

Norma Prentice, Head Teacher: Prize-giving Speech Drummond Community High School 15th June 2010

Tonight I have a lot of good news to share with you.

Tonight is about our young people and their achievements for which they have worked so hard.

These achievements are not the end, they are the foundations for even greater success. These students' journey of success is just starting. I firmly believe that partnership-working between home and school is the key to achieving students. I thank all parents and carers for their hard work and support.

As a parent I know how proud and in some cases amazed you will be that your son or daughter has got an award. I remember a few years ago when my daughter returned from a school trip she proudly announced she had been given the award for having the tidiest room. I was astounded as I had spent the time she was away tidying her bedroom and making many trips to the skip.

But let's face it, we all like to get awards. When we do it is visible proof that somebody has recognised how hard we have tried.

Often we feel: Why bother? Why go through all this study? Who cares?

The answer is here tonight. *We care*; we care about hard work. We care about perfection. We care about trying.

Tonight many awards will be given out for effort in a number of areas. Whether for academic achievement, athleticism, citizenship, or for any of the other awards that you will see presented here, these are awards that have been won and won fairly by those who receive them.

To you students, I say that when you step up here tonight, know that we understand the work in the classroom, on the playing field, in all aspects of school life that went into this moment. In a very small way this is our opportunity to say thank-you, thank-you for trying, and thank-you for being you.

I have only been at Drummond for a couple of months and I have been so impressed by the school's achievements.

Changes

There has been a lot of change in the last year and I would now like to take you through this from June 2009.

June

XL 6 pupils achieved gold award.

PE dept took 26 pupils on a water sports trip to Spain.

3 S6 pupils selected to attend Sutton Trust summer school at St. Andrews University.

August

We returned after the break to find out students had achieved well in the SQA exams.

The pupils, staff and community users were promoting Fair-trade within the school and hope to achieve fair-trade status. I have certainly enjoyed the cakes every Friday in the staff room. A big thank you has to go to Annie Scanlon for driving this link. Her hard work and passion for Fair Trade and the Kenya trip are commendable.

September

All S3 standard grade music students participated in the Royal Scottish National Orchestra's competition.

All senior pupils participated in the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's annual Masterworks education programme.

Fiona Fraser, Depute Head Teacher, retired after many valuable years at Drummond.

Hazel Kinnear was appointed Depute, and with vision and enthusiasm took over the remit of curriculum and has kept Drummond at the forefront of CFE.

October

Two S6 pupils [Natasha Wright and Valentina Flex] travelled to Poland as part of the national Lessons from Auschwitz project. On their return, a very moving assembly was delivered and interdisciplinary work occurred across the school. A reflection from an S1 student: 'No-one has the right to treat other people like that'.

Art and Design displayed over 2 nights its extremely high-quality SQA work. Advanced higher work by Lindsey MacLean, who has now just completed her first year at Glasgow School of Art, was also on display.

4 younger pupils took part in the National SDS swimming gala.

And how can we forget that Drummond was visited by HMIE! The report was good and inspectors were impressed by what they saw, and felt the best was yet to come. I also believe this to be the case and thank all pupils, parents and staff who contributed to this successful inspection.

November

For the third year, Drummond entered 2 dance groups in the Edinburgh Schools dance competition.

As part of the WAO 40 students gained a dance leader qualification.

Our active learning staff improvement group delivered high-quality CPD to 90 colleagues. Positive comments flowed from participants - we ran out of time, very enjoyable - would have liked more time.

Student's council staff versus pupil basketball match in aid of Children in Need Staff narrowly won 32 to 30 points.

December

It is the third year the Community Project saw senior pupils entertaining senior citizens to Festive cheer in school.

The first cluster Dance show was held. It was a great success and will be followed by another in June.

Jon Reid left as Head Teacher to return to Larbert. I thank Jon for his vision and creativity that took Drummond on its journey of change.

January

18 senior students and 4 staff went on a 2-day, action-packed visit to London.

Active Schools Programme – up until the end of Jan. 101 pupils have taken part in extra curricular sports clubs. I thank our Active Schools Coordinator – Nicola – for her commitment and enthusiasm.

Skiing WAO won a trophy for the most improved school. The opportunities provided by the Wider Achievement Opportunities are, as you can see, immense.

February

Parents' involvement in their children's learning maximises achievement and the 'Literacy across Learning' evening – 'I'm a parent, help me out here' – certainly gave the large number of parents who attended an opportunity to understand and engage with the role that literacy will play as part of the Curriculum for Excellence. It was also the perfect opportunity to showcase some excellent student work.

21 keen footballers and 2 staff went on a trip of a lifetime to Valencia.

March

S1/S2 came third in a regional football competition.

6 S2 Modern Studies students competed and did very well in a challenging citywide quiz.

The Times Spelling Bee competition saw Drummond winning their heat. I have been so impressed by these pupils; their spelling of chrysanthemum was exceptional.

Douglas Follan retired after 30 years' valued service to the school. I wish to extend my personal thanks for his advice and support.

April

15 pupils from the higher modern studies class visited the Scottish Parliament.

11 students completed the highly acclaimed Confident Leavers programme. Positive comments were abundant – one employer wrote: 'The student has a natural ability to teach – better than any of the teaching students I have ever had!' The children loved her and Drummond should be proud of her.

After months of planning in WAO time, Drummond staged its biggest ever rock concert.

Ross Macnammara was appointed principal teacher at PE at Whs.

May

May 2nd saw 20 senior students from the higher Modern Studies and History attend the Scottish Leaders debate in the Edinburgh festival theatre.

Gillian Tee was given a tour of the school and commented positively about the community classes and initiatives to develop literacy and active learning.

9 senior students, as part of their Wednesday afternoon WAO, were involved in working in care homes. The students raised over £1000 throughout the year to fund activities in the care homes. Their work was praised by Councillor Marilyn McLaren who said: 'Bringing the young and old together is vital in developing awareness about each other. Pupils have gained fantastic life experiences and an understanding of older people making this an inspirational intergenerational project'.

Seoras Lewis was accepted by Broughton Music School. What an amazing achievement. Drummond will miss him but we wish him every success at Broughton.

Staffing

Michelle Gordon

Karen and Ann

Alice

Other staff changes

Vince Spicer appointed PT ASN

Fraser Mcallum appointed PT Social Subjects

Vaila McLaren appointed Acting Depute Head Teacher

Phillippa Drummond appointed PT music

Peter Luke appointed as Business Manager

We also welcome back from maternity leave Claire Cooper, Claire Thomson and Sharon Gibson.

Just last week we got the news that Jon Steenbridge was successfully appointed to principal teacher CDT at Trinity.

Our Head Janitor - Charlie Cranston - retires after many years' service.

I thank all of these staff for their hard work and wish those who are leaving us every success and happiness.

Sporting achievements

Kimberley Reed S4 won silver in both at less than 15, hammer and was chosen to represent Scotland in her less favoured Discus event having pulled off silver at the Bank of Scotland closed championships.

Kyle Houldcroft Doig - S2 Football, member of the City of Edinburgh Sports Academy and Hibernian Initiative squad.

Harish Aslam S2 Cricket - member of City of Edinburgh Schools Sports Academy.

Jordan Brown Football - member of Hibernian Initiative Squad.

Morro Bajo S1 Football- member of Hearts Initiative Squad. Athletics - First in City of Edinburgh 100-metre sprint. When approached by an athletics club he politely said, 'No, thank you - I am going to a professional footballer!'

Scott Hughes S1 Taekwondo - Scottish under -12 champion.

S2 Boys' football team represented Edinburgh in the regional 7-a-side Finals. They went on to beat the champions from 4 other regions to become Bank of Scotland Lothian and Borders 7-a-side Champions 2010.

Louise Gibson S1 Ballet - Grade 7 from the Royal Academy of Dance.

Again I extend my congratulations to all the prize winners.

Looking forward

The next sessions have challenges. The economic downturn could cast gloom, but I feel that staff in Drummond have embraced curricular change in a manner in which very few secondary schools have and are now in a position to lead on the Curriculum for Excellence and how it will benefit our students. The ethos in Drummond is unique, and my plea to all I meet is: Please come and visit and you will be impressed by well-behaved pupils and the highest quality learning and teaching.

I wish our leavers continued success in life. At a previous prize-giving, Ann Begg M.P. was addressing the audience. Throughout her school days she was plagued by ill health. Every day when she left for school her Mum would say 'Go do your best'. I think this is very sound advice no matter what we do in life.

I finish by thanking all staff, parents and other family members and the wider community for their support and encouragement over the years.