

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be a pupil at Firrhill High School?

In May 2023, 30 S1 parents joined us at Firrhill High School to experience a day in the life of an S1 pupil.

Our parents were provided with iPads, timetables and pencil cases on their arrival and even treated to a special assembly from Mr Hamilton.

The parents were split into 2 classes and followed their timetable for the day, including a stop off at the canteen for an authentic lunch experience!

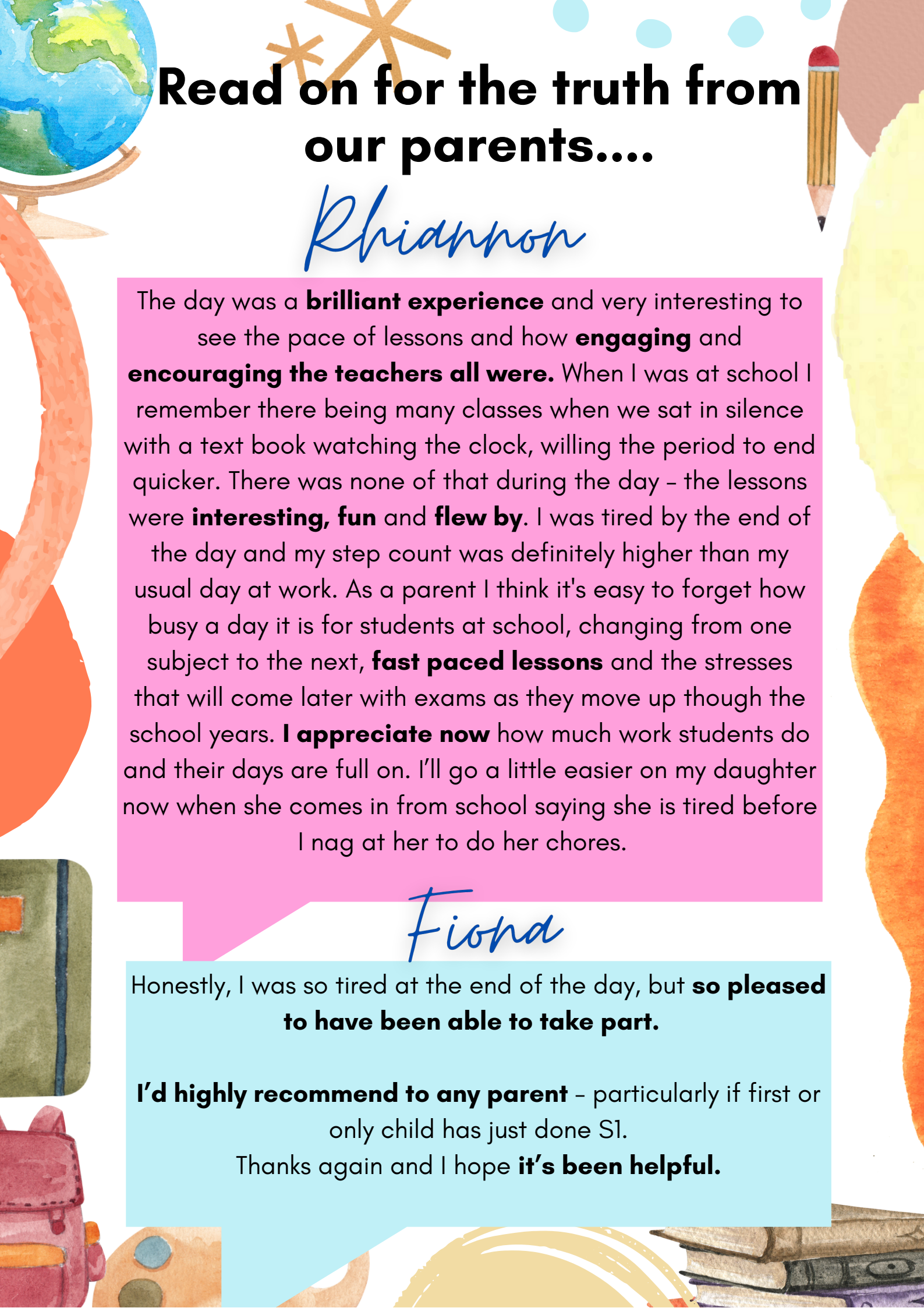
Over the next few pages, you will read about their experience in their own words.

Class 1 - Martin & Rhiannon

Period	Time	Class	Teacher	Room
1	08.45-09.35	Home Economics	Mrs Flockhart	DFT3
2	09.35-10.25	Science	Mr Rennie and Miss Williams	SC4
Break	10.25-10.40			
3	10.40-11.30	Mathematics	Miss Brookes	MA2
4	11.30-12.20	History	Mr Edwards	SOC6
Lunch	12.20-13.35			
5	13.05-13.55	German	Miss O'Sullivan	ML4
6	13.55-14.45	Modern Studies	Miss Thomas and Miss Davidson	SOC7
7	14.45-15.20	Art and Design	Miss Gilbert	AD2

Class 2 - Fiona

Period	Time	Class	Teacher	Room
1	08.45-09.35	Home Economics	Miss Cunningham	DFT1
2	09.35-10.25	Art and Design	Miss Gilbert	AD2
Break	10.25-10.40			
3	10.40-11.30	English	Mr McAlpine	EN9
4	11.30-12.20	Mathematics	Mrs Hayden	MA9
Lunch	12.20-13.35			
5	13.05-13.55	Science	Miss Foote	SC10
6	13.55-14.45	Spanish	Miss O'Sullivan	ML4
7	14.45-15.20	History	Mr Cameron	SOC4



Read on for the truth from our parents....

Rhiannon

The day was a **brilliant experience** and very interesting to see the pace of lessons and how **engaging** and **encouraging the teachers all were**. When I was at school I remember there being many classes when we sat in silence with a text book watching the clock, willing the period to end quicker. There was none of that during the day – the lessons were **interesting, fun** and **flew by**. I was tired by the end of the day and my step count was definitely higher than my usual day at work. As a parent I think it's easy to forget how busy a day it is for students at school, changing from one subject to the next, **fast paced lessons** and the stresses that will come later with exams as they move up through the school years. **I appreciate now** how much work students do and their days are full on. I'll go a little easier on my daughter now when she comes in from school saying she is tired before I nag at her to do her chores.

Fiona

Honestly, I was so tired at the end of the day, but **so pleased to have been able to take part**.

I'd highly recommend to any parent – particularly if first or only child has just done S1.

Thanks again and I hope **it's been helpful**.




Martin

We end the day in the library with a debrief with Mr Hamilton, Mrs Clegg and Mrs Mariani. Had we been **challenged** asked Mr Hamilton. Yes! Had we met five new people? Yes. It has been a **fantastic day**. I feel very **lucky** to have had this experience.

I suddenly realise the **confidence and belief the school had** needed to make this day possible. The confidence parents would want to come along. The confidence the day would go well. The belief parents would find it a useful, positive experience. The **engagement and enthusiasm from the staff** involved. The detailed organization which ensured the day went off without a hitch. It has been **an eye-opening experience**. I have a much better appreciation for the rhythm of the school day and all the hard work and dedication of the staff. **I will encourage anyone who gets this opportunity in future to grab it.**

I have much more appreciation for my children needing downtime at the end of the school day.





Registration


Assembly with Mr Hamilton

Martin


There is a beeping sound (are bells old fashioned now?) and we are on our way to the assembly hall. Mr Hamilton is waiting for us. I play it safe and sit at the front. Another parent sits in the third row and is politely but firmly asked to sit in one of the front two rows. This is beginning to feel like school.

Mr Hamilton sets out the goals for the day. He is an articulate presenter who has clearly thought about what he wants us to achieve today. We are to be challenged. We are also to get to know five new people. I really like the clarity of his growth mindset message. While I've heard it before at parents evenings, I recognize how it permeates the school and benefits our children. It is very different from my school experience.

Rhiannon



We started the day with Assembly with Mr Hamilton who welcomed us and spoke about the need to be challenged and not find everything easy. Sitting in the hall brought back memories of when I was a pupil myself at Firrhill High many many years ago when the school looked a lot different!





Period 1

Martin

Mrs Flockhart is our teacher. She is enthusiastic and welcoming, but it is clear who is in charge. The lesson moves at a pace – there is no time for dithering. We are making chocolate chip cookies! Before I know it the lesson is over and a QR code appears for “Two stars & a wish”. I learn the stars are things we’re pleased with, and the wish is something to improve next time. I fumble with my iPad cover. Another parent helps me find the passcode and I point the camera at the QR code. I’m whisked to a site to enter feedback.

Rhiannon

First period we went to Home Economics where we had a practical lesson in baking. I can see how students would enjoy this class. The teacher was gentle and friendly but also clear in ensuring we followed hygiene and safety rules. At the end of the class we then had to give 2 stars (things we did well/goals we met in class) and a wish (something we would do differently) which was a great way too look back over the lesson. We each left with a batch of tasty chocolate chip cookies.

Fiona

It was so nice to have some of the ingredients and things already prepared for me! – and it was great to bring home something tasty (and I now know where the recipes are on the school iPad!)..



Period 2

Fiona

Art and Design was excellent - a far cry from my own schooldays, when I was actually discouraged from doing it. Doing some additive and subtractive printing, neither of which I'd done before, was utterly absorbing, as I figured out how it should turn out. To be clear, I wasn't brilliant at all, but had fun and understood what Miss Gilbert was telling us...

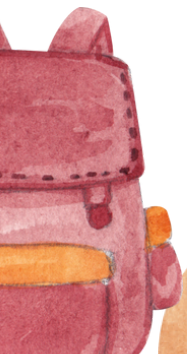
Rhiannon

Then we moved onto Art and Design for second period where we got messy doing some print making. The teacher got us to explore different mark making techniques. At the end we also critiqued each others work, using the 2 stars and a wish method. A bit of pressure on us parents who are maybe not used to doing that, but I think it is a great way for students to get feedback about their work which is not just from their teacher.

Martin

Miss Williams energetically welcomes us to her classroom, SC4. We're going to be doing a flame test - adding chemicals to a Bunsen flame and seeing what colours they make. Cool. But we start by using a data booklet to predict the colours we expect to see. It seems very complex - was it that complicated when I was at school? There is no time to ponder, we are onto spraying chemicals into the Bunsen flame. My partner is very deft at spraying. I, on the other hand, manage to blow out the flame twice despite having been warned not to do this by Miss Williams.

We finish up with a "Blooket", an interactive learning game we play on our iPads. The game, on the other hand, is ruthless. Answering a question correctly gives you the chance to open one of three possible reward chests. Inside might be gold, or the chance to steal someone else's gold, or the risk of losing some gold. While it is clearly random, there is fierce competition amongst the parents. Against all the odds I end up in second place. I'm suitably pleased. Maybe I'm not so bad at science after all.



*Period 3 & 4

Fiona

English and Maths were brilliant. I particularly loved English, and not just because my desk partner and I won a wee trophy. And I really did learn something – I use persuasive techniques at work, but had never really thought about how or why they worked.

Rhiannon

Period 3 – English started with an air raid siren and the teacher wearing a soldier's helmet. Great lesson in which we worked in groups writing and presenting a speech to the rest of the class. Was a fun lesson but also challenging by pushing us to stand up and talk in front of the class. As a parent who is not used to doing this, it made me think about the confidence students must have to do this as part of their normal school lives.

Period 4 – I was not really looking forward to Maths as it was not one of my strong points when I was a pupil. I had to get my head round using the iPad for this lesson but realise this is second nature for children using them in school. After working through some examples of expanding brackets with the teacher we then went on to have an algebra treasure hunt, moving around the room to find answers. It was not the dry maths lesson I remember having when I was young, it was interactive and fun.

Martin

Period 3 Maths – Miss Williams is very organized and has assigned us desks. I sit down at mine. Miss Williams starts the lesson. She is writing on her iPad, and it appears on the screen behind her. After a while I discover I can follow along on my iPad. This is cool. If I had homework, I'd be able to review the lesson later if I wanted to. Fortunately, there will be no homework for us. We are learning how to expand equations. I used to enjoy this and discover I can still remember how to do it. This is fun. All too quickly the lesson is over, and we've got another feedback form to fill in. I laugh when I see the feedback form contains more maths questions – I was expecting two stars and a wish!

P4 – Down a corridor, up some stairs, round a bend, down some stairs and we are in the history department (SOC6). Mr Edwards welcomes us in. Mr Edwards asks us to draw a witch. This is the precursor to a fascinating and engaging lesson about the development of our classic image of a witch. Mind-maps, discussion and video clips are weaved into a seamless, engaging lesson which is over far too soon. I find myself wondering how my life might have been different if I'd been taught history by Mr Edwards. Would I now be a historian? I certainly wouldn't have abandoned history at the earliest opportunity. I am reminded how teachers really can shape lives.



Period 5

Rhiannon

Science – Hair tied back, goggles on and the Bunsen burners came out. I can see how the students would really enjoy doing the flame tests we carried out and we then went on to play bloket games on our ipads about periodic elements. Us parents got quite competitive!

Fiona

It was great getting hands-on in Science with Miss Foote! (some bells rang vaguely from my school days)

Martin

First stop for the afternoon is ML4 and Miss O'Sullivan for German. There is free seating – I decide to sit somewhere in the middle hoping this reflects my lack of confidence in German. I never did German at school, only French and I spent much of my Higher French class chatting to girls rather than bothering with learning. I enjoyed myself but didn't learn much French.

But Miss O'Sullivan makes this engaging. There are quizzes and activities to test us. It is much more interactive. I get a question correct, pick a square and reveal a star which nets me a sticker and a lollipop. Cool – I've never been given a lollipop at school before.

I proudly stick the sticker on the front of my notebook. The next game is even more intense. We are split into three teams who compete against each other to win points. The end game is tense and in the space of two turns our team moves from first into an unshakeable dead last. No more lollipops for us!

*Period 6 & 7

Fiona

PERIOD 6 - Spanish was so much fun with Miss O'Sullivan (including prize stickers from Mrs Mariani. Languages are my background, so I was particularly interested to see how it was taught.

PERIOD 7 - History with Mr Cameron ended up a wee bit shorter than normal, but was thought-provoking and involving, as well as fun.

Rhiannon

Spanish was period 6 and the teacher used various techniques and games to get us to work through our Spanish vocab. Again the competitiveness came out amongst us parents. The lollipops the teacher handed out to those that won made me smile.

Last class for the day was History where we learned about witchcraft through drawing, discussions, slides and fun Horrid History videos. I can see many students enjoying the more gruesome side to this class.

Martin

Period 6 - Miss Thomas and Miss Davidson welcome us into their classroom. I've never had a Modern Studies lesson before, so I'm interested to learn more. The topic is North Korea, and it sparks a lively discussion led by Miss Davidson. Then Miss Thomas asks to write down our top three jobs for when we're "older". Am I allowed to write down "retired"? But I learn in North Korea I wouldn't get any choice and would likely end up a farmer or in the military. We play a game of North Korea Snakes and Ladders. One of the other parents gets sent to jail three times which makes me smile. He's a friend and a most unlikely person to get sent to jail. I escape jail and get a £50 bonus instead. The lesson seems to end almost before it has started!

Period 7 - Miss Gilbert is teaching us how to monoprint. I've never done this before and am surprised when we're told to squeeze a blob of red ink onto the desk. Am I really allowed to be rolling ink on the desk? Miss Gilbert comes around to check how we're doing and makes some very nice encouraging comments about my work. She's wrong of course - it's terrible smudgy work and much of the ink is on my hands rather than the paper - but I appreciate the encouragement. All of a sudden I want to scratch my nose but I must resist or I'll end up looking like Rudolph.

Just like Home Economics we finish with two stars and a wish. Miss Gilbert selects my "art" and offers two stars and a wish about it. I'm pleasantly surprised - it's a nice way to finish the day.



**Watch this space,
'Bring your parent to
school day' coming
May 2024....**

