



Cooper News

Issue No. 52

March 2005

From the Chair of Governors

It is with considerable sadness that the end of this term sees the departure of Andrew Hamilton, our Headteacher, who is leaving us to take up the position of Headteacher at Bartholomew School, Eynsham.

In the four years and two terms that Andrew has been with us, he has helped the school to develop enormously. Under his leadership and with the tremendous efforts of all staff, the quality of teaching and learning has risen year on year and great strides have been taken in improving the general condition of the school and the equipment within it. Andrew will be missed and the Governors wish him well for the future.

We will be holding interviews for the Headteacher vacancy on the 21st and 22nd April which hopefully will result in the appointment of Andrew's successor.

David Dunne



LIVE (A)ID @ COOPER



Tsunami Relief

Concert in aid of Indian Ocean Tsunami

Having a great bunch of bands come together for a great cause seemed to make the night twice as good! Opening with Cooper's very own Year 11 band, 'Girls are Louder', playing for the very first time. Then the fantastic floor filler 'Bop 'til You Drop' played. The galactic sound of 'Assassins of Silence' then allowed the mood to calm down before the roof was ripped off by the complex heavy guitar sounds from 'Andensum'. And finally, the sounds guys were allowed a rest when A.T.N. ripped riffs.

Managing to raise a huge amount of £4,000, the night was a great success and provoked thought into everyone. Well done to everyone who produced an awesome night at such short notice.

Flick Vidler (11.6)

MAD FOR IT!

Over the past two terms, Cooper School pupils in Years 9 and 11 have been involved in a new initiative to improve memory and motivation skills in preparation for GCSE and SAT examinations. The MAD programme—'Making a Difference' has involved strategies including mind mapping, descriptive posters, nemonics and using objects and images to help remember key facts and concepts for exams. The 'MAD' team have demonstrated such techniques to the whole of Year 11 and in small groups of Year 9 pupils. Their original and alternative approach seems to have been appreciated and we hope our Year 11 are using these skills as they prepare for their final GCSEs.

Mr Hiscock

Facilities Team

Grounds

We believe that the work carried out in the summer to define and re surface some of the routes taken by pupils around the school is paying off now that the wet weather is with us. The amount of dirt around the central part of the school is considerably less. So far this winter, the risk of slipping on mud has greatly reduced.

This is also reflected in a reduction in the amount of dirt trodden into the carpets and lobbies. We are hoping to define the paths and re surface an area adjacent to the back gate as the next phase of tackling the problem

Pupils should be returning home less muddy than in the last few years especially as a great deal of football is now played on the astro turf during lunchtime rather than the playing field.

A new covered way has been approved for installation in front of the Dining Room and Gymnasium. The major part of the installation was carried out over the February break.

Decoration

Our decorative programme continues. The Facilities team have painted the two Art rooms - it is believed for the first time since they were allocated to Art. New coursework storage facilities have been built and a new drying rack installed. Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Burnand and Mrs. Blackmore are delighted with the improvements and the smart new colour scheme of white with dark red gloss work and accents. Once the final coat of paint has been put on the cupboard doors, the team will move on to the Modern Foreign Languages classrooms.

Security

The Cooper School and Town Council are working jointly to improve the security of the school and the allotments. The school's fencing programme will be continuing along the boundary with the allotments on Churchill Road. Fencing has already been ordered to connect the wildlife area and the front gates. This will provide a solid barrier between the two sites.

Extensive work has also taken place to upgrade and consolidate the perimeter lighting on the exterior of the school buildings. The school is now lit during the dark hours from front to back. There remains some additional work on the inner quadrangle that we hope to complete next year.

Parking

There continue to be problems with parking on site especially when parents are dropping and collecting pupils. Please will all parents who bring their children to school by car, consider dropping them in the car park rather than outside the Reception area. This will greatly reduce the difficulties experienced by school buses, which already have difficulty with the right-angled corners of the service road. Thank you.

Mrs James

The Crucible

Last week the directors, cast and crew of The Cooper School's production of "The Crucible" rose magnificently to the challenges involved in staging Arthur Miller's classic drama. The Crucible is a serious and profound play; an ambitious project for any theatre company. The young cast had to transport themselves and their audience to a completely different world from their own whilst making the feelings and beliefs of the characters they were playing convincing and relevant to a modern audience. It is a tribute to the directors and the actors that they were able to make us care deeply about the lives of a small Puritan community in seventeenth century Massachusetts and, indeed, to see how the fear, superstition and prejudice which all but destroyed their community could wreak dreadful damage in our world too.

A particularly fine feature of this production was the actors' ability to understand and convey the complexity and contradictions of the characters they played; Abigail (Beckie Steele) was, by turns, convincingly dutiful with her elders, vulnerable in her love for John and truly frightening when leading the girls in their attack on Mary Warren. John Proctor (Owen Collins), Elizabeth Proctor (Debbie Munger), Mary Warren (Amy Coulling), Parris (Martyn Royce), Reverend Hale (Craig Naylor) and Tituba (Emily Williams) were equally impressive in their ability to portray the changing ideas and moods of their characters as the drama unfolded. They were wonderfully complemented by their fellow actors who played characters who refused to, or were unable to, change even when the witch hunt was at its height; the grasping and bitter Putnams (Tom North and Hannah Raynor), the noble Nurses (Katy Buckley and Gary Klimek), the litigious but eventually decent Giles Corey (Michael Taylor), sly Mercy Lewis (Kirstin Stanley), and Abigail's other followers (Katy Chatterly and Gemma Anderson-Gear), disreputable Sarah Goode (Stacey Lyons), the court officials (Tom McCarthy, James Peverill and Lewis Harrison) and, especially, Judge Danforth (Gareth Sherwood) who presided over the court with great authority and presence.

Those who worked behind the scenes are also to be congratulated on their contribution to the success of the production; costumes, make-up and props were excellent and clearly helped the actors get into role; sound and lighting admirably established mood and built up tension and the backstage crew were efficient and unobtrusive.



One of the themes of this play is bravery and it ends with the moving scene in which John Proctor is brave enough to face death rather than tell a lie. The play's directors, Goody Ramsey, Goody Ford and Goody Dingwall, were themselves brave in choosing such a challenging play for Cooper's Key Stage Four production but their belief and trust in our pupils were more than justified. Congratulations to all concerned on a wonderful achievement.

Mrs Wainman

There Was No Turning a Blind Eye to 'Turning Blind Eyes'

Delightful performances of 'Turning Blind Eyes' by Ian McCormack, captured the hearts of both audiences on Monday 14th and Tuesday 15th March. Key Stage 3 students had worked for three months under the skilful direction of English teachers, Miss J Duddridge and Miss C Moss, in staging this play which examines bullying in school.

Jeff Tipman (Tom Muddle) has been robbed of his lunch and his money daily. He has been pushed around and beaten up for far too long. He can't tell anyone for fear of reprisals, despite the concerns of Miss Myers (Alice Parkinson) and his grandmother (Gemma Greenall). It is only when he has the courage to accept help and stand up to his bullies that he ceases to be a victim. We discover in a thoughtful scene between the bully, Moz and his friend Jayne (Sarah Knight), that bullies can be victims too.

There were some outstanding individual performances from the lead actors and some very promising debut performances from our younger students. One of the highlights was a lively rap from Moz (Danny Morrell).

The set was simple with overhead projections taking the audience around school and into the homes of characters.

Behind the excellent efforts of all concerned, the youngsters did not forget that the play has a serious and important point to make. It is further to their credit that they asked for all proceeds from the performances to be donated to 'Child Line'.

Ms E Stones

E-Learning Update

As you know, we are continuously evaluating ways to raise the achievements of our students. One of our recent developments is the purchase of SAM Learning, a top quality e-learning service that has been proven to improve exam results through guided revision and exam practice. SAM Learning can be used to revise for Key Stage 2 and 3 SATs and GCSEs.

Initially we will be introducing SAM Learning to students in Years 9 and 11 in order to help them to prepare for their external tests.



One of the key features of this service is that it can be accessed from virtually any computer with internet access. Other schools who use SAM Learning report significant usage outside the core school day. SAM Learning usually costs home users £99.99 per year, but Cooper School students now have unrestricted use of the service totally free of charge.

If you have a computer with internet access at home, I hope you will allow it to be used to access this service, but if that is not possible, all students have access to computers outside of timetabled hours in the Library and at Homework Club in the Study Centre, so that no-one is at a disadvantage. Of course, it is also possible that students may use SAM Learning from computers in other places such as libraries and community centres.

I realise that you may have concerns about your child using the internet, and may wish to establish your own family rules about where and when it is to be done. To access the service at www.samlearning.com students need three details :

| | |
|------------|--|
| Centre ID: | OX26CS |
| Username: | Date of birth followed by two initials; first name then last name. Example: 010890DJ is the User ID for David Jones born 1 st Aug 1990 |
| Password: | Initially the same as Username. Pupils should change their password the first time they log on. |

Each student should have a record of this information on a sticker in their planner.

All our students who will be using the service will be shown how everything works – you may want to ask them to show you in turn, especially the area that reports on their progress and shows their marks!

We do hope that you will take full advantage of this service and thank you in anticipation of your support for this initiative.

Miss N.Roddis

Flying Start GCSE Revision

This Easter, The Cooper School is running a 'Flying Start' GCSE revision programme.

It will take place on Monday 4th April from 09:00 until 15:00 and is absolutely free! Students on the programme will have the opportunity to study for a wide selection of their GCSE options using guided computer revision packages including SAM Learning. During the day, there will also be sessions catering specifically for selected subjects where students receive small group tutoring.

Students will also have the opportunity to sit practice test papers and will receive their results before the end of the day. A full breakdown of all the grades attained will be available for parents during the first week back after Easter. Simply ask your child to collect them from Miss Roddis.

During the day snacks and drinks will be provided, but your child needs to bring a packed lunch and all relevant school materials – exercise books, subject revision packs and pencil case. It is expected that all participating students take an active role in revision activities.

Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. In order to take advantage of this opportunity to make the best possible start to the revision process, please complete the reply slip on the letter sent home and hand it to Miss Roddis no later than Tuesday 29th March. If you feel that your child will benefit from this initiative, please encourage him/her to attend.

DIARY DATES

SPRING TERM 2005

In Service Training Day: pupils not in school:

Tuesday 4 January

All pupils back in School: Wednesday 5 January —

Friday 11 February

Half term: Monday 14 February — Friday 18 February

All pupils back in school: Monday 21 February

Good Friday (Bank Holiday): Friday 25 March

Easter Monday (Bank Holiday): Monday 28 March

All pupils back in school: Tuesday 29 March

Last day of Spring Term for pupils: Thursday 31 March

In Service Training Day: Friday 1 April

Easter Holidays: Monday 4 April — Friday 15 April

GCSE ART AND TECHNOLOGY EXHIBITION

Thursday 23rd June 6.30pm-8.30pm

This is always a wonderful, varied and inspiring exhibition.

All welcome.

SUMMER TERM 2005

All pupils in School: Monday 18 April -

Friday 27 May

May Day (Bank Holiday): Monday 2 May

Half term: Monday 30 May — Friday 3 June

All pupils back in school: Monday 6 June

Last day of Summer Term: Friday 22 July (Lunch)

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.

BICESTER & DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION

The Annual Youth Exchange is being arranged for 1st to 12th August 2005 and will be held in Neunkirchen-Seelscheid, Germany. Students would stay with a German family and their children would also be part of the exchange. All of the German students and their families speak good English. Various activities will be arranged each week day. In the past the cost has been in the region of £90.00, but this is dependent upon numbers.

If you feel you would be interested please contact Sue Clutterbuck on 01869 244292 and she will arrange an evening for you to meet the other students who have been before.

Are you struggling to support someone who is misusing alcohol or drugs?

Bicester Carers support group provide confidential support and information. They meet at the Causeway Centre (25 The Causeway) on a Tuesday evening from 7.00pm-9.00pm.

For more information please ring June at the Causeway Centre on 01869 249864.

Year Nine Go For It!

Recently, the school hosted a "Going 4 It" careers day, with help from Bicester Village and the Chamber of Commerce. During the day there was a visit from an up and coming pop star, Dax. Lots of businesses from around Bicester came and set up stalls to tell us what businesses are and how they worked. Among the companies were the army, navy, the police force and salons around Oxfordshire, and BMW who produce the mini. The Universities of Oxford and the College from Banbury came in to talk to us about the courses available to us after our GCSEs. Throughout the day, the businesses showed off what they do and how to join up, they also gave demonstrations and gave out leaflets and books to help us choose a course or job. Some of the companies gave out free gifts so we can remember them and maybe make a career in the business or take one of the courses they had to offer.

In conclusion, the day was a great success in that I think that everyone enjoyed the activities and it was helpful to people wanting to find out about a career or a course to further their education.

Alec Warriner & Jake Vickers

Year Nine Get Set for SATs

The end of term has been very busy for Year 9 pupils who have been involved in a number of activities designed to help them with their upcoming SATs. The **English Department** organised a whole day of activities based around their set Shakespeare play "Macbeth". The morning session included workshops on particular scenes in which our pupils took the stage alongside professional actors from The Bite-size Revision Company and then in the afternoon the excellent Shakespeare Institute Players staged their own exciting and atmospheric version of the whole play.

The **Science Department** are also planning a whole day of interactive revision activities covering Physics, Chemistry and Biology. As well as a session lead by a leading Scientist on liquid nitrogen the pupils will participate in a workshops on creepy crawlies (provided by Oxford University) and forensic science. The Drama Department has also been elisted to further enrich what we are sure will be a memorable and motivating experience.

The **Maths Department** are building on our provision and initiatives for our Gifted and Talented pupils by devoting a whole day of tuition to help boost pupils working at the highest levels in the hope of repeating their last year's success in increasing the numbers of our pupils to reach level eight.

Finally, as described elsewhere in this newsletter by Miss Roddis, the School has invested in what promises to be an invaluable E. learning revision programme for all our examination pupils. We would be most grateful if all Year 9 parents could encourage their sons and daughters to log on to SAM learning over the Easter holidays and get a flying start to their revision. On behalf of Year 9 I would like to thank all the staff involved in the organisation and delivery of these special events for the extra work and efforts they are putting in to help our pupils achieve their potential in these exams. Last, but not least, the very best of luck to all our pupils with their revision and examinations.

GIRLS' FOOTBALL

The Year 8 team competed in the U13 Banbury and District League. Unfortunately, the girls have been disappointed at the cancellation of games by the opposition but have enjoyed and gained experience from the matches they have played.

U16 GIRLS' FOOTBALL TEAM

This team have been hugely successful this year playing in the Banbury and District league, winning all of their matches so far. We've got the final league game coming up on Wednesday 26th January at home against Drayton School.

On Wednesday 2nd February there is a friendly scheduled against BCC's U16s.

Thank you to all the girls who have played for the team, for their enthusiasm during games and for the patience that they have shown when other schools have been forced to rearrange matches.

A fantastic and well deserved result in the league – final position to follow!

CROSS COUNTRY

Our Junior and Intermediate girls' teams competed in the English Schools Cross Country Cup. The Intermediate team won the preliminary round. There were excellent individual performances from Year 10 athletes Amanda Carreras and Georgina Newell who finished in third and fourth places respectively. They were well supported by Melanie Cadle (Year 9), Charlotte Landy (Year 9), Rebecca Gill (Year 10) and Katie Richards (Year 10).

Junior and Intermediate teams competed in the recent County Cross Country Championships. The Intermediate team (Georgina Newell, Katie Richards, Rebecca Gill, Clair Cross and Natasha Sturgeon) finished third in the team competition. Georgina Newell has been selected to represent Oxfordshire at the Inter-Counties Championship.

Mrs G Allen

