

GRAMMAR School NEWS

September 2007



WELCOME TO THE 2007 - 08 SCHOOL YEAR!

CONGRATULATIONS!



Join with us in congratulating Mr and Mrs Wade on the birth of their second child, Bethany Hope. Bethany was born this week on Sunday 2nd September weighing in at a healthy 2.83 kilos (6lb 2oz).

Soon it will be the turn of Mr and Mrs Sohail as they are due to have an addition to the family any day now. Mrs Wade and Mrs Sohail will be returning to the school after a period of maternity leave.

NEW STAFF

There are some new faces pictured at the top of the page of recently arrived sponsored staff members.

Mrs Green is the school's new Learning Support teacher and will initially be working across Key Stages 1 & 2. Mr Green is teaching science alongside Mr Stott in Key Stages 3 & 4.

Mr and Mrs Green have recently moved from teaching in New Mexico so they find the heat familiar if not the current level of humidity!



Mrs Soane



Mr and Mrs Green



Mrs Sheridan

Mrs Soane is teaching the music programme from Foundation to Key Stage 4 and Mrs Sheridan is teaching English literature and language in Key Stages 3 & 4. Mrs Soane and Mrs Sheridan were teaching in the UK before moving to Saudi. Both seem to be enjoying the challenge of the many shopping malls in the locality! I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new sponsored teachers.

NEW PE FACILITIES



A fourth gymnasium facility is currently being completed for whole campus use and will be ready by the end of October.

NEW COMPUTER ROOM

A fourth computer suite for KS3 & 4 was completed over the summer and new PCs are on order. This will be an excellent boost to the senior school's ICT programme.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY



The Design Technology Centre has been extensively remodelled over the summer. An electronics room has been added as well as an area specifically for power tools for the older students. A great facility has become even better!

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WELCOME TO THE 2007 - 2008 SCHOOL YEAR

A very seasonal 'warm and humid welcome' to all new and returning families at the start of the 2007 - 08 school year!

The year begins with a very healthy registration of 393 pupils with 27 pending. I anticipate that the school will achieve a comfortable capacity of around 425 this year, a very welcome change to the situation three years ago when many international schools in Saudi suffered a dramatic fall in numbers due to the prevailing security situation.

This newsletter will bring you up to date with an outline of each key stage, various campus improvements instigated over the summer as well as to introduce new members of staff to the school community. A list of general calendar dates for the school year is published on the back page to provide an overview of key events. Additional dates will be added as we go through the school year.

Returning parents will remember that the school has embarked on an external accreditation process through the Council of International Schools. In the last two weeks of the summer term the school invited parents, students from Year 7 and above, teachers and members of the Board of Trustees to participate in an on-line electronic survey. The results of the survey have just been reported and the school will be using the information gathered to focus on areas of improvement. This process will very much require the involvement of the school community as we seek input. At times parents will be invited, along with students, Board members and staff, to participate in specific areas of self-review. All organisations need external scrutiny in order to develop and we look forward to a year of intensive work that will ultimately lead to a CIS team visit in November 2008 where the school will be scrutinised in all areas of its operations.

On the front page you will have seen photographs of improvements made to specific parts of the school and campus. The addition of a fourth gymnasium will further improve the already extensive range of PE facilities that we have at our disposal. The Design Technology Centre has had extensive remodelling and will enable Mr Barnett to add additional areas of experience within the DT programme. The fourth computer suite is designed to accommodate 24 new high-spec PCs. When this room is operational teachers throughout the school will be able to book additional technology time as they incorporate ICT skills across the curriculum.

In my time within the school I have participated in two separate initiatives to build purpose-built facilities for the British school. Both efforts were prevented from going ahead due to specific events and incidents that occurred within Saudi Arabia. I am delighted to be able to announce that the Board of Trustees recognises that the time is right to support a major facilities overhaul for the British school. I look forward to being able to report on the progress of plans to redevelop buildings for DBGS as well as a continued improvement in the range of campus facilities that will benefit all three schools on the Dhahran Campus.

A reminder that the school uses the **Latest News** section of the school web site to announce new initiatives and to provide reminders of up and coming school events. The school's web site address is: www.dhahranbritish.com. You will find photo galleries appearing on the web site as an ongoing record of your children participating in a wide variety of activities and events over the year. We look forward to meeting with you at the wide variety of school events that we have planned for the coming year.

Yours sincerely,

John Chapman
Headteacher

FOUNDATION AND KEY STAGE 1

A warm welcome to all Foundation and Key Stage One parents. After spending three days preparing the classrooms in F-building it was lovely to see the children arrive and meet their new teachers and assistants. We are looking forward to a busy, exciting year that will prove memorable, enjoyable and educationally rewarding for all the children and staff.

Many of the children from pre-reception have entered our reception classes and their familiarity with the corridor is helping them to settle easily into routines. They are feeling very grown up in their school uniforms and look very smart. All the classes have welcomed new children to the school and I would also like to welcome our new parents.

Good communication between home and school is important for children to make the best of the educational opportunities available. None of us live within walking distance of school so we really miss the opportunity to see parents regularly when they are bringing their children to school each day, as happens in many of our home countries. We will do our best to keep you informed about what is happening at school as we believe that children learn best when there is good communication between parents and teachers. Please contact us if there is anything we need to know about your child and we will contact you if necessary. A Back to School afternoon will take place shortly, when you will have an opportunity to meet your child's teacher, visit the classrooms in F-Building and learn about class and school routines - more details coming soon. In addition to parent teacher conferences we look forward to seeing you throughout the year as we will invite you into school for events such as assemblies, International Day, Open Mornings and Book Week.

Sue Chapman
Foundation & Key Stage 1 Coordinator

KEY STAGE TWO

I hope that all our families in Key Stage 2 had a very enjoyable summer. We are looking forward to an exciting year. I would like to take this opportunity to say congratulations and well done to the children from our recently departed Year 6 on the achievement of such fantastic SAT results in their end of year KEY STAGE 2 tests. The results put our school within the top 5 % of schools in the UK. Our current Year 6 has also

started in an excellent fashion, settling into school routines really quickly and efficiently. I am sure we will be providing the same good news next year.

I had some excellent feedback from pupils, parents and staff about our change to the homework policy last year. Thank you to all the people who found the time to speak to me. All opinions and thoughts only help us to make the Key Stage a better learning environment for the children, which is the core of all our thoughts at DBGS.

Just a reminder that the children will be given homework on Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. There will be no homework at weekends as we want this to be for rest and family time so that the children come back into school refreshed. However if children continually forget homework they will be given work to do at weekends.

We are trying some new ideas this year. All ideas in the key stage are trialled before being set as school policy. We are looking at the following:

- Rather than an International Day we are looking at International Week in which the children will be able to share their knowledge of a country with the rest of the class. We will be sampling foods, looking at national dress, language and geographical aspects. International Week will conclude with our usual parade.
- Setting for maths and English will only take place in Years 5 and 6 initially. In years 3 & 4 we want to give the children the opportunity to settle prior to making decisions on setting.
- As well as our merit system we will be adopting a weekly award for the pupil of the week in each class. The winner of the weekly award will be announced in our Sunday assembly and the lucky children will be able to wear their own clothes on the following day. Don't be alarmed if your child gets up in their football kit on a Monday morning for school. There has not been a change to the school uniform policy!
- Our school council for Key Stage 2 will be re-elected over the next few weeks. There has already been a lot of interest from the children to stand and represent their fellow classmates. I would like to say a big thank you to the children who

(KS2 Continued)

were on the school council last year as they did a fantastic job.

As you can see we have a very busy year ahead of us. All the staff are looking forward to meeting parents at the 'Back to School Days' in the near future. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason.

Regards,
David Bolton
Key Stage 2 Coordinator

KEY STAGES 3 & 4

We have an exciting year ahead in KS3 & 4, with a range of after school activities, tournaments and field trips. The first major venture is the upcoming trip to Amsterdam and Berlin. Thirty eager students will be accompanying Mr Snieder, Mrs Prudden and Mr Stott on an action packed trip to the Netherlands and Germany.

In the spring our expedition team will be attempting Everest Base Camp in Nepal. We are also planning an International Award expedition which, like last year, will probably take place in Oman.

The senior school continues to grow in size, and the education we provide our pupils becomes stronger every year. Our (I)GCSE students gained the best results in the school's history in 2006-7, with everybody achieving at least 5 good passes, with more A and A* grades than any other grade.

For the first time ever Key Stage 4 has reached the magical number of 50 students. Year 10 is completely full and we have a waiting list for places. DBGS welcomes students who have recently transferred from Bisak as well as students who have joined the school from elsewhere in the region, UK and further afield.

Year 6, with a fantastic set of SATS results, has moved up to join KS3 and some familiar faces have returned to DBGS after several years away. Whilst we have lost some teachers new ones have joined us and we hope they enjoy working with all the students in KS3/4.

New TVs and DVDs (courtesy of the Parent Volunteer Group) have been installed in various rooms. Data logging equipment for all those experiments Mr Stott has been itching to try over the past year has already arrived. A massive order of new books and equipment will be crossing the border from Bahrain soon, though I suspect it is the teachers rather than the students who are looking forward to the delivery of new textbooks the most !

John Power: Deputy Headteacher
Nick Hardcastle: Senior School Coordinator

HAVE YOU LOST...?

If you left two newly-purchased polo tops at the school gate the other day we have them safe and sound in the school office. One shirt is a size 6 and the other is a size 12. Please call the school office on 330 0555 # 2003 if you believe that they belong to you.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

If you hear of qualified teachers moving in to the area the school would like to know. It is difficult enough in the UK to find sufficient substitute teachers but 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 moving on to your compound please put them in touch with Fiona Duvall in the school office (see contact numbers below).

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.

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

Web Site: www.dhahranbritish.com

GENERAL CALENDAR DATES 2007 – 2008

Autumn term begins	August 28 th
Yr 3 & 4 Back to School Afternoon	September 11 th
Yr 5 & 6 Back to School Afternoon	September 12 th
KS1 and Foundation Stage Back to School Afternoon	September 17 th
Amsterdam/Berlin trip	September 28 th to October 7 th
Year 10 Parent Teacher Conferences	October 7 th
Half Term	October 13th – October 17th
Year 11 Parent Teacher Conferences	October 21 st
KS1, 2 & 3 Parent Teacher Conferences	October 25 th *
Individual school photographs (to be confirmed)	October 29 th - 30 th
International Week	November 3 rd – 7 th
KS1 Open Morning	Week beginning 17 th November
Oman Expedition	November 20 th -23 rd
Walkathon	November 21 st
KS2 Production (dates to be confirmed)	Nov 27 th & 28 th
Tentative Concert Dates	December 3 rd – 5 th
Reports to parents (Yrs Reception – 9)	December 13 th
Holiday	December 18th - January 6th
Yr 11 mocks	January 8 th – January 14 th
KS4 reports to parents	January 23 rd
Year 11 Parent Teacher Conferences	January 27 th
Book week	February 2 nd – February 6 th
100 th day of school	Week beginning February 9 th
Year 10 Parent Teacher Conferences	February 10 th
Final entries for IGCSE	February 14 th
Year 9 Options Afternoon	February 17 th
Sports days	February 24 th - 26 th
KS1 Production	March 3 rd & 4 th
KS2 maths and reading target setting for term 3	March 8 th – 12 th
KS1, 2, 3 Parent Teacher Conferences	March 13 th *
Nepal trip	March 13 th – March 30 th
Holiday	March 22nd - April 9th
Open Morning: New Children in Pre-Reception & Reception	April 16 th
Spring Fair	April 20 th
Fruit and Vegetable Week (Foundation to KS2)	Week beginning 26 th April
IGCSE Written Exams Start	May 1 st
Study Leave Begins for Year 11	May 1 st
Foundation and Key Stage 1 Open Morning	Week beginning May 10 th
Yr 9 National Tests (dates subject to test paper arrival)	May 18 th – May 21 st
Yr 7 – 10 Exams Provisional	May 24 th – May 28 th
Yr 6 National Tests (dates subject to test paper arrival)	May 27 th – June 2 nd
Year 10 Work Experience	June 7 th – June 11 th
Yr 11 presentation / KS3 & 4 prizegiving	June 15 th
Reports to parents	June 18 th
End of School Year for Students	June 25th