

Tollcross Primary pupils become Gaelic Guides at the Castle

☒ Gaelic Medium Education pupils from Tollcross Primary School in Edinburgh have seen the culmination of weeks of training to become Historic Scotland's Gaelic speaking Junior Guides at Edinburgh Castle.

The pupils gave a costumed performance in Gaelic of a 16th century royal banquet scene for an invited audience in the Great Hall at Edinburgh Castle on Monday, 13th June.

At the end of the performance they were presented with their graduation certificates as fully-fledged Edinburgh Castle Gaelic Junior Guides.

During the past few weeks the pupils have also become film stars. Their guided tour of the Great Hall, delivered as a costumed performance, has been filmed to produce an educational DVD about the Great Hall at Edinburgh Castle for both Gaelic learners and Gaelic speakers, whatever their age.

2011 is the 500th anniversary of the completion of the Great Hall and the DVD is a wonderful educational resource which takes viewers back to the 16th century to meet King James IV, Queen Margaret, their courtiers and servants, to find out what the Great Hall was used for and how it has changed..

As well as featuring in the educational resource the Guides may conduct special historical performances for their peers at key times of the year, such as Gaelic Schools Week. This will complement the tours and activities provided throughout the year by Edinburgh Castle's Gaelic Learning Officer, Ann Paterson.

Minister for Learning and Skills, Alasdair Allan MSP, said:

“Gaelic speaking Junior Guides are a really exciting development in Historic Scotland’s provision for Gaelic learners and speakers visiting Edinburgh Castle. Numbers of Gaelic learners and those in Gaelic medium education are growing and it is fitting that Edinburgh Castle, so significant in terms of national identity, is responding to demand.

“The DVD is both entertaining and educational, adults as well as children will get a lot out of this. I was really impressed by the professionalism of the pupils’ acting skills – definitely some future stars I think!”

Anne MacPhail, Principal Teacher of Gaelic at Tollcross Primary School, added:

“This project provided a unique opportunity for pupils to learn on-site about the castle and its people, while developing their own talking, writing and drama skills. They worked hard and had lots of fun, and this way of learning is what the Curriculum for Excellence is all about.”