

## **Annual General Meeting 2008**

It is with pleasure that I am able to report to you the progress made at BISAK during the last year, especially in moving the school towards an internationally recognized and accredited status.

My report summarises the achievements of last year, and also maps out the priorities for continued development over the next academic year.

Although we were all suffering with the weakness of the US dollar last year and now there seems to be a reversal but also a world financial crisis our student roll which averaged 385 in 2005/06 rose to 470 in 2007. We are presently 534 rapidly moving to the 600 mark! The 25% increase in student roll bodes well for the future of the school. The expanded school roll has given the board the fiscal flexibility to support the introduction of the GCSE followed by A levels which is now in its first year, and has attracted highly experienced teachers which have driven this innovation. Much work is now going on to enable a smooth natural transition to the A level programme.

Last year, I was able to report to you the setting of new objectives which were aimed to drive the school to its next phase of development.

These were

1. Implement a culture of recognition and motivation amongst staff and students
2. Develop the curriculum and recruitment of the personnel for KS4 and A level provision
3. Review and improve the extra-curricular programme provision
4. Develop the appraisal system so that it further improves student learning.
5. Develop and implement a data base of key data and tracking of student achievement.
6. Move towards CIS accreditation

My first objective was one centred around motivation and recognition. The development of a middle leadership team with weekly in service training to further develop our leaders in the school is forming the bedrock for the further development of BISAK. Evidence already suggests we are moving rapidly to towards this objective, with many of our leaders already contributing towards the development of teaching and learning and causing an influence towards our strategic mains.

My second objective was to implement, successfully, the introduction of GCSE, leading to A levels. Our first group is in progress with the first GCSE examination taking place last week! Indeed we are already having our first enquiries for the A level programme due to start in September 2010.

My third objective was based on developing the whole child. We appointed an activities coordinator, upgraded our activities programme and have already started leadership award and Duke of Edinburgh Award with expeditions also currently being planned. The extra- curricular programme now offers more choice to both girls and boys of all ages. We have planned overseas trips to Dubai, Cyprus and Oman.

My fourth objective was based on target setting and appraisals. The teacher appraisal system which was focused on student learning has now come to the end of its cycle and is being reviewed. Our teachers

are currently identifying ways to improve student learning and differentiation in the classrooms so that the curriculum is accessible to all. Our new Special Needs coordinator is also focusing on developing learning opportunities for the more gifted and talented students, as well as supporting the less able.

My fifth objective was based around raising student achievement by tracking progress. BISAK has now developed a data base and is closely linked with Durham University. All students complete on line assessments which give teachers data thus helping identify the more gifted and talented, or students who may need intervention to access more effective learning. This enables BISAK to look at ways of raising achievement by monitoring progress regularly and comparing to other schools internationally.

Last year I spoke about a student named Jack. In kindergarten, he was the child itching for a break, the lone voice chattering through quiet time, the boy who was always not concentrating and chatting. The next years were no better... he was always falling behind... he messed about out in class... he ignored directions... the principal's office has a seat with his name on it.

But the following September, things begin to change.

Jack started to listen to his teachers. His hands grabbed for pencils instead of ponytails. Books no longer posed as enemies. Something, indeed, had clicked.

Let us assume we have a class full of Jacks, or a school full of them.

I am now pleased to report to you that BISAK now possesses the tools to tell his success story. We are implementing a tracking system which is able to study Jack's progress over long periods of time, examine the causes of his initial setbacks—developmental delays, maybe a troublesome home life, or, perhaps, previous teaching methodology—and determine the reasons for his eventual triumph. In fact we can intervene well before we get the setbacks, and furthermore respond to Jack's passions and strengths. The assessment of learning is a major initiative which is aimed at improving the deal for every individual student at BISAK whatever their ability.

My final objective was to start the journey towards accreditation. In 2003, BISAK almost became accredited by CIS... however the political situation interrupted. Mr. Ray Davis, the regional accreditation officer visited BISAK in March 2008. After the three day inspection he was able to confirm BISAK as a full candidate for the accreditation process and member of CIS. Ray Davis was able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of BISAK which has given us a platform to further develop the school against International standards.

Already the process is well under way with a full revision of our philosophy and objectives, recently published on our website. In addition, groups have already met to look at staffing, student services and governance and management. In January the focus will be on the curriculum, commencing with English, especially where English is a second or third language for our students. In addition we will be reviewing the Arabic curriculum to improve the provision for all Arabic speaking students also enabling them to partake in the extra-curricular programme. This review and consultation process has already begun.

Clearly with Baroness Morgan's recent announcement in the UK which asks for all British Overseas schools to be accredited our journey towards CIS accreditation will give confidence to parents that indeed your child is receiving the best possible education at BISAK.

This then brings me to the major objectives for the coming year.

We are pleased to announce that in order to further prepare the school for GCSE and A levels we will be extending our Science facilities, DT Facilities, Art facilities and increasing the number of classrooms. In addition we will continue our development of the ICT facilities. This year we introduced an extra ICT laboratory, and increased the number of computers and projectors in each classroom. In the coming year we will continue to update our software and hardware to further improve the use of this technology in improving teaching and learning.

The second objective is to further improve the teaching and learning process by further improving student assessment. Most recently, the Education Secretary in the UK, Ed Balls announced the demise of KS3 SATS.

He announced that he was ending schools' requirement to run national tests for 14 year olds, with immediate effect. The current compulsory national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 will be replaced by improved classroom assessment by teachers and frequent reporting to parents in years 7, 8 and 9, with a stronger focus on one-to-one tuition and catch up support for children in the first years of secondary school.

Indeed as a school, BISAK commenced this journey in September 2008. Such changes will provide more regular and more comprehensive information to parents about their children's progress and help teachers to make sure that every child can succeed. Our strategic planning focuses on student achievement.

We collect data so that it gives us big picture ideas of where the gaps are, but in terms of the class level, we minimise our data collecting but teachers maximise the amount of assessment they do in terms of talking with students, giving feedback. Teacher observation and teacher professional knowledge of how their students are improving is important, so that's how we measure their achievement. Our aim this year is to further fine tune this process so that we can improve learning for students of all abilities as in our mission statement which says:

Inspire young minds to do the best that they can with the gifts that they have.

The third objective will be to further strengthen our teaching personnel so that we can continue to offer the best possible education in the Eastern Province and indeed also develop the A level programme. This year all teachers arrived on time at the beginning of the year thanks to our government liaison department and indeed we now have a formidable and well experienced and qualified staff at the school which is our biggest asset.

This then brings to an end my report on the future plans for the school. I believe all school improvement planning for 2008/9 will be carried out in the spirit of ongoing school improvement which, and the

bottom line means improved conditions of learning for your children. It is my privilege to work for a school where the search for self-improvement is so evident, and I take this opportunity to thank the staff, Board of Governors and parent community for their support. As ever, the children of BISAK remain a joy to work with. Thank you.

TA November 2008