



# Cooper News

Issue No. 42

March 2002

## From The Headteacher

### Celebrating the Good News!

It is really good to be able to start this newsletter with a number of pieces of good news that it is a pleasure to celebrate:

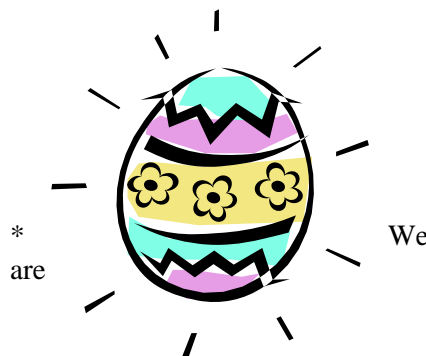
\* Our 'Rock Challenge' Team competed on March 7<sup>th</sup> at the Apollo in Oxford. They performed their 'Angels and Devils' routine, highlighting the difficulties and dangers of drink driving, wonderfully well. They had the vociferous and lively support of parents, staff and other pupils and their performance was such that they came away with the prize for the 'Most Dramatic Performance'. The contributions of all staff and students involved were greatly appreciated with particular thanks going to the inspiration and motivation provided by Ms Roddis, Ms Dalton and Mr Hutchinson.

\* Congratulations go to two of our students who have been selected for County Honours by representing Oxfordshire in Athletics: Joe Stachowiak and Neil Flynn deserve great praise for their efforts and high levels of commitment. Well done indeed.

\* Congratulations are in order for, and offered to, Mrs Linda Ellard our second-in-Science who has been nominated as one of the Country's 'Teachers of the Year' - again!

\* We undertook a joint project with BCC and Value Retail Ltd to generate a highly successful careers convention for the Year 9 pupils of both schools on Monday 11 March. This involved 35 groups of employers and some 400 students looking at the needs and demands of various types of career at this important time in their option choice process. Our thanks got out to Miranda Markham of Value Retail Ltd, particularly, for all the help and invaluable support given freely in getting this event off the ground.

\* The new buildings project for two new classrooms and a servery attached to the Sports and Performance Halls complex, that had been stalled and unlikely to take place, has been started! We were given little notice of it happening but have grasped the opportunity fully: we will have these facilities ready for the new academic year in September.



about to give the go-ahead for a massive injection of funds for the development of the school's ICT facilities. This will mean a complete redevelopment of our ICT facilities



and the extension from two outdated, to four newly equipped, ICT teaching suites. These will go alongside many other ICT developed curriculum areas such as the Study Centre, the Library and Music facilities. This will involve approximately £200,000 of investment to help move Cooper School forward in these important areas.

\* We have bid for, and gained, £14,000 of additional funding from the County's SEED challenge grant fund. This money will go to help our ICT development.

\* This year we ran a project for teachers who might return to teaching if they were given the support they required. We ran this Returners' Project for the Teacher Training Agency and it enhanced our own funding by £11,000. This project was run for 19 teachers and has been highly successful. We have just been asked by the TTA to submit a further bid for this year and have done so, actually submitting two separate bids for a total of £20,000. We hope we will be successful as this project is one of the areas that is helping ourselves and our partner schools maintain their necessary staffing levels at this time of constrained recruitment.

**Year 11 Examination Preparations: The Time is NOW!**

We have reached that time of year when examinations take centre stage and all sensible parents of Year 11 students take cover! This can be a very stressful time for both parents and students, so if there is anything that we can do to help, or if there is anything that you think we need to know in order to help your children, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

One certain factor is that the Easter holidays form a major part of the time that is left for our Year 11 students to prepare for their examinations: the amount of revision work that can be done during Easter approximates to the equivalent amount that can be done in 6 to 8 weeks of school time. This cannot be wasted if your child is to do the best they possibly can.

From the school side we are aiming to help Year 11 students prepare for this holiday by outlining for them exactly how to undertake detailed planning of their revision programme and then how to actually undertake that revision at Easter and beyond. From the parental side we would encourage the parents of all our Year 11 pupils to help ensure that this holiday is used to the full.



**Vandalism and Litter**

Small amounts of petty vandalism and large amounts of litter are again causing us

problems both on-site and off, with really horrible problems around the school and multiple complaints from local residents. We would like to emphasise that minor vandalism on-site will be dealt with severely with culprits required to pay for remedying their damage. Off-site, vandalism can be considered as criminal damage and parents and pupils need to know that being caught for these offences may mean the involvement of the police.

As far as litter is concerned, crisps are a particular problem, but all small snack and lunch elements are causing us trouble, even down to sandwiches being thrown on the ground uneaten. The attitude that it does not really matter if we drop litter/food/rubbish needs to be challenged and amended. It would be very helpful if parents could support our efforts to reduce the amount of litter on-site by reducing the amount of potential litter brought to school in lunches and/or snacks.

Please encourage your children to respect the school and other people's property by not getting involved in minor damage/vandalism, not dropping litter and by utilising the bins around the site. This is a large community environment: it is up to all of the community to improve this situation.

**STAFFING NEWS**

The current nature of staffing in this country means that, whilst there continue to be as many changes as ever, the ability of schools to recruit new staff is being challenged at every turn. Oxfordshire as a County finds it hard to recruit staff due to the high cost of local housing and it is this which makes our use of the Graduate Teacher Programme and the Returners' Projects so important.

At Cooper School we have continued to have changes in staffing this term and a summary of these is as follows:

- \* Brian Hudson (DT Technician) has retired and has been replaced directly with the appointment of Ralph Minney
- \* Our South African staff left for the bright lights of London supply teaching and we have undertaken extensive recruitment strategies to cover the gaps left
- \* We have appointed Mr Charles Todd to cover Mrs Westwell's classes
- \* Mrs Wooldridge leaves us at Easter as her family is moving to Derby due to a change in her husband's employment.
- \* We have appointed Mr Ken Kolb to help us out covering Mr Macmillan's classes to Easter and Mrs Wooldridge's classes from then on.
- \* We have appointed new Teaching Assistants in Mrs Diane Chatterley, Mrs Royna Newman and Mrs Alyson Lowe to assist us in meeting the needs of our pupils.
- \* Mrs Emma Simpson will be joining us as second in Technology after Easter.

## **BUILDINGS DEVELOPMENTS**

At this time last year I indicated to you that we had gained planning permission for the new buildings that would form the extension of the Sports Hall complex with building planned to start in the summer term. Unfortunately, the tenders for the work came in too high and we were unable to get this project started.

We then reached the point where the LEA had re-tendered for the work and were waiting to hear of any progress. On February 6<sup>th</sup> we were then informed that the work would start on February 18<sup>th</sup> – and it did! Once built, the design of the building will allow us to have a greater amount of dining space, whilst providing for evening events in the sports and/or performance halls. It will provide far greater amenity for the school and the community.

In addition, I am pleased to inform you that the major developments of the Lecture Theatre have enabled us to utilise the space efficiently again. It is now a pleasant space to work in and provides suitable accommodation for hirers, mass sits, teaching of drama, sandwich lunches and other events that we have planned for this area.

### **COMENIUS PROJECT**

The first Comenius Project is now reaching its conclusion with the final presentations of project outcomes taking place in Sweden in April. This event will be attended by the Heads' of each institution involved alongside key members of their teams. I would like to pay tribute to the Comenius team at Cooper, particularly Martin Rees and Julie Ronkesley, for their efforts on our behalf.

The second Comenius Project will also be discussed at the meeting in Sweden and hopefully this will lead to a further two years of successful

international work for both staff and students.

### **EASTER HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS:**

School will close for Easter at the usual time on Friday 22 March.

School will resume for staff with an INSET day on Monday 8 April 2002.

School will resume for all **pupils** at the normal time on Tuesday



### **COOPER SCHOOL P.T.A.**

The Cooper School six-a-side football tournament is to be held on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2002. This tournament has taken place every year for the past 11 years. Cherwell District Council have in previous years very kindly sponsored this event. Unfortunately, this year they are no longer able to offer us this sponsorship due to budget cuts. We are looking for a new sponsor/s to help the P.T.A. with the funding for medals and trophies for this event. If anybody feels they would be able to help, please contact Marion Aslett on 01869 248871.

### **GIRL'S HOCKEY**

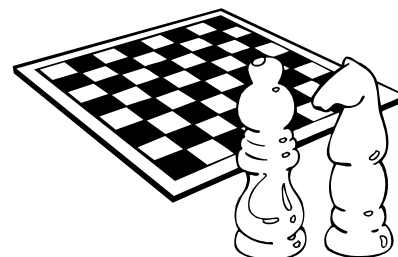
The Year 8 hockey team has been playing fixtures this term in the Banbury Schools League. The players have shown good commitment to practice despite some disappointing early results and bad weather. Their efforts have been rewarded with a 2-2 draw against Chenderit and a 2-0 win against Banbury. Team members are: Sinaed Godin, Leanne Pitcher, Sophie Giles, Darcie Fowler, Coral Davis, Sophie Ilett, Sarah Rigby, Krystelle Adamson, Amy North, Nicky Keogh-Eddy, Vicky Fox, Denise Keegan, Katie Poole.



### **CHESS TOURNAMENT**

During the last half term, the Library hosted a Chess Tournament which proved very popular. The competition took the form of knock-out matches, almost literally sometimes as the majority of games were fiercely contested! The ultimate winner was Chris Essex (9.4) with Lewis Jones (9.5) a close second. Congratulations to them and thank you to all who took part especially Marc Kempster who did a lot of the organising, and all those who were referees.

Mrs Head  
Librarian



**HOWARD GRATER (10.8)**

Howard will be appearing at the Playhouse in Oxford again this year with Oxfordshire musical youth company. This year they are presenting The Wizard of Oz and Howard has managed to secure a principal role as the Emerald City Guard. Those who came to Oliver! last year will hopefully have enjoyed the very professional production of the show and want to come again this April 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>. Tickets can be bought direct from the Playhouse box office or through Mandy Grater on 01869 245590.

Howard also sang as part of the Stagecoach performing arts choir at the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March in the Reach out for Africa concert along with Bony M, Gabrielle and Sir Cliff Richard. Leading on from this, Howard, with the Stagecoach choir, will be singing at a concert to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee, this will take place at Buckingham Palace on 4<sup>th</sup> June.

**FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS**

This year's Free Books for Schools scheme has now started and we would be grateful for your help in collecting the tokens to enable us to receive as many books as possible

**TESCO COMPUTER VOUCHERS**

Thank you to those of you who collected these vouchers last year, the school has been able to exchange these for three scanners, two digital cameras, thirty pairs of headphones and an electronic microscope. Your help in collecting the vouchers this year would also be appreciated.

**CHILDREN IN NEED**

A total of £1,009.02 was forwarded to Children in Need. Thank you to everyone who made donations and also to those who 'dressed-up' for the occasion.

**PLEASE HELP US!!**

If it is necessary for you to get a message to a pupil, wherever possible could you please let the school office know before lunchtime to avoid disruption to lessons.

**NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?**

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.



# DIARY DATES

**SPRING TERM 2002**

Monday 18th February-Friday 22nd March  
**Half Term:** Monday 11th-Friday 15th February

**SUMMER TERM 2002**

Tuesday 9th April-Friday 31st May  
**Staff Training:**  
Monday 8th April (no pupils in school)  
**May Day Bank Holiday:**  
Friday 3rd & Monday 6th May  
**Half Term:** Monday 3rd-Friday 7th June  
Monday 10th June-Friday 19th July (AM only)

**GCSE EXAMINATIONS**

Provisional dates: Monday 20th May through to Tuesday 25th June 2002.

Official leaving date for Year 11 pupils is 25th June 2002.



## *Secondary Article Heading*

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***“Take a memorable quotation from this article ( a pullquote) to pique your readers’ interest.”***

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