

Good evening and welcome to Drummond's annual Celebration of Achievement. It is lovely to see you all here to celebrate the achievements of our young people. This evening is an opportunity to reflect upon the year and to celebrate the aspiration, hard work, commitment, talents and achievements of our young people. Teaching is a wonderful vocation and we teachers always aim to inspire young people but it is your children who inspire us in so many ways and we proudly celebrate their achievements this evening.

It is now a year since I took up post and found myself in this exact same spot giving this speech for a school I had only been in for around 12 days. I spent most of my first week in Drummond gathering information about what had happened over that past year for the speech and it was a great way to get to know the school. I was amazed and impressed at all the city wide and national competitions and events our pupils had been involved in, ranging across all areas of the curriculum from Maths, Sports, Art and the Technologies. At that point I barely knew the staff or pupils I was congratulating but it has been a pleasure to get to know and work with everyone. This year has been one of the most rewarding and enjoyable of my career: I am hugely privileged to work with your children and my colleagues in Drummond. I have asked a lot of staff with many changes in school, some small some huge, and they have all risen to the challenge whole heartedly. I would like to take this opportunity to publically thank all staff at Drummond for their support, and also pay tribute to our Parent Council for their staunch commitment to the school and active participation in what we have been working on this year.

Everyone in Drummond is focused on making the school the best place to be for your children, from redesigning our curriculum and introducing 7 National Courses, to our relentless focus on excellent Learning and Teaching. The school's National 5 results last year were the highest in several years and we look forward to seeing the results of staff's and pupils' hard work this August as we build upon our successes.

Drummond's whole approach is one of an ambitious and positive ethos and we have introduced house assemblies to strengthen the feeling of community and citizenship within our school, and to publicise and celebrate achievements and events. Our ethos is also something that is tangible to visitors and commented upon. We have welcomed a number of visitors this year, from Deputy First Minister John Swinney to groups of Norwegian and Swedish Head teachers, to members of our community for our Holocaust Evening and all have commented

on the ethos and what wonderful ambassadors our pupils are for our school. In fact, our Norwegian colleagues were so impressed with our pupils, our staff and the quality of learning and teaching that they requested an exchange programme between their schools and Drummond and we are in the early stages of planning this.

The high profile our pupils enjoy in the city has gone from strength to strength, and to give you a flavour of this: in English, Joanna Farrow in S2's short story for Radio 2's 500 Words competition made it through to the last 5,000 out of over 131, 000 entries; in Art, Chi Loi Chan, in S3's poster for the Edinburgh Fringe was shortlisted and is on display at Dynamic Earth; Katherine Dempsie and Peter Wright, both S6, were the only students in Edinburgh to be selected for the prestigious US Summer School programme run by the Sutton Trust; in Maths, a number of pupils from S1 to S6 won gold, silver and bronze awards at the national UKMT maths competitions and Daniel Farrow was invited to participate in a Maths Summer school based on his performance. This is only a small number of the successes Drummond pupils- please do follow us on twitter and the website to get regular updates on what goes on in school.

We also work very hard to build relationships with external partners and they seek us out to offer our pupils opportunities not often seen in other schools: a few examples of this is that our winning team in the Youth Philanthropic Initiative was asked to contribute to a short film that will be shown to other schools who are interested in getting involved in charity fundraising and our Design Engineer Construct pupils starred in a film about infrastructure which is being used internationally for industry experts.

There have been considerable changes to staff this year. We say farewell to retiring colleagues: Rosemary Cameron in Maths, Gill Histon in Science, Lesley Nisbet in English, and to Annie Scanlon our Librarian. In total, they have supported Drummond's young people for a grand total of 61 years, with Annie's length of time in Drummond a particularly impressive 37 years. We wish them all a very long and happy retirement.

We say haste ye back to colleagues who are taking career breaks to pursue new opportunities: Emma Easton in English and Louise Tonner in Modern Studies.

We have welcomed a number of new staff this year: Clare Martin, Head of Department for Social Subjects; Keith Inglis, Head of Department for Science; Sally Barraclough, as Head of Support for Learning and Michael Steel as Head

of Maths. Lindsey Combe will take up post as Teacher of Home Economics in August, as will Sarah Henderson in Modern Studies and Maegan Garland in English.

I leave you with a quote from an American president whose words resonate with me. Not Trump, you'll be glad to hear, but Theodore Roosevelt who said 'Far and away the best prize life has to offer is working hard at work worth doing'. Your children embody that message and it is a pleasure to recognise their hard work this evening.

Thank you, and enjoy the evening.