

*Insider's guide to the latest developments in the independent schools sector*

business **insider**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



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# Attention all independent schools....

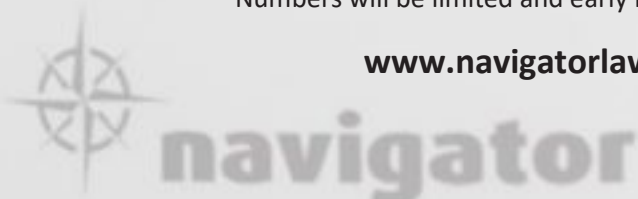
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If you would like to receive further details of our timetable of events to support your school in relation to the issues above (as well as others), please contact Clare Lynch at [clare.lynch@navigatorlaw.co.uk](mailto:clare.lynch@navigatorlaw.co.uk)

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## We are again delighted to be sponsoring this Business Insider Independent Schools Supplement.

Navigator has had a close affinity with the sector over the last ten years delivering independent school-specific solutions in employment law, health and safety, and HR.

As we start 2021, the landscape for independent schools remains challenging but perhaps, and unlike a year ago, there may be a potential new market in parents of children who have become worn down by the disappointment of how the state sector has or has not delivered education over the last ten months.

More than ever, we can see that independent schools will be investing in their staff to make sure that they retain and develop the quality people they have while seeking to attract the best of the new talent, and these goals begin with a people strategy.

Some speak of them, some have them and some are actively implementing them. Unsurprisingly then, we see this as an exciting time to be working within HR in the independent school sector.

We have recently added to our resourcing in that area by bringing on board HR professionals with a background in the independent school sector in Scotland and we have been delighted with initial reaction from the sector to these moves.

As well as the more obvious health and wellbeing programmes being initiated, schools are having to address issues such as equality, diversity and inclusion and all of these areas offer risk and reward dependant on how they are treated.

We believe that in 2021 and beyond there will be a vibrant and sustained market for those who wish their children to be educated at an independent school in Scotland. And, long may that be the case.

## 'The independent schools sector in Scotland has demonstrated its resilience and creativity in the steps it has taken to continue providing leading education during the pandemic'

**W**ELCOME to Insider's first Independent Schools Supplement of 2021 and, indeed, since the Covid-19 pandemic stopped publication.

The independent schools sector in Scotland has demonstrated its resilience and creativity in the steps it has taken to continue providing leading education during the pandemic as we highlight (page 8).

Preparing young people for the challenges that they will face as they enter the world of

work, preparing them for problem solving and encouraging them to think out of the box, is a key output of the sector.

We look at what some of the schools are doing in this area (page 12) and cover an example of what one school did in laying the educational foundations for a bridge builder (page 14).

We hope you enjoy this issue and we would be delighted to hear any feedback on it.



**businessinsider**

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## INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

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IN BRIEF

**A new rural connection**

RSABI, a charity that provides emotional, practical and financial support to people in Scottish agriculture, welcomed Glensalmond College as the first school member of its Supporter Scheme in October.

Dr Michael Alderson, head, said: "We are very proud of Glensalmond's rural heritage and our many country connections. We are therefore delighted to be able to help this excellent charity with the valuable work it does to support people involved in agriculture who have found themselves in difficult times."



Above: RSABI vice-chairman David Leggat and Highland bull Donald at Glensalmond School

**Step into the snow**

KELVINSIDE Academy has made a fundraising initiative part of its learn-from-home curriculum and is urging students to get active outside in aid of motor neurone disease research.

Launched by rugby legend Doddie Weir, who has the condition, Doddie's Active Inter-District challenge sees rugby's old Scottish Inter-District Championship's five teams resurrected and competing to log the most lockdown exercise.

**Sector has more HR professionals**

FROM furlough to flexible working, Covid-19 has seen HR professionals relied on more than ever – but independent schools were prepared, says Gareth McKnight, Navigator Employment Law managing director.

"When Navigator first started dealing with independent schools nine years ago, there were six HR people in post. Now there are around 30 HR professionals supporting and developing school structures," he says, adding the change has increased schools' resilience.



Merchiston Castle School has new indoor tennis courts

**Ace news for Merchiston sport**

MERCHISTON Castle School has upped its ball game with new indoor tennis courts and a lucrative partnership with Babolat, the oldest racquet sports company in the world.

The school's new 'tennis dome' – a three-court indoor cable net structure – will give Merchiston the opportunity to improve its Tennis Academy and extend indoor playing

hours for both the school and the local community. The Babolat deal will see Merchiston players and coaches supported with premium equipment and valuable technical advice.

**American Dream come true**

MERCHISTON Castle School's golf captain is headed for the prestigious Northwestern University in Illinois this September. Cameron Adam, 18, will join the golf programme and compete with America's top young players.

He said: "I have loved being at Merchiston. The Golf Academy has been excellent for me and it has helped me to hone my own game as well as learning to play and train as part of a team. The way the school helps you to balance



Cameron Adam, Merchiston's golf captain

academic and sporting commitments is really helpful.

"Heading to America has become quite a well-walked

path for young British golfers and over the last couple of years it has been on my agenda to try and make it a reality for myself"

**STEM successes at Morrison's**

A TEAM of four second-year Morrison's Academy pupils were crowned champion coders at the National OpenUK Kids' Competition. This contest saw pupils harnessing their software and development skills to create an award-winning piece of wearable technology.

The win came as Morrison's announced a new partnership with the University of Glasgow's Dr Margaret Ritchie, founder of STEM Academy Scotland, and launched its new Bauhaus suite.

A dedicated STEM workshop, the space has



The champion coders celebrate their achievements

been designed to foster creative thinking. Gareth Warren, rector and former chemistry teacher, said: "It is a pleasure to watch the

spark of curiosity ignite for a new generation of scientific and technological explorers from our school."

IN BRIEF

**Online move is bid to close the attainment gap**

INSPIRED by and masterminded during lockdown, Dollar Academy has launched a first-of-its-kind online learning platform, Dollar Discovers. It gives pupils across Scotland the opportunity to study subjects they may not be able to access at their school – for free.

Rector Ian Munro said: "Dollar Discovers seeks to close the attainment gap by widening access to SQA subjects while challenging traditional curricular design. In addition to providing access to SQA courses that may not be available in other schools, shorter interdisciplinary 'Discovery' courses are offered to pupils virtually at both Dollar Academy and local authority schools.

Created in partnership with the pioneering NuVu Studio in the United States, Discovery courses bring together leading figures from industry, non-government organisations and academia to create exciting content that explores topics framed around the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.



**Heriot's secures School of the Decade accolade**

THE Sunday Times named George Heriot's School as the Scottish Independent Secondary School of the Decade in November after consistently high academic performance.

Lesley Franklin, principal of the Edinburgh school, said: "It is important that schools are happy places. The inspector said she could hear laughter around every corner. We aren't some academic hothouse: we just create a really good environment where learning can happen."



# TOILET TWIN SCHEME TAKES SCHOOL'S ETHOS BACK TO HEALTH BASICS

**H**ELPING to flush away toilet poverty while learning the importance of global social responsibility, George Heriot's School has twinned its lavatories with those at a village school in Shamende in the centre of Zambia.

And for an establishment that has carefully and consistently built a strong humanitarian community – a result of its lifelong mission to “distribute cheerfullie” – it seems the perfect fit.

The idea of positively distributing generosity, kindness and support dates back to George Heriot himself. He founded the Edinburgh school in 1628 in a bid to provide education to the city’s “fatherless bairns” and his charitable vision lives on today through The Foundation.

Providing full fee remission to the children of widows and widowers in Edinburgh and The Lothians, Fife, the Scottish Borders and Central Scotland, 61 “Foundationers” are currently supported at the school. However, more than 5,500 children have benefited from Heriot’s legacy.

This philanthropic philosophy stretches far further, though. It is central to the student body and especially relevant to those who are members of the Rights Respecting Schools (RSS) Group. The steering group meets regularly to consider how best to promote children’s rights and is part of UNICEF’s youth panels, which discuss progression of the RRS Award.

The Award, run by UNICEF UK, encourages schools to place the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of its ethos and curriculum. And having reached the third stage



**It allowed us to help people in other parts of the world gain access to something we take for granted**

Charlotte Black, RBS Group member

– gold – George Heriot’s is considered to have children’s rights fully embedded in its policies, practice and ethos. A key issue for the RSS Group has been the staggering number of children in poverty who are unable to access clean sanitation and, therefore, an education.

“Two billion people in the world don’t have a toilet and because of this, millions of children get ill, miss school and fail exams. Attendance gets worse when girls start their periods,” explains Gemma Hay, principal teacher of citizenship, enterprise and international education at George Heriot’s.

“Huge strides have been made with access

to clean drinking water but lack of sanitation is a roadblock. Getting equipment and education to those who need it can make a real difference.

“The pupils wanted to look at the impact of inequality around sanitation and we looked at twinning our school lavatories with school blocks in less economically developed countries,” adds Hay, who oversees 40 classes a week covering social education topics, human rights and subjects such as equality.

Toilet Twinning is a simple yet effective way to bring toilet transformation to some of the poorest places on the planet. Funds are raised then donated to families to build a basic toilet, source clean water and learn about hygiene – a vital combination that saves lives.

“The RSS Group raised awareness of the importance of clean sanitation through assemblies and fundraising efforts. Pupils were paying to wrap the principal and head of senior school in loo paper, for example! In total, £480 was raised to twin two of our toilet blocks with the school in Zambia,” said Hay.

Pupil Charlotte Black, a member of the RRS Group, says: “The Toilet Twinning campaign was important because it allowed us to educate our own community further, as well as being able to help people in other parts of the world gain access to something we take for granted. It was a very rewarding experience for both groups involved and echoed the Heriot’s ethos.”

During the campaign, the pupils had the opportunity connect with their African counterparts. Student Kirsty Brownlee says: “We were able to see how our fundraising had helped improve the water and sanitation levels of that community, and we got a chance to help promote rights in a different part of the world.”

Since Toilet Twinning, a big tick in the box for the school’s promotion of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the RRS group has continued to campaign, most notably on the impact of palm oil on the environment and the importance of equality for all children. ■







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**GREAT THINGS HAPPEN IN THE GREEN BLAZER**

**St Aloysius' College, Glasgow**

**Matthew Bartlett, Headmaster**

"Covid-19 has transformed the way we do things, from our first newly-appointed head of digital learning to our significant investment in cutting-edge technology. Face-to-face learning is valued more than ever before but we have learned the importance of digital learning.

"Our job is to make the school experience for pupils and parents as close to normal as possible whilst keeping everyone safe and well. Our large cleaning team works tirelessly throughout the day and the creation of 'bubbles' for pupil working has kept us really safe. Pupil attendance has been in excess of 96% over the last half term."

**Morrison's Academy, Crieff**

**Gareth Warren, Rector and Principal**

"During the first lockdown the school was creative and flexible; delivering learning in new ways. The teachers used multiple channels to teach live and pre-recorded lessons, engaged in virtual assemblies and employed online subject-specific learning packages. We remained connected as a community via virtual social and co-curricular activities.

"Pupils enjoyed virtual pipe band sessions and one-to-one musical instrument lessons, and they competed in family challenges, including bake-offs and TikTok dances. These activities added variety to their school days, encouraging them to think critically and creatively, and aiding their all-round wellbeing."

**Kilgraston School, Perth**

**Moirra Mackie, Head of Finance**

"Admissions enquiries have significantly increased although, interestingly and understandably, it is taking longer for parents to commit during the current financial backdrop. Pupil sign-up numbers are stronger than we anticipated, particularly in primary years and in the domestic boarding market.

"Travel restrictions have impacted the international boarding sector – a trend reflected across the UK – producing a downshift in foreign pupils for the autumn term. However, many places were delayed to 2021 and the market was still buoyant with new starts last term from Thailand, USA, Mexico, France, Germany and Ukraine."

**Albyn School, Aberdeen**

**David Starbuck, Acting Head**

"Unified by our shared experience of the challenges of Covid-19, the school population has renewed its respect for one another. There is an enhanced appreciation of the teaching staff, nursery staff and senior management team for keeping the school going in a fun, vibrant and meaningful way.

# LEADERS TELL HOW SCHOOLS SURVIVED AND THRIVED IN PANDEMIC BY ADAPTING TO THE NEEDS OF PUPILS



Alex Hems



Ali Kinge



Danny Rowlands



David Campbell



Gareth Warren



Ian Munro

"But there are many other members of staff who have worked and still are working very hard. The admin team, accounts team, classroom assistants, learning support, admissions, catering, estates, IT and cleaners have all been exceptional and now have more well-deserved visibility in the school."

**Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh**

**Danny Rowlands, Head of Outdoor Education**

"With the ban on residential trips, the camping element of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) expeditions was always going to be difficult. The solution, however, turned out to be quite simple. We used our wonderful school grounds as our campsite and bussed our teams out to expedition areas in the Scottish Borders each day. We adapted all aspects of these events – transport, tents, groupings and cooking – to be Covid-compliant.

"We now have almost record numbers signed up for the new DofE cohorts. It is clear this is providing great relief for pupils who find themselves restricted in other areas of their lives."

**Hutchesons' Grammar School, Glasgow**

**David Campbell, Depute Rector**

"The cancellation of the 2021 diet of examinations has led to Hutchesons' putting in place our own summer assessment period. It will replicate the SQA experience for our senior pupils to ensure they have the best evidence available for their qualifications and are fully prepared for the examinations they will surely sit in the future."

**Gordonstoun School, Moray**

**Lisa Kerr, Principal**

"Expeditions and sail training are at the core of our curriculum. Our biggest challenge was deciding whether these were still possible. By working very closely with infection control experts and our outdoor education team we found ways to continue safely. This involved stringent hygiene, social bubbles and a lot of cleaning of boats! We have since heard that we were the only school doing overnight sail training, other than the Royal Navy.

"Our staff were ingenious in the way they used outside environments to teach subjects in more inventive ways. Geography lessons took place on the nearby coast while art classes were in the gardens. One of our maths teachers used our distinctive Round Square building to teach a lesson about Pi and circumference."

**George Heriot's School, Edinburgh**

**Lesley Franklin, Principal**

"The Heriot's community has seen a wider

Pupil sign-up numbers are stronger than we anticipated, particularly in the domestic boarding market

Moirra Mackie, Kilgraston







Kelvinside School captains and Senior Six pupils Olivia Carrol and Lewis Carmichael (both 17) pictured with the Bobcat Alpacas during their very welcome visit to the school

reach. Films have been made of events and sent far and wide so older people or those who live far away feel more connected to school life.

"There has been an increase in engagement with the school's online marketing. People are more involved than before through social media, online brochures, e-newsletters and more."

## St George's School for Girls, Edinburgh

Alex Hems, Head

"Covid-19 has certainly had an impact on boarding life. Some girls came back early after summer and didn't fly home to Hong Kong again until Christmas – normally they would go home for a fortnight at half-term.

"The pandemic means girls are wearing masks all the time in the house unless they are in their own bedrooms and boarders are seriously limited on what they can do at the weekend. No trips or socials – instead, we've had a lot of back-to-basics house-based activities, such as film nights. It has reminded us about what we value and the things we love to do together."

## Dollar Academy, Clackmannanshire

Ian Munro, Rector

"Co-curricular activities are an integral part of life at Dollar. In March, at the start of lockdown, we produced an app, Sportstrain, for pupils to follow training exercises and keep in touch

with each other, recognising that there are both mental and physical benefits of being part of a team. The app was also useful during pre-season training in August. Pupils used it to pre-register and complete the Covid-19 symptom checker, allowing us to keep an accurate record of attendance for Test and Trace purposes."

## Ardvreck School, Crieff

Ali Kinge, Headmistress

"Rural [independent] schools in particular should find that they emerge from the pandemic with greater interest from prospective parents. This comes as society as a whole starts to reconnect with the natural world and moves to a new normal where a healthy environment and sustainable living become ever more important."

## Kelvinside Academy, Glasgow

Olivia Carrol, School Captain

In a bid to soothe pandemic-related anxiety, Kelvinside Academy students enjoyed a festive 'therapeut' visit from a herd of alpacas.

School captain Olivia Carrol said: "For the first time in a long time, my friends and I managed to go almost an entire day without worrying about the pandemic. While many memories from our final year at school will be about the cancellation of exams, adjusting to mask-wearing and blended learning, I think when I look back at this year it will be the alpacas that stand out!" ■

## IN FOCUS

### John Edward

Director, Scottish Council of Independent Schools

"The independent sector has really stepped up to the enormous challenge of the pandemic. When schools were closed, they worked tirelessly to ensure the academic and pastoral needs of pupils were met while working from home.

"They reopened with high quality and inventive solutions to the new public health requirements, ensuring staff and pupils were safe while individual health concerns were met. During lockdown, many worked to support their local communities from kitchen use for charities to production of PPE to sharing space with NHS staff. All of this has been done with substantial impact on school finances and staff workload; all issues that will require support as the challenges of 2021 follow."

### Dave Roberts

Independent Schools Advisor, Chiene + Tait

Independent schools have generally coped well but the pandemic has certainly had an impact on finances. After school clubs have been forced to close, extra costs have been incurred on new health and safety measures, and revenues from hiring out facilities to summer clubs were also curtailed.

"While bursaries will continue, I would expect some schools will be reviewing the number of these they will be able to offer in the short-term due to the tightening of their financial position.

"That said, pupil numbers have remained steady and there have been offsetting factors, including an extension to rates relief, which has helped prevent an increase in fees at most independent schools."

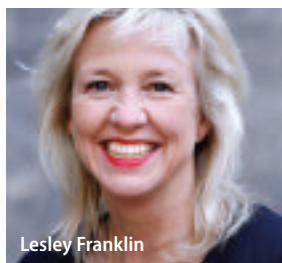
### Gareth McKnight

Managing Director, Navigator Employment Law

"As schools were returning to the spring term last year, there was no such legal concept as furlough. Now we are all experts in its application and consequences.

"As schools adapted to their new reality, and as they have now emerged looking to the future, inevitably, the legacy structures within those schools are being reviewed and interrogated. We have never been busier on the restructuring support side of our practice.

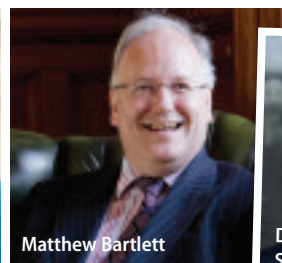
All schools are having to initiate challenging conversations and subsequently make difficult but necessary decisions." ■



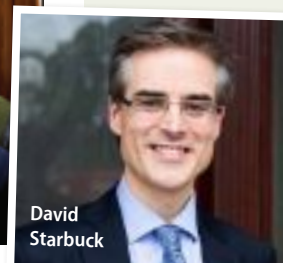
Lesley Franklin



Lisa Kerr



Matthew Bartlett



David Starbuck

# PLAYFUL START TEACHES SKILLS TO MAKE THE MOST OF LEARNING



**I**N 1870, the English parliament chose an early school starting age so children's mothers could work in factories. Scotland followed suit and since then formal education has started at age four or five.

Now, though, questions are being asked about the optimum age to begin and Scotland's leading independent schools are working in different ways to give the next generation the best start in life.

According to Upstart, an alliance of parents, early years practitioners, teachers, playworkers, and health and social work professionals, which is campaigning for big changes in early years education, only 12% of countries worldwide start their children at school as early as we do here in the UK. And the Western countries with the best records in education – Switzerland and Finland for example – don't start formal schooling until age seven.

Upstart is calling for a "kindergarten stage" for children aged three to seven in Scotland, founded on the ethos that children should be supported at their own developmental level. The kindergarten stage would offer pre-schoolers "an educational approach that supports their all-round physical, emotional, social and cognitive development," as opposed to "pushing them towards early academic achievement," says the alliance.

This approach would bring no financial changes. Instead, it would be a "change in the ethos of education" for that age group to be "different from that of formal schooling".

According to Upstart, children in European countries who attend play-based kindergarten until they are six or seven have higher levels of health and wellbeing than

Above: Hutchesons' Grammar School

work for hours each day." The alliance insists there is "no evidence" an early start on school work pays long-term dividends. Instead, Upstart points to research that links this approach to health and wellbeing issues, from lack of outdoor play leading to obesity, heart disease and osteoporosis, to the decline of free play contributing to a rise in children's mental health disorders.

At Ardvreck School in Crieff, nursery manager Laura Baird is on board. She says: "I believe offering this kindergarten stage will benefit the younger children greatly in preparing them for the best start in life as the main aspects of a child's time at nursery are to focus on their personal, social and emotional development, the development of positive relationships, play with friends and understanding the feelings of others.

"Research shows play helps to nurture imagination and provides children with a sense of adventure. Through play, children learn essential skills such as problem solving, working with others, sharing and much more."

Likewise at St George's Nursery, part of St George's School for Girls in Edinburgh, there is a strong belief that pre-schoolers learn best in a play-based setting: "Our nursery environment is warm, engaging and most of all fun," says head Alex Hems.

"While we include a little structure to our

## The main aspects of a child's time at nursery are to focus on their personal, social and emotional development, the development of positive relationships

Laura Baird, Ardvreck School (below)

their Scottish counterparts – and they score higher in international charts of educational achievement.

As the headlines often highlight, youngsters in this country lead more timetabled and sedentary lives than previous generations. Upstart argues that Scotland's "very early" school starting age compounds this problem by "confining four- and five-year-olds to desk





nursery day, which helps foster security and independence, we make sure there is lots of time for children to feel inspired and stimulated through spontaneous play with time to follow their own natural, child-led curiosities.”

Back at Ardvreck, nursery capacity is about to jump from eight to 30 with the launch of a new indoor/outdoor space. The new facility – a refurbished bungalow on the 45-acre estate – will embrace the Forest School ethos, a philosophy that originated in Scandinavia. With many of the values pioneered by Upstart at its heart, the Forest School approach supports play, exploration and supported risk-taking.

“It’s about developing confidence and self-esteem through learner-inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting,” explains Ali Kinge, headmistress.

“Life beyond the school gates is tough and to give children the best start in life we instil the capacity to bounce back at an early age. Our grounds are extensive and whilst they are risk-assessed they are certainly not risk-free. We encourage our little people to go about their learning by risk assessing their own activities, making mistakes, learning from them and moving on.”

All Ardvreck nursery practitioners are Forest School-trained and whilst the pupils benefit from a free flow experience, it naturally transpires that approximately 75% of the curriculum is delivered outdoors.

“The very best play is with friends in natural surroundings,” explains Baird. “Unfortunately, childhood play today in many parts of Scotland is limited as children as young as four begin primary school with only focused learning in the classroom.”

Further north in Aberdeen, youngsters at the Albyn School Nurseries play outside every day – even those who join as young as two.

“Rather than education at this stage, the focus is more on the happiness, wellbeing and confidence of the children,” explains David Starbuck, acting head at Albyn School.

“The toddlers adopt new friendships and build on their social skills during this year. The children learn to play, share with one another, eat new foods, sing songs and discover their own creative minds.”

The following year – ante pre-school – sees the introduction of an educational element, which is considered by Albyn as essential groundwork for formal schooling: “By preparing the children in nursery they are ready mentally, emotionally and socially to move on to the next stage.

“We follow the principles from the Curriculum for Excellence. The children are familiarised with IT by playing games on computers and interactive white boards. There is the option for them to participate in weekly classes, such as football and ballet: an introduction to co-curricular activities in preparation for school life. And the children experience baking, gardening and time with



Albyn School



George Heriot's Nursery School



Above: St George's Nursery at St George's School for Girls, Edinburgh

**Our nursery environment is warm, engaging and most of all fun... While we include a little structure, there is time for children to feel inspired**

Alex Hems, St George's School for Girls (below)

specialist teachers each week for music and PE.”

Specialist teachers and their consistency from this stage until sixth form is a great benefit of a nursery in an all-through school, says Kirsten O’Hagan, deputy head of the junior school at George Heriot’s School.

“Our specialist teaching not only includes what may be viewed as the more traditional subjects – it also involves our unique learning enhancement department,” she says.



“Our team of learning enhancement teachers are all experienced primary teachers and specialise in areas including outdoor learning, resilience, mindfulness, science, technology and philosophy.”

The school’s philosophy programme, which starts in nursery and continues into the senior years, adds particular value. Bespoke to Heriot’s and designed to encourage curiosity from an early age, the award-winning course encourages young people to think for themselves, express their ideas and listen to others.

O’Hagan continues: “It is not normally taught at such a young age but our keen learning enhancement teachers have devised a programme of activities that we see the children thrive in. Pupils who can normally be reserved enjoy the open, creative nature of the activities where no answer is wrong and everyone has a voice. Our philosophy programme is designed to promote respect for our own ideas and beliefs as well as those of others.”

So, besides navigating the pandemic to ensure pre-schoolers avoid lockdown-induced isolation – “Social and emotional development rely on engagement with others; children need to build relationships and deal with friendship difficulties as this is how children learn to negotiate one another. The nursery school is the world in microcosm: the children’s early skills in socialisation will support them through the years ahead and beyond school into the global workplace,” says Emma Corbett, principal teacher in charge of early years at St Columba’s School in Kilmacollm – what is next for early years pupils at Scotland’s top independent schools?

“I believe there is a growing awareness of Anna Ephgrave’s Planning in the Moment pedagogy,” says Hems at St George’s. “Many nurseries are incorporating this into their own practise.”

Ephgrave’s 2018 book, a hands-on guide for early years practitioners and parents, is underpinned by the belief that youngsters live in the here and now. If adults are to make a real difference to their learning, they need to seize the moment at the first sign of curiosity and immediately support with the next steps. Very much a child-led approach, Ephgrave recommends planning “in the moment” and embracing spontaneity.

Meanwhile at Ardvreck, the school known for its sense of adventure and love of creativity, the hope is that teaching in nature remains high on the agenda.

“Extensive outdoor time in nurseries has always been there,” says Baird. “It is only now becoming recognised as the teachers and parents see the difference it brings to young children. With the government releasing new legislation surrounding the inspiring focus of the outdoors, it can only benefit the way we teach and nurture early years for the future.” ■





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# PREPARING FOR THE NEXT STEP TOWARDS FULFILLING CAREERS

**A** SOUND classical and commercial education' was Morrison's Academy's key tenet when it was established in 1860 and today, through a combination of STEM projects, co-curricular activities and other bespoke programmes, the school is still making that vision a reality.

Now, being the only school in Scotland with a Peter Jones Enterprise Academy (PJE) stands the Crieff-based students in even better stead in terms of their commercial education.

According to Jones, the Academy is designed to "empower the next generation of business leaders, wealth-generators and change-makers with the skills to succeed in the world of work." Through a series of hands-on accredited enterprise courses and qualifications, students get the opportunity to run their own businesses, learn entrepreneurial proficiency and develop financial literacy. "We have invested heavily in

progressive programmes, focusing on the long-term employability of our pupils," explains Gareth Warren, rector and principal at Morrison's Academy.

"Our partnership with PJE is the first

## St Aloysius' College, Glasgow 2020 leavers – the facts

### Where they went:

- 86% Higher Education university courses
- 5% HNC/HND courses partnered with Higher Education institutions
- 4% Modern Apprenticeships
- 3% Gap year with plans for university in 2021
- 2% Further education institutions.

### What they studied – the top five:

1. Accountancy, finance & business (24%)
2. Law (15%)
3. Arts and social science (18%)
4. Science (15%)
5. Engineering (13%)



## E-Learning

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Most pupils go to university after leaving St Aloysius'



Above: Some St Aloysius' pupils choose to study engineering

Left: Morrison's Academy has invested in progressive programmes

step in establishing a School of Business and Enterprise, with practical application being at its heart. This is a unique offering in Scottish education and I believe this will give our pupils a distinct advantage in their future careers."

Practical skills are a priority at St George's School for Girls, too. Sixth formers at the Edinburgh boarding school take part in a development programme with content ranging from diet and wellbeing to car maintenance.

Naturally, the boarding experience is a valuable life lesson, too. Head Alex Hems comments: "The sixth-form living arrangement is a fantastic stepping stone before moving to university. They live in a self-contained purpose-built bungalow with their own kitchen facilities so they can begin to have a sense of independence."

At Hutchesons' Grammar School, the final term of sixth year focuses on topics such as understanding mortgages, spreadsheet management, politics, travel and cookery.

Depute rector David Campbell explains: "This [development programme] is run in conjunction with our Hutchie undergraduate experience where all academic departments run sessions to prepare pupils for life at university. They attend tutorials and seminars in the areas they will be studying the following autumn, from politics to programming and drama to literature."

The school also broadens horizons by hosting speakers from all walks of life. Guests

The Governors of Morrison's Academy, known as Morrison's Academy, is an independent school for boys and girls, founded in 1860. The School's Scottish Charity Number is: SC000458.



**Big opportunities. Big family. Big futures.**

Morrison's Academy is a vibrant independent day school, nestled in the heart of Perthshire. We offer a truly personalised education, where every child is known and guided to find their passions and develop their strengths.

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**Tuesday 09 February 2021 - 10am**  
**Friday 07 May 2021 - 10am**

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**MORRISON'S ACADEMY**



▶ have ranged from household name Judy Murray to Jamie Andrew, a quadruple amputee and mountaineer, to John Bowers, an ex-offender and speaker on crime and punishment.

"They bring a huge variety of experience and opinion to the sixth years for discussion each week, helping them to see life from very different perspectives," adds Campbell.

The girls at St George's also get an insight into the wider world. Hems adds: "We had a fantastic programme last summer where parents and alumni talked about the graduate recruitment processes in their workplaces. It helped



## They attend tutorials in the areas they will be studying the following autumn, from politics to programming

David Campbell, Hutcheson's (above)

the girls understand some of the exercises they may have to do when looking for internships or a first job."

At Gordonstoun School, principal Lisa Kerr encourages students to secure work experience early on: "It gives them a chance to see if certain careers are really what they think they are and helps them to think about the skillset they will need in the workplace, which is different to that they have become used to at school.

"For certain careers, such as medicine, we will arrange the work experience, but in other areas we ask students to find it for themselves.

"It is a way to introduce them to the fact they will have to think about how to sell themselves and how to use their networks to open up opportunities."

"By embarking on new challenges and seeing things through, young people gain greater resilience, which will help them enormously as they enter the world of employment." ■

## 'THE SKILLS NEEDED FOR PULLING TOGETHER ON EXPEDITIONS CAN'T BE TAUGHT ... THESE ARE LIFE EXPERIENCES THAT MUST BE LEARNED'

**H**ENRY Beaver's time as a pupil at Gordonstoun School was, he says, the perfect preparation for his work now as the managing director of Beaver Bridges which is gearing up to start work on Lossiemouth East Beach crossing.

"My family live in Shropshire and I was at a prep school locally," he says. "But I was full of energy and my parents were not sure if the local secondary offering was the best fit. They had heard of Gordonstoun so they visited and loved it. I was a full-time border the next term!

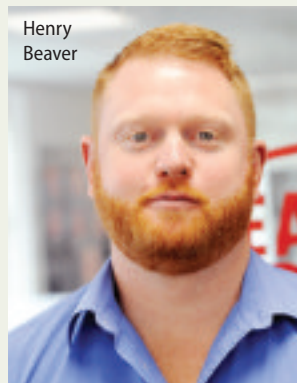
"Following my time there in the 1990s, I studied business management and joined the family firm, which offered products and services, including fabrication, to the agricultural sector. We ended up fabricating three bridges on a demand basis for a farmer in Scotland and I recognised a market opportunity.

"I spent 16 years developing the bridge side of the company and in 2016 we demerged the original firm. I took on the bridge division and created Beaver Bridges Limited.

"We now have 45 full-time staff, offices in Shrewsbury and Glasgow and operations across the UK and in Ireland. It has been a challenging but exciting four years and we even have some awards to our name.

"The highlight, though, has to be securing the £1m Scottish Government-funded project to replace the East Beach bridge.

The crossing has been sealed off since July 2019 after it started to buckle under the summer rush to the shore.



"Rewind a few decades and I was one of those sunseekers. At Gordonstoun we spent a lot of downtime in Lossiemouth, running around the beach and having ice cream. It really is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be developing an iconic landmark on the sands where many of my childhood memories lie.

"Experiences like those played an enormous part in getting me to where I am today. I was at Gordonstoun during the years that really shape a person; when you're constantly growing and developing. The school's ethos really resonated with me then and it still does now. The skills needed for pulling together on expeditions can't be taught in the classroom. These are life experiences that must be learned.

"Attending an independent school prepares you for life and work in a way I don't think anything else can. Our first major job as Beaver Bridges was a bridge replacement inside Paddington station over Christmas. I had 40

men in two shifts, working 12 hours at a time for 10 days in extraordinary circumstances and conditions. It was tough going but my time at Gordonstoun meant I knew I could grit it out, make things happen and deliver.

"That was Gordonstoun to a tee. Whether on the ocean, up a mountain or putting out a fire (I was part of the school's fire service), you learned how to cope, be resilient and manage situations.

"At the other end of the scale, I met my wife at Gordonstoun. Jo joined in sixth form having been awarded a scholarship and we started dating. We married in 2006 and she works for Beaver Bridges as finance and HR director.

"We have two little girls so have to balance work, childcare – especially at the moment – and family time.

We are an absolute team and I think her time at Gordonstoun means we are more often than not on the same page. We have the same strong morals and we understand where the drive to succeed comes from.

"From my business life to my personal life I can honestly say I don't think I'd be where I am today without my Gordonstoun education."



## IN FOCUS Lisa Kerr, Principal, Gordonstoun School

"A KEY component of the Gordonstoun curriculum is service to others. Students volunteer with a range of organisations, including the Coastguard, local conservation groups and the fire service. A Fire and Rescue Service station is based in the school grounds and our students support crews operating out of nearby towns, responding to more than 40 call-outs per year.

"Many former pupils tell us that their volunteer work made a big difference when applying for jobs. It can really help you stand out if you are the only candidate who spent their spare time being a retained firefighter."







## CAN YOU PUT A PRICE ON YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION?

More parents than ever are seeking to send their children to independent schools, and at the same time fees continue to rise. Hampden & Co Banking Director Clare Ansell discusses how to plan for what can be a significant financial commitment.

**They say you can't put a price on education but, actually, you can. According to the Independent Schools Council census for 2020, the average annual fee for a place at a UK independent day school is £14,940, while the average cost for a boarding school now stands at £35,289, or £19,908 for a day place at boarding school.**

Not that the cost, which rose by an average of 4.1% last year, seems to be putting parents off.

There are now 537,315 independently educated pupils in the UK – the highest number since records began in 1974.

Yet even for those in a comfortable financial position, independent schooling represents a significant investment over several years – particularly if you have more than one child. And that's without factoring in all the associated costs such as uniforms, sports equipment, musical instruments, clubs, school trips etc.

With the costs being so high, there is a lot to be gained from starting to plan when your children are very young, or even when you're just thinking about having a family.

Personalised banking for the long term  
"At Hampden & Co, we often help our clients



Clare Ansell

**School fees represent a big commitment over many years. We understand the importance of being there for the long term**

manage their school fees – sometimes for the length of the children's education, and sometimes just for a short spell when a little extra is needed to tide them over. Options that often come into play are personal loans, remortgaging, borrowing against investment portfolios, or even a simple overdraft facility."

"And while we can't give advice on investments, it's well worth getting in early to speak with a financial adviser or a wealth manager that you trust. We are always happy to join in those conversations from a banking perspective."

There are also other options beyond banking. If you have cash available you could, for instance, offer to pay your school fees for a few years in advance, in return for an appropriate discount.

Schools may also offer discounts if you send more than one child to the same place. And then there's the option of scholarships and bursaries.

A third of all independent school pupils now receive help with their fees, with the vast majority of that help coming from the schools themselves.

"School fees represent a big commitment over many years. We understand the importance of being there for the long term.

We get to know our clients and develop a full understanding of their finances and priorities in life so we can offer banking tailored to their individual requirements."



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