



St David's High School

1 Cousland Road Dalkeith Midlothian EH22 2PS

0131 654 4702
0131 663 1826
StDavids_hs@midlothian.gov.uk
@St DavidsHS
stdavidshighschool.co.uk

Headteacher
Mr D MacDonald

Depute Headteachers
Ms K Lewis
Mrs K Williamson

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Dear Parent/Carer

The second term (from Christmas to Easter) in high schools has a particular pace and focus. The prelim exams in January signal the start of the final sprint towards the SQA examinations in May for our senior pupils, while the junior years are challenged to make the right subject choices for careers that seem so far away, when you are only 13 or 14. All this preparation for exams and choices generates reams of marking for teachers, hours of revision for pupils and countless discussions for parents and carers.

The challenge for any school is to try to ensure that we are getting things right for our pupils and that they are supported to make the right choices and prepare effectively for the inevitable examinations. This term, of course, we had the added challenge of welcoming inspectors from Education Scotland into St David's to look at how we work together, how we teach and support our pupils and how we engage with the wider school community.

Whatever line of work you are in, being scrutinised and challenged about how you are doing things and why you are doing them can make for an anxious time, no matter how well prepared you feel you are. We sought throughout the inspection to take a really positive approach by using it as an opportunity not just to talk about our successes, but to seek out advice and guidance as to how we can keep improving. It was truly inspiring to see the way in which staff across the school set aside any kind of nervousness and embraced this chance to listen to feedback and become even better at what they do each and every day. Of course staff are but one part of any school community and the enthusiastic and open way which pupils, parents, carers and partners engaged with the process contributed hugely to the success of the week.

We do not yet have the feedback from Education Scotland (the report is due to be published towards the end of May) but what we do have is a reinforced feeling of community across the school, that even when the challenges are coming thick and fast we can all take the time to support each other to be the best we can be.

Of course there has been a lot more going on in the school than the inspection and I would like to congratulate all of the senior pupils who have completed their practical assessments in Music, PE and Hospitality over recent weeks. It has been a busy time for them and their teachers but the preparation and commitment has been impressive. Equally encouraging has been the work across so many subjects to complete folios and assignments to meet all of the SQA deadlines - again well done to pupils, teachers and parents and carers for the ongoing support. Now it's full steam ahead for revision!

We will be finishing this term with a special Mass for our fourth and fifth year pupils as they prepare for their exams or for moving on from school at the end of May. The sixth years will have their Leaver's Mass on the evening of Tuesday 23 April, our first day back after the holiday.

The term has also seen some impressive sporting performances from our boys' basketball teams with the seniors getting all the way to the semi-finals of the Scottish Cup and the junior team taking the Midlothian Schools title. A wonderful effort from the teams, and it is tremendously encouraging to see so many players practicing hard every lunch-time in the PE department.

However, while we are all looking forward to a well earned holiday, the highlight of the term is undoubtedly still to come – yes, Wednesday night is Strictly Come Dancing 2019! Staff and pupils have been practicing furiously to get the music, steps and outfits ready for the big night. Who will impress the judges and who will take the title from Mr McKenzie and Miss Jennings? It's sure to be another cracking night and there are still a few tickets left if you would like to come along and join us.

Thank you all again for your continued support for the school - have a wonderful Easter.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donny MacDonald', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Donny MacDonald
Headteacher