



JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL

Interim Head teacher / Ceannard: Neil McCallum B.Ed (Hons), SQH

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JGHS Parent council 28th January 2026

Staffing

Departing

- C Roderick Computing (retirement)
- J Forrester Business Management (retirement)
- L Shearer Maternity Leave
- R Richards Maternity Leave
- A Murrison New Post in Spain

New Starts

- H Stygal Performing Arts (Curriculum Leader)
- J Steer Computing (Starting 23rd February)
- M Forward Mathematics
- J McIntosh Psychology

Inspection Report

I am delighted to share that the HMIE inspection report from October is now published and available. We were pleased to receive the gradings of:

1.3 Leadership of Learning	Good
2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very Good
3.2 Raising attainment & achievement	Very Good

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher provides calm and aspirational leadership to the school community. He supports staff effectively to maintain high standards and improve young people's wellbeing and attainment.
- Staff and young people have developed inclusive, positive and respectful learning environments in which young people thrive. Young people are highly motivated as a result of their learning experiences, which are underpinned by the school values.
- Young people sustain very high levels of attainment across the senior phase. Senior leaders have supported staff well to develop effective approaches to improve further all young

people's attainment. Young people who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing are making very good progress and are attaining well.

- Staff have worked well with a range of effective partners to increase young people's learning pathways and opportunities for achievement. As a result, more young people experience success and achieve very well.
- Across the senior phase, young people achieve highly in Gàidhlig, with nearly all securing National Qualifications at appropriate levels. These outcomes reflect the collective leadership and drive of staff and young people to promote and sustain the language.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from The City of Edinburgh Council.

- Senior leaders should continue to develop the capacity of staff at all levels to embed recent improvements. Young people should be more effectively involved in decisions about their school.
- Staff need to ensure that young people experience a greater consistency of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment across the school. This includes young people experiencing more appropriate levels of pace and challenge in their learning.
- Senior leaders should develop a more coherent and strategic approach to immersion education, with a focus on broadening the curriculum leading to qualifications and awards through the medium of Gàidhlig.

The report is accessible at [HMIE | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland](#)

Communications (Website – email – School App)

I will be reestablishing the communication working group and will link in with the parents and carers that initially offered to support with reviewing all aspects of communication between the school and home.

The website is now able to be updated on a regular basis, we have an IT Technician now employed five days a week, which is helping with this aspect and updating the information. We are reviewing the letter for sending home and have been working to create positive letters that share appropriate information with parents and carers.

As part of this we are also looking at a new platform, that is used across other schools in the authority. This is called 'Class Charts' This would allow staff to communicate information with parents and carers very easily and quickly. This is at the very early stages of being progressed and we have a group of middle leaders looking at this and creating a timeline for progressing this platform.

We continue to review the process of sharing information through emails and the school app and will review the best way to share the key information throughout the year.

Communications (Digital)

- a. Simple guide to apps, platforms and other resources used for teaching
 - a. The self-service app on the iPad gives clear info over all the apps available on the student and staff devices. When you tap on the icon via self-service the description of the app appears. Different depts /staff use diff apps from here to support learning and teaching. The most commonly used apps are the Microsoft office e.g. Teams, OneNote, PowerPoint, word etc. The ipads are only used to enhance learning and teaching. Paper resources, practical activities and other learning and teaching strategies are obviously still very much used as they were prior to the devices being introduced.
ClickView is also a very good learning resource for class and home.
- b. Simple guide on the use of teams (channels, assignments, weekly tasks)
 - 1. We are working alongside students and staff at the moment to develop a more consistent approach to storing and sharing resources on Teams to make it more user friendly. A useful resource to help people navigate Teams is copied below.
 - 2. [Digital Skills – Edinburgh Learns Digital | City of Edinburgh Council](#)
- c. How is access to games (Minecraft education) limited during classes?
 - a. Minecraft can occasionally be used in classes where it is with a clear purpose contributing towards the learning intentions for the lesson.
 - b. It is the teacher responsibility to check students are on task in class and refer anyone who is off task. If this is off task behaviour on the ipad it is recorded and without improvement the device can be removed due to misuse.

We are hoping to offer a digital information evening for S1/2. This is going to be developed alongside our Learning and Teaching school improvement team, new S1-2 ICT teacher and interested students. We are currently working on the Homestudy resources for S1-2 and will progress onto this once we publish that.

A Level Art

We have been reviewing this course and the delivery of a two-year course in 8 months. We have to also continuously review our curriculum and the courses we can offer within the staffing allocation we are given each year. We will continue to offer the course to the current S5 as this is the pathway that was shared previously. Going forward we have put this in a course choice in S5 and for the course to be completed over S5 and S6. This is with the rationale to support pupil and staff wellbeing. We will also review this to monitor the progress of pupils.

Events / News / Updates

Wellbeing Hub and SNUG Christmas Coffee Morning

We held our first coffee morning in the WBH and SNUG and it was lovely to welcome parents, carers and staff to experience these spaces and the incredible work that takes place.

Youth Philanthropy Initiative

Very proud to see one of our first YPI group making an impact for their charity by raising awareness via having an article published in the Edinburgh News. Huge congrats to Bernard Hinchcliffe-Drumm, Oscar Muir, Jacob Barenblat and Theo Naumov. A great example of making that extra effort and working well with your charity.

I would really appreciate if you could share this with your friends and families to help the group raise awareness

[Edinburgh Teens Advocate for Local Charity in Youth Philanthropy Initiative](#)

Marchmont/Sciennes Tree-Lighting Event

The JGHS Pipe Band and Wind Ensemble were delighted to be invited once again to take part in this festive community event. The Pipe Band opened the celebration with a performance at the tree, after which the Wind Ensemble provided musical accompaniment for the carol singing. Guests enjoyed mince pies kindly donated by Scotmid before we were all treated to the much-anticipated lights switch on.

The Pipe Band then led the gathering to the German Speaking Church and played in the gardens, where everyone was then treated to snacks, juice, and mulled wine for the adults. Our performers had a wonderful time and would like to thank the Marchmont and Sciennes Community Council for inviting us back. We're already looking forward to next year's event.

Senior Drama Production

On the 5th December our senior drama pupils put on an incredible performance, after many months of rehearsal. They put on both a matinee and evening performance, with both very well attended.

Memorial Fundraiser

Pupils and staff have engaged in fundraising for the memorial benches for Paul Cummings and Claire Fraser, who sadly passed away. There was enough money raised to purchase the benches and for engraving and installing of the benches.

Christmas Concert

It was excellent to be back at the Usher Hall and to sell out the venue. The learning community joining us was fantastic to see and many staff past and present as well.

Course Choice Evening

This took place on Wednesday 14th January and was excellent to see it so well attended by parent's and carers.

Many Good Men Event

I was pleased to attend an event on Tuesday 20th January for the launch of the 'Many Good Men' programme with Civic Digits. This included our pupils involved in the making and recording of the film and then the Q&A after the first showing of the film. This has now been shared as a national resource.

Engineering Talk – Dr David Milne OBE

On Tuesday 9th December we had presentation by Dr David Milne OBE a founder and the former CEO of Edinburgh based Wolfson Microelectronics plc.

He talked about the business of engineering, and founding/growing an international technical company in Scotland. Although this was directed mainly to our S2 pupils in advance of them making course choices, any senior pupils who were interested or already applying to study for careers in engineering, particularly Microelectronics Engineering were invited to attend.