



The Cooper School, Bicester

Where 'Learning Matters'



Science

Issue No. 1

December 2005

FROM THE HEADTEACHER

It is natural, as we approach the end of a year, to reflect on all that has happened in the past twelve months and I am no exception to this! From my own personal point of view 2005 has been an exceptionally fulfilling year. In January the school that I was then Deputy Head of in Buckinghamshire had a full OFSTED inspection and the resulting report was extremely positive of the significant improvement that the school had undertaken. This signified to me that my job there was done and it was time to seek new professional challenges. To that end I was therefore delighted to secure the position of Headteacher at The Cooper School. Whilst it is true that the school through its Governing Body and Local Educational Authority chooses the Headteacher, the Headteacher also chooses the school and that is certainly correct in my case. During the interview process I was impressed by the courteousness and friendliness of the students and staff that I met and the atmosphere around the site and I looked forward to working with all the different stakeholders in the school. My personal philosophy of education is simple: the passionate belief that each and every student has the right to learn and achieve to his/her maximum potential. High quality education provides for students of all abilities to achieve and become ethically informed citizens, where approaches to learning are flexible so that students are capable of learning constantly and where the focus is

maintained on teaching and learning and best practice. My role therefore is to raise standards of achievement of all students regardless of ability; to raise levels of aspiration and actively seek to prepare students for the world of the 21st Century; to raise the reputation of Cooper School both locally, regionally and nationally.

The designation of the school as a Specialist Science College clearly demonstrates that this is a school with ambition, which has high expectations. Much work both within the school and the local community has already started this term and we look forward to improved resources arising out of the refurbishment of many of the science laboratories.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenges and opportunities that have occurred this term. I would like to finish by thanking the students and staff (teaching and non-teaching) who have welcomed me to Bicester and to Cooper School and to you, as parents, for supporting myself and my colleagues in the work that we do to support the learning of our young people. I wish you a restful festive season and a prosperous New Year.

Ben Baxter



READING WITH PUPILS AT LAUNTON

LINKING WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

At The Cooper School we are trying to strengthen our links with primary schools in many ways. We have a Gifted & Talented day when we invite primary school pupils in for a taster day. This year we arranged Japanese lessons, Computer work and some Martial Arts lessons. The latter was very popular as the pupils had the chance to whack a teacher with a big bamboo pole!

We have also visited Finmere School for their Science day and Launton School for their Reading Week. Specialist Science Status means that we will be using this as a focus for links with our feeder primaries, both in sharing resources (including scientific equipment) and expertise through our Science teachers and technicians.

YEAR 5 PUPILS AT THE END OF THEIR VISIT



SCIENCE DAY AT FINMERE

SURVEYING PARENT AND STUDENT OPINION

Thank you to the parents and students who recently completed this survey. The School is very keen to seek the views and enlist the support of parents and students in raising achievements. It was therefore decided to use the very highly rated parent and student survey devised by the Centre for Successful Schools at Keele University in order both to seek parental and student perspectives on priorities for school improvement and to determine how we can improve information to and communications with parents.

The study required a random sample of 25% of our parents and students to fill in a survey on all aspects of school life. As an objective outside agency Keele University will analyse the responses to our survey and provide us with a report on and an analysis of these findings with parents and students, alongside any actions we will be taking in response to them.

Alongside this method of canvassing student opinion, we have also asked The National Children's Bureau (a charity keen on promoting the student voice) to conduct interviews with students about their experience of school life and how we can best help them improve their achievement. Again, a representative sample of students will be interviewed by experts from the Bureau and they will draw up a report based on their findings which we will use with the Keele survey results to help plan for school improvement for the benefit of all our students.

P Wainman

MR HISCOCK GOES TO THE TOP OF THE CLASS !!

Assistant Headteacher at Cooper School, Bicester, Rob Hiscock, has won the 'Best in Oxfordshire 2005' award for Top Teacher in a competition run by FoxFM in association with Oxford Tube.

On winning his award Mr Hiscock said, 'I am humbled to have won this award. I was in a meeting when the result was announced and was surprised when my fellow teachers told me. At first I thought it was a wind but once I realised it wasn't I was shocked. It certainly put a shine on the day, although I have had a lot of good natured ribbing from my colleagues. I try to make lessons an enjoyable and fun experience and that the students remember what they are being taught.'

Student Gareth Shearwood said on Fox FM, 'Mr Hiscock can be really funny but also strict. He has the respect of all the students and we learn a lot from him. I think he really deserved to win.'



FUNDRAISING FOR OTHERS



Over the last twelve months the staff and students have raised around £10,000 for various good causes. In January £4,000 was raised for the Tsunami Appeal following

the Boxing Day disaster, by holding a concert. £300 was raised by students for the charity Childline, whilst a further £600 was raised on 'Jeans for Genes' day.



The magnificent sum of £3,578.90 was raised for Cancer Research by holding cake sales and a fun run. November saw fancy dress and dressing down day as we raised £620.96 for Children In Need.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

As part of Oxfordshire County Council's Better Way To School transport policy we have recently constructed a School Transport Plan.

After undertaking comprehensive surveys of students and visitors we completed our analysis and started to compile our plan. The student survey told us that 52% of our students walk to school, 12% use cycles, 12% use School busses and 24% travel by car (with half of that 24% car sharing). Interestingly when asked how they WOULD LIKE to travel to school 19% said cycle, pointing us to an immediate improvement opportunity.

However we do need to upgrade our existing cycle sheds which many of you will know are in a sorry state! We are looking to remove the existing semi-derelict cycle shed and replace it with a covered, secure cycle shed, additionally we are looking to provide a new cycle shed at the other end of the coach park to prevent those students coming onto site by cycle via the back gate having to ride across the coach park to put their bikes away. To further reduce the risk of accidents we are looking to educate our students on the benefits of cycle safety. This will include a presentation at assembly by our Community Police Officer, possible provision of cycle safety training if there is a demand, monitoring of cyclist behaviour on site and monitoring usage of cycle safety helmets. As parents you can help by encouraging your child to wear a cycle safety helmet when riding a bike.

We are also looking at ways of improving the management of traffic on site. Many parents coming into school turn left at the gates and drop their passengers off outside the old reception, even though there are double yellow lines laid. We would ask all cars to turn right at the gates and drop off their passengers in the large car park there please.

Our transport plan has been approved by the County Council and we have been given a further £500 for being the first school to have completed a plan this year.

YEAR 8 VISIT TO THE MANDIR – HINDU TEMPLE, NEASDON, NORTH LONDON

The Year 8s went on a visit to the Hindu temple; the Hindus call their temple a Mandir.

My group started off in the gift shop. The things you could buy were things such as little wooden ornament elephants, Yogi-spiritual incenses, beauty Suhag, which are red spots that you put on your forehead once you have got married. You could also buy fancy Suhags, in shapes of snakes and flowers.

After the trip to the gift shop, we went upstairs to view a Hindu ceremony. In the background of silence, there was some lovely music. The Hindus opened a couple of doors, inside the doors were some beautifully dressed Murtis (images of Gods). After a while of sitting down, we eventually stood up and walked around, in front of the Murtis and then onto a balcony made out of marble, with marble steps leading down into a garden.

We had lunch and then moved onto the exhibit. The writing told you information about Hindus and the Mandir itself. There were also sets of Hindu figures, with information on what the figure was representing. This information was needed to fill in a question sheet that the teacher guiding you had handed out.

The last thing we did at the Mandir was go to another room and meet up with all the other groups. We watched clips about the making of the Mandir and how Hindus used the Mandir.

On the way back to school we had more to talk about than on the way! Overall, the trip to the Hindu temple was well worthwhile. I certainly enjoyed it and would be pleased to go again.

Rebecca Gambrell (8.7)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Three year 11 students attended a conference on Issues of Life and Death at St. Andrew's Church, Oxford on October 29th, 2005. They attended lectures, participated in a drama workshop and wrote this report on their day.

During our R.E. GCSE course, we study *Medical Ethics*. This is where we look at Abortion, The Sanctity of life, Euthanasia and the religious views on these issues. We got invited with Ms Dee to a conference in Oxford to do with abortion and euthanasia. The first talk was about Abortion and we discussed whether or not it was right or wrong. Secondly we learnt all about the science behind genes. We listened to a presentation about genes in our body and what developments will happen in the future. We found out that monkeys have 98% of human genes in their body. Thirdly we participated in a drama workshop. This was a lot of fun and made us think about the effects that these things have on people. At the end of the conference we had a presentation and talk on suicide and euthanasia and what it is really about. Overall we think the trip was good fun and we learnt a lot about medical ethics which will help us in our GCSE exams.

**Laura, Stacey and Elektra
Year 11**

NEW BUS TIMETABLE

A revised School Bus Timetable was introduced from 10th December. All students who travel to and from school on buses have been handed a copy of the new timetable.

DRAMA

Cooper School drama department were delighted to play host to Bardwell School's production of 'Macbeth'. The Year 10 drama students were spellbound by the concentration and theatricality of the Bardwell students' piece. They combined clever and evocative sound effects; simple costume and props to great effect. We are looking forward to working with them on a joint piece in the future. Thank you to Louisa Hook and Steve Simms for organizing it for us.

As you will have no doubt realized, the school production this year is to be 'Romeo and Juliet' and what a hard task we had in casting it. We had six excellent Juliets to choose from and as many Romeos. We are very pleased with our final cast list and we know that we will have a production to be proud of. We are really fortunate to have such a depth of talent to choose from.

Drama club is in full swing as well. All are welcome on Thursdays 3:45-5:00pm in the Lecture Theatre.

We are off to see 'The Snow Queen' on Friday 9th December. Thank you for your support as always—see you at a future production!

Mrs Ramsey

LIVING WITH TEENAGERS

The Cooper Parent Support Group invite
Parents/Carers

To share your concerns in a series of 6 informal
group meetings

When: Monday evenings
(commencing 9 January 2006)
Venue: The Cooper School (Room PE5)
Time: 7.15pm - 9.15pm

What's in it for you?
Support Fun Confidence Boosting
Top Tips

Interested? Give it a go - what have you got to lose?

I would be like to participate in the Parent
Support Group meetings to be held at Cooper
School, commencing 9 January 2006

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel:

DIARY DATES

ACADEMIC YEAR 2005-2006

TERM 2

Tuesday 1 November-Friday 16 December 2005 (12.30 finish)

Christmas Holiday:

Monday 19 December 2005-Monday 2 January 2006
Inclusive

TERM 3

INSET Day: Tuesday 3 January 2006

Wednesday 4 January-Friday 10 February 2006

February Holiday:

Monday 13 February-Friday 17 February 2006 inclusive

TERM 4

Monday 20 February-Thursday 30 March 2006

INSET Day: Friday 31 March 2006

April Holiday:

Monday 3 April-Monday 17 April 2006 inclusive

TERM 5

Tuesday 18 April-Friday 26 May 2006

Bank Holiday: Monday 1 May 2006

Whitsun Holiday:

Monday 29 May-Friday 2 June 2006 inclusive

TERM 6

Monday 5 June-Friday 21 July 2006 (12.30 finish)

Cooper School Reunion and Prizegiving 2005

Cooper School celebrated the achievements of the class of 2005 when former students returned to receive their GCSE examination certificates. The Chair of Governors Mr David Dunne welcomed the former students who were entertained by one of their number, Shane Halterman, whose accomplished and dramatic performance on keyboards of his own composition, a club mix based on music by Bach, Elgar and Rob D, was warmly received by his former classmates. Mrs Maggie Burnand, their former Head of Year, then regaled her former charges with special memories of their school days. The Headteacher, Mr Ben Baxter, welcomed special guest, Mr Andy Sceeny, a founder member of the School and former Deputy Head who presented the certificates and prizes. In his speech to the former students Mr Sceeny reminded them that he too had left Cooper School in July 2005, but that it had taken him 32 years to their 5 years to do so. His reflections on the importance of lessons learned in school to life after school gave the audience plenty of food for thought.



PARENTS' EVENINGS YEAR 8

Thursday 19 January 2006

YEAR 11

Tuesday 31 January 2006

BICESTER CAREERS CONVENTION

Thursday 12 January 2006 at

The Cooper School

6.30—8.30pm

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Students in Year 8 have been filling shoe boxes with toiletries, stationery, sweets and other small gifts to be sent out to underprivileged children in Africa and Eastern Europe. Altogether we managed to fill over 500 - a fantastic achievement for our very first effort. Well done Year 8 and thanks to all the parents who helped.

K R Whiffen

WANT TO RETURN TO TEACHING BUT NEED TO :

- Be updated on educational developments?
- Boost your skills and confidence?

Apply for our highly rated 'Return to Teaching' Course due to start January 2006.

Training bursaries and childcare costs available to successful applicants.

For more details please call Beverley Munro on 01869 242121.

Congratulations!

The following students have passed ECDL Modules:

Jamie Hall 11.8

- Module 2 'Using and Managing Computer Files'
- Module 7 'Information and Communication'

James Gambrell 11.8

- Module 2 'Using and Managing Computer Files'
- Module 3 'Word'
- Module 7 'Information and Communication'

Stacey Lyons 11.2

- Module 7 'Information and Communication'

ECDL Club

Wednesdays Session 5
in S1 with Mrs Bedford
Catch up with your work,
sit Diagnostic & Certification tests

The new Cooper School website is currently under construction. The site address is <http://cooper.oxon.digitalbrain.com>.

SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

If you have any worries or concerns, our School Counsellor is happy to discuss them with you in private. A form is available from Reception if you would like to book an appointment..

PHOTOGRAPHS POLICY

The School has been very active on publicity recently and have published several photographs of students in the press. If you do not wish your child to appear in any press releases please inform the School in writing.

A SPECIAL APPEAL!

Do you like to make a difference?

Are you a parent of a student, a teacher or a member of the Governing Body?

If so, you could help us by volunteering to sit on the School Admission and Exclusion Appeal Panels. Your work will be very important to children, parents and schools in Oxfordshire.

Training will be provided and volunteers are reimbursed for their travel and subsistence along with any financial loss e.g. loss of earnings or child minding expenses.

Whether you could help us occasionally or for longer periods, we would like to hear from you.

We would particularly welcome enquiries from minority ethnic groups and teachers (past and present), who are under-represented on the panels at the moment.

If you are interested, please contact Sheila Sturgeon on 01865 810180 or email: Sheila.sturgeon@oxfordshire.gov.uk for further information.