a Wish charity represented the school in the national YPI day on Tuesday 21 June. I would like to thank the fantastic work of Ms C Kelly, Miss G Kelly, and Mr McCormick who led and managed this great experience for the whole of S2.

Congratulations to S2 Dylan Neilson who plays a role in a new film called Tommy's Honour. The film is directed by Jason Connery and also stars Sam Neill and Peter Mullan. The film premiered on Thursday 16 June. Dylan had a fantastic time during filming and thoroughly enjoyed the premiere. I am looking forward to watching the film during the summer holidays.

The 3 Day Primary 7 visit has been a great success this year. I would like to thank Ms Jean Pierre for her strategic leadership and management of the entire event. Our new S1 cohort had a fantastic time, experiencing lessons in the school, getting to know one another and meeting staff. The S6 pupils who volunteered to support the visiting Primary 7 pupils excelled in their roles. I met with the

entire S6 year group on Monday 27 June and congratulated the volunteers. I would also like to thank the great work of Ms Bendall, Ms Laverick, Mrs Teasdale, Ms C Kelly, Ms G Kelly, and Mr McCormick in supporting the 3 day visit. I would also like to thank Ms Statham, Mrs Gilroy, Mrs McKernan, Mrs Armstrong, Ms Hunter, Ms Craig, and Mrs Ferrante in supporting the administration of the 3 Day visit.

Christopher Santini
Acting Head Teacher

SQA Exams

The whole school community extends our best wishes to all of our young people waiting for their National Exams in August.

Candidates can register with the SQA before 18th July to receive their result by text or email. The SQA have produced a leaflet entitled *relaxaminations* which details information for pupils and parents regarding the 2016 exam diet and can be found on the SQA website. Pupils will receive results by text or email by 8.00am on the 9th of August if they sign up to this service. All pupils will receive their results by first class mail on 9th August. Mr Santini and Ms Gardner will be in school on the 9th and 10th of August to meet with pupils to discuss their results. Candidates should ensure that if there has been any change in name, address or personal details they should notify the school immediately.

Post Results Service

Information about this service and the school's policy on this can be found on St Thomas of Aquin's website in the study and exam support section (SQA support).

The Royal Highland Show



S3 Geography and Hospitality classes attended the Royal Highland Show on Thursday 23rd June. Pupils had the opportunity to explore many interesting exhibits from major chains including ASDA, Tesco, Marks and Spencer's, LIDL and ALDI as well as getting to see many farm animals and agricultural competitions whilst at the show. The pupils also took part in the Quality Meat Scotland food demonstration and workshop where they made beef and

couscous, jus, shepherd's pie and pork pate. The pupils had a wonderful day and were also involved in some 'Celebrity Spotting' during the day. Can you spot the celebrity in the image?

Caritas – Love is an Extraordinary Force

Congratulations to our successful Caritas pupils – Alishas Nabi, Siobahn Holborn, Lucie Broadbent, Jackie Flynn, Jonathan Robertson, Bonni Murray and Lauren Bailey.

Their work for the school and parish community was highly recommended as was their reflective writing and final presentations.

Unfortunately they were not all able to attend the reward ceremony in Glasgow.

The school was commended on their support for pupils as the quality of the final submissions and journals showed a mature understanding of the aims and purpose of the Caritas Award.



Food Social Truck & Visit to Whitmuir Farm

A lucky group of S3 pupils have been the first to experience a new social enterprise focussed on local food. Working closely with the team of chefs from the Edinburgh Food Social, pupils researched, developed and costed a menu. They then prepared and sold their wares from a food truck in the school playground during lunch on 17 May 2016.

The pupils got a real insight into the food industry and made over 100 fish, veg and organic beef burgers and brownies which sold out within 30 minutes. An additional challenge was that all their ingredients had to be locally sourced and seasonal. The group of pupils showed a real sense of pride as several arrived early for school and worked right through service. Their enthusiasm was infectious as many pupils and staff who would normally go out of school to buy their lunch choose to remain. One participating student said that this was by far the best day of school he had ever had.

The session on the truck was the culmination of two weeks of work with pupils from the school looking at local produce, planning and costing a menu using interesting local ingredients such as rainbow carrots and wild garlic. The pupils showed a fantastic level of engagement, having raised funds for the initiative by selling baked goods to their friends and family. They each had a role to play in the delivery of the lunch and worked incredibly hard to make the day a great success.

The money raised by the pupils will now go to providing a trip to local organic farm Whitmuir Farm near West Linton. There pupils will learn more about how the ingredients they have used have been produced.



Meaningful May is a programme that allows pupil to follow an alternative timetable during exam leave. This has involved many activities including:

- **Ready, Steady, Cook!** A whole day in the Ms Winders creating a master meal. This involved the pupils showed off the culinary skills by making a delicious Savoury Pesto Pinwheel, Chocolate Chip Cookies and were shown how to set a table and creatively fold napkins.



- **Davis Cup Trophy Tour** by Mr Rafferty and Mr Whyte. Pupils were given a tennis lesson as well as the chance of a photo with the trophy ; celebrating Great Britain's success in the Davis Cup!



- **Experiencing Modern Working Practises.** Mrs Nicolson and Mrs Turner took the group to a café where they worked on short story writing surrounded by the other people working whilst on the move!

- **Ghost Tour.** Ms Whiffen and the Meaningful May crew had a spooky afternoon walking around some of the most haunted sites in Edinburgh. We learned about the dark history of Greyfriar's Kirkyard as well as some of the wicked tales of the Grassmarket's past.

- **Swimming the English Channel.** This involved Ms Quigley and Mrs Turner taking the pupils to the commonwealth pool to swim the equivalent of the English Channel, we only got half way!



- **Spin classes** with Mrs Turner – although many did not make it to the end of the class! Mr Philips also experienced cramp during the warm up!

- **Games with Mr Lodge.** Pupils were making the most of the wonderful weather down at the meadows flying kites, playing football, softball and rugby.

- **Observation Drawings.** Mr Cunningham and Mrs Wilson took the group to the museum to look at textures and patterns.



- **Climbing a Volcano** – This involved a lovely walk around Arthur seat on the sunniest day of the year with Mrs Turner and Ms Wojcicka.

- **Home Cinema Experience** with Mrs Laverick.

- A trip to the **beach** with Mrs Turner and Mrs Patrick.

- Various visit to **galleries** by Ms Cairns, Mr Lafferty, Ms MacDonald and Ms McClelland Pupils were given a private tour of the Scottish National Gallery and the Fruit Market Gallery; celebrating Scottish art of past and present!

- **Zoo Trip** – Mr Linden, Mrs Turner and Mrs Devlin took a group to the zoo which involved visiting all of the animal enclosures and getting a special tour of the chimpanzee and monkey enclosures. Pupils looked at endangered species and human impacts on the environment.

- **Museum trip** with Mrs Turner and Ms Quigley.

- **Quiz time** with Mr Murray.

- **Football** on more than one occasion with Mr Hare.

- Very competitive **Sporting Challenges** with Mr Rizza and Mrs Turner

- **Computer games** with Mr Herbison.

- **Murrayfield Ice skating** - Coach and ex world class ice skater Nicolas Salicis gave us a really informative tour of the ice rink and plant room, telling us about its listed building status (they're not allowed to change the wooden seats!) and how the ice is made and

maintained. We also discussed all the different types of ice sports such as ice hockey and curling before having the ice rink to ourselves for 90 minutes. Some ice hockey stars of the future were born – Kyle Cranston and Kieran O'Neill and maybe Mrs Patrick!

- **Grant Institute** with Mrs Patrick and Mrs Turner – Kings Buildings Volcano Presentation. Lecturer Kate Saunders and her colleague put together a really interesting morning for us at the Kings buildings. We watched a PowerPoint on the different types of Volcanos before trying some experiments ourselves and examining many different samples of volcanic rock – some collected from Arthurs Seat. Leon and Devon asked all the rights questions and everybody really enjoyed the visit.

- **Bowling** with Ms Quigley.

- **Fire Station Museum** with Mrs Turner.



- **BT Murrayfield Stadium** – Pupils were given a tour of the BT Murrayfield Stadium and an opportunity to experience what it would feel like to be a rugby player. Mrs Turner also enjoyed watching the Scottish Rugby team training.



Duke of Edinburgh Update

Congratulations to the following pupils who have achieved their Duke of Edinburgh Award since the last newsletter.

D of E Bronze Award

- Kieran Fleming

D of E Silver Award

- Matthew Deponio
- Ittihad Ahmed
- Lydia Dowling-Clarke



Also well done to our Gold team - Lydia Dowling-Clarke, Lauren Stephenson, Joanna Thomson, Ittihad Ahmed and Matthew Deponio – who successfully completed their Gold Qualifier.



Our S3 Bronze group have completed their practice and qualifying expeditions and are now busy finishing the other sections of the Award.

Some pictures from the Bronze expeditions. Well done teams.



Edinburgh Active Schools Dance Extravaganza

Congratulations to all the girls who participated in the first ever Edinburgh Active Schools Dance Extravaganza. Despite very little practice the girls managed to reach the final and performed on stage at the Pleasance Theatre on Wednesday 23 March.

All girls performed to an extremely high standard and were an asset to the school.

A massive thank you to both Emily Harkins (S5) and Kimberley Anderson (S5) for all their help running the dance club this year.



Young Writers' Society - Congratulations

Congratulations to St Thomas' poet, Alexander Day! His work has been selected by the Young Writers' Society to be published in their volume of pieces by teenage poets, to be published in August 2016. Alex's poem was chosen out of entries from all over the UK. He also received a certificate of merit entitled "A Talent for Writing Award." Alex is currently studying Advanced Higher English.

Edinburgh School Athletics

On Wednesday 8 June 2016, fifteen S2 to S4 pupils took part in the Edinburgh Schools Athletics Competition at Meadowbank.

The pupils competed in a wide range of events and there were some very pleasing results.

Alixé Philips won the U-15 Girls 1500m by a long way, showing excellent form throughout the race. Based on Alixé performance in this 1500m, she has been selected to represent Edinburgh Schools in the Scottish Schools U15 inter area match at Grangemouth Stadium on Thursday 16 June. This is fantastic achievement. Well done Alixé.

Dominique Zahra placed 3rd in the U-17 Boys Javelin, which was a fantastic effort considering he had only had one lesson to practice before the event and was competing against in a strong field.

Erin O'Neill did very well in making it into the final of both the 100m and 200m in the U-14 Girls category. In both finals Erin was up against a number of athletes almost a year older than her but managed to compete very well.

Beth Morrow placed 4th in her U-14 girls 1500m. In the same race Bo Willis also produced a good time and worked incredibly hard throughout the race.

Sebastian King also placed 4th in his U-15 boys 400m.

Maka Musamba was very unfortunate to not make the final of the U-14 Boys 100m, missing out by the smallest of margins. Maka also competed in the Long Jump where he showed good technique. We are still waiting confirmation on the final results

Georgia Gill was unfortunate not to make the final of the U-14 girls 100m but produced some great jumps in the Long Jump event. We are still waiting for confirmation on the distance she jumped and the results. This is the same for Bo Willis who also jumped very well with Georgia in the Long Jump.

In the U-14 boys Javelin George Gray showed excellent throwing technique in each of his attempts and placed well in a very strong group.

Both Michael McDonald (U-15) and Gordon Simpson (U-14) ran well in their respective 800m races pushing their opponents hard and showing good technique.

The U15 boys of Cammy Scott (U15 Shot Putt), Moray Stiven (U-17 Long Jump) and Mark Robertson (U-17 100m) all put in a huge amount of effort and were unlucky not to finish in higher positions or make it through to their respective finals. All boys were competing in very strong fields.

Throughout the whole day the pupils were a credit to the school. They worked incredibly hard and represented St Thomas' very well.

'Scrub up on Science'

Ruby Dourley, Silvie Furneaux, Gemma Ireland and Shakira Shanley (all S2) went to great effort to produce a video presentation for creating a bath bomb in the science lab this term all in aid of the Scrub Up On Science competition. Similarly, Simone Smith, Emer Irvine, Bo Willis and Jessica Wright (all S1) went to the same effort to produce a poster of their Bath Bomb. Both groups of girls put an incredible amount of thought, time and enthusiasm into the project and deserve some recognition whether they win or not!

'Geography Takes You Places'

Icelandic Excursion 2016

S3, 4 and 5 Geography pupils went on the trip of a lifetime to Iceland between the 12th-16th June this year. The pupils had the opportunity to see many wonderful and mesmerising sites in this exciting country. Daily excursions included visits to Thingvellir National Park, Gullfoss Water fall, The Secret Lagoon (featured in Rick Stein's weekend breaks), Mud Puddles, Seljalandsfoss, Eyjafallajokull Visitors Centre, Skogafoss, Vik, the luxurious Blue Lagoon, Solheimajokull Glacier and finished with a tour around Reykjavik.

Pupils were accompanied by Miss Quigley, Mrs Nicholson, Mrs Mc Kernan and Mr Linden. All pupils had an amazing time and were marvelled by the scenery on display in this Geographical Paradise. The St. Thomas of Aquin's 'Icelandic Crew' certainly made their mark on this fabulous country as our tour guide Anthony stated that they were the 'best group he had ever had!!!'.



S3 Modern Studies London Trip

In April, Mrs Nicholson, Miss Whiffen and members from the S3 Modern Studies class had a whirlwind overnight trip to London to tour Westminster. Before completing a workshop and meeting our MP, Tommy Sheppard, the group got to go all through Parliament including visiting special committee rooms and the House of Lords. When not at Parliament, the class braved the busy London Underground and covered a lot of ground across the city visiting the Natural History Museum, Harrods, Chinatown, Buckingham Palace, the London Eye and the London Dungeon. We enjoyed fantastic weather and great company. The group is looking forward to their upcoming trip the Scottish Parliament where they will be touring the parliament and viewing First Minister's Questions.



Visit to Scottish Parliament

Pupils studying Modern Studies also had the opportunity to visit the Scottish Parliament (S3 and Higher) and our Advanced Higher pupils had a very interesting visit to the Sheriff Court in Edinburgh as part of their Crime and Law Unit. Pupils also participated in a pre-referendum presentation and debate on 23 June before voting on whether the UK should Remain or Leave the EU.

