



Erskine Stewart
Melville
COMMUNITY

Impact Report: 2024/25



Contents

Introduction	3
Bursary Programme	4
Bursary Stories	6
Community Partnerships	8
Community Connections	10
STEM Partnerships	12
Inclusive Sport	13
S4 Community Days	14
Junior Award Scheme	16
Murrayfield Care Home	17
Youth Philanthropy Initiative	18
Duke of Edinburgh Award	20
Charity Fundraising	22
Development Office Team	23

From August 2026, The Mary Erskine School, Stewart's Melville College and The Junior School, known as "Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools" (ESMS), will unite to form a single co-educational school for children aged 3-18, called Erskine Stewart Melville.

Introduction from the *Principal*



It is my pleasure to welcome you to our latest Erskine Stewart Melville Community Impact Report. Community is at the heart of everything we do, from nurturing a strong sense of belonging within our School to supporting those around us. It is a privilege to share the positive and meaningful difference we are making together.

In this report, you will read about our Community Partnerships with local schools and charity organisations, developed as part of our new School Vision. More than 400 students have taken part in community activities, contributing over 3,000 hours of support across 16 partner organisations. You will also hear about the achievements of our Junior School children through JASS and our sector leading Duke of Edinburgh programme in Senior School, which generated a further 7,000 hours of volunteering.

We are also proud to highlight the life changing difference made by our bursary programme. Testimonials from Tracy Flower (Ross) and Matthew Coyle show the profound impact that financial assistance had on their education. Broadening access to an Erskine Stewart Melville education remains central to our ethos and to the vision of our founders. From our beginnings in 1694, when Mary Erskine first created educational opportunities for merchants' daughters, to

today, where one in thirteen students receives bursary support, we remain committed to providing transformational opportunities. Thank you to everyone who has supported and continues to support this vital work.

This past year has brought significant political and fiscal changes for independent schools, fundamentally reshaping the sector. Despite these challenges, our focus has remained clear. An ESM education is about so much more than examination results: it builds character, resilience, active citizenship and a lifelong commitment to making a difference.

On behalf of the entire ESM community, students and staff alike, thank you for your continued support and engagement. Together, we are creating a positive and meaningful difference within our School and across our wider community.

Anthony Simpson
Principal, Erskine Stewart Melville

Bursary Update

Fundraising Update August 2024 - July 2025

Since our last report, thanks to your generous support, we have continued to make a meaningful difference in children's lives through our bursary programme, as well as fundraise for capital projects, as part of our plans to become a fully co-educational school as Erskine Stewart Melville in August 2026.

Thank you so much to everyone who has kindly given over the last year, whether it was through a single or regular gift, through generously gifting annual school fees for a pupil on a Transformational Bursary, or for those of you that have left a gift in their will to the School. Special thanks must also go to the Melville College Trust for their incredible gift of £1m for capital projects.

13%

of students had a bursary at Stewart's Melville College and The Mary Erskine School

*The support of our community is needed more than ever in the current climate, and we are incredibly grateful for the generosity and kindness you have shown over the last year - **thank you.***



255

donors in
our ESM
Community



29

years old
- youngest
donor



100

years old
- oldest
donor



£1,686,492

was raised in 2024-25



Planning for the Future:

We continue to work towards our goal of raising a capital sum of £15 million to generate an annual income to sustainably fund bursaries for children in the Senior School. As at 31 December 2025, the value of the Endowment Fund was **£4,195,318**.

Families of Current Students:

We are hugely grateful to all the families, that kindly give to our bursary programme through Extras. Your dedicated support helps to provide bursaries for children to attend ESM and gain access to a transformational education, as well ensure there is a safety net for families who may unexpectedly need financial assistance.



1,304

families giving



Melville College Trust

We are incredibly grateful to the Governors of The Melville College Trust, who kindly provide essential support for our school through a generous, annual grant for bursaries and smaller grants for extra-curricular activities, to perpetuate the memory of those former pupils of Edinburgh Institution and Melville College who lost their lives in the two World Wars.

Over the academic session 2024/25, The Trust funded 19 bursaries across The Junior School, Stewart's Melville College and The Mary Erskine School, at a cost of £250,000. They also gave grants for a wide range of extracurricular clubs, such as supporting the Pipe Band, Badminton Club, STEM and Geography at MES and some new play equipment for our Juniors.

Furthermore, the Trust also provided a generous donation of £1million in support of our move to a fully co-educational school. This substantial investment will help to enhance the School's educational facilities, notably increasing the number of science labs at the site of the new Senior School. The science building will proudly bear the names of esteemed former pupils the late Sir Fraser Stoddart and the late Dr Norma Stoddart, celebrating their outstanding contributions to science. Funds will also go towards indoor and outdoor wellbeing spaces across both sites, and towards the Sixth Form Centre, the Fitness Centre and the Health and Food Technology Kitchens at the Senior School. We are incredibly grateful for this donation, which will have a lasting impact on our School community.



Bursary Stories

Tracy Flower (Ross)

The Mary Erskine School for Girls,
Class of 1994



I lived at home with my Mum and Dad, I had two older sisters but they moved out soon after I was born. My Mum didn't work, she always looked after the house and the children and my Dad was made redundant when I was young. He started a new job working on Stagecoach buses. We didn't have a lot of things when I

was young. We lived quite a simple life. I remember being the last child to have a colour television, we never had a video player, we never ate out or had takeaways. We always holidayed in the UK.

My sisters had attended the local primary and high school and neither them or my parents were happy with the education they had received, and they didn't want me to go there.

My Dad had attended Daniel Stewart's College in the 1940s and my parents wanted me to go to The Combined Junior School Mary Erskine and Stewart's Melville as it was known then. I remember going in to sit a test when I was only four years old. I must have done well as I was awarded an Assisted Place. I started in 1980 when I was four years old. I stayed at the school until I finished sixth year in 1994 aged 17.

I have only happy memories of school, my Mum said it was the only school where the girls had cried upon leaving to go to their next venture. I loved going to school, even though it was a long journey there and back. I enjoyed the sciences, and Maths. I still love Maths. I also enjoyed art and photography, and

the Enterprise Module I did in Sixth Year, which I am sure was my first love of being the boss and planning everything meticulously and the financials.

After leaving school I went to University in Essex, to study a degree in Horticulture. Every girl in my sixth year went to university. I then worked at two local authorities in the Parks Department before settling in Canterbury City Council for many years as the Senior Contracts Manager. I was in charge of grounds maintenance, refuse and recycling, street cleansing and public conveniences, minor works and building maintenance and enforcement.

"I reached the top of my career in 2019 when I took the role of Director of Commercial Operations at East Kent College Group. This was my first venture into education. I ran 19 separate business ventures which were wide ranging from Early Year Nurseries, cafes and refectories, sports centre, an award-winning restaurant and the highest scoring hotel on trip-advisor in Kent, The Yarrow. I had 170 staff members working under my directorate. It was my dream role."

This is the success that former students can obtain from ESMS. I am still working in Education, in finance at a junior school, which is a role I have taken to spend more time with my autistic son, and while I search for my own business to purchase. I also am a landlady and own several houses which I rent out.

I still have my best friends from school, whom I have known for 40 years, one from my class and one from my long bus journeys. We made lifelong friendships at MES.

I have had a very successful life and I do believe it stemmed from the opportunity I had to attend such a great school. I can't imagine what my life would have looked like if I had not been so lucky as to gain a place at the school.

Matthew Coyle

Daniel Stewart's and Melville College, Class of 2000



I received financial assistance from the school following a change in family financial circumstances and the separation of my parents. It ensured continuity and stability during a time of change and uncertainty. I will always be incredibly grateful for the opportunity to continue my education at Stewart's Melville.

My time at school was thoroughly enjoyable and was shaped by the connections that I made - both in terms of friendships and through the opportunities and advice offered by some passionate and dedicated teachers.

Academically, I enjoyed English and social sciences. This was undoubtedly shaped by the enthusiasm of teachers who made learning fun. John Allan, Richard Cairns and Mark Longmuir were definitely responsible for my decision to study Medieval History at St Andrews University. Not knowing what I wanted to pursue as a career, the advice to study the subject I enjoyed the most, at the best university I could get into, may sound obvious but it was most welcome.

Sport has always been important to me and I am very grateful to the numerous teachers and parent coaches that provided such great opportunities. I thoroughly enjoyed rugby and cricket at school and was honoured to be the First XI cricket captain in my final year. I am a big believer in the importance of sport for physical and mental health, plus the benefit of learning skills such as commitment, teamwork and leadership. Sport is also a great way to meet new people and this was certainly the case

at university. I knew some friends from school, but joining the rugby and cricket clubs brought an immediate new friendship circle - many of whom I am still in contact with.

My connection with FP sport continued throughout university and beyond. I played both rugby and cricket for StewMel for many years and remain involved in both clubs, as well as the golf club. Having a shared interest in sport makes it very easy to connect with people of all ages.

“StewMel rugby links also played a huge role in my professional life. The investment management industry is competitive and I was incredibly fortunate to be introduced to rugby legend, Jim Calder, who was recruiting for a junior role shortly after I left university. Almost 20 years later I continue to work in the industry and remain incredibly grateful to Jim for providing me with my first opportunity.”

Since leaving school I have been asked on several occasions what I think the benefits of a private education are. I think smart, driven individuals will excel regardless of which school they attend, but it is the additional opportunities and the network of connections that broaden horizons and open doors. The ESMS community has played, and continues to play an important part in my life and that is unlikely to be the case were it not for receiving the bursary. The school continues to evolve, but historic connections and traditions remain. It is also nice that some of the teachers who taught me are now teaching my sons.

For as long as I can remember I have been contributing a small amount each month to the bursary fund so that others can continue to receive the same support that I benefitted from. In time, it would be nice to be able to increase this contribution but for now, I am giving back through volunteering as a parent coach through both the StewMel Lions mini rugby club and the StewMel Royals cricket club. It is great to see kids from different schools coming together to enjoy sport.

Community Partnerships

Overview

During the 2024-25 academic year, we took a more intentional approach to community partnership work, supported by the creation of a dedicated role to grow and strengthen relationships in North Edinburgh and to increase both the scale and depth of student engagement in this area.



This year our students across year groups took part in a wide range of community activity, including volunteering with local primary schools, supporting inclusive sport programmes and improving outdoor spaces across North Edinburgh.

Most of this work was delivered in partnership with established charities and community organisations. These partners brought experience, local knowledge and trusted relationships, helping ensure that student involvement was useful, appropriate and well supported.



Wheelchair ice skating with Oaklands School

Quantitative Highlights



Over

400

students engaged
in community-facing
activities



Approx.

3,000

total hours volunteered
across community
projects



Approx.

7,000

additional hours
volunteered through
Duke of Edinburgh Award



Over

400

children reached through
STEM, tutoring and
inclusive sport



16

community and
charity partners
supported



6

local state schools
engaged



6

inclusive Sports Days hosted
at ESMS, attended by

232

children and their families



240

participated in S4 Community
Days, contributing

1,400+

hours

Community Connections

Volunteer Tutors Organisation (VTO)

Through our partnership with VTO, seven S6 students took part in the VTO Senior Leadership Programme, volunteering weekly at Pirniehall Primary School. They worked one-to-one or in small groups, supporting children with literacy, numeracy and reading, as well as helping to build confidence, communication and engagement with learning.

Each student contributed around 30 hours across the year. By attending regularly and working with the same pupils, students were able to get to know children well and build consistent, trusting relationships. The emphasis was on encouragement, patience and showing up each week.

“I think what’ll stick with me most from this experience is the friendships that I’ve built with the children I’ve been working with.”

Amaya, S6 VTO Student Leader

“After taking part in the programme, I now feel a lot more confident at explaining things to people.”

Bea, S6 VTO Student Leader

“I could see the children building relationships and making genuine connections with the seniors. That stays with them and can have a really positive impact on their education, motivation and confidence in learning.”

Beth, Learning Communities Coordinator, VTO



vto

Volunteer Tutors Organisation
Inspiring Achievement,
Building Confidence

Circle

Through our partnership with Circle, S6 students took part in Circle’s Mentoring Project, working one-to-one with their primary aged mentees weekly at the Circle Hub at Craigroyston Primary School.

Before starting, students received training and support from Circle. Sessions themselves were informal and activity-based, combining homework support with plenty of time to chat and play.

“You get to make a meaningful impact in a young person’s life. It’s really great to see how they develop during your time together in the programme. I really enjoy going to every session. Circle are great at pairing mentors and mentees with shared interests - my mentee is a great kid and we have so much fun together playing football and stuff.”

James, S6, Circle Mentor

Over the year, this meant students committing their time and attention to the same child each week, learning the importance of being a trusted person and the responsibility that comes with that. For the children involved, it meant having a familiar face and a steady, positive presence in their lives.

“Parents of the mentees told us how much their children looked forward to seeing their mentor each week and that it became a really important and consistent part of their routine. Some of the young people involved had quite complex needs, particularly around emotional regulation and the mentors were incredibly patient and calm in their approach. They were able to help the children feel heard and understood, which in turn helped them settle, regulate and participate more positively in group activities. Parents shared that they noticed a difference at home and school too, especially in their confidence. The children still ask after their mentors now. Circle are grateful to the students for the time, care and maturity they brought to the role last year.”

**Katie Middleton, Mentoring Project
Co-ordinator at Circle**



STEM Partnerships

During the 2024-25 academic year, we began developing STEM work in the community, with students leading a small number of hands-on sessions beyond the classroom as part of their Young STEM Leader Award.

Across the year, students ran practical STEM sessions at Fetlor Youth Club and the Pilton Youth and Children's Project. Activities ranged from pop rockets and microscopes to bubble experiments, all designed to spark curiosity, build confidence and show younger children that STEM is something they can enjoy and take part in.

Building on this experience, we worked with Spartans Community Foundation to pilot an after-school STEM programme at Granton Primary School. Running over several weeks, the sessions created a relaxed, informal space where pupils could enjoy hands-on activities, return week after week, and build relationships with the students involved.

As a first step into community STEM work, these projects offered engaging new experiences for younger pupils while supporting our students to develop confidence, communication and leadership. They also laid strong foundations for future partnership work in this area.

"It was a good opportunity to break down barriers between us and the community, and to interact with children from schools we maybe didn't work with before. I think it was good to have the common interest of STEM to bond over!"

Eleanor, S6 Young STEM Leader

"It built confidence in our young people to try new things and work as a team. Seeing young people teaching and supporting other young people was incredible."

Amy, Youth worker, FetLor Youth Club



Pilton Youth & Children's Project



Here for good.



Fetlor Youth Club

Inclusive Sport

Inclusive Sport is a central part of our community partnership work. During the 2024-25 academic year, the schools hosted six inclusive sports events, welcoming 232 children with disabilities and their families to take part in free, welcoming and inclusive multisport activities, followed by a shared community lunch.

The events were run in partnership with Stewart's Melville Rugby Club, with support from our FP hockey and cricket clubs and Spartans Community Football Academy. Together, partners helped create sessions that were flexible, inclusive and responsive to a wide range of needs.

S5 Sports Leaders were at the heart of the programme. Around 100 students were involved across the year, contributing more than 600 hours of volunteering. Working one-to-one with individual children, students supported participation at each child's pace, responding to individual needs and helping ensure every child felt welcome and included.

Alongside the Inclusive Sports Days, we also worked with Oaklands School and Rowanfield School, specialist schools supporting children and young people with complex additional support needs. This included joint wheelchair ice skating and wheelchair dance sessions with Oaklands School, and welcoming pupils from Rowanfield School to use the school swimming pool for an eight-week block during the summer term.



“Sessions are welcoming and not rigid, and the student volunteers are really adaptable to our son's needs. They're so creative. There are so many benefits from these sessions – having fun, connecting with others and moving more. Our son has tried out new sports, and even made some up himself. He's making new friends and his confidence has really grown since starting the sessions. As a parent, I feel part of a community.”

Testimonial from a parent



S4 Community *Days*

All 240 S4 students took part in two days of volunteering with partner charities across Edinburgh. Activities ranged from conservation and garden maintenance to supporting clothing donations and community clean-ups.

Together, they contributed an estimated 1,440 hours of service. Feedback from partners was overwhelmingly positive, with all of them expressing interest in ongoing collaboration. The project not only supported vital local causes but also gave students the chance to experience different environments, meet passionate local volunteers, build teamwork and contribute meaningfully to their city.

Students volunteered at:

- *Friends of Orchard Park*
- *Pilton Youth and Children's Project (PYCP)*
- *Kids Love Clothes*
- *Lauriston Castle*
- *Cammo Estate*
- *Granton Castle Walled Garden*
- *Friends of the River Almond Walkway*

"Having your students visit was a real pleasure. We are a small number of garden volunteers and only come in on Monday and Wednesday mornings. To have a large group of students for a significant time period each day allows us to concentrate on tasks on our wish list that would have been a challenge for us to achieve in our normal working days. Thanks to the motivated students (and teachers!) we achieved some significant goals. Members of the public commented on the immediate improvements in the grounds of Lauriston Castle."

John Jeffrey, Chair of Friends of Lauriston Castle Estate & Lauriston Castle Beekeeper



Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS)

The JASS Award is a national programme that helps Junior School children recognise the effort they put into activities beyond the classroom, including learning new skills, helping others and taking on personal challenges. The programme includes the 'Me and My World' section, which focuses on helping others and making a positive impact on the environment.

Throughout the year, our junior school children have taken part in a variety of activities that demonstrate their growing awareness of the world around them. Through these experiences, children have not only contributed to their communities but have also developed a sense of responsibility, teamwork, and confidence in their ability to make a difference. JASS provides them with opportunities to engage with the world beyond the classroom, helping them to understand that even small actions can have a meaningful impact.

“Programmes like JASS give children a chance to see that what they do beyond the classroom matters. It’s been wonderful to see our young students taking pride in their efforts and reflecting on the value of commitment and the joy that comes from making a positive contribution in the wider world.”

**Mike Kane, Head of Erskine Stewart
Melville Junior School**

**During the 2024-25 academic year,
233 students took part in the award:**



71



68



93



Murrayfield *Care Home*

Following a successful pilot in early 2024, a regular intergenerational partnership with Murrayfield Care Home was established for the 2024-25 session. Weekly visits took place throughout the school year, with all four nursery rooms participating on a rotating basis.

Children and residents spent time together through conversation and shared activities. Traditional tales and nursery rhymes proved particularly popular, as both groups were already familiar with them. The consistency of the visits helped children and residents get to know one another, build confidence and enjoy regular social connection across age groups.



“I love seeing all the little children, it brings me great joy and makes my day.”

Care home resident

“He loved meeting the, in his words, grannies and grandads and couldn’t stop smiling about his day when he came home.”

Nursery parent



yp.i

YOUTH AND PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE SCOTLAND

PAY TO THE ORDER OF

House OF HOPE

£3,000

Three Thousand Pounds

Managed and principally funded by

The Wood Foundation

The Mary Erskine School

Youth Philanthropy Initiative

During the 2024-25 session, S2 students at MES took part in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative, exploring local social issues and learning about philanthropy through research, teamwork and presentation.

Working in groups, 120 students researched charities they felt were making a difference and developed a case for support. Many groups visited organisations to meet staff and learn more about their work, helping ground their learning in real local contexts.

Alongside this, groups planned and delivered their own fundraising activities, developing confidence in advocacy, collaboration and public speaking.

The programme culminated in the MES YPI Final Showcase, a well-attended event with families and staff invited. Student teams presented their chosen charities to a panel, answering questions and explaining why they felt their organisation should receive funding. The winning team secured £3,000 for House of Hope, a community-based wellbeing centre supporting people affected by breast cancer.

YPI In Numbers:

120

Students involved

16

Staff involved

15

Years supported at MES

Money raised:

£3,000

ypi[®]

YOUTH AND
PHILANTHROPY
INITIATIVE
SCOTLAND

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) continues to provide a clear and structured route for our students to contribute to their communities through sustained volunteering.



This year, students completing their DofE volunteering section contributed a total of 7,046 hours of volunteering across a wide range of organisations and causes. This volunteering was typically carried out on a regular basis over a number of months, supporting organisations including local charities, sports clubs and community groups.

The social value of this contribution has been estimated at over £45,000, reflecting the scale of time given by students during the year.

DofE volunteering supports the development of responsibility, reliability and confidence in our students, while offering practical experience of contributing beyond the school environment.



1,950
hours



2,964
hours



2,132
hours



Combined
7,046
hours



Monetary value
£45,094



Charity *Fundraising*

Alongside longer-term community partnerships, students took part in a wide range of charity fundraising and youth philanthropy activity during the 2024-25 academic year. Through this work, students explored social issues, worked collaboratively, and took responsibility for raising funds and awareness for causes they cared about.



Across the school year, over £35,000 was raised for local and national charities. Activities ranged from teddy bear picnics to bake sales to non-uniform days to music concerts and sponsored hikes, with students involved in planning, promotion and delivery.

This year 26 of our P7s took on the West Highland Way, clocking up over 115,000 steps and raising more than £8,161 for Edinburgh Cat and Dog Home and Edinburgh Children's Hospital, which was an incredible feat.



Over
£35,000

was raised for local and
national charities

Development *Office Team*



I very much hope that you have enjoyed reading this year's Community Impact Report and learning about the collective impact that we are having through our bursary programme, our community partnerships work and fundraising.

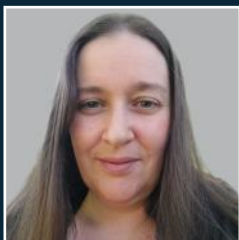
If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved, please get in touch.

None of this would be possible without the kind and generous support of our community, for which we are incredibly grateful - **thank you.**

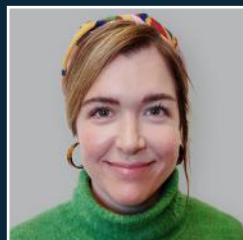
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Erskine Stewart
Melville
COMMUNITY

Thank you

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