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FIRST MINISTER'S VISIT TO INVERNESS SCHOOL OF AMBITION



First Minister Jack McConnell today (Friday) visited Inverness High School – one of the first 20 secondary schools in Scotland to pilot the Schools of Ambition Programme, which aims to raise the ambitions of schools, instil belief and ambition in pupils, extend their opportunities and transform their life chances.

Funding of £100,000 per year over three years will allow the 487-pupil school to extend its growing links with the local community and improve provision of training in information technology and staff development at the school.

Accompanied by Education Minister, Peter Peacock, Mr McConnell met pupils who are involved in the school's innovative enterprise project, involving the local community with the school at its centre. The REAL project (Real Education Active Lives) has already led to suggestions for improvements in the buildings, the curriculum, the role the school can play in the community and a plan for a social enterprise that can combine the public and private sectors.

He also met the 25 fourth year pupils who are heading to Kampala, Uganda, on Thursday 6 October on a two-week educational exchange visit and praised all pupils, staff and parents for raising £40,000 for the adventure.

Speaking about the School of Ambition Programme, Mr McConnell said: "In Scotland today, most pupils and most students have raised their aspirations and improved their results. But many still need a radical transformation to change expectations, improve discipline and create more success.

"We want our schools to aim high, stretch, challenge and inspire their pupils. We don't want to see youngsters in Scotland being told that they shouldn't have ideas above their station. We want them to have the ambition and belief that they can use their talents and achieve their full potential.

"I have no doubt that these Inverness pupils, and thousands more across the country, will do exactly that. This school, and nineteen others, have the determination and ambition to completely transform their school and give young Scots a better start in life. With schools full of pupils striving to achieve their ambitions, Scotland will be a more confident and successful country in the future."

the commitment and hard work which has been done by pupils, staff and other partners in developing the ideas which will take our school forward.

"Pupils enjoyed showing the First Minister a range of activities we are involved in, including our forthcoming trip to Uganda, which has involved the pupils in major enterprise activities to raise funds for the trip. They also explained how staff and pupils together have come up with innovative ideas for developing the school in its local community."



Councillor Andy Anderson, Chairman of The Highland Council's Education Culture and Sport Committee, said: "The school, its community and partners are to be commended for their vision and I am certain that they will make the most of this unique opportunity that has been afforded them."

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