

Please visit our website www.mpawycombe.co.uk

And let us know what you think!

Eid Greetings:

As we go to print Eid-UI- Adha, one of the two major Islamic festivals, is getting nearer. This year it falls on Friday, 26 October and the MPA would like to wish all our readers of the Newsletter a joyous and peaceful Eid Mubarak.

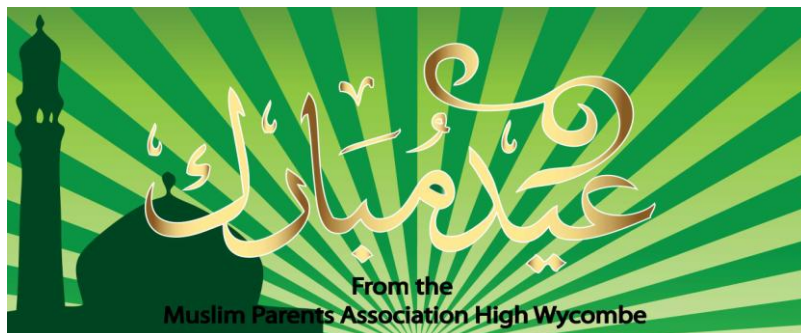
Wishing for a safe and peaceful Hajj pilgrimage:

As usual a number of people from High Wycombe have gone on the annual Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah and we wish them all a safe and spiritually fulfilling trip. (See page 6 for more information about Hajj)

The MPA AGM:

The MPA has organised its AGM at Sir William Ramsay School, on Saturday, 17 November 2012, (9.30AM to 1PM) which will also attempt to recruit more school governors, so they can help their own children as well as other school children in general. Therefore, if you have never been approached before or you have been too busy with other things up to now (or indeed you have already served as a school governor, but gave it up for lack of time), but now feel that you could give something back to the community, then this is your chance to come and find out about the rewarding work of school governors.

It is a sad fact that whilst one fifth of Buckinghamshire school children are from ethnic minorities, the ethnic minority school governors account for less than 4% of all governors. So, if you have gone through the education system and are now a successful professional, then please consider becoming a school governor, so that the community can benefit from your education, experience and ideas.



BMEC Conference:

After the very successful conference for parents last year, the Bucks Minority Education Concern, (BMEC) an umbrella organisation formed by the MPA and the Parents Forum for Children of African & Caribbean Heritage is organising another conference for parents on Saturday, 15 December 2012, at Cressex Community School at 11 AM. All parents, teachers, school governors and others interested in the education of our children are asked to let the organisers know, if they wish to attend.

A New Head for Sir William Ramsay School:

We warmly welcome Mr Mark Mayne as the new Head of Sir William Ramsay school and trust he will have an enjoyable experience of an upper school in Buckinghamshire. The MPA is pleased to advise that Mr Mayne has agreed to address the MPA meeting on 17 November and it is hoped that what he has to say will be of benefit to all parents, especially those with children at SWR school (or going there in the future).



Mark Mayne, new Head of Sir William Ramsay School
- see page 3 for his introductory words.

Contact the MPA:

Post: 34 Perth Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.
HP13 6XX

E-mail: rafigraja@hotmail.co.uk

Tel: 07956 622 469

Derek Berry gives an alternative opinion on Highcrest Academy's New Admissions Policy for 2013

The Highcrest Academy have introduced a compulsory banding selection test for all applicants who wish to gain admission. If your child does not take this test, s/he will not be admitted to the school. If your child takes the test, admission to the school will depend on how your they performs in the banding test.

Highcrest claims that its new admission arrangements are a challenge to the 11+. It will make the school into an all ability school and claim it will not affect the chances of local children gaining admission.

The reality is that the tests are set up as deliberate attempt to reduce the number of local children gaining admission and replace them with what Highcrest hopes to be higher ability children from further distances and adjacent towns. Applications from children of local families who for a variety of reasons are not able to take the tests will be rejected. The school's claim that it is the only all ability school and that its arrangements will benefit local families needs to be challenged.

It is misleading in the extreme to claim that banded admissions to Highcrest Academy presents a challenge to the selective system.

Highcrest, like other upper schools in the county, has always been free to admit children of all abilities. Ms Moynihan's claim (Bucks Free Press September 7) that 'we are now legally an all ability academy' does not establish a new situation – it reflects what has always been the case; parents who chose to withdraw their children from the 11+ test, or disregard a successful outcome, have sought a place in an upper school.

Highcrest is wrong in claiming that its policy is a challenge to the selective system. It has certainly made great progress since local people fought to keep it open and the Labour Government poured money in under their Fresh Start scheme. But to suggest that in academic terms it is a rival to the grammar schools is absurd. Perhaps it's not surprising that the academy has chosen to present their changed admissions procedures in this manner.

The obvious outcome is the new policy will attract more able children from other upper schools, changing the balance of their current admissions. No wonder other secondary schools and Buckingham County Council challenged their proposal.

The consequences are not good for local children; changing the balance of admissions in this way will not come without cost and some who would have naturally expected to attend Highcrest will be disappointed. The test that these children are being compelled to take is no guarantee of a Highcrest Academy place.

Formal objections were made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) against the banding test proposals by among others by Bucks CC, 11 Secondary Schools, 3 primary schools, local community groups and some individuals. Despite the objections pointing out that the Highcrest proposals contravened the Governments overall education policies, the OSA made a determination that the school can go ahead with these banding tests for the 2013 intake, despite the obvious disadvantages to the local families who live close to the school

What can you do? Write, phone or email the four Micklefield councillors (Julia Wassell, Chaudhary Ditta, Paula Lee, Matt Knight) who supported the banding tests. Ask them to withdraw their support for the Highcrest 2013 admissions arrangements. The Councillors should now use any influence they have to make the school abandon the tests and revert to the 2012 admissions arrangements for 2013 and beyond. These councillors are supposed to be the champions for their local constituents, they should not have supported a local school setting an admission policy designed to discriminate against the local families.

You could also write to your M.P. asking him to investigate the OSA decision which has allowed Highcrest Academy to adopt an admissions policy that contradicts the schools own funding agreement, the Academy policies and the overall Governments Education policy.

There are serious issues for families living in the current Highcrest Academy catchment area. The new banding tests are going to be socially divisive which will narrow the opportunities available for many of the local children who would expect to attend Highcrest. The difficulties for the rejected families to find an alternative school will be significant. If your child has to attend a school many miles away, you will find it much more expensive in time and money. There will be increased difficulties for you to engage with the school as a parent and your child may feel alienated from the community where you live.

Do you have something to write about?

If you wish to write about something then please e-mail your contribution as soon as possible. Articles should be or about 500 words; however, if there is something of a more serious nature then please limit it to one page of this Newsletter and e-mail it as soon as possible.

Mr Mark Mayne the new Head of Sir William Ramsay School gives his first impressions

Embarking on the Headship of Sir William Ramsay School has been a pleasure and a privilege. Students, staff, parents and carers have been extremely welcoming and I have thoroughly enjoyed myself. It has confirmed my belief that being the Head of a school must be the best job in the world. I am making good progress getting to know the names of one hundred and sixty three members of staff and I am starting to get to know students' names and to understand their aspirations and ambitions.

Sir William Ramsay has had a very good couple of years, culminating in another strong inspection report and impressive examination results last summer. Building on this success will be about a relentless focus on all students and a commitment to finding the potential in every single individual. As I said to students at the start of the year, I feel that there are three essential ingredients for their success at Sir William Ramsay School: high expectations of themselves, of each other and of every single adult who teaches and supports them. I have been impressed with the way that students have engaged with this message and the energy and commitment from members of staff in developing outstanding learning opportunities for all.

Much of my teaching experience has been in London and for the last ten years I have been Deputy Head at Hampstead School, in Camden. The school has been recognised as outstanding in promoting equality of opportunity and there are now few significant differences in the outcomes for different groups of learners. I understand the processes which have had an impact on engaging learners and families from a range of different communities, including Muslim students who make up over half of the student cohort. I am pleased to be bringing this experience to Sir William Ramsay School and the network of schools in South Bucks. I am also delighted to have met your Chairman and to have started some work on further improving outcomes for students at our school.

Specialist advice for academies

Whether you are thinking of converting to academy school status or have already done so, we can help you with the complex array of issues you will need to deal with from best value audit and accounts preparation to fundraising and VAT issues. We will provide you with an independent opinion on your financial situation and recommend any necessary adjustments or improvements to your controls and processes for future years.

We are able to support you with a full range of specialist services, including:

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- accounting and accounts preparation
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- VAT
- pension scheme returns
- assistance with FRS 17 reporting requirements
- corporation tax and tax planning
- personal tax and tax planning
- payroll and bookkeeping

Nationally we are one of the leading auditors to academy schools, with a number of academy clients across the country, and our London office also has extensive experience in the charities and not-for-profit sector.

UHY Hacker Young
Chartered Accountants



If you would like to discuss your school's requirements, please contact **Gregory Chong**

t: 020 7216 4600

e: g.chong@uhy-uk.com

For more information on UHY Hacker Young, please visit our website at **www.uhy-uk.com**

Helping you prosper

Listen to 'The World of Education' - Taleem Ki Dunya Every Sunday, on High Wycombe's Awaaz Radio (107.4FM) between 10AM & 12 NOON.

World of Education tries to inform the members of the Asian community in general and the Pakistani community in particular, about the importance of education with a particular emphasis on informing the 'hard to reach' community.

If you are interested in taking part in a future programme or have some topics or ideas about raising educational achievement levels then get in touch with Rafiq Raja: raja@awaazradio.com

News from Cressex Community School, by Headteacher David Hood

This has been a truly extraordinary summer in the world of education. News item has followed news item; announcement has followed announcement, both locally and on the national stage. What should we make of it all?

Firstly, the GCSE English results. I have worked in education for my whole professional life – almost thirty years - and have never seen anything like this. This summer an unprecedented fiasco has unfolded which could have a direct impact on the life opportunities of many sixteen year olds. It emerged during August that the mark required to gain a C in GCSE English had been substantially raised during the course of the last school year. Put simply, students who took the exam in January had a much better chance of getting a critical grade C than if they took the exam in June. This is surely unfair and unworthy of a country that is happy to proclaim its sense of “fair play”. Up to the time of writing, the Secretary of State has refused to intervene on the part of students who have been disadvantaged in this way and has hidden behind an investigation carried out by the exams regulator, Ofqual. Astoundingly, the regulator has taken the view that two sets of results for the same examination in one year is somehow acceptable. In their view, some students “got lucky”; for others it was “tough luck”. I feel so strongly about this issue I have written to our MP, Steve Baker. I would encourage concerned readers of this Newsletter to do likewise. There is also a petition on the government website calling for a debate in Parliament. Please consider adding your name to it. The link is: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/37620>. At the time of writing this article a legal challenge is also in the offing.

Simultaneously, a debate has been raging about the value of the qualifications provided for our young people. In the late 1980s the GCSE was introduced as a replacement for the two-tier ‘O’ level and CSE exam system. Unlike the ‘O’ level, which was norm referenced (meaning only fixed percentages of candidates could achieve a pass at grade A, grade B and so on), the GCSE was criterion referenced, which meant that any candidate who achieved the required standard for a grade would be awarded that grade. Shortly afterwards, school “league tables” and Ofsted inspections were introduced, both of which heightened the public’s awareness of schools’ results and ensured that schools’ focus on results became ever more intense. Would it surprise anybody if, in these circumstances and as a consequence of students’ and teachers’ efforts, results were to rise? Move on twenty years and we are told by the government that there has been “grade inflation”, GCSEs are “not fit for purpose” and there has been a “race to the bottom” in terms of standards. We await more details of the replacement qualifications with interest. As ever, schools will do their best to implement the changes required of us; in the meantime it is important that youngsters are able to feel confident in the calibre and value of the qualifications they take.

Meanwhile, a local Wycombe school, now academy, has introduced a test for pupils wishing to attend it. A stated purpose of this is to create an all ability school. In point of fact, Buckinghamshire Upper Schools have all always been open to pupils of all abilities. It is likely to be of greater significance to parents and carers that pupils who do not take the test are unlikely to gain a place at the academy. Even those who do are not guaranteed a place if their particular “band” is full. Though the consequences of the academy’s decision have yet to be seen, concerns have been voiced that the introduction of the test and the associated “banding” procedure could lead to some local pupils failing to gain access to their neighbourhood school and having to travel long distances to the next school with space.

As I say, a remarkable summer in which the educational landscape has undergone major turbulence and more is planned. Is this turbulence in the best interests of the young people the system exists to serve?



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Community Cohesion Cup at Adams Park

Wycombe Wanderers Community Trust working in partnership with local organisations including Thames Valley Police, Wycombe District Council and local businesses, delivered the Community Cohesion Cup at Adams Park. The CCC was created to improve relationships in the community, by using football as a vehicle, especially relationships between the police and local young/adult individuals who have a negative view of each other.

The cup was 11 a side and each of the four teams played each other once, with the top two contesting the final; Thames Valley Police beat OAK FC (the Sunday League team) 2-1 in the final after extra time. The watching public and the players then tucked into tasty Halal food courtesy of Khan Caterers.



Winners of the CCC collect their medals.

Connexions offers young people aged 13 to 19* years free information, advice, guidance and support on:

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Creating a CV . . . Money matters . . . And much more . . .

Young people access the Connexions service through Connexions Personal Advisers (PAs) who are based in high street centres, and can be found in schools, colleges, outreach centres and voluntary organisations. Connexions PAs are enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked before they work with young people.

Contact Connexions

You are welcome to drop into one of our centres – we are open Monday to Friday, 1pm to 5pm or chat to us online at www.connexionsbucks.org.uk

Aylesbury Connexions

14-16 Temple Street
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Email: aylesbury@connexionsbucks.org.uk

High Wycombe Connexions

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Bucks HP13 6RZ
Tel: 0845 217 1368
Email: highwycombe@connexionsbucks.org.uk

* up to 25 years for young people with special needs

www.connexionsbucks.org.uk

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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Hajj

The annual Hajj Pilgrimage of the year 1433AH takes place in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, in the week of Eid Ul Adha. Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam, (the others being 'Kalma' proclamation in the belief of ONE GOD and that Mohammed (peace be upon him) is his messenger, 'Nimaz/salat' five daily prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadan and 'Zikat' the giving of 2.5% self assessed tax, levied on people with assets over a threshold) commemorates the story shared with Christianity and Judaism, of Hazrat Ibrahim's (Abraham) willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail in the name of God.

There will be between 2.5 to 3 million Muslims from all over the world, who will start the Hajj from 24 October 2012, the 8th day of the final Islamic Month of Zul-Hajj and it culminates on the 10th Zul Hajj, with Eid Ul Adha. Able bodied Muslims, who can financially support themselves during Hajj and also have sufficient resources for their family members left behind are obliged to undertake Hajj, at least once in their lifetime. The Annual Hajj attracts a uniquely multi racial, multi cultural and multi lingual gathering of the faithful who have an opportunity to visit and pray in the holiest Islamic cities of Makkah, which houses the 'Kaaba' (Arabic for cube and reportedly the oldest and continuously in use religious building dating back to the time even before Hazrat Ibrahim) towards which all Muslims face when offering formal prayers. Medina is also of significance to the Muslim world as the holy prophet is buried under the Green dome of the magnificent 'Masjid-E- Nabvi' or the Mosque of the Prophet. All pilgrims spend as much time as they can in both cities.

The Hajj has its own obligations, rituals and timetable which the future 'Hajjies' have to observe in detail. For about three days, from the 8 Zul-Hajj, the pilgrims leave Makkah for the Tented City of Mina, about 5 miles from Makkah, where they spend the first day and night and then move on to the plains of Arafat the next day after day break where they stay in lighter tents and pray. A hajj is not complete unless a pilgrim stays in the plains of Arafat during that day. At sun set the pilgrims leave Arafat for a nearby place called Madullfa, where pilgrims stay under the stars with minimum comfort. The next day they return to Mina and symbolically stone the 'satan' before returning to Makkah a final 'tauaaf' or walk around the Kaaba before they can discard 'aharam' the special dress, which for men consists of couple of plain white sheets, whatever your status or nationality, whilst the ladies can wear their ordinary cloths as long as their hair and their bodies are modestly covered.

Incidentally, the covering of the face by a veil is not permitted during the performance of the Hajj. Once Eid-UI Adha is celebrated on 10 of Zul Hajj, most Hajjis then make their way to Medina for the final few days of their stay in Saudi Arabia, unless they have been there before Hajj. The Hajjis will start to return in early November and we wish them a safe and joyous experience of a life time.

A teacher questions whether the exercise books are to aid learning or for the convenience of teachers & record keeping?

I wonder what the general feeling is on this current pet peeve of mine. Some teachers prefer to keep their pupils' exercise books in school whilst others prefer to allow their students to keep them. So what are the pros and cons of each scenario?

Teachers who keep pupils' exercise books claim that it gives them easy access, when they have the time to mark them; students do not lose their books. A spot-check on the books results in a full set so the books are always fully marked as they (teachers) are accountable for the books and there is proof in the books of all work that was done in the class.

Teachers who allow pupils to keep their books often note that some pupils will lose their books and have to buy a new one at say 50p; the teacher may have to set detentions to get the pupil to catch up with the work that they lose in the process. If a spot check is made on the books there might not be a full set and may contain books that are not fully marked as a child may have been absent or not given their book in when they were last taken in for marking.

Now, consider the following questions:

1. Should pupils in secondary schools be capable of taking care of their own exercise books? If not, when will they be able to learn?

2. Should homework be done in the book next to the relevant lesson or stuck in after a few lessons or not at all?

3. When class work is not able to be completed in lesson, when will it be done if the book is kept by the teacher?

4. Would a parent be averse to meeting the replacement cost, after chastising the child for losing it?

5. Should a child have access to the work done in order to revise after every lesson? If not, what is the point of doing the work in the first place?

6. Do parents have a responsibility to look at their children's exercise books in order to check the quality and quantity of the work done in the lesson?

7. Will doing the above (Q5) cause children to produce better quality work and therefore, raise attainment?

8. How can a teacher teach children to take responsibility for their own learning whilst simultaneously taking away the chance for them and their parents to be responsible for an exercise book?

Can you guess to which group of teachers I belong?
Any feedback would be helpful, so please let the Editor know if you have any views.

Sanam-Ullah tells us about 'The Great Learner Project' workshop, which she helped to deliver at Highworth School

'The Great Learner Project' workshop was led by Clare Pankhania, a teacher at Highworth School, for MPA mothers in High Wycombe, on Sunday 1 July 2012.

The Great Learner Project (GLP) looks at the concepts of 'mindsets' and 'philosophy for children'. The key attributes of the GLP include: communicating well, asking questions, analysing, working things out, working well with others, being able to reason and justify opinions and taking responsibility.

Parents should work with teachers to make our children Great Learners for life because a learner for life will always persevere no matter the result. One way to develop great learners is through 'mindsets', a set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determines one's behaviour, outlook and mental attitude.

"The more you challenge your mind, the more your brain cells grow"

"Observe, learn and improve"

"Having innate talent is not a goal. Expanding skills and knowledge is"

The second part of the workshop looked at Philosophy for Children, which some schools already do with children from primary school age. In this workshop the parents were given an opportunity to engage in a session similar to one that children participate in. The parents took part in a discussion about philosophical concepts, prompted by a simple story book, which in this workshop were about friendship and lying, each parent taking it in turns to put forward their opinions. When this is done with children, the discussion is owned by the children and led by them with the adult only facilitating. The children have a safe environment to say their point of view without there being a right or wrong answer.

There are many advantages of engaging children in philosophical discussions and debates of which a key one is that it develops higher order thinking, that includes skills such as analysing, evaluating, critical thinking and justifying their thoughts. It also requires them to then communicate their ideas as well as respecting the opinions of others, which all contribute to developing better learners. Talking to your children, discussing various topics and even debating with them is vital to intellectual development and helping them have the courage to justify their own opinion.

All of the parents from the workshop said that they would look for opportunities to engage their children in philosophical questions at home, whilst resisting the urge to influence their children's views!

Please visit the MPA website for Sanam's full notes of the workshop www.mpawycombe.co.uk

Here are some famous quotations

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand."

[Albert Einstein](#)

"You ain't gonna miss your water until your well runs dry."

[Bob Marley](#)

"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds. Won't you help to sing the songs of freedom?"

[Bob Marley](#)

"I destroy my enemy when I make him my friend."

[Abraham Lincoln](#)

Would you like to get involved with the MPA? Do you have an article you would like to submit? Then please get in touch via our website mpawycombe.co.uk

Dear friend and Colleague

MPA AGM

You are cordially invited to the MPA AGM, at Sir William Ramsay School, on Saturday, 17 November 2012, at 9.30 AM for a 10 AM start, where information about the roles and responsibilities of a school governor will also be provided.

Rafiq Raja
Chairman

Agenda

- 09.30 Registration
- 10.00 Welcome & introductions - Rafiq Raja (MPA Chairman)
- 10.05 Talawat
- 10.10 Chairman
- 10.15 Election of a new executive committee, (including chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and 7 other members). Please let the MPA chairman know if you would like to offer yourself for election for any position.
- 10.45 The Roles & Responsibilities of a School Governor.
- 11.35 Break
- 11.45 Mr Mark Mayne – New Head of Sir William Ramsay School
- 12.15 Parental Concerns & Questions
- 12.45 Closure & refreshments

Please email or telephone and let the MPA chairman (Rafiq Raja) know if you intend to come. This will help for catering purposes.
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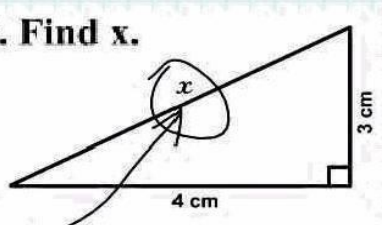
How to fail with dignity. Here are some answers given on real exam papers, for your enjoyment.

(d) Explain why phosphorus trichloride (PCl_3) is polar.
God made it that way.

Explain the phrase 'free press'.
When your mum irons trousers for you.

What did Mahatma Gandhi and Genghis Khan have in common?
Unusual names

3. Find x .



Here it is

Name six animals which live specifically in the Arctic.
Two polar bears
~~Three~~ Four Seals

Where was the American Declaration of Independence signed?
At the bottom.

www.funnyexamanswers.com

Transparency Worksheet 23
Hard and Soft Water

1. Briefly explain what hard water is. ice

2. Note that calcium is one of the solids dissolved in ocean water. Describe two ways by which calcium can be removed from ocean water.

The World of Education/Taleem Ki Duniya (TKD) is a tremendous opportunity to discuss local and national educational matters (and dissemination of knowledge about other issues relating to health, diet, employment, taxation, etc) for the benefit of the Urdu/Punjabi speaking listeners and their children, who are the future for all of us. See bottom of page 3, for more information.

A professional advisor has some words of wisdom for Academy Schools

UHY Hacker Young now works with almost 50 academy schools across the UK. Earlier this year, some of our academy clients were selected by the EFA, unexpectedly, for a Financial Management and Governance Evaluation (FMGE) return validation visit.

The visits are being used by the EFA to investigate further specific areas of the school's FMGE return. Academies should be aware that these validation visits are extremely detailed and time consuming.

Fortunately the EFA recently announced that academies which provide timely audited financial statements for 2011/12 will not be required to complete a FMGE return. Data released by the EFA has announced that a relatively high percentage of academies did not file their 2011 accounts with the YPLA by the 31 December deadline, but the exemption from having to complete the FMGE will no doubt prove an additional incentive.

New academy trusts that will not be producing financial statements until 31 August 2013 will be asked to complete a revised, shorter, FMGE for their first year only.

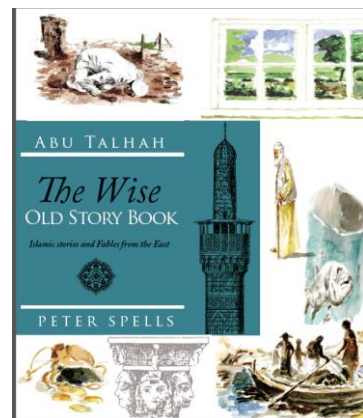
The advice to academy schools would be to ensure that your 2011/12 accounts are audited and submitted ahead of deadline, to avoid the unnecessary burden of completing the FMGE return and leaving the school exposed to a potential validation visit as a result.

If you would like further information, please contact Gregory Chong in our London office at g.chong@uhy-uk.com.

Book Review

The Wise Old Story Book

By Abu Talhah



"Our children are our trust; they are the delights of our hearts and the hope of our future. Let us nourish their souls with words of wisdom and truth. Let their imaginations soar through the skies, fly with the wind, and travel to where only the pure and innocent go."

"This exquisite collection of Islamic stories will offer children and their parents an opportunity to reflect upon timeless lessons of wisdom. Transcending different cultures and places, this is a thoughtful selection of stories to be shared and treasured with the whole family."

The book contains 15 stories, spanning over 100 A4 pages, well written with superb illustrations, appealing to both children and adults alike.

Furthermore, all the profits from the sale of this book will go to charity and or reinvested to publish more books. The book is available to buy from www.amazon.co.uk

We can get a special rate if the order is over 2 dozen. So anyone interested in buying this book, please contact the MPA.

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Full Page £60. (Black and white
only. Colour rates negotiable)

Congratulations to Awaaz Radio, Wycombe's Community Radio station, for being recognised at the Pakistan Achievement Awards 2012. Awaaz Radio was presented with the Excellent Community Services Award, in only its second year of 24/7 broadcasting to the Asian community in general and the Pakistani community in particular.

The Pakistan Achievement Awards 2012 were held at the Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square in London on Saturday 20th October

Well done to the team at Awaaz Radio!

The MPA Treasurer, Riaz Ahmed tells us about his day spent at Kingston University learning about Raising Achievements of Muslim pupils.

In September I attended a seminar/workshop organised by the Muslim Council of Britain at Kingston University, on the subject of Raising Achievements of Muslim pupils.

The MCB has over 500 affiliated member organisations and their Education Committee organised the seminars and workshops. The guest speakers included Directors of supplementary schools, Educational consultants and Chair of Multi-academy, PhD research fellows, university lecturer Parenting experts and Head of schools. The presentations were very timely and interactive.

We spent some time on how does one measure and compare a success in a school. The notion is very critical in view of the governments various yardsticks.

In Islam, Education is much bigger than attainment. It is development of the person as a member of the society. A person with 6 A 'levels and 2 PhDs may not be educated if he is rude and bad mannered. The Islamic definition of education is TRUE knowledge otherwise you have learnt stories.

The government is encouraging Communities and parents to run the schools as Academies, Free schools or faith schools where the LA has little input. But how can any group take advantage of this, especially as the performance of minorities, like the Muslim pupils, after 11 years in school, averages 35% attaining 5 GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and Maths (ACEM). The national average is 58% and the government minimum is 40%. It was stressed that parents' need to challenge these low figures as the schools cannot use the EAL (English as an Additional Language); once a child has been in school for 3 years, the EAL label cannot apply to British born children.

A Birmingham Secondary school in Alum Rock, with 82% British Pakistani origin pupils had 18% ACEM in 1999 but it now has 76% ACME in 2012, after parental challenges and involvement to make the school environment relevant to the community. They started, breakfast and after school classes for homework and Islamic studies. They celebrated all cultures and faiths to make everyone, including the parents and local community to be inclusive. Pupil prayed in the hall while others watched with interest. Interestingly, the school head is an atheist whilst the deputy is a Sikh.

This school introduced some changes, such as:

- Ensuring parents knew that the school and staff are answerable to them.
- It's parents', not Ofsted', who challenge the school performance.
- Girls do not have to sit next to boys.
- Pre and after school clubs / classes started.
- Collective worship and mother's day celebrated to show respect (parents).
- Local role models and businesses invited to share food and culture.
- Differentiated approach and curriculum relevant to ethnicity was introduced.
- Welcome reception area for parents was designed.
- Celebrate success with BIG trophies that are visible on the mantel piece.
- Invite local police, sports centres and businesses to work with pupils.
- Raise funds for Muslim and other British charities.
- Invite all faith leaders.
- Hold Mosque classes, on site, after school.
- Hold parenting classes to inform parents that their TIME spent with children is the most treasured investment which will bring trust, love and learning.
- Training parents and teachers to praise and accept the children's higher and lower performance – praise to improve.
- Remove the FEAR getting of getting things wrong and encourage novelty / adventure.
- Contribution of Islam to history and science included in the curriculum.

Some important Conclusions and recommendations were made, which I believe we can try to implement her in High Wycombe. The basic conclusions to be drawn from the day were that:

1. Performance must be compared using the same measure.
2. Achievement will improve when all the pupils and parents can relate to the school ethos.
3. Success and failure must be encouraged. One learns from mistakes.

And the Recommendations included, stopping youngsters feeling alienated (and forming their own, rebellious gangs) the curriculum must relate to their culture and be inclusive. Parents need to feel welcome and realise that spending TIME with a child, be it playing, dinning, discussing, is the best investment, as it will develop mutual trust. You only learn from those you trust. But also use the principals of the examples given to challenge the schools and the parents to make the education relevant to the pupil and advice to parents included raising the concerns in writing and not personalising any issues and that the issues must be purpose driven not performance driven .



Parents Forum for Children
of African & Caribbean Heritage
IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD



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The PFCACH and MPA High Wycombe proudly invite parents to the

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at 11am on Saturday 15th December 2012

Entrance is **FREE**

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FREE Refreshments will be served

Are you a Parent?

Do you want your child to do well in school?
Do you want to learn more about how you can help them?
Do you want to know more about how to talk to schools/teachers?
Do you want to know what options are available 'after GCSE'?

If it is **YES**,
do attend this conference

EVENT SPONSORS



- 10.30am Registration
- 11.10am Introduction
- 11.20am Helping your Child get Better Results
- 12.30pm Break and Refreshments
- 1.15pm After School and Vocational training
- 2:25pm Key Note Speaker
- 2:40pm Questions and Answers
- 3:50pm End of Conference and view Exhibitors



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