

DUNOON GRAMMAR SCHOOL: ACHIEVEMENT REPORT 2008

1. SUMMARY

A report on the performance of all Argyll and Bute pupils in the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examination results was presented to the Strategic Policy Committee on 20 November 2008.

This report, presented by the Head Teacher, Mr Stewart Shaw, outlines the major achievements of the school in 2007/8 and includes the SQA examination results for pupils who sat examinations in May/June 2008. The results are based on pre-appeal data.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Area Committee are asked to note the continuing improvement in the performance of pupils and the commitment of staff in their examination successes and in the wider aspects of achievement across the school.

3. DETAILS

The details are included in the attached report from the school.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Policy:	None
Financial:	None
Personnel:	None
Equal Opportunities:	None

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Argyll and Bute Council: Community Services – Education Dunoon Grammar School - Report on Achievement 2007-2008

Introduction

2007-08 was another successful year in Dunoon Grammar School. The School moved into its new accommodation in August 2007 and although there are some teething problems the overwhelming view of staff, pupils, parents and visitors is that the premises are first class. The school has had a busy eventful year. There are positive signs in our examination results and a plethora of opportunities offered to our young people to show their talents in the wider learning agenda. At the end of the session Mr Joe Rhodes retired as head Teacher and was replaced by Mr Stewart Shaw.

What we intend to improve in 2008/9

Priority 1: A Curriculum for Excellence

We will engage with our partner primaries to begin to develop a seamless curriculum from P5 to S3.

We will introduce Skills for Work courses in S3.

We will trial an interdisciplinary task on Citizenship with S2.

Staff will begin to match courses into the new outcome and experience statements issued by Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Priority 2: Learning and Teaching

We will continue to embed the techniques of the Assessment is for Learning programme.

We will continue to incorporate the use of ICT in learning.

We will continue to focus on raising attainment, particularly in S5.

Priority 3: Self Evaluation

We will develop a culture of self evaluation which responds positively to client constructive criticism and which allows us to look critically at our policies and practices to systematically identify our strengths and weaknesses with a view to informing us of our improvement needs.

Priority 4: Pupil Support

We will develop a fully integrated Pupil Support Department and an ethos of inclusion within the school community: the additional support needs of all pupils will be known, understood and openly recognised as a shared responsibility of all staff.

We will review current practices in the teaching of Personal, Social and Health Education

We will introduce assertive discipline techniques consistently across the school.

We will pilot a programme of personal support in S5 via Assertive Mentoring and by running a Study Skill evening delivered by Strathclyde University.

Attainment

The school has a standing target to raise attainment for all pupils across the curriculum. Test and examination data are regularly analysed to help identify areas for improvement.

5-14 Attainment

The percentage of the S2 roll attaining or exceeding the 5-14 level E by the end of 2007/8 school year was as follows:

	School %	Argyll & Bute %
Reading	65	72
Writing	52	59
Mathematics	63	70

Pupil Performance in all three categories has improved from the previous year's figures.

SQA Results 2008

	School	A & B	Scotland
In S4 5+ Standard Grades 1-6	96	94	90
5+ Standard Grades 1-4	86	83	76
5+ Standard Grades 1-2	37	36	34
In S5 1+ Higher Grades A-C	43	44	38
3+ Higher Grades A-C	21	24	22
5+ Higher Grades A-C	6	10	10
In S6 3+ Higher Grades A-C	25	30	30
5+ Higher Grades A-C	15	19	19
1+ Advanced Higher	9	12	12

S4 performed well in the SQA examinations being above Argyll and Bute and the National averages in all three measures.

There were strong performances in Biology, French, Geography and PE at Higher Level; and in Computing Studies, Hospitality and French in S4.

What else happens in Dunoon Grammar School?

The following represents a selection of other activities and achievements of pupils in Dunoon Grammar School.

History/Modern Studies

Department staff run a History Club; a Classics Club and a Debating Society. History students in December visited an Imperial War Museum exhibition in Manchester.

Standard Grade Modern Studies visits to the UK, Scottish & European Parliaments - meeting MPs, MSPs & MEPs and presenting a petition on the International Year of Sanitation to ask for more to be done to supply clean water to parts of Africa without access.

Higher Modern Studies class trip to the UK Parliament - meeting with local MP to discuss his work in Parliament and the constituency; visiting Dover House the HQ of the Scotland Office, meeting senior civil service officials and ministers at the Scotland Office to discuss the work of government and the civil service.

Organisation of a Fairtrade coffee morning by senior pupils supported by the local Co-op and for all staff and senior pupils to try different Fairtrade products.

Business Studies and Computing

Three teams of S3 Standard Grade Business Management pupils from Dunoon Grammar entered the dragon's den to 'pitch' groundbreaking business ideas to an esteemed panel of judges.

144 teams from throughout Scotland entered this year's Youth Challenge Competition, run by Highland and Island Enterprise - by entering and explaining their idea on the competitions website. Only 30 of these teams were then shortlisted to make a video-conference presentation to a panel of judges including the Head of BT in Scotland, the Head of Microsoft in Scotland and a Professor from MIT in the USA.

Dunoon Grammar School was one of the most successful schools in the competition with three teams included in the shortlist – DBMC, The Sophisticated Highlanders and the Technolochicks.

BREAKING NEWS: One team from Dunoon Grammar School has won through to the next phase of the Youth Challenge. The Sophisticated Highlanders have been invited to attend a full day workshop in Inverness, working with Business Professional to develop their idea further.

Enterprise Activities

The School's Young Enterprise Company was successful in completing the session and were runners-up at the Argyll and Bute Presentation Evening in Inveraray in May.

We had a successful "Greenfingers" project organised and run by Andrew Anderson, an S6 pupil who involved some S1 pupils with Additional Support Needs. This involved the buying, planting and growing of containers which were then sold to staff and friends to cover costs and profit to local charity. Andrew was awarded a prize of £100 donated by Andrew Kean of Firstpoint USA for Enterprise.

Modern Languages

German Exchange 20th anniversary - leading to a British Council celebration fund award of £5000, an article about the department in the Times Educational Supplement and invitations for Lesley Clark (leader of the exchange) to attend/speak at language-learning events in London and Stirling. She was also short-listed as a nominee for Teacher of the Year for her work in this area.

Visit to Glasgow Film Theatre to see a French film (S4-S6).

Launch of a French penpal scheme with Dunoon Grammar's old French partner school.

Launch of a Chinese penpal scheme and Beginners' Chinese classes at lunchtimes.

Launch of Spanish learners' after-school club.

Music

The Junior Choir gave a Christmas performance at Inverreck House

The Senior Choir performed at the Loch Fyne food fair and at the Community switching on of the Christmas lights.

There were several noteworthy individual performances:

At the Kirn Gala, Leanne Campbell performed her own composition/song;

Ryan Heddon, Liam Sommerville and Jonathan McGraw performed acoustic Guitar and Vocal music; and Megan Strapp sang.

Hayley Macfarlane was accepted for the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

Jonathan McGraw, Scott McGuigan, Leah O' Neil and Ryan Heddon took part in Rock School Residential course in Oban (CAST).

The Pipe Band took part at the Sunset Ceremony before Cowal Games and at the Cowal Round Table charity event.

Talent Show

In April a packed forum at the Grammar School was entertained by a plethora of talent. The show was in tribute to 'Sandra the Jannie' – Sandra Waugh.

School Show (Bugsy Malone)

Pupils and teachers teamed up to produce a fantastic version of the musical, mafia comedy Bugsy Malone in June. The show was a great success, playing to full houses each night. Pupils from S1 to S6 were involved in leading and managing all aspects of the show including performing, stage crew, sound, lighting, costumes, the band, props, make up, advertising, front of house and the design and creation of the posters, programmes, and tickets. The three performances were sold out and involved the whole community. Local businesses were also involved in advertising in the programme. Publicity shots appeared in the local paper.

Pupils in the cast, band and back stage crew were involved in rehearsing and preparing for the show from December 2007. They did this in their own time after school twice a week and at weekends in the run up to the show.

Argyll and Bute Education Awards

In the "Everyone Counts" category 'S2 Superstars' received a 'Highly Commended' Award.

Sam Coley received the Director's Award in the "Making a difference" category for his virtual walk-through computer presentation of the new building. In addition he received an award from Mansell for his informative newsletters about the progress of the new building.

Drama

The Drama department was heavily involved in many special events to promote wider achievement.

S1 Playfair Day

All S1 involved with participation from some senior pupils in S4/5/6 in leading workshops & performing a short play.

Domestic Abuse Conference

A group of Senior Drama students performed at an area wide Domestic Abuse Conference in Royal Marine Hotel. Students were also used as group facilitators for workshops.

S2 Citizenship Days

Senior Drama students were involved in taking workshop groups and performing as 'casualties' in the event.

Gavin Campbell (S6) was asked to take part in a documentary/ film for Strathclyde Police in 2007/08 which was distributed on DVD to highlight the work of the Strathclyde Force.

Some of the senior Drama students were also involved with the Whodunnit Day and in the initial setting up of the Radio Station.

Pupils in all years participated in a number of Theatre visits and events.

Small group of S4 pupils performed in the Christmas concert.

Sporting Achievements

Christopher Ritchie was selected for the Scottish Junior International Swimming Squad. He represented Scotland in Belgium. He also won an open-water swimming event (ie including adults) across the Clyde.

Fraser Keenan was selected as Cowal Junior Rugby player of the year. He has been selected to go to France this summer to play.

Meghan Nicholson has won numerous medals for fencing.

Jane Thomson, Rachelle MacOneghy and Mhairi O'Neill were selected for the under 18 Scottish Rugby squad. Jane was selected to play

Science

The annual Costa Rica trip was again successful.

The Science Club continues to stimulate pupils' interest in scientific applications.

Higher Chemistry and Biology pupils had a revision course at Paisley University for a day

A group of S3 pupils went on a trip to Glasgow University for a health related careers information day.

Other Activities and Achievements

Second Year

S2 had a busy year of whole year activities: Study Skills for Starters, Superstar Assemblies, Glenbranter Forest Visit and the 'Tempest' by the Walking Theatre Company for the top 40 pupils, and Citizenship Day. They also participated in the S2 Cook – Off. All six form classes had to put forward a team which was co-ordinated by the Pupil Council. An enjoyable day was had by all.

Cybersafety Week

This whole school was involved in this initiative which highlighted the need to use the internet safely.

Radio Station

When we move to the new building we introduced "Generation DGS" – our own Radio Station broadcast in the forum. The Radio was managed and staffed by pupils from S1-S6.

Website

The school website which was re-launched after the format was changed. The website is most attractive and informative. It is receiving many thousand hits in a year.

Fashion Show

A group of enthusiastic S3 and S4 pupils organised a very successful Fashion Show.

Conferences

In the course of the year various conferences are run to enrich our young people's learning: The Third Option Conference on self-employment for S6 and the Careers Conference for S4 being only 2 such examples.

Conclusion

As can be seen from this report the learning opportunities in Dunoon Grammar School are plentiful and varied. The above is only a selection of all that happens in a school year. The staff and pupils work hard to ensure that Dunoon Grammar School is an establishment of which the community of Cowal can be justifiably proud.