

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT FOR THE GENERAL PARENTS' MEETING ON 29 MAY 2014

Dear Parents,

I am pleased to present the first Principal's Report under the Board of Directors which assumed office in January 2014. I am also happy that a large number of positive developments have taken place during the first six months of the incumbent Board.

We have just completed an almost never-ending series of activities, to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the school.

ACADEMIC MATTERS

NEW ICT TEACHING PROGRAMME

I am pleased to inform the parents, that NCC Education has introduced a new, improved teaching programme in ICT. The Board of Directors in consultation with the Academic Advisory Council and the Parents' Committee, decided to introduce the **Digi Suite** of ICT Teaching in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 with effect from the Academic Year 2014/2015.

This programme is developed and delivered by NCC Education, United Kingdom and regulated by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation)

NCC Education (www.nccedu.com) is a UK awarding body, active in the UK and internationally. NCC started offering IT qualifications in 1976 and is considered to be one of the largest ICT teaching organisations in the world.

Ofqual is the statutory **education authority** in UK (www.ofqual.gov.uk), which is the highest body, that regulates all aspects of the **English National Curriculum (ENC)**.

The courses are newly designed by NCC, to cater to the vast changes that were introduced in the English National Curriculum in ICT by Ofqual, in September 2012. Interested parents may search for 'Changes to the National Framework' on the internet. The Digi Suite consists of three stages:

Digi **Explorers** in KS 1

Digi **Navigators** in KS 2

Digi **Trail Blazers** in KS 3

A presenter from NCC - UK visited the school and conducted an impressive presentation for the Board of Directors, Academic Advisory Council, Parent's Committee and staff. The course promises to be very interesting and modern in its approach, with a vast online resource base available to the teachers and students. Parents are requested to visit the NCC website and acquaint themselves with the Digi Suite.

At the end of each Digi Course, final answer scripts of students will be sent to NCC -UK for external paper marking, like in the case of Edexcel Examinations. Students studying the course, will receive authentic NCC certificates at the conclusion of each Key Stage. NCC certificates are highly recognised internationally and the new Digi certificates too, are expected to gain the same prestige and recognition.

The Board of Directors is studying the overall cost of the programme, before deciding on the amount to be charged from the parents, for ICT education of their children. However, I am pleased to inform you at this stage, that it is expected to be very much less, than what the school has been charging for this service at all three Key Stages.

The school is happy to announce that NCC Education has already granted centre status for conducting their courses to Sri Lankan School Muscat.

CHANGES TO NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Parents have been informed earlier about the fundamental changes that took place in UK, in the education sector.

Ofqual introduced changes to the National Framework in July 2012 in all key stages.

The text books in Science that were introduced in September 2013 have been designed taking the above changes in to consideration. This means that the school is following the correct curriculum in Science in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The publishers of Abacus Mathematics books, have come out with the new versions of the book and the school has adopted the amended and updated books from September 2014.

This means that the school will be following the correct curriculum in Mathematics too.

As mentioned earlier, the new Digi suite of ICT teaching has been developed to cater to the changes to the national framework. This means that the school will be following the correct curriculum in ICT too.

It is expected that the English texts used in the school also might get updated by its publisher by September 2015.

CHANGES TO ADVANCED LEVEL

Ofqual introduced far reaching changes to GCE Advanced Level examinations too. The most significant change is making GCE Advanced Level examination a linear examination. I mentioned this in my report at the GPM in January 2014:

Quote

'1. The examination becomes linear. That is the entire examination has to be taken up at the end of two years.

2. The January session is discontinued.

3. In Science subjects the written alternative to Practicals would not be available. Instead the students and schools would have to do the Coursework, which is a form of formative assessment (continuous assessment)'.
Unquote

Unfortunately this change was done without any prior notice to the students or the schools. The students who had started their AL courses in September 2012, were the worst hit by this decision.

As a measure of consolation, Edexcel offered a new examination called International Advanced Level which continues to be modular.

The school had no choice for the students who were to take up their final A2 examination in May/June 2014. They were forced to switch over from GCE AL which was regulated by Ofqual, to IAL which was regulated by Edexcel,.

The only consolation was that the Universities that were clamouring for tougher and more rigorous evaluation, declared that IAL would be recognised on par with GCE, for admission to their Universities.

For the batch of students who were starting their AL classes in September 2013, the school allowed a choice between GCE and IAL in the non-coursework subjects.

The discreet Sciences - Physics, Chemistry and Biology have an internally assessed coursework in GCE regulated by Ofqual, for which the school is not prepared at this stage. The remaining subjects on the platter in Ofqual regulated GCE, continues to be externally assessed but linear.

The school has also decided to cater to the more rigorous GCE when Edexcel launches the new curriculum in September 2015. This would mean that there is no January session or an AS examination.

AUSTRALIAN MATHEMATICS COMPETITION

The Mathematics Department is arranging for students to sit for Australian Mathematics Competition this year too.

This is the fourth occasion that the school is taking part in this competition and the number of students taking part has risen from 154 last year to 230 in 2014.

The Mathematics Department is conducting extra classes, to familiarise the students with the type of assessment used at AMC, which is different from the Key Stage assessment mode.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEES

I am aware that there have been complaints, dissatisfaction and loss of confidence in the minds of some parents in the appointment of student leaders, awarding of prizes and awarding of School Colours in the recent past. The school, though aware of same, does not accept any blame, as it had to follow the policies that were adopted by the Board of Directors.

There were many unclear and undefined areas, in these documents that led to the above issues. I am pleased to inform you that the Board of Directors has appointed three special committees, consisting of representatives of BOD, PC and staff for the purpose of reviewing the school policies on:

1. Awarding Colours
2. Awarding academic prizes
3. Student Leadership Cultivation

The first committee has already met several times and submitted its final recommendation to the Board of Directors for ratification.

The refined policy documents will be posted on the school website when they are ratified by the BOD.

HEALTH, NUTRITION, SAFETY AND CLEANLINESS COOMMITTEE

The very important areas of students' health, nutrition, safety and cleanliness are being discussed by the newly formed HNSC Committee with the purpose of:

1. Enlightening the students on health and nutrition issues
2. Ensuring that they develop good and healthy food habits
3. Ensuring that the school canteen maintains professional standards in all four aspects above
4. Ensuring the preparedness of school in fire safety issues

The committee consists of representatives of BOD, PC, staff as well as parent volunteers. I am thankful for the work done so far by the committee.

TEXT BOOKS

I am pleased to state, that the issue of text books for the next academic year, (except for a few titles that are in print) has been completed in May, well in advance of the date promised to the parents.

I express my appreciation to the Deputy Principal, academic and administrative staff for the support extended to complete the exercise.

COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

GAVEL AND TOASTMASTERS CLUBS

It is with much pleasure that I announce that a Gavel Club for students and a Toastmasters Club for teachers of SLSM will be formally inaugurated in the first week of June.

42 students in Years 7 to 10 have joined the Gavel Club and 40 teachers have joined the Toastmasters.

This initiative is aimed at improving the skill of communication of the teachers and the students.

We expect to start a second Gavel Club for the students of Advanced Level classes in September.

Based on the success of these two clubs, a third club for the students of lower grades too, will be considered.

WORKSHOP ON ROBOTICS

The ICT department organised a workshop on Robotics for the students of Years 3 to 10 in May 2014. Students were introduced to new technology in computing and artificial intelligence.

STAR GAZING CAMP

The Guides Pack in collaboration with the astronomical society conducted a star gazing camp in the school in April 2014.

Children were shown different constellations and planetary positions through the newly acquired telescope.

LEADER IN ME

A workshop was conducted for the Junior Leaders, by the Student Leadership Cultivation department in May 2014. The workshop was based on Stephen Covey's seven habits of highly successful people.

CUBS INVESTITURE

The investiture of new cubs took place in May 2014 giving 31 young boys the opportunity to join the international Scouting Movement..

BUTTERFLIES INVESTITURE

The investiture of 52 Butterflies will take place on Sunday 1 June. This is expected to be a landmark event since the Girl Guides movement which was restricted to a few keen girls is now opening up to the majority of the girls in the school.

I am thankful to the teachers in charge of Girl Guides and Scouts movements for their dedication.

ART CAMP

The school conducted its first Art Camp in which students of all grades participated. In addition, the teachers, non academic staff and parents too participated in this unique event.

ART EXHIBITION

The school conducted an Art Exhibition which showcased the artistic talents of students of the whole school. This event which was highly acclaimed by all who witnessed it, was special since the paintings of all participants at the junior and senior art competitions were exhibited, keeping to the oft repeated principle that, the competition is only with one's own self.

DRAMA COMPETITION

One of the most spectacular events connected to the Silver Jubilee celebration was the Inter House Drama Festival which depicted the heights achieved by the school in performing arts, though it is not a part of the core-curriculum.

THE INTER HOUSE QUIZ COMPETITION

was another event that was conducted in grand style to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the school.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Inter House Debating Competition, the Language Day Celebration, The Teachers and Children's Day celebration, the Thinking Day celebration, Kiddies Sports Meet and the Primary Concert are the other events that were conducted in celebration of the 25th Anniversary. I am also glad that two of our students got selected for the finals in the Times of Oman Interschool Quiz.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The Computer Whiz Kid Competition and the printing of the Silver Jubilee Year Book are the remaining items in the long list.

PERIPHERAL SERVICES

The school has ventured in to providing uniform PE kits and winter jackets to students in good faith and has performed these tasks in spite of the severe lack of man power for same. I am thankful to the Deputy Principal and the academic staff who have always assisted me in these peripheral activities.

Parents are kindly requested to understand that selling of text books, PE kits and winter jackets, is not the purpose of having teachers in a school.

If that understanding and appreciation from the parents is forthcoming, I will be able to get my teachers' support in such school activities.

I would like to conclude my report by thanking the Chairman and the Board of Directors and the Parents' Committee for the support extended to me and the school administration in running the school.

The parents of the school stood up to justice and put their foot down when they felt the need for it.

I wish to bow my head in admiration of the parents of the school, for their valiant and spontaneous gesture of standing by the school in its hour of need.

Now it is time for us to get together with the Board of Directors and the school and achieve what we have set out to achieve in all areas of the spectrum of development of the school.

Thank you.

Somabandhu Kodikara

Principal