

It was great to get back into a routine this week. There were many lively stories that pupils told of snowdrifts, snowmen and snowball fights but also loneliness. It has to be remembered that for young people with autism 3 days without familiar routine and contact with trusted adults and a peer group can be very isolating and challenging, especially in rural communities. While the internet may offer respite from extended periods of isolation there is nothing like being surrounded by those with whom we are comfortable. I hope that this is something we all bear in mind as we continue to develop strategic pathways to progression for inclusion at all levels – in school and the wider community.

Oliver Lincoln S1 represented Meadowpark at the East Lothian Youth Summit. He listened attentively and made valuable contributions in discussion groups. All attendees were asked to choose a quote that summed up the importance of pupils having a voice and the one Oliver chose was: “When we talk...It’s vital that you listen.” This is so true for all young people and particularly for those with an additional support need.

World Autism Week <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/world-autism-awareness-week.aspx> is being held from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March – April 2<sup>nd</sup> and staff and pupils at Meadowpark are going to get fully involved in a range of activities promoting autism awareness and celebrating What We Can Do #whatwecando More information to follow.

Class 1 and Class 3 made representation at this year’s Boccia Festival at The Hub, Sanderson’s Wynd. Lots of practice had taken place and it was wonderful to see the huge grins on the faces of the participants when they returned with medals from Scottish Disability Sport. Not only did Meadowpark pupils have fun, they were part of a wider community supporting participation, inclusion and achievement. Thank you to Claire Palmer-Fairbairn and Marion Barclay for their exceptional organising skills. I’m hopeful that Knox Academy/Meadowpark can host the event next year.

David Watt (@dknwatt) enjoyed meeting Meadowpark pupils and staff and commented that pupils are offered a wide and varied experience through the Broad General Education and can expect to have certification across the Senior Phase. He recognised that Meadowpark is a new and developing provision and one that continues to build capacity in East Lothian. While there have been staffing issues Meadowpark is experiencing a period of stability and this will continue to be reflected in planning and developing the curriculum to ensure all pupils have their entitlement to a broad range of experiences and certification in preparation for transition through to S6 and beyond.

I am delighted to have been able to give Declan Scott a Praise Postcard this week for engaging with planning and preparation as part of his ongoing experience at Meadowpark and I am assured that Oliver will receive a Praise Postcard for attending the East Lothian Youth Summit. These Praise Postcards go onto the Merit System as used by Knox Academy to celebrate achievements at all levels, and I am proud of all the steps our young people take, however small, towards independence of thought and living skills.

Charli Prime DHT 09.03.18