

The ACADEMY STAR



S1-3 students flocked to the auditorium to find out more about all the clubs on offer at the Academy.

Extra-Curricular Extravaganza

Written by Oliver (S5)

The new autumn term always means one thing: the annual activities fair. Every year the fair gets bigger and better and 2024 was no different.

Taking place on the 4th of September in the school's Auditorium, the fair was offered to all S1-S3 students across lunchtime. New S1 students were able to go first because they had not signed up to any clubs before. S2-S3 students were then able to join after to avoid there being too many people in the space at one time.

The Activities Fair is a brilliant event that shows off all the amazing clubs and extra-curricular activities the school has to offer

for students. Around the Auditorium as well as in the Drama Studio, staff and students had created lots of different stalls for each club.

There were plenty of different options for students to choose from: The Academy Star was there to represent the paper and also to find out more about the event, and the Podcast Club was there as well. The two clubs shared a friendly rivalry as the two clubs offering journalism and media skills to students.

Sports was represented in many fields including Netball who achieved one of the highest amount of sign-ups for any club on the day which was an amazing achievement.

The LGBTQ+ group as well

as the Rights Respecting School Group were there to represent inclusion and equality. Meanwhile creative arts showed off their production and drama clubs as well as advertising their School of Rock show which was due to be performed later in the term.

When asked about the fair, one S1 student said: "I really liked getting to see all the different clubs. I didn't realise there were so many!"

There is no doubt that this year's fair was a complete success for all the clubs who got lots of sign ups. For The Academy Star, the fair has helped to increase our number of journalists which means even more articles in the future!

Foreword by Miss Ross

What a start to the new term it has been! It feels as though it should be just beginning and yet we are already at the end. When I look back at this edition of *The Academy Star*, and at all previous editions of this paper, it is incredible to see how much has been achieved by these budding journalists and by all the fantastic, talented students and staff within this school.

As Liam mentions in his article about our newspaper's bolstered numbers, *The Academy Star* are continually going from strength to strength. We have added a brilliant, dedicated group of new students in the junior and senior phase to add to our already diligent set of journalists. You can peruse their articles across the staggering 21 pages.

Furthermore, we have added a brand new column to the paper! Our School Captains are aiming to increase their presence within the school community and so have taken on the task of writing their own column each edition. This column is designed to show all the hard work they are doing across a variety of different areas in the school. We, as a paper, wish them well in their endeavours and we cannot wait to see what they will accomplish.

There are lots of new additions to the school this term. The school show which, at the time of me writing this, has just finished its performances, has been a resounding success. We have brought a behind-the-scenes look about the production, with a full review to be written for next edition.

The rest of the paper, as always, is filled to the brim with current events and latest news. We hope you enjoy!



A New Age

Written by Liam (S5)

A new year brings with it another fresh-faced team of journalists who want to bring all the latest and most exciting news to students, staff and the wider community.

The recent Activities Fair (see more about it in Oliver's article on the front page) meant that the student newspaper now has lots of new S1 students joining to bring their own point of view to life at the academy.

We have already made some changes to the paper with our first edition which will be very exciting. Our new School Captains have taken over their very own column (right), and each edition they will be bringing you all the most up-to-date ideas that they are working on around the school. We can't wait to see what they have to say!

Just as exciting is the newspa-

per's latest collaboration with the wider Inverurie community. You can now find the student newspaper on the main Inverurie website, which means local Inverurie residents can now get to know the school community more. A big thank you to Derek at Inverurie BID for helping us make this a success.

Finally, the newspaper are working on bringing even more interesting articles to you. In this edition, the S1s have written all about their own experiences within their first time at the school. And we have an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the school show - *School of Rock* - where we talk to cast and crew, find out all about the audition and rehearsal process, as well as see some fantastic photos from one of the S6 students, Fergus.

There is no doubt that this year will be the best ever for *The Academy Star*!

The Captain's Column

As we enter the new school year, we, as your new School Captains, begin to make our mark on the school. The seven of us entered into our roles overflowing with ideas and ambitions to make our school the best possible place for students, teachers, and the community.

To kick off the year and get the students suggestions on school improvements, the captains hosted a student focus group. A variety of students from every year group were selected to attend, allowing a wide range of perspectives to be shared. Everyone was put into groups and were given time to brainstorm. All the students came up with some fantastic ideas, from music on Friday lunchtimes to QR codes in the bathrooms to let the janitors know when a stall runs out of toilet paper. This was a valuable session and the captains are looking forward to implementing some of these ideas to make the school a better place.

One of our biggest goals for this year was to make the amazing things we do in school more visible. At the beginning of the term, two school captains took over the running of the Inverurie Academy Instagram page and began posting small snippets of life in the school. The initial posts focusing on the new house boards displayed in school were a roaring success, with followers liking their individual house board post in an inter house competition. The winners, Harlaw, with the most likes on their post, were able to choose the music playing in the canteen on Friday lunchtime that week. We continued to update the platform with little glimpses into the school, and celebrations of achievements by groups within the school.

Student voice is one of our main priorities this year as school captains. We want our students to be active in the changes and improvements that are happening this coming year. To kick start this process we went around all year groups with 'feel heard' leaflets. This was a collection of leaflets that the students could anonymously write something they like about the school and something that they want to see changed. From this we had such a successful turn-around from our bright students that we then collated into a list of the main priorities for this year. Thanks to our students we have been able to put proposals together for review from SLT. This will create positive change and benefit our students to make their time at Inverurie the best it possibly can be.

After hearing from students about all their ideas, another key topic that was brought up was the addition of a school Christmas dance and ceilidh for the seniors. The captains have taken this on board and have begun to outline the beginnings of what this might look like. We have booked a date and the venue for the dance. Applications have just opened for senior pupils to join the organisation committee so that everybody can get a say into how they would like the dance to be. We are all very excited for this event and look out for more information coming out after the October holidays!

As School Captains we are depended upon to aid in the organisation of after-school events. So far, as a school, we have successfully hosted multiple functions. These include: The School Show, a UCAS information evening,

the Summer Concert, the Awards ceremony, an S1 parents information and an S1-3 parents evening. These after school events would not have been possible without the help we have received from the entire Inverurie Academy Student Leadership team. One of the most successful events we have run was the UCAS information evening. Throughout this evening, multiple speakers came from across universities, colleges and workplaces to deliver talks to pupils and parents about the different possibilities after leaving school. We received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from the community and are looking forward to hosting many more events in the future!

New to Inverurie Academy, The Anthony Nolan Trust looks to provide stem cell donations to individuals with various types of blood cancer through recruiting donors. Donors can be as young as sixteen. This week the six school champions for the Anthony Nolan Trust met with The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to get an introduction into what the trust works to do. As well as this, we were given detailed information on what we can do to promote stem cell donation to S5 and S6 students. Assembly dates were assigned as well as promotional days to get as many donors signed up as possible. These will be taking place after the October holidays for S5 and S6 pupils.

This first term of the new school year has been busy and exciting for us school captains. With new approaches to leadership, organisation, and the running of things in school, we hope to continue to make our mark on Inverurie Academy throughout this bright new year.



Fun at the Fringe

Written by Evie and Isla (S4)

On 23rd August 2024, Creative Industries students got the opportunity to go to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival which had a variety of art, music and drama events. The trip was opened for new S3s but it was then decided that a few S4s, S5s and S6s got the option to go as well to see the exceptional events that would take place.

Mrs. Campbell (Head of Creative Arts), Miss Kinnaird and Mr. Wood, took all pupils by bus and when arriving in Edinburgh, they got to see The National Art Gallery of Scotland which is an art gallery in Edinburgh that shows wonderful art by artists like Eileen Agar, William Aikman and other talented artists. Pupils also got to see Cadenza, an Acapella group from Cambridge University which played a variety of songs starting from the 80s all the way to modern music now. All the people from the group had their talents and sounded beautiful all together.

Speaking after the festival, Mrs.

Campbell said: "I felt the trip went well and it gave S3s and upwards a chance to see a mixture of street performances, a national art gallery, an acapella group and other performances". After asking her about the trip, it seems she really enjoyed the acapella group along with many students.

One of the students in attendance said:

"The trip was a good experience personally as I really enjoy art and getting to look at a variety of different kinds of artistry. I also enjoyed getting the freedom of walking round Edinburgh and seeing all the people and street performing acts."

Another pupil that went, Alana, said: "I felt as though the trip went very well and that I really loved the acapella group and that it was a nice day out of school, also going with friends and seeing other arts was great too."

When asked about the trip, Miss Kinnaird added:

"Our recent trip to the Edinburgh Fringe was an absolute blast! It was fantastic seeing the

students marvelling at all the classic masterpieces in the National Art Gallery, as well as enjoying the vibrant street performers in the heart of the Fringe. By far my favourite performance though was the final one - the day was beautifully capped off with a mesmerizing performance by the acapella group, Cadenza, at The Space@ Niddry Street. Their harmonious voices and captivating stage presence left everyone in awe."

Overall, the trip was a great success, and all the pupils enjoyed it, it was a great opportunity for our creative arts students to experience a range of different arts. It was no doubt that the acapella group was a personal favorite for many of the pupils. We are sure that the creative arts teachers are most definitely looking forward to giving the same experience with new pupils in the near future.

A Race to the Finish Line



Written by Abbie (S1)

The NASSA Road Relay is an annual running race that schools across Aberdeenshire are able to take part in.

This year the relay race took place in Ellon at the Ellon Sports Centre. Where all year groups from S1 to S6 are welcome to participate.

The groups consist of 3 people per year group who each have to run 1k, making the full distance 3k in total which is a lot of work for the students to do!

Mr Cameron, a PE teacher at Inverurie Academy, was organising the NASSA relay event and all the students went with him on the bus to Ellon at 9am.

The S1 girls immediately had to rush off and get changed as they were racing first. None of the girls could think clearly because everything happened so fast, and suddenly everyone was lining up to start the race.

The girls got 6th while the S1 boys who raced next managed to place 2nd! This was followed by the next year group to race and all the S1s watched on, nervous to see how the more senior groups would do.

The S2 girls did amazingly well were 1st place and the S2 boys didn't disappoint and also got 1st - both groups won by a mile. It was very impressive!

Then the S3 raced and although neither group placed 1st, there was another fantastic win from the speedy S4 boys who won 1st place.

Finally the seniors went last with the S5-6 students ready to go. Everyone else cheered them on as it was the final race. They were very close to winning and showed a lot of competitive spirit right the way through. All the groups definitely kept every other team on their toes!

Speaking after the event, some of the winning students said:

"It was a lot of fun being a part

of the race. A lot of hard work needs to be done with plenty of practicing to make sure you are the best you can be."

One student added: "It's even more difficult because you're having to work as part of a team. It's not just about you being good, you have to make sure everyone else is doing what they need to do too. It's all about being part of a team - it only works if everyone is working together."

Mr Cameron spoke about the relay after all the teams had raced and said:

"The NASSA Road Relay was a great day. It was very competitive with Inverurie winning overall by only 1 point. Everyone did extremely well and did the school proud."

When asked what was next, Mr Cameron added: "Our next NASSA event is the badminton which will be held on home turf at Inverurie Academy!"

Hello and Welcome Back!

Written by Jessica (S3)

Every year, Inverurie Academy says a big hello to new teachers and welcomes back some who have been away. In 2024, I spoke to five teachers who were either starting at the school for the first time or coming back to the school.



Mrs McCallum

What is your favourite part of being a teacher?

The pupils and staff, definitely!

What are you most looking forward to at Inverurie?

Getting to go on trips and days out, and getting to know the pupils better.

Miss Kennedy

What is your favourite part of being a teacher?

Working with young people and when people finally understand a new concept. Also when people come to me with stories about what they've learned and are excited about learning.

What is your impression of Inverurie academy so far?

It's very friendly, a lovely new building and I really like all of my classes!

What are you most looking forward to at Inverurie Academy so far?

Getting more involved around the school.

Mrs Milne

What have you been doing before coming back to the English department?

I was out for 2 years: the first year I was doing maternity cover for Mrs O'Connor, then the second year I was on maternity leave.

How are you feeling about being back?

Good! It's really nice to be back and especially to be back with classes.

What are you most looking forward to this year in school?

Seeing all of my students' progress, and seeing them developing as the year goes on. I'm also looking forward to lots of laughs at lunches with the English department. Getting to know new pupils and staff more.

Miss Young

What drew you to the academy?

I wanted to join Inverurie Academy because I had heard so many great things about the pupils and the staff, so I didn't want to miss out. I knew the Academy had a stellar sports background, and I wanted to be a part of it and help it develop.

What were your first impressions?

My first impressions of the school were that everyone was super keen for PE and had great relationships

with the staff. There was also such a positive atmosphere in and around the Academy which made me feel very welcome here.

What are you most looking forward to?

I am most looking forward to continuing to work with everyone here and seeing what we can achieve over the years.

Mr Gibson

What is your favourite part of being a teacher?

My favourite part is getting to help students to develop a new skill that they didn't have before they met me.

What is your impression of Inverurie academy so far?

It's very different from the US - but in a good way. It seems to be a very comfortable place for students.

What are you most looking forward to at Inverurie Academy so far?

I'm looking forward to not having to do extreme lock down drills and having a completely new teaching experience.





Catherine (S5) showed off her incredible artistic skills with a scarily life-like special effect on her arm!

A Gory Get Together

This term, students at Inverurie Academy celebrated a significant achievement by successfully completing a Special Effects Makeup Course in Prosthetics, led by the esteemed Calum MacDonald from Gibbet FX. The course provided an invaluable opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience in creating

realistic prosthetics.

Throughout the course, students showcased exceptional creativity and skill. They began by crafting intricate latex prosthetics from scratch, using plasticine and plaster casting. These creations were then brought to life with detailed makeup applications, highlighting their newfound expertise, only us-

ing a simple pimple kit and plaster.

In addition to mastering basic techniques, students explored advanced special effects, including burn makeup and zombie skin, adding a layer of realism to their work. Their dedication and hard work were evident in the stunning results.

“I am incredibly proud of my students’ achievements,” said Miss Kinnaird, teacher of drama. “This experience has not only enhanced my students technical abilities but also ignited a passion for special effects makeup that will benefit their future endeavours.”

Looking ahead, some of these talented students will apply their new skills in their Drama NAT5 course next year, further showcasing their abilities.

A special thank you goes to Calum MacDonald for sharing his expertise and inspiring the next generation of special effects artists. He was so impressed by our students work that Inverurie Drama department are now going to be supporting the school in a Scotland Arts Fund Project that provides financial assistance to cover costs of materials, tools, and courses, enabling students to participate in workshops and creative activities.

Helping students at Inverurie Academy develop essential skills for a career in special effects makeup and pursue their passion. Congratulations to all the students for their outstanding work!



All smiles for the S3 group on their unforgettable expedition.

Behind The Scenes: *School of Rock*

Written by Charlotte and Holly (S1)

There's nothing more nerve-wracking than trying something new. That's definitely how it felt for everyone involved in creating Inverurie Academy's new school show.

It all started at the beginning of 2024, when the Creative Arts department and lots of other teachers decided that the best way to show off all the talent in the school was to do their own school show.

A musical was the obvious choice because of all the different actors and musicians we have at Inverurie Academy. After a lot of debate and a vote by students, the famous musical 'School of Rock' was chosen.

Written by the famous composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, 'School of Rock' is all about Dewey Finn, a failed rockstar who pretends to be

a substitute teacher so that he can earn some money. While at the school, he teaches a brilliant class to become rock music legends.

The musical has been a Broadway smash-hit since 2015, and it was going to be a huge challenge for Inverurie Academy to pull it off, but everyone was determined to make it a success.

After getting the script, written by Julian Fellowes, the next thing to do was auditions. A team of judges were assembled in March which included Miss Kinnaird, Mrs Campbell, Miss Padam, Ms Purvis, Mr Fuller, and Mr Simpson. Students from all years could audition for the various different parts and it was a nail-biting time for everyone. After the first round of auditions, the successful pupils were invited for 'call backs' to work out exactly who was going to play which character. When the cast list was finally announced,

everyone who got a part were thrilled. But now the hard work was really going to have to begin.

Rehearsals started every Wednesday and Thursday after school, usually for around two hours. Taking place in the auditorium, students were able to finally read through the script and start learning their lines. Even more excitingly, this was when they also began to rehearse all the different musical numbers.

Speaking about the rehearsals, one S2 student, Mya, said:

"I was so excited to get started. I thought I'd feel more nervous but that didn't come until later. It was definitely a lot of work trying to remember all the different songs."

When asked about what her favourite part of rehearsals was, she added:

"I just loved getting to be together with everyone. It all felt like we were a team making this big

project!”

After the summer holidays, the new S1 students arrived with lots of them also wanting to be a part of the musical. This really made the cast complete and soon the rehearsals sped up. Before long a Saturday full-day rehearsal was added along with the ones after school. It was a lot of work for everyone but the cast and crew knew that this was what it would take to get the musical to where it needed to be. There were so many people behind the scenes getting everything organised, including Mrs Elrick and Miss Addison who were in charge of costuming. They spent hours and hours sewing sparkles and sequins onto Inverurie Academy uniforms to give every outfit a bit of extra glitz and glamour.

Amelia and Cynara, two S1 students who joined the cast after summer, spoke about their experiences:

“We couldn’t wait to join the musical even though it was a bit scary joining after everyone else because everybody knew what they were doing and we didn’t!”

They added: “Luckily we both have done musical theatre, drama



and dance before so it didn’t take us long to get the hang of it. There was definitely times when it got stressful, especially when we were getting closer to the first performance, but that was because we were all nervous.”

Speaking about the casting process, Miss Kinnaird said:

“I was truly amazed by the outstanding effort and dedication everyone put into the school show. The hard work, creativity, and passion truly shone through from

the beginning. The one little moment I remember so well is when we were trying to cast Dewey. We were getting to the point where we thought ‘We still don’t have someone that fits his character!’ And just then Even came in and stole the show - he was perfect! We couldn’t imagine anyone else doing that role.”

Mr Fuller, who was there during the whole process, said: “The students took to their lines and directions very well and the rehearsals overall were a huge success. I’m so proud of all the hard work they produced.”

Miss Padam added: “It was amazing having so many teachers and students coming together to create something so special. When I think about all the scenes and choreography they had to learn - it’s amazing what they achieved!”

The Academy Star wants to congratulate everyone involved for all their hard work. We know the show itself will be as big of a hit as the Broadway version. Check out our next edition for the full review!





Conquering the Cairngorms: A Duke of Edinburgh Expedition

Written by Erin, Yasmeen and Molly (S6)

The Duke of Edinburgh expeditions took place on the 27th-28th of September and the 5th-7th of October. The first of which was a practice for the 2 groups taking part in their Silver Award which took them to Bennachie for one night and two days. The latter however involved 3 groups, those who had finished their practice expedition would use this as their qualifier, in addition to a third group who were carrying out their practice Gold Expedition, with the two nights and three days away at Ballater.

In order to complete a Duke of Edinburgh award participants must complete Volunteering, an aspect of physical fitness and finally, the expedition. These sections

of the award are completed in participants' own time usually over the course of a year. Additionally, Gold Award participants are required to take part in a Residential for a few days, which consists of pupils going on a trip for a few days alongside people they do not. This was surely a tough experience and a test of mental resilience similar to that of the expedition.

Day 1:

The groups began their journey at Burn o' vat car park on a wet and windy Saturday morning, acting as somewhat of an omen as to what was to follow. 'The last ginger standing' set off course at 10am, not before being subjected to a group photograph from their families before their inevitable departure. The group started their venture through the forest, mak-

ing their way through the winding paths and hopping over the humps of tree trunks. Following the map, the group's heads were held high and their bodies full of energy.

Before the expedition, each group was tasked with choosing a project to complete during their hike, which they would be given a set amount of time to do at each checkpoint. Both groups 'we don't have a name yet' (silver) and 'Send help' (gold) chose to film a vlog of their progress throughout the expedition documenting the highs and lows they no doubt experienced. Similarly 'The last ginger standing' decided to record the weather and how the group's emotions changed as a consequence of this, later promising to construct a graph to present their findings (it is unclear whether that will actually be happening). As a result

of this, there were multiple opportunities for the students to have a rest, which according to some was, arguably, not enough.

The trek, while challenging, offered breathtaking scenery, with vast rolling hills, sweeping valleys, and clear streams providing the backdrop to their adventure. Despite the inspiring landscape,

were so late became evident after interviewing, the last ginger herself, Isla Grant, who stated that, in response to her favourite moment of the expedition, "I think my favourite part was when we found the public toilets on the first on the first day" showing that their tardiness was due to a significantly important detour.

"It was quite a magical sight, you really don't see something like that every day". It ended up being a positive end to the first day, as the students soon retreated to their tents once it became too cold to stay outside, very much ready to rest after their challenging experience as they would soon face an even tougher task the next day.



the groups encountered less than ideal conditions on the fateful Saturday, predominantly due to the howling wind interrupting what would have been a relatively pleasant lunch. Spirits, however, were lifted due to the quick descent down the various hills they had scaled previously, in addition to the weather slowly clearing up to become a somewhat pleasant afternoon. It took a while however for all groups to reach the campsite at Glenntanner with the 'last ginger standing' reaching the endpoint last, after the rest of the students had already pitched their tents and had even begun making dinner! The reason as to why they

The campsite was a reasonable size with a wooded forest surrounding the field with a river running through it, creating a picturesque scene. The midges however ruined its beauty for many rather quickly and layers of Smidge (anti midge cream) was applied upon arrival, as they swarmed the unfortunate pupils for the majority of their stay at Glenntanner. This did not completely dampen spirits however, as once dinner was consumed, dishes were washed, hot chocolate was drunk and night fell, the clouds cleared, revealing a dazzling canopy of stars in which many gazed at in wonder. One pupil commented

Day 2:

As the trickles of water fell down the tents, it was time to venture on to the next step of the journey. While the sky was a hue of pink and purple, the tents were put down and breakfast was swiftly eaten. Finally the night had been cast away as the sun had risen and the groups set off.

Bodies aching, shoulders and hips bruised and their minds away to their happy place, the journey really began to take its toll on the group as the hill they began climbing became steeper with no end in sight. After each corner the group took, was another prolonged path with an even sharper

incline. Lunge after another, the group's calves in white hot pain, their throats became smaller and dry like sandpaper, finally the group attained the peak of the hill. One pupil said that that specific hill was, "The most difficult thing I have ever done in my entire life."

The rest of the trek was just as abysmal as they trudged through mountains of heather and the wandering wilderness. Thick pellets of rain splattered on their covered bodies while the group had lunch on an uncovered quarry which was when the quietest the group had ever been after being so physically and mentally drained on the first leg of their day expedition. One of the members of "The Last Ginger Standing," Isla Grant was asked what was the lowest point of the expedition which was replied with, "I think the lowest point was Sunday lunchtime when we were all sitting in some sort of quarry it was super muddy and there was no trees that we could sit under and our sandwiches were all squished because we brought them from home... we're all just sitting shivering. No one was talking as we were depressed but then it got better from there." Despite the rough voyage, the views were breathtaking as mist covered the coniferous woodland.

The majority of the trek was over and the campsite was getting closer. However after being informed of a Christening happening in the church next to the campsite, the group had to wait even longer to seek respite. Before the Christening was held, some of the party crossed paths with one group, "Send Help", who was kindly given leftover cake which was quickly inhaled by the boys.

Luckily, the sun had crept through the clouds so the last stretch of Day 2 was bearable.

Setting up the camp was simple

given the dry weather conditions. The groups set up their supper and the sun dipped over the hills and the neighbouring farms cattle. Mr Shepherd thankfully set the groups up with a cosy and crackling campfire where the groups gathered around and sipped on their warm hot chocolates and roasted marshmallows. The fire's warm glow pushed back the chill of the evening with the serene sound of the stream flowing in the background. This was a nice way to end Day 2 and gave all the groups motivation and hope to continue their venture for day 3.

Day 3:

After setting off for the third and final time, they embarked on their last adventure in the Greater Cairngorms. They left the campsite after saying goodbye to Mr Shepherd and Dr Webster, and began the last leg of seven hours. They wandered through fields full of yet more sheep and crossed many burns and streams, one of which required a certain amount of teamwork as Rhona Bompfrey from 'The Last Ginger Standing' dared to cross first by forging her own bridge using large pebbles sourced from the river. For the first half of the day, there was an eerie absence of much activity and wildlife as the sheep disappeared as they approached and an unsettling fog lurched around them as they were encased by a light drizzle.

The hills continued and the gradient steepened as they powered on. Half way through the 370 metre incline, they decided to stop for a rest as their leg muscles were aching and it was time to snack. Estimating that the boys group (Send Help) were at least fifteen minutes behind, they kept an eye on their time, aiming to stay ahead for as long as possible. Knowing

that it was inevitable they would be faster on the trail, some girls were feeling the motivation and competitiveness to maintain a quick pace. Some time had passed while they rested, the biting wind was strong and the air was blistering as they exchanged laughter and sweets in an attempt to uphold morale. In the far distance, they heard a faint noise drowned out by the weather; it was 'Send Help'. Almost immediately, in a bout of laughter and exhilaration, the girls sprang up and it was go, go, go! A member of 'The Last Ginger Standing' exclaimed later that: "...it was the funniest moment of that hike. I remember listening through the wind and hearing the faint noise of one of the boys and the rush we felt to leg it up the next part of the hill. We hadn't expected to meet them for a while, but what were we expecting? They managed to sail past us effortlessly while we huffed and puffed up this hill!" Unfortunately, the summit of this demanding hike presented anti-climatic views as the thick cloud still surrounded them. Rachel Stewart and Isla Grant were said to have carried specific flags which provided comedy for the tired group - personalised flags of their favourite celebrities were held with pride.

They pressed on, shuffling down the hill while the freezing temperatures were well and truly a challenge. There was a mixed sense of dread and "couldn't wait to get home", while the aspect of relief and accomplishment were imminent. The clouds began to part and the rain came to a halt. It was almost like they had been granted a rare opportunity to see the most beautiful views of farmlands and rivers. Their journey was coming to an end. They stopped for a lengthy lunch break to eat cheese and crisp pita bread sandwiches

where they could see the shrunken figurines of Send Help, still situated on the hillside, prancing around and throwing pebbles. As funny as this was to the girls, they knew the most important thing - they were going to beat them to the final checkpoint.

'The Last Ginger Standing' ended their Silver Qualifier at three o'clock that day. They relished the fact that they could use the public toilet at the carpark (something unseen for the past two days). They dropped to the grass and eased the pain they carried in their whole bodies, hopefully a brief recovery will mend their aches and blisters. Not to mention the rapid return to normality after being in the middle of nowhere for three whole days came with a degree of appreciation. To be home to a warm house, soft bed sheets, loving pets and family, and of course, a hot shower.

Most of those who took part

recommended the experience despite the trials and tribulations that came their way. Adam Stevens (Send help) found that "It is a great opportunity for personal development such as leadership, teamwork and time management. You also get to explore new areas of Scotland's scenery that I normally wouldn't see". Isla Grant added "I would recommend it to people who already like being outside and being outdoors. I think you don't need to have any experience of it per se, but you definitely need to know your limits. It's really good for your CV, that's why people do it, but it's also just fun, in general, being outside being away from your phone as you've literally got no choice but to not go on your phone because there's no service anywhere."

Some of the most memorable moments taken from some groups was the quality time that was spent with friends and how it

brought them closer. The Duke of Edinburgh expedition teaches students many crucial skills such as cooking safely which was quickly learnt from Moly Bryce and Jamie Farquarson who burnt themselves while helping. This emphasises the fact that the Duke of Edinburgh isn't just an award, it's a mental and physical game that tests participants' toughness. The expedition, while tough, was extremely rewarding for all of those involved, allowing for every student to build their resilience and teamwork which are great transferable skills for every aspect of life.



An Inspirational Day



Written by Fiona (S6)

On the 11th of September, Inverurie Academy's Advanced High English and History students embarked on an exciting and useful trip to University of Aberdeen to partake in their Inspiration Day, where professionals from UoA's departments gave talks and advice to the new and engaged Advanced Higher pupils, giving advice on dissertations, the use of sources and more, while also giving them a taster to Aberdeen University and the staff it contains.

The Advanced Higher English students' day started bright and early, meeting at the University at 9:30 to begin their day. They travelled to the Fraser Noble building on campus, where they were situated in a lecture theatre, among many other Advanced Higher English students across Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen, and further.

The first talk revolved around the advanced higher dissertation, a 3,000-word essay on a literary text of the students' choice. This part of the Advanced Higher course is significantly independently completed and a large part of students' final grade, which made this talk all the more advantageous for listeners. This talk involved tips on how to curate the dissertation question, and included lots of helpful tips for prose, drama as well as poetry dissertation topics. A multitude of UoA's lecturers presented the talk, using their expert knowledge to help further students' understanding and confidence towards their dissertation. One student said, "I found the dissertation talk very educational and helpful and it will help me progress in my dissertation for advanced English." The lecturers used detailed examples of certain prolific authors, poets and playwrights from examples

including, Arthur Miller, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Grace Nichols (a poet who was making an appearance at Wayword festival, hosted by the University of Aberdeen.)

The second talk was a brief introduction to linguistics. Linguistics is the study of language and its structure, e.g grammar, syntax. The mini-lecture included an example of how a poem would be analysed linguistically, which many students had never done before. While this talk did not directly relate to the Advanced Higher course, it gave an insight into what such a subject would be like at the University and was overall very interesting. One student found the lecture, "very fun and unique and something I would definitely be interested in doing if I went to Aberdeen Uni."

The next talk was another short but incredibly critical lecture on library resources and sources,



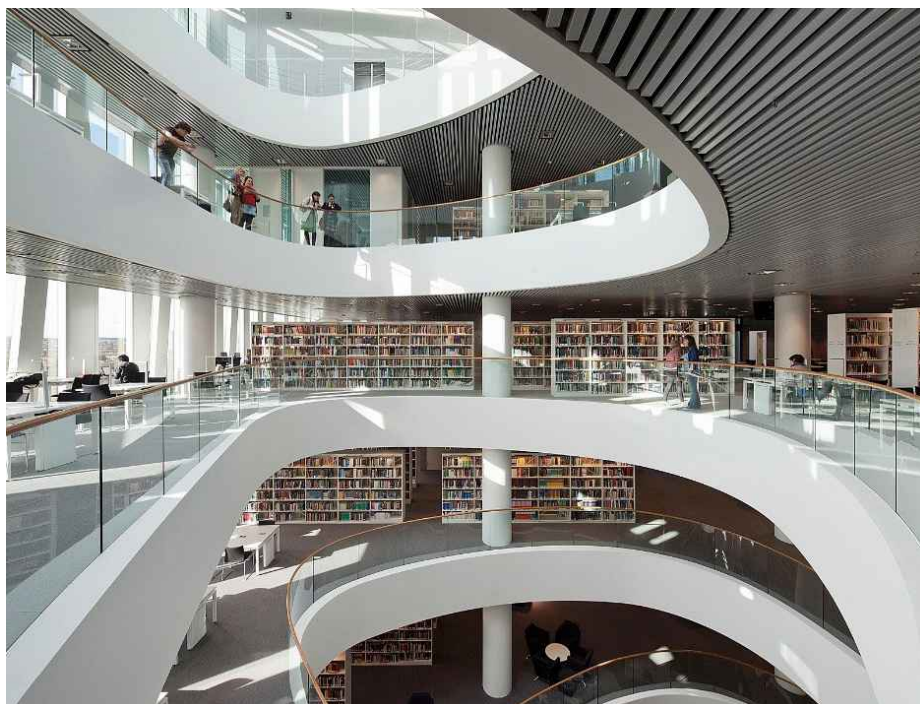
which is a key part of students' dissertations. Students are required to pull data from secondary sources for their dissertation, and this talk provided key information on where to acquire the correct kind of sources. It also provided explanation on how students can take books from Aberdeen Uni's library, both physical and online, which many students have assured they will make use of.

Afterwards, students were given the opportunity to explore the sprawling and impressive labyrinth of the The Sir Duncan Rice Library's shelves, where they were able to use tips from the aforementioned sources to look for books related to their texts. The library spans seven floors, with endless books inside as well as offering many study spots for students. It gave students a chance to both appreciate such a beautiful building while giving them a taste for what it would be like if they were to attend UoA. One student said, "I've always seen the building from outside but it's even more amazing from inside and I could have explored it forever. It would definitely be a place I can see myself frequenting."

Finally, the insightful day ended with an hour long talk on creative folio, hosted by UoA lecturer and published author Shane Strachan who spoke about character and plot structure, providing multiple interactive activities for students to participate in to further their understanding of folio. He further went on to talk about where to gain inspiration and ideas from using the example of inspiration through art. The folio is a piece of writing, which can be either creative or discursive that is marked

out of 15, before being doubled, to total 30 marks of a student's grade. This is typically marked incredibly harshly by the SQA, so the kind of guidance this talk provided was brilliant for students to receive. The talk provided insight on poetry, prose as well as drama and this advice could also be helpful when relating back to dissertations. The talk ended with a Q&A, where students could have any queries elaborated on. Inverurie Academy student said, "the folio talk was incredibly helpful as I'm often very stuck on where to begin when writing and I felt this talk has given me some inspiration."^a

Overall, the University of Aberdeen's Inspiration Day turned out to be an incredible success for students that not only expanded their opinions and knowledge of the University itself, but also provided lots of unique and inspiring advice that will guide students throughout their Advanced Higher journey as well as to studying English at University itself, if they so choose. This experience further allowed students to experience University-style learning, and further their opinions on whether such a place is right for them





Our S1 Experience

By Anna, Pippa, Charlotte, Layla, Morven and Andrea (S1)

We can't believe it's already been a whole term since joining Inverurie Academy. In some ways it feels like we have only just started, but it also feels like we have been here for ages. There has been lots to learn in the last two months and we thought we would share all the different experiences that S1 students have had so far:

Buddies

The buddies were very kind and helpful for taking us from class to class and chaperoning throughout the whole day. They were also the ideal person for us to ask questions about the school and they were always obliged to help us. The school does seem like a scary

place to begin with but the buddies just made the transition from primary to Academy so much easier. Each registration class had about 4 buddies and the practical sets had two buddies. Once the first week had passed our buddies had to leave us. Finding our way around and to our classes was like looking for a needle in a haystack! Here's an interview with one of the buddies who is also our school captain:

Cara said that: "It was good being a buddie. I found it nice to get to know all of the younger students and see all of the new S1s because when my year group was S1 it was during Covid. It was nice to remind myself of being S1 even though that now feels so long ago! I enjoyed getting to learn the names of everyone in my buddy class that I was helping with and

getting to know their personalities. When I was in S1 my favourite subjects were Art and RMPS but mostly in S1 I just liked getting to experience lots of different lessons and subjects."

Learning

Learning in the academy is very different from primary, because in primary you would walk into your classroom and then stay there for the whole day. But then in secondary you have to walk to at least 6 or 7 classes a day, because of long days, and that's not including break and lunch. You also have to separate into different classes for practical subjects. Not only that, but you also have to learn all the different subjects!

On top of learning all the new subjects you need to find your class. In the first week we had our

incredible buddies who showed us the school, took us to our classes and answered all of our questions, but after the first week they left us and we had to find our own way around the school, which at the start is incredibly difficult but we're getting the hang of it now.

In the academy you get to do a ton of different things that we would have never done in primary. For example, in Science we sometimes get to use the bunsen burners, go outside to do sampling and even more! We get to cut wood in TVE and even cook food in Home Economics! But on the whole, learning in the academy is amazing!

Uniform

The uniform is very simple as it has been designed by former students so it should be easy to follow. Before you start you get fitted at the school to get the blazer. For the blazer you get a recommended size to use and then you get the details for ordering the blazer. The uniform consists of blazer and tie for both girls and boys however there are some things that are different but that is usually just the shoes and the skirts or trousers or leggings.

It is definitely not smart to not wear uniform because the consequences can be big. You can get a demerit for not wearing uniform and your registration teacher, guidance and Year Head will all be checking to make sure you are wearing it. Plus it's much better to wear the uniform because then everyone knows you are a part of the school and part of the community which is much better.

Learning the building

Learning the building is not as hard as it looks; it gets easier the more you're at the school. You don't get to learn where all of the classes are at first because you are always very busy on finding your way to the next class. However you don't have to worry about getting lost because everyone does sometimes and there will always be someone to help you out. The teachers are very understanding if you come in late. You explain that you got lost and apologise for being late so don't worry about that.

The school is very smartly designed as there are numbers on each floor and every subject has a colour which makes it easy to find.

On your time table there are numbers and either a G, F or S which stands for ground, first, and second floors. There are also a lot of teachers and older students there to help if you do get lost or need some help. You mostly walk around the school with the people in your class. The buddies are really helpful as for the first week the walk you to your classes but after the first week they stop.

Transition

Transitioning up to the academy can be a massive step for some people. I remember me and my friends were very excited to go up to secondary school but were a bit scared of many things like homework, getting lost, uniform, making new friends as well as leaving old ones.

The transition days were very fun; we went to our subjects as we would after summer holidays but class buddies would take us around the building. We got to see the whole building and prepare ourselves for after the summer! It was really good to getting to see the different classrooms and meeting all our new teachers. It

made coming up to the school after summer feel a little less scary because we had already experienced a bit of it before.

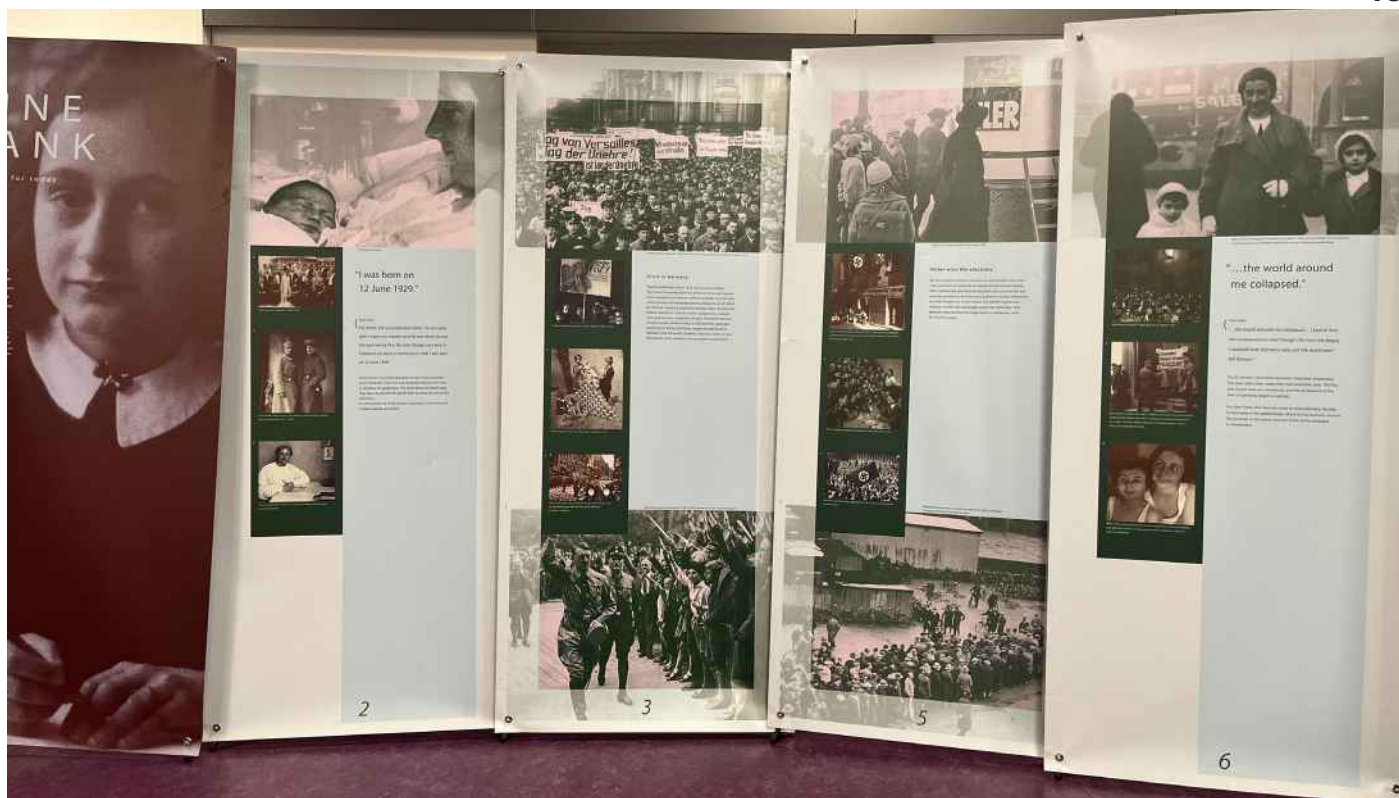
On a whole, the transition up to the academy has been a big step, but an exciting one too! There is so many cool experiences you can do - we are definitely enjoying the academy!

Friendship

When you move up to the academy there are a lot of changes and that means making new friends and potentially losing old ones. A lot of the time when you come up to S1 you won't always be with the friends you made in primary school and that can be quite nerve-wracking. However even if your friends aren't in your class that doesn't mean you will stop being friends. It's important to remember that even if they make new friends (which they most likely will) you can still speak to them and you might even end up being friends with their friends too.

Also the academy will give you loads of chances to make new friends. All the different clubs mean you get to meet new people that you aren't even meeting in classes and you can even speak to students from other years which can be good too.

All in all, the academy involves a lot of change and even though sometimes it can be stressful or make you nervous, there are way more positives and lots of things to do.



The prefect team was on hand to ensure everyone gave feedback on the event before they left.

In Memoriam

Written by Cara (S6)

From the 2nd to the 13th of September, Inverurie Academy had the opportunity to host the Anne Frank Trust Exhibition. Pupils in both S3 and S6 were given the opportunity to become peer guides for the exhibition and give tours to select History and World Studies classes, as well as some primary school classes. This was a wonderful opportunity for both the peer guides, the school, and all the classes who got to experience the exhibition.

On the 2nd and 3rd of September, Eilidh from the Anne Frank trust came into school and set up the exhibition and gave all the peer guides an in depth tour through the exhibit to prepare them for their own tours they would be giving in due course. Eilidh told the story of Anne's life, from birth till her tragic death within the concentration camp

Bergen-Belsen. The tour took us through the end of the first world war, the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany, the Frank Family's move to the Netherlands, the introduction of race laws in Germany designed to destroy anyone who was not of 'pure German blood', the extreme violence committed by the Nazis against Jewish people, the Frank family's escape into hiding in their 'Secret Annex' along with the Van Pels family and Fritz Pfeffer, their life in hiding, their eventual capture, and the deaths of the secret annex inhabitants. Everyone who escaped into hiding with the Frank family, other than Anne's father Otto Frank, was killed in the holocaust.

One of the S3 Peer Guides, Luke, spoke about how he learned new information throughout the experience, lots of which connected with him, stating: "I learned a lot about Anne Frank's life and what she went through, like how

she had to leave her home at a very young age and go into hiding. She was the age I am right now when they went into hiding, it's hard to imagine having to leave my home and go into hiding. She was very strong and resilient."

The exhibition was full of amazing information that you don't learn in school normally and when asked what the most interesting thing he learned was Luke replied: "I didn't know that Anne Frank's father was in the German military during World War One, this was interesting because he obviously loved his country and his country ended up betraying him which is sad."

The opportunity to become a Peer Guide was a unique and valuable experience and when asked what his favourite part about the experience was he stated that it was: "Getting to spread Anne Frank's legacy because it shows an important message that she will be

remembered through the voices of other children.”

History teacher, Miss Crabb, helped bring the exhibition to Inverurie Academy and aided in organising the tours and guides, when asked how she managed to get such a wonderful experience to come to our school, Miss Crabb replied: “I stumbled across the Anne Frank Trust website and contacted them about the exhibition. The trust hadn’t brought their exhibition to any schools in Aberdeenshire before and jumped at the opportunity to bring it further north.”

Many classes and teachers were able to see different groups of peer

guides giving tours around the exhibition and Miss Crabb spoke on what she thought as an audience member to these tours, stating: “I thought they were all really good. As the two weeks went on the speakers got more confident and I was very proud of everyone involved, particularly students who are quieter in class.”

Miss Crabb may be a history teacher but she even learned some new things during the exhibition, with her adding: “I learned a lot about the people who helped the Frank family when they were in hiding. I was lucky enough to visit the Anne Frank house in Amsterdam so I already had a lot of

knowledge about Anne and her experiences.”

The experience and exhibition was very beneficial to the students involved and Miss Crabb said:

“The confidence in the speakers grew across the two weeks and some have even applied to become Anne Frank ambassadors because of how much they enjoyed the experience.”

In all, the Anne Frank exhibition and the opportunity to become peer guides with the Anne Frank Trust was an amazing, extremely valuable experience for everyone involved.



Unlocking Opportunities: The 'Access To' RGU Experience



By Erin, Yasmeen and Molly (S6)

The “RGU Access To Programme” is a free after-school programme designed for students aiming to pursue university studies, offering subject-specific sessions. The programme is delivered by RGU’s academic staff in collaboration with the Widening Access Team. The programmes offered to S6 students ran for seven weeks during the first term of school, and the S5 sessions will run for five weeks after the October Holidays. There were many subjects offered such as Architecture, Law, Journalism & Media and Social work, just to name a few. Each week, at the end of the school day, the S6s would get an arranged bus from Inverurie Academy to the RGU campus.

At the end of the program, a graduation was held for the students to collect their certificate and show off their commitment which can then be used to enhance their CVs.

In the beginning, the year groups were given an introduction into what ‘Access To’ was, through an assembly given by an RGU ambassador detailing all of the information required to sign up to the course. The ambassador also listed off all of the advantages of signing up - they can use the RGU Access course when applying for specific degrees by writing about their experience in personal statements. It is an excellent way of proving to universities and colleges that the students have gone out of their way, outwith school time, to learn more about the subject

they want to pursue. As a bonus, it is not even limited to RGU as all universities appreciate the extra effort and passion from a candidate. It shows they have that additional experience that just may push their application to stand out more than others. Furthermore, this persuaded pupils to sign up for the opportunity as not only were they able to further their understanding of a potential degree, but they were also able to get a feel of university life within the campus and speak to past graduates.

The programme was very well organised, providing students with free travel into campus at 15:15 sharp, usually arriving at 16:00. In the first week students were instructed to go to the Sir Ian Wood building in order to sign in at their course. Soon after, food such as rolls varying from cheese and ham, crisps and fruit were provided before class was to begin at 16:30. This practice would continue every week, creating a positive routine amongst students, with one commenting that: “I really loved how well organised everything was, it definitely made the whole experience a lot more enjoyable”.

One example of a course offered was Nursing and Midwifery. This allowed students to be trained in the inner workings of the health-care system and would also learn to use various relevant practical skills. One student who was interviewed stated what the course involved, stating that it “included going to lectures and the people who were leading them were from different parts of the NHS such as midwifery, mental health nursing,

childrens nursing, adult nursing and paramedic practise”. Furthermore, they enjoyed learning about the aspects of the NHS which is not known by a majority of people such as the toll on nurses mental health, which was extremely poignant and increasingly relevant especially due to the recent Covid 19 pandemic which greatly impacted nurses. The pupil finally concluded that: “I would recommend the course to them as I found it very informative and if it’s something you would like to do for a career it does show you the ins and outs and what it’s actually like instead of just showing the good parts of it. So I felt like I got a lot out of it.”

A positive response from a student who participated in the Health Professions and Sport course tells a lot about her experience. “Overall, the program was really interesting and interactive. I liked getting to speak to others and find out why others my age wanted to go into different sections of health. I had the chance to speak to Dieticians, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Radiologists and a Sport & Exercise scientist. They also gave tips on how to balance work-life with social-life and make the most of the ‘uni’ experience. Now, I can’t wait!”

An example of one of the courses offered was the Law/Law & Management which was a great introduction to the world of legal studies, offering a view of what studying law entails. The first session explored the question: What is Law? This helped us learn about the role of law in society and how it shapes everyday life. Some of the sessions covered the various paths to becoming a lawyer, from undergraduate degree to qualifying as a solicitor or a barrister. The sessions also discussed the versatility

of a law degree that opens doors to many other career prospects such as international relations, politics and business. One of the collective favourite moments is the couple of weeks taking part in moot-ing courts which was practising presenting legal arguments in a pretend court setting. This allowed aspiring lawyers to gain advocacy skills as well as understand legal procedures.

To wrap up the programme, a graduation took place in the main building on the seventh and final week. Students were encouraged to invite friends and family to celebrate the time and effort put into Access To. With a short speech from the Chancellor and each Dean, pupils from Aberdeen and Shire schools walked across the stage and were presented with a certificate tied in a small purple bow. Hot food was available each graduation night and to round everything off, there was the opportunity given to the S6 pupils

and their families to have a final one-to-one conversation with different specialists. This was useful for those who perhaps missed a week they were looking especially forward to, and allowed parents and carers to ask questions as well; about jobs, university life, what exactly is studied in that course and to describe the different types of placements students are offered (something RGU is highly renowned and ranked for).

To conclude RGU offered a great variety of courses so that students could gain some experience, potentially in a degree they want to pursue after secondary education. It was well organised, well taught and well concluded and is instrumental in widening opportunities for all pupils to participate.

