It was a privilege to be joined by over 100 guests to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our nominees for our Young Sports Person of the Year 2020 award dinner. We were joined by Ms Claire Brownie—Captain of the Scottish netball team who was our guest speaker. She spoke about her journey into becoming an elite athlete, the obstacles she overcame, the support of her loved ones she needed, and what it meant for her to not only represent her country, but to captain it. Her words of advice, of encouragement and of hope for all of our young sportspeople were really well received, and we could not have asked for a more inspiring speaker to start our evening. Our nominees were highlighted throughout the night, coming from a wide range of sports, from Karate to gymnastics, swimming to golf, with football, rugby and scootering amongst the rest.

Many of our nominees have won local, district, regional and national competitions and have represented Scotland at their ages. The variety and amount of talent on display was simply humbling, and towards the end of the evening, we awarded our winners.

Our Team of the Year is—Shinty
Our outstanding Contribution to Sport is—Claire Shanks
Our Young Sports Person of the Year (Junior) 2020 is—Kennedi Foster
Our Young Sports Person of the Year (Senior) 2020 is—Rhys Hartley

Well done to everyone who was nominated and who came along to contribute to another evening celebrating the successes of our young people, and my thanks to our Young Sports ambassadors, our Sport and Recreation classes, our catering and janitorial team and our PE Department for once again organising the event.

**Staffing Update**

My thanks to our Parent Council and Pupil appointment teams over the past few weeks as we made appointments in French—Ms Drion from Largs; English—Mrs Thompson from Whitburn; Maths—Mr Carey from St Kentigerns and Ms Murdoch from John Paul Academy; Technical—Ms Smith from John Paul Academy and in PE, Mr Stewart from Falkirk. All should start with us just after Easter.

Mrs Docherty—PT VIT is now DHT in Lesmahagow, and Mrs Morris is acting PT VIT. Mr Paterson PT Humanities has started his phased retirement, and Mr Campbell is now acting PT Humanities. Ms Murphy has inherited his role as PT Lewis and Ms Webster has taken Ms Murphy’s former post in Skye House. We may have additional staff after summer as our roll continues to grow.
It is that time of the year when young people begin to think about their choices for next year. Our S6 will all be leaving and many have secured unconditionals or conditionals for University or College, and many more are looking at undertaking apprenticeships on leaving. Our S2, S4 and S5 will all be making subject choices over the coming weeks. We have spent a long time discussing choices and pathways with them. It is important that young people recognise that there are no wrong paths—there are options in school and beyond for everyone, and this year we have increased our offer once again for young people. Skills Development Scotland, our Pupil Support staff and our teaching staff are all supporting young people as they look at the evidence from their learning to make the best informed decisions they can about their futures. Our Careers fair and individual interviews will help conclude this part of the process.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCOTLAND PROGRAMME

Our 2 have been involved in a STEM programme working alongside our SDS partners in advance of their options choice programme. As well as highlighting the future job-market information, they worked in teams undertaking activities in their challenge workshops, such as programming robots, to build the employability skills they will need on leaving school.
CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

As part of our Senior Phase programme of working with partners to help young people into positive leaver destinations, we have formed an excellent partnership with CoGC. They are always delighted to welcome our young people, and given that they are on the train line from Uddingston, they are easily accessible. From hospitality industries lead by the Professional Masterchef winner, to cabin crew, our young people have thoroughly enjoyed their tasters!

FUTURE CHEF

Speaking about Masterchef—what about our very own Jake McDonald—finalist in the future chef competition held across Scotland with the finals being in Glasgow. Jake was the runner up in the Central and South Scotland finals—outstanding—and you should try his vegan sausage rolls—Greggs are quaking!

SKILLS FOR WORK—MCPHIES PARTNERSHIP

McPhies the bakers are real champions of our young people. Recently they donated £1000 so that we could establish our own beautiful laundrette—part of our RISE programme and independent living skills programme which is accessed by a number of our young people. They also work alongside our Business, Health and Food technology and Technical departments as part of our IDL programme—The Cupcake Challenge—in Lower School. McPhies work with our teachers and young people talking about supply chains, logistics, manufacturing processes, packaging, marketing and selling produce. The method we use is via our cupcake challenge. Young people, in teams, have to agree flavours, sizes, colours and designs for a set of cupcakes. They make these. They use CAD to design and manufacture their boxes and they use Graphics to design their logos and adverts. They then produce and present their cupcakes to a panel who select a winner. These skills are industry based skills and promote employability through Lower School—prior to young people making options choices. Cupcake kingdom came 3rd; Cookie Monsters were the runners-up, and the winners were Minnie Bites. Well done everyone—mmmmm—tasty!
PARENTAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

We have recently completed our first of our new parental partnership events—learning as families. This first pilot was based on STEM and Health and Food technology, and involved our Science staff, Technical staff and our Health and Food technology staff working with young people and their parents / carers over a number of weeks on a project based around food. They looked at how many calories were in food by burning it in Science, they worked in the workshops and they cooked in our kitchens. It was great to welcome parents into the school to learn new skills alongside their young people, and the feedback from this pilot has been very positive. We will now be looking to extend this later this session and into next, and we will keep you informed of dates, times and themes as we move ahead. My thanks to all of our carers and young people who helped us learn from this pilot programme. Learning is better when we do it together.

ARE YOU DANCING? ARE YOU ASKING?

Our Dancers recently took part in the SLC active dance 2020 showcase event at The Townhouse. This is a fantastic opportunity for our young people to showcase their undoubted talents and in fact—it is actually a really good evening out! Our team were, as always, a real credit to our school and themselves, and they had a great time—well done everyone!

CHANGES TO NATIONAL 5

Mrs McGuigan and I met with the parents and carers of our S4 just before and also again, at the end of our recent Parents Evening. We discussed the change coming in this year to N5—the removal of the ‘safety net’. Previously we presented all youngsters who were sitting N5 in the added Value Unit for N4. This meant that if, on the day of the exam, they underperformed, we could submit this and they would receive an N4 pass. This year, the Scottish Government has chosen to remove this. Indeed, I asked a question about this to the Deputy First Minister to highlight my own concerns about this. None-the-less, this is where we are. As a school we have highlighted young people who are ‘on the cusp’ of N5. We still wish to present them for this award, however, we will also present them for additional unit awards in eg Barista training, employability etc as a back-up. These will take place in May and will be co-ordinated by Mrs McGuigan. You may also have heard that the whole of Curriculum for Excellence is to be reviewed after the Scottish Government lost the vote in Parliament and it will report next January, so further changes may follow from this. We will keep you in-the-loop.
Café UG71

We recently opened our new Café UG71. This is named after our postcode, with the UG also representing the school. This new café is part of our efforts to continue to grow our curriculum and our curricular content to offer more and more appropriate courses and qualifications for our young people—there are no wrong learner pathways. Young people will be able to choose Hospitality industries as a course next year, working in the Café to gain SQA awards at Level 5, as well as working with Matthew Algie, working in the Malmaison Hotel and Restaurant, and with the City of Glasgow College to gain a wider perspective on the hospitality industry—a real growth area in the future. We have already trained a number of young people as Baristas (SQA level 5 award) and you can see them operate at Parents evenings throughout the year. Our young people will take their learning experiences to the SLC Showcase event in March and to the Scottish Learning Festival in September. Thank you to all of the schools who came along to our launch event.

Belgium and France

Our History team have recently returned from their trips to the battlefields where they again laid a wreath to commemorate those form our school who gave their lives for our freedoms. Our young people visited the battle sites, the graves, learned about the sacrifices made and how we need to value each other in what is becoming a more divided world. A sobering trip, but a very worthwhile one for everyone involved.

Diary Dates

27th February – S2 Parents Evening
2nd March—options forms issued
3rd March—S2/4/5 Options fair
9th March—S2 options forms returned