



DOLLAR ACADEMY

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2009 - 2010

Looking back... the Maguire Art, Drama and Sports centre
And now... the new hockey and tennis artificial playing surface
Looking forward... a new Science and Technology building

Rector: John Robertson, MA

CURRENT POSITION

Dollar Academy, founded in 1818, is the oldest co-educational, day and boarding school in the United Kingdom. Whilst it is clearly rooted in a living tradition, Dollar has never been afraid of development and innovation. To that end, there have been major financial outlays in recent years which have ensured that the Academy remains powerfully at the forefront of Scottish education. In 2005, the Maguire Building was completed, rehousing the Art and PE departments in purpose-built accommodation, and providing a new drama studio, gymnasium, fitness suite and conference facilities. As a consequence of the vacated space elsewhere in the school, other academic departments have benefited from enhanced facilities, besides a further ICT suite and the Support for Learning and Classics centres. Further developments have included the Gibson Music Building, the Home Economics Iona Building and the Younger Building's Business, Computing and Mathematics centre. Extensions to the Prep School have been opened in recent years, and the science provision has been overhauled throughout. Work was undertaken to amalgamate McNabb and Tait Houses in 2008, and significant developments made in the other boarding Houses. 2009 brought (finally) a high quality synthetic turf surface at the centre of the Academy grounds – ideally suited for both hockey and tennis. The focus of the Governors is not only forward-looking, however: they pay great attention to their responsibilities for the maintenance of the principal Grade A Listed Playfair Building, its grounds and the other listed properties in their care.

The campus, situated beneath the sweep of the Ochils, is sufficiently compact to allow indoor and outdoor activities to be timetabled throughout the school day. The Senior School timetable - based on five single hours of timetabled teaching per day - allows enough time for every subject and activity, without a feeling of stress.

The Prep and Junior School is a friendly and welcoming environment where an emphasis on traditional disciplines takes place sits alongside innovative learning in attractive classrooms. Schemes of work are based largely upon the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence and link fully with those of the Senior School, many of whose specialist staff teach in the Prep and Junior School. Senior pupils help to support younger children both in and out of the classroom.

The extensive co-curricular life of Dollar is not compulsory, but is viewed by all pupils and staff as being fundamental to the full Dollar experience; this brings real satisfaction to the lives of many pupils and staff. Dollar's achievements on the games field, in debating competitions, in musical and dramatic performance, in CCF, in the Pipe Bands, in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and in charity work are remarkable. Each year, new activities are added to the range of what is on offer, according to enthusiasms of staff and pupils.

The development of ICT in the Academy ensures that every pupil has the opportunity to gain the necessary experience in new technologies – there are three ICT suites, besides access to computers in all classrooms and laboratories. Dollar also runs its own distinctive courses from the earliest stages to Form IV.

The high academic attainment of many of our pupils guarantees that almost all leave Dollar for higher education. Good academic results are seen in Dollar as the bedrock on which everything else depends, and the pastoral system in the Senior school operates closely with subject departments to enable pupils to be supported as required in their studies. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored, and parents are kept fully informed on progress through regular meetings and reports. Further careers and higher education support is provided, when required, after a pupil has left Dollar.

Dollar provides expert career and university guidance, and ensures that choices are based on clear knowledge and on open channels of communication. We retain the services of a professional careers adviser, and there is a library of Higher Education resources, backed by a team of experienced staff advisers.

Dollar has two girls' boarding houses and an all-through boarding complex for boys. The needs of our boarding community are viewed as central to the overall development of the Academy.

Dollar currently has exchanges, some involving work experience, with schools in Russia, Germany, France, Spain and in Japan. The linkage of language programmes with work experience continues to be developed.

The Governors have established a procedure for awarding means-tested bursaries, and continue to concentrate on increasing invested funds to support this. They have also allocated significant funding for staff development in recent years. Lately, Dollar has mounted its own in-service programmes in Guidance, in ICT, in Modern Studies, in Human Biology, in Marketing, in Economics and in Biotechnology. Regular staff in-service days are built into the calendar. The Governors have set up Creativity Awards for staff projects, and these funds have enabled a number of new components to be introduced to the curriculum. All members of staff are encouraged to consider such opportunities.

The Parents' Association Committee meets regularly, liaising closely with the Academy. The Association is involved particularly with the Careers Convention, Sports Weekend and departmental Open Evenings. In addition, the Thrift Shop, selling good quality items of uniform and staffed by parent volunteers, greatly benefits the school community.

At present, all aspects of Dollar Academy life are regularly evaluated: targets are set annually; and parents, staff, and Governors work closely together to ensure that the Academy's aims and achievements are clearly communicated to all involved in the wider world of Dollar. Above all, the Dollar experience, based securely on friendship, courtesy and respect for others, develops the right kind of self-assurance in our pupils.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SESSION 2008 – 2009

A number of developments have taken place in line with last session's School Development Plan:

Buildings / Facilities / Grounds

- The commencement of the artificial playing surface for hockey and tennis.
- The refurbishment of the exterior of the Playfair Building.
- The further resurfacing of tarmac areas in front of the Playfair Building.
- The development of the Junior School playground and removal of the old laundry.
- The installation of more cricket nets and artificial wicket surfaces.
- The development of enhanced accommodation for ICT and network operations.
- The planting of many more trees about the campus.

Pupil - Curricular

- The establishment of links with local Primary schools in science.
- Further funding for projects to develop creativity in the classroom.
- Open Doors initiatives to share approaches that encourage innovative teaching and learning.
- Reorganisation of aspects of the curriculum in the Prep and Junior School, providing alternative approaches to Music, Modern Languages and Environmental Studies.
- The introduction of a mentoring scheme to support pupils with learning difficulties from other schools.
- The formulation of a whole school approach to climate change issues.
- Planning flexibility for the Third Term timetable in Forms I and II to enable intensive whole day projects in individual departments.
- The introduction of a "Sustainability Day" in Junior Science.
- A range of new PSE materials and courses.
- A review of courses in Form I Science, Classical Studies and Art & Design.
- The collaboration of the Biotechnology department with other groups in further projects for the *Let's Talk* series to encourage more discursive styles of scientific learning in schools across Scotland.
- A range of Business Education-based activities, including the Form II Dragons' Den, the Stock Market Challenge and the national "shares4schools" competition (in which the Dollar team was placed 3rd in Scotland.)
- The inauguration of a Classics society.
- The granting of twelve Harry Bell Awards to support pupils wishing to undertake literary research and travel projects in the UK and internationally; the granting of two Scholarships to pupils whose subsequent work was adjudged outstanding.
- The introduction of opportunities for fitness training in the Form VI curriculum.
- The Dollar team's winning the Go4SET engineering and design Innovation competition for the second year running.
- The Greenpower project in Technology, providing practical engineering challenges.
- The introduction of a Form I / II Technology Challenge Day.
- Two research projects into English in Dollar: Writing across the Curriculum, and a pilot study into 5-18 progression through Prep, Junior and Senior schools.
- Researchers-in-residence working in science departments in Dollar.
- The re-vitalisation of Choral singing in Senior school assemblies and Parish Church school services; regular Friday lunchtime concerts have also been introduced this year.
- CREST awards made to a number of pupils in recognition of their research in scientific areas; and the Junior Science Fair again attracted wide praise for its innovatory approaches and high standards.
- Dollar had more presentations per candidate in Advanced Higher than any other school.
- The visit of two Dollar pupils to Auschwitz as part of the Scottish Government's scheme.
- The selection of three Dollar artists' work for the SQA's on-line "Inspirational Artworks" website, and the work of a J2 boy for Clackmannanshire's Biodiversity calendar.
- A team of Form I and II pupils reaching the London finals of the UK Team Mathematics Challenge.
- In the Primary Mathematical Challenge, a J2 pupil was one of only 49 out of the initial 99,000 entrants to gain full marks.

Information & Communication Technology

- The creation of a new language laboratory / resources solution for the Modern Languages department.
- The new developments in Music department, fully furnished with suites of specialised PCs and software for composition and listening.
- The development of the school intranet to provide resources of guaranteed quality, and to create more effective communication links within the Dollar community; most paper forms have now been replaced with on-line applications.
- Further interactive whiteboards have been installed in the Business Education, History & Modern Studies, Mathematics and Physics departments, to extend our development of materials and approaches associated with the new technology. Significant developments have similarly taken place in the Junior School.
- Numerous technical improvements have been put in place: the main server has been upgraded; the tape back-up system has been replaced; all CRT monitors have been replaced with flat screens; and home working for staff has been enabled through VPN access.

Staff – wider curricular contributions in Scottish education

Members of staff have been involved a number of initiatives outwith Dollar, including:

- The work of examination boards (including the Scottish Qualification Authority) as principal assessors, markers; moderators, visiting examiners, question setters and vetters, qualifications development specialists, and members of curricular development groups.
- The new national Science and Languages Baccalaureate qualifications are currently being developed by Dollar staff.
- The production of text books, articles and other materials in Biology, Biotechnology, Classics and History and Modern Studies.
- The running of in-service training for Scottish teachers in summer schools and in forums across Scotland.
- Teacher training (in selection, lecturing and direct support of students and new teachers).
- The chairing of Children's Panel hearings.
- The involvement of members of staff in judging panels for national competitions.
- The major secondments of members of staff to organisations such as the Royal Society of Chemistry.
- Organisation and coaching in sport at community, regional, national and international levels.
- The active membership of professional associations in disseminating good practice and innovation.

International links

- Further trips and external events related to academic work, including the History & Modern Studies visit to WWI battlefields in Belgium, followed by their visit to China. The Biology department again mounted an expedition to Malaysia; the Geography department inaugurated a visit to Iceland; the Art & Design department went to Madrid; the Classics staff led a trip to Hadrian's Wall, while Modern Languages staff ran a wide variety of exchanges, "desk-to-desk" initiatives, trips, internet links and work experience in Spain, France and Germany.
- The World Studies initiative has been consolidated, with further exchange visits arranged between Dollar and schools in Russia and the United States.
- The Prep School has set up a link with the St Francis Small Home in Malindi, Kenya which caters for children with a wide range of disabilities. A Dollar FP is already working there during her Gap Year, and it is hoped that a Form VI pupil will attend also.
- We have received visits from exchange and work experience pupils from the USA, Germany, France, Spain and Japan.
- We have continued to welcome the linguistic support of Assistants from three European countries.
- A member of staff has visited St Vincent and continues to liaise with Mozambique to advise examination bodies.
- Three members of staff attended "Comenius" conferences in France and Scotland, and developed further e-learning resources. As a result, plans are now being drawn up to train teachers from across Europe in the use of the ICT learning platform "Moodle".
- The Rector is chairman of the Membership Committee of HMC, which meets each term in London.

Communications

- The website has been completely redesigned, with further development to introduce elements of interactivity, and to extend academic departments' facilities to communicate with pupils and parents.
- The conclusion of the DVD project illustrating the life of Dollar, providing further material for the website.
- The publication of the new prospectus, linked with the DVD and website developments.
- The recognition of the part that the internet plays in the dealings of prospective and current parents and pupils, leading to more direct communication of school matters to parents via the website and e-mail.
- The website offers new multilingual mini-prospectuses.

Access

- The provision of wider access for public use to appropriate school facilities, including sporting, cultural and social locations.

Health & Safety

- The installation of security locks on outside doors around the campus.
- The establishment of a staff / pupil initiative to develop a whole school recycling policy.
- The extension of the Governors' Health, Safety and Security Committee to ensure greater staff involvement in the monitoring of relevant issues; this committee also has pupil representation.

Boarding

- Pupils have had the opportunity to join in a range of new whole boarding community activities, as well as social events based on their own year groups.
- Parents' questionnaires have been introduced to enable more regular feedback. Material from these, along with items from pupils' questionnaires and Heads and Deputy Heads of House meetings, have been incorporated into a new development page on the website exemplifying changes brought about through our consultation processes.
- We have received the first gradings of Dollar's boarding by inspectors of the Care Commission. All areas under review were pronounced either "Excellent" or "Very Good." (*Details of the full reports are noted on the last page of this plan.*)
- In-service training has been provided for staff in Houses covering a range of interests, and new members of staff have been recruited.

Co-Curricular Achievements

- Internationalists: more than 60 current and former pupils are wearing the tie to signify their representation of their nations in a wide range of sports and activities.
- Athletics: a pupil has become the Scottish Schools Indoor pole vault U-17 champion.
- Ballroom dancing: large numbers of Form VI pupils received the highest school awards for Latin American dance.
- Badminton: the Dollar team retained the Central Schools' Quaich for the second year, with a range of personal and paired successes.
- Charities: throughout the year the Committee has been running activities to raise funds for a wide range of good causes.
- Chess: the school team reached the semi-final of the national schools championships.
- Combined Cadet Force: for the third year running, the Dollar First Aid team won the National CCF trophy at Sandhurst, and won the St John's Grand Priory competition for the first time at Rugby. Two pupils have gained RAF Gliding scholarships, and a pupil won a Gold medal for fitness on the annual UK CCF expedition to Canada.
- Cricket: three pupils have been involved in the Scotland U-19, U-17 and U-15 squads. The 1st XI in 2008 won nine of its eleven matches.
- Cross Country: the Junior 2 team gained 1st place in the Scottish Primary Schools competition, and a pupil won the Scottish Schools U-14 title, thus ensuring her selection for the next Schools International event.
- Curling: the Dollar team won the Millar-Drummond Trophy for the first time since 2000.
- Dance: three Dollar sisters won a range of top awards at the European Festival of Dance in Paris.
- Duke of Edinburgh Award: over 80 awards have been made this session, including 7 at Gold level, with more to come.
- Debating: two Dollar teams were placed first and second in the final of the Dundee Courier / CIBS competition, and another was runner up in the Glenalmond competition. A senior team has reached the regional final of the Law Society competition.
- Drama: a pupil has been selected for the Scottish Youth Theatre's Summer Festival.
- Enterprise: in the first Scholars' Challenge competition, a group of 15 Form VI pupils raised over £83,000 for The Prince's Trust and beat six other schools to win the competition. Their efforts culminated in the organisation of a Ball at Stirling Castle attended by the First Minister, Alex Salmond.
- Equestrian: Dollar teams won the Scottish Schools Winter show jumping competition and the Show jumping event at the Kilgraston competition, with two other teams being highly placed.
- Equestrian Vaulting: two Dollar sisters retained their national Pairs title for a record six years in a row, and in the Dutch International, both gained first places in their respective individual categories.
- Fencing: Dollar pupils have won gold medals in the UK School Games, and one has been selected for the GB cadet team in Portugal. Another won the GB U-17 championships in France and achieved Silver at U-20 level. Her brother won the U-20 Men's Sabre title. A third pupil has joined them in their Scottish selection for the UK Games in Cardiff.
- Football: a senior boy played in the third Scottish Independent Schools Football Association international fixture against England. The girls' A team won the SISFA S1 – S3 7-a-side tournament, while the B team were the winners of the consolation cup in the same tournament.
- Golf: a pupil has been selected for the Scottish Girls' Performance squad and was the top placed girl in the Forth Valley scratch competition.
- Highland Dancing: a pupil has won the British Open Junior Championships for the fifth time, along with a significant number of other championship titles.
- Hockey: the Dollar 1st XI reached the final of the Midlands Cup.
- Journalism: this session *The Galley* was placed in two categories of the Periodical Publishers' Association 'School Magazine of the Year' award: one pupil writer won the 'Best Feature' overall award; and *The Galley's* editorial team of eight pupils was recognised in the 'Best Editorial Content' category.
- Karate: a pupil gained Bronze in the Karate Union of Great Britain Girls 12-14 category in the Regional Championships.
- Karting: a Dollar pupil has won the Scottish karting club Junior championships.
- Music: the annual Christmas concert was so successful this year that the Perth Concert Hall has been booked for two nights' performance in December 2009. Dollar's two entries took first and second place in the Advanced Chamber music competition in Perth. The First Jazz Orchestra was invited to play at the Palace of Holyroodhouse by the Lord High Commissioner. A pupil played his own composition on live radio in BBC Lincolnshire. Another sang with the orchestra of Scottish Opera, while three have been selected for National Youth Choirs of Scotland.
- Pipe Band: Dollar's 'A' Band won the Scottish Schools CCF Pipes and Drums competition for the tenth year in a row, with the 'B' band awarded second place; there were many individual successes in the competition in addition. A J2 pupil won the National Mod Piping competition at U-13 level and also received the Young Musician of the Year award for playing guitar, whistle and pipes in a 10 minute period. The "A" band won the Quartet competition for the third year running.
- Quiz: the Dollar Senior team were runners-up in the Scottish Schools Challenge Quiz championship after winning the competition in 2008.
- Rugby: two pupils have been selected for the Scotland U-18 squad and one for the U-17 squad. For only the second time in 43 years, Dollar won the Heriot's Sevens Tournament at U-16 level.
- Sailing: a Form III pupil was the top Scottish contender in the Laser 4.7 class at his level in the British national championships.

- Shooting: A pupil won Silver at the Commonwealth Youth Games in India, a Bronze in the Australian Youth Olympic festival and she has been selected for the CSF(ED) Championships in Gibraltar. Two pupils toured Canada in The Athelings (GB) team, several pupils toured in South Africa and two will tour the Channel Islands. The Country Life Green Howards competition was won for the second year in succession. A significant number of other pupils are representing Scotland at various levels this year.
- Ski-ing: A Form III boy is now the Scottish Children's champion in Giant Slalom.
- Squash: a pupil is currently ranked 3rd in Scotland at U-13 level.
- Swimming: Dollar came first by a significant margin in the Central Schools Championships, and team members won many Gold medals. Dollar also won the Glasgow Academy Cup for the first time since 1995, the competition's inauguration.
- Tennis: the boys' team reached the Quarter-Finals of both the Scottish Boys' Team Tennis Championships and the UK-wide Glanvill Cup (Scottish section).
- Wakeboarding: two Dollar pupils gained First and Third place (U-16) in the first national competition.
- Wrestling: a 14 year old pupil won the Gold medal at the 10th Annual Wrestling competition at The Tryst.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Over the course of the next five years, further major developments are planned. Clearly, priorities will change, but the major aims at present are:

Buildings / Facilities / Grounds / The Environment

- The conclusion of the project to provide an all-weather playing surface in the school grounds capable of supporting both hockey and tennis.
- The development of facilities for the teaching of Technology, the sciences and applied science.
- The development of the courtyard areas in the Prep School.
- The provision of a new Sixth Form Centre.
- The development of the current Sixth Form Centre to provide further Junior facilities.
- The upgrading of the girls' pavilion.
- The improvement of the Reception area for visitors.
- The development of the Bursarial facilities.
- The development of the school office and staff administration facilities.
- The development of playgrounds in the Prep & Junior schools.
- The creation of a staff base in the Music department.

Curricular

- The encouragement of all members of staff to undertake "Open Doors" activities; to consider applying for Creativity funding; and to undertake activities contributing to the educational community beyond Dollar.
- The encouragement of more departments to run curricular events on the lines of the Junior Science Fair.
- The creation of a "Centre for Excellence" providing training for teachers across Scotland in the biological sciences.
- Further exploration of the potential for development in Dollar from the Curriculum for Excellence.
- The development of further resources and approaches in the Library to provide curricular support.
- The creation of a "Writing across the Curriculum" project to clarify the range of writing skills required in Dollar, and to enable cross-curricular support for all pupils in developing those skills.
- The running of a "China" day to raise awareness of the importance of links with this nation.
- The inclusion of further field trip elements in the Form II Geography syllabus.
- A joint project with the local Primary School involving pupils in Dollar's Junior School.
- The introduction of the Scottish Baccalaureate in Science and Modern Languages.
- The creation of an in-house Form I & II textbook in Classics.
- The creation of a Form I & II Art Club.
- The extension of support for the Auschwitz project.
- Research into the possibilities of a Corporate Law module for Form VI pupils, and for a business-related school trip abroad.
- Wider research into curricular progression from ages 5 – 18 in Dollar, with a view to optimising personal development and academic results.

Co-curricular

- The running of a "Co-curricular fair" at the start of session to encourage pupils to try new activities.
- The development of the website information area, giving a page to each activity.
- The introduction of new activities as pupil and staff enthusiasms allow.
- The introduction of an overseas musical tour.
- The development of the Quint system to four co-educational groups.

Communications

- The development of more interactive features of the website.
- The extension of the range of information offered to users of the website.
- The translation of the new prospectus into more languages for access on the website.
- The introduction to the website of pupil voices in other languages.
- The publication of a pupil-based creative writing magazine.

Access

- The exploration of issues involving pupil remote access to intranet facilities.

Health & Safety

- The extension of the benefits available from Motor Skills support to a wider range of pupils.
- The installation of further security locks around the campus.
- The running of joint contingency exercises with Clackmannanshire's Emergency Planning Unit.

Information & Communication Technology

- The development of centralised media storage facilities for the benefit of all departments.
- The shift to "Connect 4" technology and the replacement of the current exchange server.
- The upgrade of 80 computers around the campus.

Boarding

- The continuing development of high quality accommodation for boarders.
- The provision of further in-service training for boarding staff.
- The development of whole boarding community activities and inter-house contacts.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

1. By means of Departmental Reviews, each department in the Senior School, together with the Prep and Junior School, is carefully monitored on an annual basis. The Review provides the opportunity for targets to be set in each Department, and these provide the aims for the following session. The Departmental Targets are collated in a single document. Each member of staff takes part in the process of review. A parallel process occurs in the review of Heads of Year, the boarding Houseparents, the School Office staff and the medical staff.
2. Academic results are reviewed on an annual basis.
3. By means of regular, focused meetings, with tasks specified in each, the major standing committees in the Academy are expected not only to discuss topics, but to ensure that action is taken. Thus, Senior Staff Group, Heads of Department, Heads of Year, Houseparents, Departmental and Whole Staff Meetings have task-based minutes. Short-term working groups are set up as required. Monitoring is thus more straightforward over the course of each session, and forms the basis of each year's Development Plan.
4. Every year the Deputy Rector monitors the range and scope of Dollar Academy's co-curricular provision. A handbook describing the nature and patterns of each activity on offer is provided for every pupil and parent.
5. Budgeting in departments is subject to careful scrutiny and planning by means of liaison with Heads of Department, the Deputy Rector and the Bursariat.
6. Departmental handbooks are continually revised, as are the departmental leaflets. Much information about Dollar's curriculum is increasingly available on the Academy web-site www.dollaracademy.org.uk

In every area of the Academy, curricular, pastoral and bursarial, there are descriptive position statements available. The aims of Dollar Academy are clearly set out in the full-size prospectus, and in the prospectuses published in French, in German, in Polish and in Spanish - all of which are available on the website. The distinctive Dollar ethos is captured, to as great an extent as possible, in the words and photographs there.

There are ten essential guides to Dollar: *Information for Pupils*, *Information for New Pupils*, *Information for Form I Pupils*, *Information for Form VI Pupils*, *Information for Parents*, *Information for Staff*, *Information on Co-Curricular Activities*, *Information on Trips and Tours*, *Child Protection Guidelines*, and the *Health and Safety Manual*. These guides are all updated on an annual basis and give full and readily accessible information to everyone who is involved either in the day-to-day running of the Academy, or in applying for entrance. They include school guidelines and statements on policy in all areas. The Rector issues approximately seven newsletters each year, with up-to-date information and guidance on specific school issues.

The importance of the linkages of Governors, Staff, Former Pupils and Parents is recognised in the Academy, and much work goes into ensuring the continuing closeness of these connections. Parents are welcome to contact the Academy on any matters involving their sons' and daughters' education. Thus, ultimately, each new generation of Dollar pupils has the opportunity to benefit from a secure, committed environment where the needs and the enthusiasms of the pupils themselves are seen as paramount.

The most recent reports on Dollar are available online at www.hmie.gov.uk and www.carecommission.com

- HMIE Independent School Inspection, 22 February 2005
- HMIE / Care Commission Joint Inspection of School Care Accommodation Services, 9 May 2006
- Care Commission unannounced Inspection of School Care Accommodation Services, 20 March 2007
- Care Commission announced Inspection of School Care Accommodation Services, 22 January 2008
- Care Commission unannounced Inspection of School Care Accommodation Services, 17 March 2008
- Care Commission announced Inspection of School Care Accommodation Services, 7 November 2008
- Care Commission unannounced Inspection of School Care Accommodation Services, 12 March 2009

and at the Learning and Teaching Scotland website: www.ltscotland.org.uk/scottishschoolsonline/schools

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