

# IN THE KNOW

Falkirk Council's Education Newsletter  
Issue 8 - Summer 2009



Falkirk Council  
Education Services

## In-Service Days

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning announced that in line with a recommendation from the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board, she would provide for one extra in-service day in the current school year and one in each of the next two school years. This would focus on the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence by staff in schools engaged in delivering and supporting the Curriculum. This is in addition to the expectation that a substantial proportion of current in-service and other Continuing Professional Development for educational professionals will focus on this crucial area.

After some discussions, it has been decided that this extra in-service day for Falkirk Council pupils will be Monday 18 May 2009.

Consultations will be taking place with parents and schools as to whether they would prefer a similar arrangement for 2009-10 or whether to add the extra day to the existing February 2010 in-service days. Parents will be notified on the outcome of the consultation in due course.

## did you know?

Almost nine out of ten Falkirk Council schools have received an award from Eco Schools Scotland, for promoting environmental awareness.

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The amount of paper and card which was recycled in schools increased by 36% in 2007/08.

## Mini Carbon Crusaders Blast Energy

**First year pupils at the new Grangemouth High had a blast when the Carbon Crusader hit the school in March. The mini Crusaders battled it out to reduce carbon emissions at every turn during the S1 Sustainability Day.**

Now you'll have heard of Superman, Spiderman and even WonderWoman but who is the Carbon Crusader? It's Falkirk Council's very own gas busting hero created to encourage Falkirk Council employees to work towards reducing the Council's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20% by 2013.

Grangemouth High's Sustainability Day was the perfect opportunity to let pupils and staff know how they can reduce the amount of energy used in the school.

Not only did they have to design and create an outfit for the Carbon Crusader using reused and recycled materials but they also learned all about the benefits of wormeries and how to reduce their carbon footprints on a 'pretend' trip to New York.



This resulted in all 145 pupils having a very informative 'green' day!

Using recycled materials costumes had to show recycling super powers and energy saving gadgets.

Their imaginations were instantly switched on with ideas for 'litter spotters' that could see for miles, a solar powered sat nav and special 'carbon' seeing goggles.

And a carbon car fuelled by hydro power was designed to help the Carbon Crusader get around!

The outfits created on the day using old bits and bobs including plastic bags, egg containers, paper/cardboard, textiles blew the judges away. By the end of the session three super hero outfits stood out

from the crowd and the winners were announced.

Kyle Gormley, Ross Evans and Stuart McKay modelled the outfits rather well.

Scott Robertson, Teacher of Mathematics at Grangemouth High said: "It was a great day for S1 pupils. They learned all about recycling, energy and carbon reduction in a fun way and really threw themselves into the task of creating a super hero outfit for the Carbon Crusader.

"Our new school has many sustainable and energy saving features and the Carbon Crusader helped us to get this message across."

The winning teams shared £50 of iTunes vouchers.

**For more information contact [carbon.crusader@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:carbon.crusader@falkirk.gov.uk)**

**In this issue: ♦ Careers Scotland ♦ Getting it Right for Every Child ♦ Pupils 'buzz' at INEOs' Annual Science Fair ♦ Euroquiz**

# Director's item



**An increasing amount of time in the Education Service and in schools is being spent in preparation for implementing Curriculum for Excellence. By August 2010, S1 pupils will be the first group to experience a new approach to their education which will lead to a new framework of qualifications. I anticipate that all nursery and primary schools will have begun to implement Curriculum for Excellence by that time as well.**

The concept of Curriculum for Excellence is one of the most exciting developments in education for a number of years and there is growing international interest in Scotland's innovative approach to developing education for the 21st Century. However, it does mean that all the teachers and support staff in schools in Falkirk, and across Scotland have a major task to achieve.

Curriculum for Excellence is about developing the way teachers teach and children learn. There will be an increased focus on pupils achieving not just better attainment but becoming more independent well rounded citizens of the future with skills to help them through an unknown world which will be different from the one we live in at present. I have every confidence

that our service and schools will take this forward in a positive and confident way, building on the excellent work that already exists.

So what is happening in Falkirk at the moment? We have agreed a plan with our headteachers on the most important things that need to be worked on and when they need to be completed. There is a wide range of training activities and other developments in schools and we are all actively involved in national events which help us understand what the Curriculum for Excellence will mean in practice. By the end of this school session we should have all the guidance about delivering the curriculum in schools and information about plans for the introduction of the new assessment framework which will include a new qualifications framework. The initial focus will be on literacy, numeracy and health & well being which will commence in August this year.

The introduction of Curriculum for Excellence doesn't mean everything that goes on in our schools will be changed. This is about building on all the good practice that already happens in our schools but aims to further improve standards and ensure every child will achieve their full potential. We will be working with headteachers and other colleagues to help inform parents as the work progresses. In the Know will have regular updates and information and we will be discussing the best ways of communicating developments to parents with parent councils and the Parents Focus Group to help you to support your children's learning. As always, if you have any ideas about how you would like to be kept up to date on Curriculum for Excellence please let us know.

**Education Services Annual Parents' Conference  
Saturday, 16 May, Victoria Primary School, Falkirk**

## ARE YOU READY TO VOTE !!

The European Parliamentary election takes place on 4th June 2009 and poll cards will be issued to registered voters in early May.

The Electoral Registration Officer, Brian Byrne, is advising anyone who has changed their name because of marriage, divorce etc to contact his office to arrange to update the register of electors now.

All applications to be added to the Register of Electors updated on 28th or applications to change details need to be received no later than 19th May.

Anyone who is not registered to vote will not be able to vote in this election or future elections.

They are also reducing their chances of obtaining credit as recent press articles have confirmed that your credit rating is reduced by 10% if credit reference companies cannot verify that you are registered to vote at your current address.

Forms and more information to register to vote or to vote by post are available in local libraries as well as from [www.saa.gov.uk/central](http://www.saa.gov.uk/central) or by telephoning 01786-892200

## Making Partnership Work Conference - Denny High School - Effective Contributors



**'Sharing Events for everyone who wants to support children's learning'** was the purpose of the two seminars held recently, one in Stirling and one in Aberdeen, organised by the Scottish Government and Learning and Teaching Scotland. These half day seminars were open for parents, Parent Council representatives, school and local authority staff to come together and share information on the good practice projects undertaken in various schools nationwide to increase parental involvement.

At the Aberdeen event, the headteacher of one of our own local schools, Stephen Miller from Denny High, presented his 'Effective Contributors' workshop which explained how he had introduced parent focus groups to share ideas and improve communication between parents and the school.

Stephen explained that he was relatively new to the school when the project started and he had taken over at a time where communication and involvement was perceived to be poor in a recent HMI report. His first meeting with parents only attracted 22 attendees and the Parent Council was struggling to attract members.

The school had a lot of positive aspects - a history of community pride in the school, local goodwill and a strong determination to improve, especially with an impending move to new school premises planned in 2009. He was confident that improvement could be achieved by working in partnership with other stakeholders in the school. His partners for change were identified as the school staff, the pupils and the parents - each with an equal capability to influence improvement.

Quite simply, but also effectively, Stephen issued personal, written invitations to a random selection of parents to come along and meet with him for an informal chat with a cup of tea and to talk about a variety of topics such as transition, the move to the new school, transport and parents evenings. There were no presentations, no agendas and no minutes taken at these meetings. It was simply a chance for a small group of parents to relax and tell him what issues about their child's school mattered to them. He acknowledged that, at first, some parents were mildly alarmed by his invitation, possibly thinking 'what have I done?' as many parents must have felt this way when called to the headie's office when they were at school

themselves! Stephen felt strongly that at such meetings he had to listen much more than he talked and once the parents realised that they felt much more comfortable.

One important consequence of these meetings is that all issues raised and action taken as a result is reported back to all parents in the school newsletter. These 'Focus Group' parents act as critical friends and they share their perspective helping to improve communication and partnership as well as both parties providing mutual support and gaining respect for each other. Parents who have been invited to the Parents Focus Groups are very positive, "It's good to know that the headteacher is constantly trying to do the best for the school and its pupils". One measure of success is that these parents are now keen to be involved in further discussions in the future.

The next stage of the plan for involving parents will be to ask them about Curriculum for Excellence and start a new dynamic conversation about implementing this new development. Stephen says, "Investing my time in the project has reaped great benefits for the school. I now have a greater understanding of parents' views and what the school can do to support their involvement. A simple thing such as a personal invitation to share a cup of tea has encouraged more parents to engage with me in a way that is not threatening to them so that we can work together. Parents are the child's main educators and we need their help to produce the best possible learning outcomes for all our pupils".

**More details on all the projects, all the workshops held at the two seminars and a wide variety of ideas and information on how parents can get involved to improve their child's learning are available to download from the ParentZone website - [www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk](http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk). DVDs of the projects will shortly be produced - also available on ParentZone.**

Education Services Annual Parents' Conference 2009

# Literacy across Learning

Read it!, Write it!, Say it!, Learn it!

Special Guests

– Alan Bissett, Author and Matthew Fitt, Author.

Saturday 16th May 2009 – 10am – 2pm,

Victoria Primary School, Falkirk

**ALL PARENTS WITH CHILDREN AT FALKIRK COUNCIL SCHOOLS AND NURSERIES ARE INVITED TO COME ALONG TO THIS YEAR'S PARENTS' CONFERENCE.**

In fun workshop groups, pupils and teachers will show what activities they do in school and nursery so children learn to read, write and talk with confidence. Parents will learn how they can help their children at home and make sure that they reach their full potential.

For further details and to register your attendance, please telephone (01324) 506602 or email [diane.cherry@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:diane.cherry@falkirk.gov.uk) by Wednesday 13th May 2009.

A free crèche and light lunch will be provided. Please let us know if you need an interpreter for the deaf or a community language interpreter.

MY FUTURE'S IN  
**falkirk**



**fffb**  
For Falkirk's bairns



**Falkirk Council**  
Education Services

**CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE**

# Careers Scotland

**John Shanks is what we would class as a truly inspirational young person who has overcome many barriers to achieve his goal by securing a place on the popular course at Oatridge College – Applied Small Animal Care.**

We would like to highlight and celebrate his success in this case study and to show how Careers Scotland has helped John every step of the way.

When John was twelve years of age he suffered a severe viral type infection and was weakened as a result of this. He lost mobility and speech and because of this he spent his early years at Graeme High being educated – for the majority of time – at home. However, he was determined to get back into school full-time and although his mobility was limited he did manage to achieve this goal and he can now manage to move around in his wheelchair independently. He has also worked hard to regain his speech through intensive speech therapy sessions.

John was initially referred to Careers Scotland by his teacher in Learning Support. She was concerned that his lack of mobility may have proven to be a major barrier for him. During his discussion with the school Careers Adviser it soon became clear that John was particularly interested in working with animals and he was able to talk about his career ideas related to

kennel work and countryside ranger work. They also talked about his back up plans and because of his friendly personality he was advised to consider jobs working with the public and John gladly took that on board.

The Careers Adviser also suggested that John consider finding out about Oatridge College and discovered there was an open day in mid February. John decided to attend and whilst there took the opportunity to apply to the Applied Small Animal Care course.

At the same time the Careers Adviser and Learning Support worker decided to refer John to a Careers Scotland Key Worker to offer John a bit more support. The Key Worker then had several meetings with John. He was able to meet John and bring him to the Careers Centre, show him the facilities and encourage him to attend regularly. John was aware that he had applied to a competitive course and out of four hundred applicants only forty received a place. With the support from a Careers Scotland Key Worker in particular he prepared for the interview and



on the 14 April was informed that he had been successful! However, the onus was put on John to secure a work placement as the course demands a practical element and again with the support from the Key Worker John managed to secure a place at Polmont Veterinary Clinic for a week. This went really well and confirmed to John that he has made the right choice.

He has now started the course at Oatridge and is really enjoying

the challenge and variety. He has even found time to get a part-time job at Falkirk Stadium as a steward which is helping him with extra pocket money plus giving him valuable experience helping the general public.

**So, it is clear to everyone how committed John has been in following his ambitions and what a credit he is to his school, family, community and above all to himself. Well done John!**

## Which way now? Helping your children with their career

**Careers Scotland are part of Skills Development Scotland and offer high quality guidance and employability services which are available to people of all ages and are free, impartial, confidential and based on individual need.**

Careers Scotland can help parents help their children take those first steps on the career path using a range of resources and contact points – including their re-vamped website.

The Careers Scotland office in Manor Street, Falkirk recently held an 'open afternoon' where Falkirk Council staff who have a corporate parenting responsibility and parents themselves could drop in to find out about the latest developments in the way that Careers Scotland help young people towards the career of their choice.

The focus is on young people in the 12-19 age bracket, especially those who may need help finding out about opportunities and training when they leave school or otherwise risk having no positive post-school destination. If these young people are identified at an early stage, through their school careers adviser, for example, then practical steps can be taken to make sure they are signposted to get all the help they need. Parents themselves have an equally important role to play at this important time in their child's life and they can also make an approach to Careers Scotland for advice. Corporate parents, such as Falkirk Council who look after children in care, work with Careers Scotland to make sure these young people are also helped with their post-school

opportunities. The number of young people leaving schools without positive destinations has dropped in the Falkirk area but with the full impact of the credit crunch still to be felt, this area remains a high priority for Falkirk Council Education Services and for all partner agencies.

One new initiative which hopes to make a big difference for young people leaving school is the 16+ Learning Choices scheme which will guarantee that by 2010 all school leavers will be offered a learning opportunity when they leave school. These learning opportunities will help young people develop employability skills, self confidence, interview skills and more. In Falkirk this scheme is being phased in and the target is for 75% of young people to be offered this experience when they leave

school in 2009 with full implementation just a year later.

You can find out about all the help and support Careers Scotland offers – both to parents and the young people themselves – by phoning 0845 850 2502, logging on to the website [www.careers-scotland.org.uk](http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk) or by dropping in to the office in Manor Street, Falkirk 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. You can ask for help at any time – not just when you child is approaching school leaving age.

Careers Scotland staff are happy to come along and visit individual Parent Councils - which all parents can attend - so if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity contact [ian.scales@careers-scotland.org.uk](mailto:ian.scales@careers-scotland.org.uk)

# The wonder of 'World of Work days'

Career Education is a crucial element of Determined to Succeed and to address this many primary schools participate in World of Work events. In some cases these are held within the school and have grown to become week long events where various speakers visit the schools and pupils undertake a variety of experiences which support them in developing skills for life and skills for work. As part of a very productive partnership, Forth Valley College hosted three World of Work days this year.

The first of these was held in October for the Bo'ness cluster of primary schools. 130 pupils attended the day and each pupil undertook four different workshops. On offer from the college were workshops on, Hair and Beauty, Forensic Science, Construction and the Creative Industries. The business community once again got right behind the schools and we were delighted that Caledonian Produce, Tapside Marketing, Physio Focus, The Royal Highland Education Trust, The Royal Bank of Scotland and Central Scotland Police Force were there to deliver workshops which gave the young people not only an understanding of the options available at the college but how the skills they will develop can be utilised by the business community.

The Small Schools cluster know how important it is that P6/7 pupils get to meet each other as part of their transition activities...



so what better way than a World of Work day. Again the College hosted the event which this time involved 102 pupils. The pupils undertook college workshops on Journalism, Hairdressing and CAD technology and also had a range of businesses on hand including St Andrew's Ambulance Service, Royal Highland Education Trust, Central FM, The Royal Bank of Scotland, Airth Castle Hotel, Lime Designs and Christine Jardine.

The Falkirk Cluster held their annual World of Work event known as Fantastic Futures on 2 April. Once again the College hosted the event providing two workshops, Engineering, Robotics and Science. The businesses included, Central Scotland Police, Central Scotland Fire and Rescue service, Cloybank Estate, St Andrew's Ambulance, The Royal Bank of Scotland, The Falkirk Herald, Cineworld, The

Macdonald Inchyra Grange Hotel and Tapside Marketing. Great favourites are always the police dogs and Diesel the police pup was no exception.

Although these events provide a lot of fun and excitement for the pupils they are also an excellent means of developing the young people's awareness of the range of jobs available and they also allow our teachers to work collaboratively with local entrepreneurs, the business community and other working people to broaden pupils' experiences of the world of work.



## The 2009 Giveaway

Already since January the CFSLA Payroll Lottery has donated over £7000 to local community groups and charities.

Russell Taylor, the current Chairman said he hoped to double the amount donated so far by December 2009 but to date only 2 new applications for support have been received for the May committee meeting.

The committee prefers to support the fund-raising efforts of its members who are employees and former

employees of Clackmannanshire, Falkirk & Stirling Councils, plus Police, Fire & Assessors Services and to buy equipment for local charities and community groups.

More information on how to join the lottery and apply for community group assistance available from [www.cfslalottery.org.uk](http://www.cfslalottery.org.uk)

## Looking After your Child's Eyesight

Most children do not require to wear spectacles but all children can benefit from an eye examination. During a full check-up, the vision in each eye, muscle balance and the eye's health are assessed. It is also a good idea to have colour vision checked because 1 in 8 boys show some level of colour vision deficiency which may make learning at school more difficult. Children and young people don't always realise that they have a vision problem especially if it only affects one eye. Some children in Forth Valley will have had pre-school screening and all children have a quick vision check at primary one but a full eye exam can detect a lot more. It is easy to do and all eye exams are paid for by the NHS. Eye examinations can be carried out by any local community optician.

### did you know?

Falkirk ranks top in Scotland for the percentage of pre-school children with access to a GTCS registered teacher

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The total number of exclusions from Falkirk Council schools reduced by 25% in 2007/08, and is now 42% lower than the national average.

.....

In secondary schools, pupil attendance is now at its highest level.

# Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

**GIRFEC is all about improving services for children young people and their families. In the Falkirk Council area we are already working towards these improvements through our Integrated Learning Communities and our Locality Pilots.**

The Scottish Government's programme for change in Children's Services gives responsibility to services, local communities, children, young people and their families to work together to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Together we will ensure that:

- Children and young people get the right kind of help, when they need it.
- When working together with services, parents, children and young people are involved in developing their plans but have to attend fewer meetings.
- All services and agencies deal with children, young people and their parents in the same way.
- All services and agencies work better together to improve outcomes.
- Responsibilities are clear.
- Services and agencies have less paperwork and more time to respond to children and take action.

These changes will make sure that children get the best start in life.

In the Falkirk Council area the developments are being led by Falkirk Children's Commission. They are currently updating the Integrated Children's Services Plan (for Falkirk's bairns) to focus more on outcomes and building services around children's needs.

To share information more effectively our Integrated Assessment Framework is being developed. The paperwork is currently being trialled amongst staff in three pilot areas. It is also being used by Social Work as part of their reporting mechanisms for the Children's Panel.

In early years provision the amalgamation of three nurseries and nursery schools will offer increased services for the under threes and ensure that they have as wide an experience as possible. The needs of looked after children are the focus of our corporate parenting work and within schools there is an increased focus on their attainment and achievement.

All council staff have the opportunity to participate in the highly regarded multi agency child protection training. Evaluation has shown that individuals feel that they are more confident in their approach to keeping children safe after the opportunity of sharing experiences with colleagues from other services and agencies.

Scottish Ministers have agreed a high-level vision for young people of Scotland:

"in order to become confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens, all Scotland's children need to be: safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, included, respected and responsible"

The Children's Commission is confident that through these developments and working together effectively we will achieve positive outcomes for our children and young people in the Falkirk area.

For more information please contact Elaine Costello, Integration Support Manager on 01324 503807.

## Young People in Falkirk Making More Choices and Creating More Chances

Figures released recently show that more young people across the Falkirk Council area are leaving school and moving into 'positive destinations' such as further or higher education, employment or training than ever before.

A report to the Education and Leisure Committee on 27 January showed increases for those young people going into full-time further and higher education as

well as into training (with the highest recorded figure for Scotland in this category) and a total of 87% of school leavers moving to a positive destination.

A slight dip in the number of those going into full time employment was experienced last year however the overall number of those young people not making a positive transition had fallen from 25% of all school leavers in 2004 to a record low of 13% in 2008.

Falkirk Council is leading the 'More Choices, More Chances' strategy that helps support young people move to a positive destination and provides a number of opportunities to take part in post school activities that

prevents them from heading to a 'negative destination' such as long term unemployment.

To help deliver this strategy, Falkirk Council is supported by Forth Valley College, Careers Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and Jobcentre Plus.

**Programmes have been developed by Falkirk Council and its partners such as - S4 pupils moving onto part education and work based programmes with Falkirk Council's employment and training unit; early intervention careers support and; Activate Clubs that help S4 pupils with practical activities that help them plan their future.**

## Parents Meetings

Every year we organise four Council-wide Parents Meetings covering topics of interest to our parents. All parents can come along and meet members of the Education Services Senior Management Team and the Convener while finding out about Education Services in Falkirk. It is a chance to share good ideas, discuss different topics, give your views and have a cup of tea or coffee!

Three of these meetings are held on a Wednesday evening at a central school in Falkirk and the Annual Parents Conference is a big event held on a Saturday, again in a local school.

The meeting on the topic of the Annual Report takes place in September and parents have the opportunity to ask questions about Education Services and discuss developments that have taken place over the school year.

In November we host the Service Performance Plan meeting where we look at attainment reports, performance and planning for the future, including discussion on Service priorities and local improvement priorities.

The third meeting is the Budget Meeting - this is always a popular meeting as it gives you the chance to get information on Education Services budget plans for the forthcoming year. Again you can ask questions about Education Services and meet members of the Education Services Senior Management Team.

Last but by no means least, the Parents Conference is usually held on a Saturday and a crèche and a light lunch are provided. The Conference has a different theme each year such as Anti-Bullying, Literacy, Drugs and Alcohol and Skills for Life. There are also fun workshops on relevant topics - some led by the pupils themselves. There is also a very useful market place where you can pick up information leaflets on topics relevant to the conference and some freebies!!

**Watch out for the date and venue of the next Parents Meeting in your school newsletter and remember you are invited and will be made welcome!**

# Pupils 'buzz' at INEOS' annual science fair



**Learning about how changes in climate may affect Scotland's sea life and how to construct electrical circuits, incorporating a buzzer, was just two of the interactive workshops featured at this year's annual INEOS Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) fair.**

Designed to promote science, engineering and technological subjects through investigation and team work, over 1850 Primary 7 (10/11 yr old) children from 52 local schools, including all in the Falkirk Council area, were invited to take part in this exciting and unique event, which was officially opened on Thursday 5th March by Dr. Wendy Livingstone, Associate Principal, Forth Valley College.

David East, Communication Manager at INEOS' Grangemouth site said,

**"We were delighted to run our annual science fair for local school children. As an industry that uses science and technology everyday it is important that we enthuse the next generation to take up these subjects at secondary school. This event is all about showing children that science and technology can be fun through participation in interactive workshops and 'hands-on' activities. We were pleased to deliver this event in conjunction with Global Science and Falkirk Council".**



The 2009 SET fair is supported by INEOS, Global Science, Scottish Government and Falkirk Council and is part of the My Future's in Falkirk economic development initiative. Running from 2-17 March in the indoor arena at Grangemouth Stadium, specific workshops ran at regular intervals throughout the 12 day event, covering topics associated with engineering, science, technology and mathematics.

Frank McKeever, Global Science said, "We were delighted that partners supported this event over National Science Week. The INEOS annual Education Fair is recognised as the premier STEM event within Falkirk District. The support provided by Scottish Government will be used to develop and expand the event in future years and involve the wider community."

**For further information please contact:**

**David East, Communication Manager, INEOS on Tel: 01324 476948 or e-mail: david.east@ineos.com**

## Euroquiz

**Do you know the answers to the following questions?**

- Where did Anne Frank write her famous diary during the Second World War?
- What is the capital of Hungary?
- Geographically, which is the smallest member state of the EU?
- How many MEPs represent Scotland?

These are just some of the questions answered by Primary 6 pupils who competed in Falkirk Council's Euroquiz heat on Friday 13 March. Teams of four pupils, representing 21 schools were joined at Kinnaird Primary School by their teachers, families and local dignitaries for the quiz.

All schools competed in three rounds, each having 20 questions, before the two highest scoring teams (Bantaskin and Kinnaird) met each other for the 'Beat the Buzzer' final round.

The winners were Bantaskin Primary School and they will represent Falkirk at the national final on Monday 11 May at the Scottish Parliament. The final will be broadcast live on the internet. You can watch this live on the day at [www.holyrood.tv](http://www.holyrood.tv)

## NPDO Schools



The impressive new Grangemouth and Denny High Schools have now been completed. Grangemouth High School welcomed pupils for the first time on 6th January while Denny High School opened its doors on 23rd February. Students, staff and community users of both schools are enjoying getting to know the fantastic range of new facilities including swimming pools, games halls, gymnasias, dance/fitness suites, synthetic all weather

pitches and state of the art stage and drama facilities. Open evenings for parents and residents to allow them the opportunity to view both schools have taken place and the reaction has been overwhelmingly positive.

The two remaining schools, St Mungo's RC High School and Falkirk High School, are both progressing well and are due for completion by the Contractor in June and July respectively. They

will also contain the same range of excellent facilities as the two schools already opened. The schools and the Council's Community Schools Project Team are already working hard to prepare for the demanding task of moving from the old schools to the new schools. The completion of these two schools will mean that the whole of the Council's secondary school estate will comprise schools all completed since the year 2000.

# Local Improvement Priorities 2009-12

Every year, Education Services produces a series of local improvement priorities that the service will focus on delivering in the next and following two school sessions. These priorities are agreed in consultation with headteachers and managers in schools and within Education Services headquarters although some of the priorities are set for us by the Scottish Government. Parents, pupils and school staff have a say in deciding these priorities too through the self evaluation survey process which is carried out annually. Last year, in October 2008, these surveys were carried out in the Braes and Falkirk school clusters. The priorities are also linked in with the overarching Falkirk Council goals - as you can see from the table opposite.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Further raising levels of achievement and attainment among young people	Further developing a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy	Continuing to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our citizens and communities	Increasing our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination	Enhancing and sustaining an environment in which people want to live, work and visit	Service Management Priorities
<b>Curriculum for Excellence</b> Effective Learning and Teaching Literacy Numeracy Health and Wellbeing More Choices, More Chances 16+ Learning Choices  <b>Attendance</b>	<b>Enterprise Education/My Future's in Falkirk</b>  <b>Improving School Leaver Destinations</b>	<b>Behaviour Improvement/ Restorative Approaches</b>  <b>Health Promoting Schools</b>	<b>Looked After Children</b>  <b>Early Years Framework</b>	<b>Pupil Participation</b>  <b>Parental Participation</b>  <b>Leadership Development</b>	<b>Scottish Government Priorities</b> • Reduction in Class Sizes • Free School Meals P1-3 • GLOW  <b>Property Priorities</b> • Antonshill RC PS build • Re-profile and re-focus School Asset Management Plans  <b>Demographic Changes</b> • NPDO Community Schools Project • Secondary Schools Estate Capacity Review • Early Years Amalgamations  <b>Workforce Planning Strategy</b> • Review Equality Scheme  <b>ICT Infrastructure Improvements</b>  <b>DSM Roll-out and Implementation</b>  <b>Gaelic Strategy</b>  <b>Child Protection</b>  <b>Integrated Children's Services</b>

**The Local Improvement Priorities contain two types of information – statistical reporting on measurable targets (such as exam results) giving detailed figures showing progress towards achieving the targets that were set in previous Local Improvement Priority plans and a list of action plans giving an outline of what we will do in the course of the next three years to improve continuously Education Services.**

Copies of the finalised priorities are given to schools to help them develop their own school improvement plans and copies of

the entire document – the Local Improvement Priorities form a major part of the Service Plan – is posted on the Falkirk Council website in the Council's Performance Zone. Hard copies are sent to all headteachers / managers - we do not produce lots of hard copies for sustainability reasons but prefer to send out electronic copies or encourage people to download it from the website.

Parents have a further opportunity for discussion on the Service Plan as we invite all parents along to a meeting to discuss it in more detail and ask any questions they may have or make any comments or

suggestions about what the priorities should be. This meeting takes place in November each year – the meeting in 2009 will be held on the 18 of November - venue still to be confirmed – and any parent with a child at any Falkirk Council school or nursery is invited to attend and contribute.

If you have any questions about the local improvement priorities you can contact Education Services' Communications Officer - diane.cherry@falkirk.gov.uk. If you would like to know what other priorities are set for your school, you can ask your headteacher / manager about the school improvement plan.

## Dates for your Diary

Here are some useful dates for your diary:

### AUGUST 2009

- 17 Aug Autumn Term Begins (Staff Only)
- 18 Aug Autumn Term Begins (Pupils)

### SEPTEMBER 2009

- 07 Sept Term Time Public Holiday
- 09 Sept Parents Meeting - Annual Report - Venue tbc

### OCTOBER 2009

- 09 Oct Autumn Term Ends
- 19 Oct Winter Term Begins

### NOVEMBER 2009

- 16 Nov Staff Development Day
- 17 Nov Staff Development Day
- 18 Nov Parents Meeting - Service Performance Plan - Venue tbc

### DECEMBER 2009

- 22 Dec Winter Term Ends

### JANUARY 2010

- 06 Jan Spring Term Begins

## School Meal Service – Menu and Price Update

**Falkirk Council have agreed that the price of all school meals will increase by 25p across the board. These new prices will be effective from Monday 20 April 2009.**

Pupils have the daily option of a 2 Course Meal or choosing from the Pic & Mix Menu. Both menus offer healthy and tasty meal options while reflecting the Scottish Governments food and drink legal requirements. Fresh bread and 3 salad choices are provided with every school meal – free of charge.

A new primary menu cycle will be launched in August and issued to Parents prior to the summer break. Taster sessions

have already begun in some schools and feedback from pupils has been favourable.

While the current menu cycle will run until June, Catering Services continue to make improvements in terms of quantity of the food bought and cooking methods. These changes will be incorporated into the current menu cycle from 20 April.

It is planned to introduce a "Thirsty Thursday" On that day bottled water will be served with every school meal. Plain milk will be offered as an option but is it hoped that your child will be encouraged to participate in the promotion. A selection of plain

or flavoured milk, water or fruit juice will continued to be served with both meal options for the other 4 days.

The updated 2 Course Lunch and Pic & Mix menus will be available for parents to view on the Council's website.

[www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/corporate\\_neighbourhood/facilities\\_management/building\\_services/catering\\_services/school\\_meals/school\\_meals.aspx](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/corporate_neighbourhood/facilities_management/building_services/catering_services/school_meals/school_meals.aspx) link school meals

Should you wish to comment or discuss any matters relating to the current or future menus please contact Judith Borg, Catering Co-ordinator on 01324 590477.