

GRAMMAR School NEWS



March 2008

New Headteacher for DBGS!



Meet the new Headteacher of DBGS - Mr Ian Jones. He is pictured here with his wife, Judith, and their three children Matthew, Felicity and Oliver. Please see inside for details.



What is the story here (or hair)?



Interior of the Recently Completed South Gym



Say Goodbye to the Quonset Hut!



Another New Member of Staff. Mr Charles Webster will be taking over the DT Programme in August 2008.



Pictured above is a long jump pit under construction. The pictures on the left are from the highly enjoyable sports days organised recently by the PE department.

This Month's News

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Welcome to Mr Jones and Family!

DBGS Headteacher Appointment

Dear Parents,

I am delighted to announce that the International Schools Group has been successful in appointing a Headteacher for the Dhahran British Grammar School effective from 1st August 2008.

I have included a photograph on the front page of Mr Ian Jones, his wife, Judith and their three children, Matthew, Felicity and Oliver. Mrs Jones will teach in Key Stage 2. It is hoped that Mr Jones will be visiting Saudi before the end of the school year so that he can tour the school and the Dhahran Campus.

Please see below a notice from Mrs Hudson, Superintendent of the International Schools Group.

John Chapman
Headteacher

Dear Parents,

I am delighted to be able to inform you that a Headteacher has been appointed for the Dhahran British Grammar School, effective August 2008.

Mr. Ian Jones is currently the Headteacher of the Primary School at The Sultan's School, Muscat, Oman. Ian has three years of experience as a Deputy Headteacher and 12 years of experience as a Headteacher; eight years in the UK and four years in Oman.

Ian has a Bachelor of Education Honours degree from Bangor University, a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Education, and a Certificate in the Management of Continuous School Improvement.

Ian will be accompanied by his wife, Judith, an experienced early years and KS2 teacher. Judith is also currently teaching at The Sultan's School in Muscat and will teach in Key Stage 2 at DBGS in the next school year. Ian and Judith have three children; Matthew (9 years old) and twins Oliver and Felicity (8 years) who will attend DBGS.

The Sultan's school is a 1,000 student school and offers IGCSE leading to IB in Years 12 and 13. As such Ian has experience of operating across the three phases of early years, KS2 and senior school in a large through-school with an excellent academic record.

The process of appointing a Headteacher has involved advertising with the TES as well as interviewing candidates locally and at job fairs in several countries.

I am pleased that ISG has been able to find such a well-qualified, well-recommended and experienced Headteacher to lead the school into its next phase of development. Additionally, we are arranging for Ian to visit the school in the near future when he can be introduced to the staff, the school, and the Dhahran Campus.

Respectfully,

Norma Hudson
Superintendent ISG

Save the Children

In November all children from Pre Reception to Year 11 took part in the school's annual Walkathon.

At the time we announced in the monthly newsletter that we had raised the magnificent total of £3,250. Over the years we have supported Save the Children on other occasions so that DBGS children could help children in need worldwide. In recognition of the school's fund-raising efforts I would like to share a

letter that I received from Save the Children on 20th February 2008.

Dear Mr Chapman,

Thank you so much for your exceptional donation of £3,250. Please convey our warmest thanks to all the parents, teachers and pupils that helped to raise this generous gift. We really appreciate your support, through which we continue to help some of the world's most vulnerable children.

In addition, we also wanted to express our very special thanks for the number of donations that your school has made over several years. These have exceeded £10,000 – a fantastic amount which will help to make real and lasting change in the lives of the children we support. Your continued support is particularly appreciated and I am pleased to enclose a certificate and 'thank you' DVD which details some of our programme work.

*I would also like to take this opportunity to tell you about one of Save the Children's latest campaigns – **'Rewrite the Future'**. More than 39 million children around the world are denied school because they live in countries affected by conflict. This 5-year global campaign is aimed at getting 3 million children affected by conflict into school for the first time and to improve the quality of education for an additional 5 million. The campaign has been running for a year; much progress has been made but there's still a long way to go.*

*Enclosed is an information pack and a DVD of the progress that has been made so far which illustrates the impact that support such as yours provides to the children that we are able to reach. In addition to the materials that I have enclosed you can also gain up to date information by logging on to **www.savethechildren.org.uk/rewritethefuture***

Once again we thank you for your continued and valuable support, which makes the work we do possible.

*Best wishes,
Emily Maskell
Schools Development Manager*

Well done to all our children, parents and teachers for making a difference to the lives of many children in need worldwide.

The DVDs mentioned in the letter above will be made available for staff to use in their classrooms. The certificate celebrating the £3,250 raised has been framed and is now displayed proudly in the corridor of E-Building.

Kind regards,
John Chapman

More on a Charitable Theme

The front page of the newsletter features three very bald members of staff. Mr Wade, Mr Green and Mr Hardcastle put their hair on the line - all in the aid of a good cause. Over SR 21,000 was raised for the Ronald McDonald House charity that provides a home away from home for families of seriously sick children. The children enjoyed the spectacle of seeing three members of staff losing their hair in a good cause!

Say Goodbye to the Quonset Hut!

If you are wondering what a Quonset Hut it is that strange-looking 'temporary' building next to Mrs Soane's music room.

The Quonset Hut was the original school for the campus in the early 60s and is a remnant of a time before purpose-built facilities on the campus. It is currently being demolished to make way for a new 450 seater Dining Hall that is due to be built once the campus is clear of students over the summer. The new dining hall will have a dedicated kitchen and preparation areas so that a greater range of foods may be prepared and cooked on campus.

The three campus Principals have traditionally worked closely with each other to plan large projects for the benefit of all our students. We are delighted that the large auditorium can be turned back full-time to a rehearsal and performance centre.

The South Gym is now finished and in daily use. The Long Jump pit, pictured on the front page, is still under construction. When it is finished it will provide yet another excellent facility for the three Dhahran campus schools.

Staffing

Design Technology Teacher:

Pictured on the front page is Mr Charles Webster. Mr Webster will be taking over the role as the school's Design Technology teacher from August 2008.

Mr Barnett is leaving the school after two years and we thank him for the time and effort that he has invested in developing the DT facility and programme.

Mr Barnett has spent considerable time in reviewing the DT facility and will leave the programme stronger as a result of his planning and efforts.

Mr Webster is currently teaching Design Technology in Brunei at the Jerudong International School.

We look forward to welcoming Mr Webster to the school and to Saudi Arabia.

Reception Class Addition:

The school is responding to considerable demand for school places in the early years by adding a third Reception Class as from August 2008.

It is pleasing to see so many families arriving in Saudi with young children. Our numbers are currently 414 and we are still registering new children as they arrive in Kingdom.

Sports Days

Recently we had the school's annual sports days. We began with Foundation and Key Stage 1 on Sunday 24th February. Key Stage 2 followed on Monday 25th and Key Stages 3 & 4 on Tuesday 26th.

It has been a tradition over many years to invite the equivalent grades from the Dhahran Elementary Middle School. This year was an exception as the campus schools are now too large to be able to compete in the same events.

The pictures on the front page are only a taste of the three days of activities as comprehensive galleries have been posted, as per usual, on the school's web site: www.dhahranbritish.com

Many thanks to the school's PE department of Ian Darlington, Sarah Wade and Chris Wade. These events take a great deal of

organization and we thank our PE staff for their hard work and effort in producing three days of competition carried out in exemplary spirit.

Our thanks, also, to the many parents who were bribed, bullied and cajoled into taking part in a number of fun races. The parent events may have been designed as fun activities, but the expressions of latent competitive instincts were writ large on the faces of our parent competitors. Shall we let our children win? Absolutely not!!!!

Please note that the school took no responsibility for those unfamiliar aches and pains that some parents may have experienced the next morning after plunging themselves into (for some) unaccustomed athletic exertions.

You helped to make the day more memorable for our pupils by taking part. Thank you for being good sports!

Serco

Student Administration System

Recently, all members of staff spent time after school taking part in an in-service training session learning the basics of a student administrative system purchased for all seven ISG schools and currently being trialled in DBGS.

For many years the seven ISG schools have

used a variety of systems to collate data from admissions to finance. This has been hugely inefficient as it meant that core information entered at each school was then transferred manually to Central Office or to other schools and departments requiring information.

The SERCO system is a UK software system and adapted for international schools with a number of core modules. As it is a central system it means that core data only has to be entered once for it to migrate across the system. For the first time schools will be able to compile detailed statistics on a range of everyday school operations and for this information to be seen within the Central Office on the Dhahran Campus.

Functions such as daily class registration are now being carried out electronically and it will also eventually help to track additional events such as after school activities. The system will enable timetabling (scheduling) to be carried out as well as many other core operations.

School reports will also be hosted on the system. At present our reporting system is electronic and is hosted on the school server but all names and other details have to be entered manually for each report. The new system should speed this process enormously.

It will take at least two years for some aspects of the system to be developed throughout all seven schools and Central Office and we look forward to keeping you posted as the system becomes fully implemented.

KEY DATES FOR TERM 3

Term 3 Begins for all Pupils:

April 12th

Pre-Reception/Reception Open Morning for New Parents: April 16th

Spring Fair: April 20th

Fruit and Vegetable Week (Foundation to KS2): April 26th

Study Leave Begins for Year 11: April 29th

IGCSE Written Exams Start: May 1st

Foundation and Key Stage 1 Open Morning: Week beginning May 10th

Yr 9 National Tests (subject to test paper arrival): May 18th – May 21st

Yr 7 – 10 Exams (Provisional Dates): May 24th – May 28th

Yr 6 National Tests (subject to test paper arrival): May 27th – June 2nd

Year 10 Work Experience: June 7th – June 11th

Yr 11 Presentation / KS3 & 4 Prize Giving: June 15th

End of Year Reports to Parents: June 18th

End of School Year for Students:

June 25th

CIS Accreditation Process

The school has now been advised of the dates of the CIS Team Visit: November 20 - 26, 2008 This is the final part of the of the school's self-evaluation process and where a group of trained administrators and teachers from a range of international schools carry out a rigorous examination of the school in all its areas of operations.

As a quick recap on previous newsletters this is what we have achieved to date:

Philosophy & Objectives: a dedicated committee consisting of parents, students, teachers, administration and board members reviewed the school's philosophy & objectives. They were largely endorsed with just a few amendments that were immediately incorporated into the school's published Mission and Beliefs. The revised Mission and Beliefs were reprinted and posted throughout the school as well as appearing on the school's web site and on the back page of each newsletter.

Part 1 Committee:

The Part 1 Committee had the task of reviewing data received from the school's electronic on-line survey carried out in June 2008. Their report produced recommendations on each of the 7 main areas for review under the self-evaluation process and the basis for the other committees to use to investigate further.

Curriculum:

Since December 2007 the teaching staff has been involved with a thorough review of the school's curriculum in each subject area.

The first stage was to review the curriculum in place horizontally (i.e. across each phase of the school Foundation & Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stages 3 & 4). This has taken many weeks and has involved the teachers in three Thursday work-days, weekly meetings as well as several after school twilight sessions.

This process has now been completed and each subject area now has to be reviewed vertically i.e. from Foundation through to

Key Stage 4. This will demonstrate the linear progression of the curriculum in each subject and will highlight the relative strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum that we have in place.

Although the process is extremely time-consuming it is very valuable. We are delighted when it demonstrates considerable strengths but even more pleased when it shows where and how we can improve.

Now that the curriculum process is achieving excellent process we will shortly be starting other committees. Some of these will also involve input from board, parent and central administration representatives.

Art Show

Our very own Art teacher, Mrs Diane Little, was recently invited to judge the Dhahran Art Group Annual Art Show at Aramco on March 5th, 6th and 7th.

There were three judges for this fair, judging 78 exhibitors in 27 categories. Surprisingly, oil painting is gaining in popularity within the Art Group and so this was the largest category.

The judging was done just before opening night, allowing the winning pictures to be displayed as such. There was a very large crowd for opening night and steady crowds for the remaining two days. Thanks go to Helen Al Amari and Rubina Malik for the organisation of the show and to many members for helping with all the details.

Mrs. Little is pictured below (3rd from left) with the other judges, Ibrahim and Wahab, organisers Rubina and Helen, and Layne Raybar, an artist.



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).

Parent Volunteer Group

This is the busiest time of year for the DBGS Parent Volunteer Group with preparations well underway for the Spring Fair 2008. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year's Fair which will be held on Sunday 20th April from 10.00am to 1.30pm. If you have time during the holiday please sort out a few things to donate to the stalls ie. toys, books, DVDs, bric-a-brac or anything that we could include in hampers or auction baskets. We also need plenty of willing volunteers on the day (and lots of cakes) to make this a wonderful event for the whole family. Every riyal that we make will go towards enhancing the education environment at DBGS, with a few end of term/year treats and graduation presentations too. If you would like to help or have any queries about the Spring Fair please e-mail dbgsspringfair@gmail.com

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