

Newsletter

February 2004

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Dear friends

"Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully."

As I write, Dr Johnson's quote is firmly at the front of my mind in that we have just received notification that the school is to be visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors during the first week of March and while things might not be quite as dire as the good doctor's would suggest, it does provoke a period of rapid and intense reflection.

The past six years has been a period of fairly extensive change for the school in both physical and operational terms. The closure of the annexe and the return of learning for the entire school to Perth Road, the traumatic introduction of the new Higher Still courses, a staff turnover of around 40% amongst others have posed major challenges for staff and pupils alike. It is however my firm belief that despite these major events in the life of any school, as well as the ongoing day to day issues, the school has not only survived, but prospered and improved the quality of education and experience provided for our young people.

Our examination results continue to improve year on year – more pupils leave school with more and better qualifications. More than three times as many pupils left school with 5 higher awards in 2003 than did in 1999! Pupils from Harris continue to excel in numerous areas outwith the classroom. Many of you for example were entertained by our young people at the Burns Supper.

Change is a constant part of school life today. In a rapidly developing world it must be this way if education is to prepare young people to meet the world head on and succeed. Learning in Harris however takes place in a school where the ethos is strong and based on a set of values which are able to support staff and pupils despite the demands which a rapidly changing society places upon us.

In welcoming the Inspectors to the school I do so, not with Dr Johnson's words as my guide, but rather those of Franklin D. Roosevelt

"Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself".

Yours sincerely

Mr J Thewliss

Head Teacher