

GRAMMAR School

NEWS

June 2008



Another Year Almost Completed!



The Leaving Class of 2008

Year 11 Pictured at the Recent Leavers' Presentation and KS3 & 4 Awards Ceremony



The **Key Stage 2 Presentation** was a great success. Above left is pictured Mrs Norma Hudson, ISG Superintendent, addressing KS2 students, parents, and staff. Above right Anna Fishwick receives a French award with her proud parents looking on. Anna is leaving the school after 7 years at DBGS. Below left is Mr Bolton, Head of KS2 and Master of Ceremonies at the KS2 presentation. Both presentations were lovely occasions.



Science & Maths Fun Fair
Year 9 students taught KS2 pupils. Great fun was had by all

This Month's News

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My Final Newsletter

School years never wind down, they always wind up! This year is no exception with



exams, reports, school trips, an early years' concert and presentations.

I have revisited the year's events and, as always, I am amazed with the opportunities that our staff members are prepared to arrange for pupils over and above the routine school day. It really is a very active and lively programme that the school provides.

As I leave the school after six years teaching English in the senior school, three years as Deputy and six years as Headteacher it is an opportunity to reflect on my association with the school.

The Chapman family arrived in Saudi Arabia in 1991. Emma was two years old and James five. The next eight years passed in the blink of an eye and we returned to the UK with our children who had formed a very different outlook on life than had they spent their time living in the UK.

Leaving DBGS for just two years made me realise what tremendous opportunities our school provides. When I was invited to return to the school in 2001 it was an opportunity that the family agreed was the right move for us. Our children are now young adults and their views on the

world - shaped by their long association with the school - make Sue and I very proud. For this we can only thank the school and Saudi Arabia for the opportunities that it provided for our children.

The last six years have not all been plain sailing. From the mid-nineties the expatriate community began to experience a succession of security events that ratcheted up the tension within Saudi. One year after I took over as Headteacher we experienced three very tense years as the internal security situation in Saudi Arabia created an incredibly difficult period. Companies withdrew families and school numbers dropped by 50%. Limited school closures occurred in response to some very nasty incidents. Staff members were concerned that I would enforce redundancies. Parents were concerned that we were no longer going to be viable as a school.

The low point was May 29th 2004 when an attack on the Oasis Compound took place. The school was closed to pupils on May 30th and the British Ambassador, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, visited the school to provide his perspective to staff about what was happening in the community. At this time all international schools in Saudi Arabia were concerned about whether there was a future for expatriate education in the Kingdom. The school and ISG kept a steady course during this period. We maintained staff and programme intact and were able to recover relatively quickly once families returned. Throughout this period our already strong academic record continued to

grow and develop.

The last few years have been excellent. The school has returned to a very healthy state and we have been able to provide additional resources, facilities and to increase the level of sponsored teachers within the school. I feel that I am handing over a very strong and successful school to my successor, Mr Ian Jones. Due to a very supportive ISG Superintendent, Mrs Norma Hudson, and Board of Trustees new facilities are in the planning stage and Ian Jones will preside over how they are developed for the school.

The CIS accreditation process that has been operating for one year will conclude after one more term's work in November 2008. This will provide an ideal platform for identifying strengths and weaknesses and to allow the school to develop even further. Mrs Power, as Chair of the CIS Self Study Steering Committee, has kept us all on track and deserves a great deal of credit. The committee and all staff members have worked incredibly hard and much time has been committed to driving the CIS process. We have developed professionally as a result and my sincere thanks go to all concerned for their hard work and dedication.

As I leave the school I would like to say thank you to the staff and especially to the pupils. The pupils are friendly, enthusiastic and well-motivated. The Senior Management Team of the school comprising of Sue Chapman, David Bolton, Nick

Hardcastle and John Power work incredibly hard on behalf of the school with all staff members in their respective phases. The teaching assistants manage and supervise the welfare of pupils across the age range in a caring and effective manner. The office staff consisting of Joan Weaver, Fiona Duvall, Yvonne Bland and Lynn Perry provides a professional and efficient service to parents, staff and children. I would like to specifically thank John Power, the Deputy Headteacher. We have worked closely over the past six years and John carries out an amazing job in a very understated, professional and efficient manner on behalf of the school.

It is also an ideal time to thank the Parent Volunteer Group for their tremendous efforts over the year in organising a wide range of activities for the pupils as well as supporting class and other events. In particular the PVG deserves praise for organising a new venture, the production of a PVG Yearbook. The completed Yearbook is outstanding and has taken a great deal of work to achieve. Mrs Lemoine, the driving force behind the project, deserves special mention. Perhaps some of you may also wish to become involved with a similar venture next year?

Leaving the DBGS community after fifteen years is going to be very strange as this represents half of my career in education. I am looking forward to my new role as Director of Human Resources for the International Schools Group and I will still be involved with DBGS and other schools within the organisation.

The extended summer holiday is an ideal time for us all to catch up with friends and family. To the children and parents who are leaving us for new countries and opportunities I wish you every success in your new ventures. To our returning families, travel well and safely over the summer break. I wish the school all possible success in the future.

With kind regards,

John Chapman

Headteacher

The school's teaching staff has remained extremely stable over the past three years. This trend continues and only four members of staff are leaving the school at the end of the 2007-08 school year: Peter Barnett (Design Technology), Ian Darlington (Foundation and KS1 Physical Education), Val Darlington (Pre Reception) and John Chapman (Headteacher).

Peter Barnett is to be replaced by Charles Webster and John Chapman's replacement is Mr Ian Jones. Mr Jones will be accompanied by Judith, his wife, who will be teaching in Key Stage 2. Due to the late resignation of Ian and Val Darlington the school is still making arrangements to fill their positions. We are optimistic that this will be achieved before or soon after the start of the 2008-09 school year.

Internally a couple of staffing changes will occur and these have already been incorporated into the timetable for the 2008-09 school year:

Foundation & Key Stage 1 (Pre-Reception to Year 2)

- A third Reception Class has been established and Mrs Elaine Nelson will be taking our third Reception Class due to increasing demand for places. It has been many years since we have been able to operate three Reception classes and this is indicative of the need for education as new families arrive in Saudi.
- Mrs Little will be leaving the position of KS2 – 4 art teacher and will be taking over the music programme in Foundation and KS1. I would like to thank Ms. Jane Holland for the role that she has played in developing music in the early years over the past year. Ms Holland is returning to Canada and the school wishes her all possible success next year.
- Arabic will be extended to Reception and Year 1. Mrs Bitar will be taking one class a week in each Reception and Year 1 class from August.
- At present all other staffing positions will remain as they are this year in

Staff Changes for 2008 - 2009

Foundation and Key Stage 1.

will be a few more galleries to showcase the incredible diversity of events within the school. Each gallery is a highlight of a specific trip, event, expedition or activity.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 - 6)

- Mrs Stott will be moving from Year 3 to Year 5;
- Mrs Jones, the wife of the incoming Headteacher, will be teaching in Year 3;
- Mrs Sohail will be moving to Year 4 to teach alongside Mrs Bolton. This is the perfect time to publicly thank Mrs Ogidan who stepped in at very short notice to take over 4 Red after their teacher left with very little notice in December. Thank you, Mrs Ogidan, we really could not have coped without you this year!
- Mr Wade will be teaching PE to one of the Year 6 classes. Due to the addition of a new Reception class our new PE teacher will not have sufficient time to take the other Year 6 class.
- All other teacher placements remain the same in KS2 as per the 2007-08 school year.

This year the school has added new facilities, equipment and resources:

- A fourth computer lab as well as a music lab of five PCs running Sibelius software, a dedicated music programme;
- Digital projectors have been placed in every class in Key Stage 2 and many specialist teachers have also had them provided for their specific subject area;
- A long jump pit and track has been installed and a new gymnasium for campus use came into operation during the school year;
- The original school building, the Quonset Hut, was finally demolished and plans are now well under way to build a dedicated dining hall to seat 450 students. This will be completed during the next school year and will have specific food preparation areas incorporated so that a range of food can be prepared and cooked on campus;
- Several subjects, including mathematics, French and English are in the process of receiving new resources at significant cost to update older books and resources;
- A dedicated computer was purchased to host the school's web site;
- The science department received SR 42,000 worth of data logging equipment at the start of the year to enable them to carry out work that had been previously impossible;
- The Design Technology Department started the year with considerable modifications that enabled the school to operate different activities as a result of a considerable investment in the DT facility;
- The budget was doubled in Foundation/ KS1 and KS2 this year and a

Key Stage 3 (Years 7 - 11)

- The GCSE mathematics programme in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) will be delivered by Mrs Chambers and the science programme in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11) will be delivered by Mr Stott.
- Mrs Chambers and Mr Stott will also take one set each of mathematics and science in Year 9. All other science and mathematics groups in KS3 (Years 7 - 9) will be taken by Mrs Merza and Mr Green)
- Mrs Yousef is taking over the role of art teacher from Mrs Little in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. Mrs Yousef began her new role in the last half of the summer term in the current school year.

DBGS Highlights in 2007-08

At the time of writing seventy photographic galleries are listed on the school's website. By the time the year rolls to a close there

tremendous range of resources have come into the infant and primary classes;

- Foundation and KS1 (Pre-Reception to Year 2) will return after the summer to have a brand new computer suite of 22 PCs. In the past they have always had the cast-offs from the upper school and primary. For the first time they will have brand new PCs.
- A part-time teaching assistant position for Key Stage 2 was added halfway through the year as a trial. This has worked successfully and the position has been added full-time for the next school year;
- A Learning Support teacher, Mrs Green, was appointed at the beginning of the school year and this has provided some much needed support for children within the school.

Highlights of the School Year

Reception Red and 2 Blue children have contributed highlights of the school year from their perspective.

Reception Red said:

Neil: 'When we work in class'
Habeeb: 'Painting in the class'
Sian: 'When we did time with the clocks'
Angela: 'When we did colouring in the class'
Ali: 'The Olympics assembly you know the boxing boy'
Arlen: 'Making hot air balloons'
Jasmine: 'When we were talking about dinosaurs'
Amir: 'Playing outside'
Georgina: 'When we drew Mr Wiggles and going on field trips'
Adam: 'I did like the dinosaur part when we were talking about dinosaurs'
Fawaz: 'Watching videos and going to library'
Thomas: 'When we did hot air balloons'
Funmi: 'I like puppets'

2 Blue's Highlights of the Year:

Mrs Chapman says that the whole year has been a highlight with the children in 2 Blue!

The things 2 Blue children say they enjoyed over the year have been the everyday ordinary things – maths games, science experiments, getting certificates, spelling, literacy, handwriting, computer work, funny poems, making castles and islands, reading, swapping classes to do history with Mrs McMahon, Arabic, playing outside with our friends, circle time games – but we've had fun with the special things too – our trip to Scitech, The Litter Muncher, our summer concert, visiting the School store, Halloween and 100th day.

We've been happy in Year 2, but Year 3 will be fun because we get to go to School store on our own and we can pre-order lunches from the cafetorium!

We have had a great time in Year 2 and some of us don't want to leave. As Marcus says 'Everything is special in Year 2'.

CIS Update

Over the year there have been many references to the CIS self evaluation and accreditation process in letters, newsletters and on the school web site. It has been an incredibly hardworking year for all the staff as well as the parents, students, Board members and ISG administrators who have also been involved.

As this is the end of the school year it is an ideal opportunity to recognize the staff for maintaining a tremendous commitment to an exciting but exhausting process. It is an appropriate moment to thank the large number of stakeholders who volunteered to represent the school community. Their presence on various committees has ensured that all voices were heard as the school moves ever closer to the CIS Team Visit in November 2008.

When the school year begins again in August 2008 the school has just one term of work remaining before the CIS team visits the school from 20 – 26 November. Ros Power, as Chair of the Self Study Steering Committee, has worked tirelessly to drive the process within the school. Although it is always difficult to highlight just one person I am sure the staff of the school will join with me in recognising the pivotal role that she has played.

John Chapman

International Award for Young People: Service Project

Students at DBGS are fortunate to be able to participate in this Award which comprises three elements namely, Skills, Sports and Service.

Over the past few years the Dhahran Campus Nursery has accepted students who wish to do service time for their Award in an early childhood environment.

This year six lively and enthusiastic students, Sara, Amy, Sanjana, Dania, Daanyaal and Fras, gave an hour of their time each week to Nursery service. They cleaned inside, outside, here and there; assisted with kitchen and eating duties as well as kicked balls, played cars, dug holes, drew pictures, pushed prams, made flowers, prepared for parties, played dragons and the list goes on!

We wish them well in their ventures and trust that they learnt something positive from their time with us! Thank you.

Anne Armstrong: Nursery Manager



Sanjana, Kaitlyn and Aaliyah



Buddy Links

Mrs Evan's English Group (Year 5) and Mrs Chapman's class (Year 2) came together in April to share some of their writing. These pictures cannot show how lovely the older children are with the younger pupils. Year 5 were patient and caring as they shared their stories with the younger children.

Year 2 really enjoyed hearing the stories that were written especially for them. In turn Year 5 were a wonderful audience when Year 2 read their stories to them.



Science and Maths Fun Day

This event was organised by Mrs Chambers, Mrs Little, Mr Green and Mr Stott. Year 9 prepared scientific experiments and mathematical challenges before teaching them to the younger pupils in KS2. Year 9 were great teachers and much fun was had by all !



Standing Notices

Office Contacts

A reminder that the school office is open daily from Saturday to Wednesday from 07.30—15.30. The main office number is 330 0555. Please dial any of the following extensions when prompted: 2003/2007/2009. Fax messages may be sent to 330 0555 Ext. 2037. Should any of your contact details change please contact Mrs Perry on extension 2003.

Emails should be sent to the usual address of: brparents@isgdh.org

Web Site: www.dhahranbritish.com

Substitute Teachers

If you hear of qualified teachers moving into the area the school would like to know. It is difficult enough in the UK to find sufficient numbers of substitute teachers; in Saudi Arabia, schools have always had considerable difficulties. We are fortunate enough to have a small pool of teachers that we use to cover classes but they are not always in Kingdom throughout the year. If you hear of qualified teachers arriving on your compound please put them in touch with the school office (see contact numbers above).

KEY DATES FOR 2008 - 09

Start of School Year for Teachers:	August 23
Start of School Year for Pupils (Reception - Year 11):	August 30
Start of School Year for Pre Reception:	September 1st
Saudi National Day/Eid Al Fitr Holiday:	September 23 - October 1
Winter Break/Eid Al Adha:	December 6 - 31
Spring Break:	April 4 - 15
End of School Year for Students:	June 30th 2009

*** Please note that the first day of the school year, Saturday 30th August, is for all students apart from Pre Reception. Pre Reception will have a split start on Sunday 31st and Monday September 1st. Pre Reception parents will be contacted by the office in August to advise.**

Mission

Our mission is to provide a high quality, child centred education which will equip students with the skills needed for life-long learning. The school follows the British National Curriculum and delivers an externally assessed (I)GCSE programme.

Beliefs

A chievement:	Foster self-esteem, confidence and high achievement
C hallenge:	Provide a challenging, stimulating education
T olerance:	Establish an environment of co-operation, tolerance and mutual respect
I ndividualism:	Recognise the unique needs of the individual whilst promoting international and intercultural understanding
V ision:	Provide a safe space for the development of life-long learning
E quality:	Celebrate the values of equal opportunities, racial harmony and a positive school climate