

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2010



"It is in all our interests to help the underachievers when it matters."

Message from Rafiq Raja - MPA Chairman

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Rafiq Raja, Jane Penton, Dr Challanors School - Chair of Governors and Dr Katy Simmons, Cressex Chair of Governors, at the Launch of the Cressex Co-Operative Learning Trust 10.6.10.

It is amazing how much has changed since the last Newsletter at Easter. We have had a change of government which is seriously concerned with reducing the Budget deficit and education appears not to have been ring fenced enough from playing its part in reducing the deficit. It is not a bad idea to live within ones means but I wonder whether putting our children's future at risk is going to achieve the desired results.

The way some of the new build schemes have been scrapped it is lucky that Cressex School in High Wycombe has got its new building before the ferocious wielding of the axe against the schools for the future initiative.

Unfortunately the gap between the mainstream and Pakistani origin pupils in Bucks, as far as the 5 GCSE passes at grades A*-C, including Maths and English are concerned remains unchanged when looking at recent results. We understand that this situation will not change until the intervention programmes for helping year 11 pupils, such as undertaken by the Karima is available at a larger scale. (see page 7)

We urge all educational professionals, schools, parents and pupils to play their part in reducing the gap even in these difficult economic conditions for schools.

Ramadan the Month of fasting starts in early August this year and the MPA wishes every reader Ramadan Mubarak.

You are welcome to contact us with ANY comments or suggestions for reducing the achievement gap between the Pakistani heritage and mainstream pupils.

Cressex School on the move

On Friday July 16, students at the Cressex school said goodbye to their old school for the last time. When they go back to school after their summer holiday, they will be returning to their brand new building. Built at a cost of £31 million and paid for by the last government's Building Schools for the Future programme, the new building will bring new opportunities, not only for students, but for everyone who lives nearby. Soon the old building will be knocked down to make way for lawns and a new car park.

With its large classrooms, curriculum gardens, great sports facilities and exciting information technology, Cressex school will be an inspiring place to learn. Its performance spaces will encourage the arts and music - students have worked on wall hangings that will take pride of place in the glass-roofed atrium. David Hood, the Cressex Head Teacher, said 'We wanted our building to be able to change over the years, to reflect changing ideas about teaching and learning; we are sure that the new building will serve our community well for many years to come'.

Last November, students, staff and governors all gathered for the 'topping out' ceremony and a time capsule was buried, showing what life was like in 2009 at the school. Since then, students and teachers have made regular visits to the site. When the school was designed, everyone wanted flexible space and the 'wow' factor – and that's what they have got. A Year 8 student, visiting the building for the first time, was totally amazed when he went into the new sports hall. 'Miss', he said, looking awe-struck, 'Is this really going to be ours?'



Pakistani Cricket Team Players at Cressex School

A week before the end of term, the school had a special celebration to mark the end of the old school and the start of life in the new building. Hundreds of students, parents, staff and former pupils enjoyed an afternoon of sunshine and entertainment. At the end of the afternoon, everyone was thrilled when 4 members of the Pakistani Cricket Team, in England for the summer, arrived to sign autographs and have their photographs taken with students. David Hood said, 'This was a great way to mark the end of our time in this building. It was an afternoon to remember'.

This was just one of several celebrations held recently at Cressex. In June, everyone gathered in the new school to mark the launch of the Cressex Co-operative Learning Trust. The Trust brings together Wycombe Abbey School, Bucks New University, Dr. Challoners Grammar School, Bucks Local Authority and the Co-operative College. These new Friends of Cressex will support the school and give new opportunities to students.

It's an exciting time at Cressex - everyone is looking forward to the new school year and the opportunities it will bring. www.cressex.bucks.sch.uk

Linda Lewins, METAS Manager, has issued a helpful letter about Ramadan to Colleagues, which is reproduced here for your information.

RAMADAN DATES FOR 2010

Ramadan is the holiest month of the Islamic calendar and as such the end is marked by a celebration Eid Ul Fitr. Many schools find it helpful to avoid the month of Ramadan when planning parents' evenings, trips, open days etc., as Muslims will almost certainly not attend such functions at this time.

This year however, the month of Ramadan is expected to begin on the second week of August 2010 and finish the second week in September, just after pupils have returned to school for the new academic year.

Most Muslims rely on the local physical sighting of the moon to mark the beginning of Ramadan, but some use the calculated time of the new moon or the Saudi Arabian declaration to determine the start of the month. Since the new moon is not in the same state at the same time globally, the beginning and end dates of Ramadan depend on which lunar sightings are received in each respective location. As a result, Ramadan dates vary in different areas, but usually only by a day or two.

Accordingly, I am writing to inform you that in 2010 the month of Ramadan will be from the 10th or 11th of August until 9th or 10th of September 2010.

These dates allow for some uncertainty occasioned by the fact that the month does not start until the new moon is sighted.

I will Endeavour to confirm the dates with different mosques in different areas of the county and put these dates on the METAS website www.bucksgfl.org.uk/metas under 'latest news' as soon as I have clarification at the beginning of the new term.

Only one authorised day is allowed as a religious holiday – this has been agreed with Imams from the local Mosques. Hopefully schools will contact families and alert them to the expectations of the school, explaining that one day only will be authorised and asking them to identify which day they will be taking.

The next significant Muslim celebration that impacts on attendance will be **Eid-ul-Adha**, celebrating the **end of the Hajj. This will be on Tuesday 16th of November**. Again it should be explained to families that **only one day** should be taken as a holiday. Schools with high numbers of Muslim pupils may consider taking their inset day at this time.

I hope that you will find this information helpful in planning events for next term. Should you need any further information or guidance please do not hesitate to contact me.

NEWS:

There are a host of activities running throughout the district over the summer aimed at 3-16 year olds.

Please see the following link for details.

<http://www.swr.bucks.sch.uk/downloads/Summer%20Sports%20Programme%202010.pdf>

A view of Ramadan

It all starts before dawn when everyone in the family gets up to eat. This meal ends at twilight and signifies the beginning of the fast each day. It has a huge impact, especially for families where both parents work. The sense of togetherness throughout Ramadan is a wonderful experience.

The fact that the pre-dawn meal is not only allowed, but also encouraged suggests that fasting is not meant to be simply a feat of physical endurance. It's more about changing ones daily routine by controlling the appetites. Depriving oneself of, say, the bar of chocolate at break-time is a small exercise in self-discipline. The idea is that slowly through the month one is able to generate enough self-discipline and control, that dealing with serious character flaws, such as envy and jealousy, becomes possible.

At the same time, virtuous qualities of patience, generosity and love are to be developed. Fasting is a spiritual tool, it unlocks the psyche and gives the individual a practical methodology for changing and becoming a better person.

Ramadan adds another dimension to community life. The first revelation of the Koran occurred in this month. According to tradition the Archangel Gabriel taught the words to the Blessed Prophet. Following this example, Muslims try to listen to a whole reading of the Koran during Ramadan.

In a time when the walls of the mind are closing in on us, and we are constantly being unsettled by inane problems like traffic and work-related stress Ramadan comes as a liberating experience. Fasting teaches us that the first step in learning to share is to control ones own urge to consume - a message that has a certain poignancy in the run-up to Christmas.

Highcrest hosts the Sixth Form Conference “The Changing Face of Britain”

On Wednesday 24th March Highcrest Community School held the first Sixth Form Conference in the Wycombe area on “The Changing Face of Britain”.

Miss Moynihan opened the conference and welcomed the guests and sixth form students from Wycombe High School. Ruth Gunstone, Director of Student Experience, Buckinghamshire New University then started the education debate. Ruth spoke about how the university experience is changing and how the learning environment through the advancement of technology is contributing to this change.

The audience were then invited to ask questions of the panel and Ruth Gunstone. The panel of guests were: Zahid Javid, METAS; Rafiq Raja, Chair of the Muslim Parents Association; Ann Bowker, Chair of the Wycombe Sharing of Faiths and Jay Blades, ‘Street Dreams’ and Highcrest Community School Governor.

At 2.45pm the audience and guests adjourned for some light refreshments. The second part of the Conference was originally going to be opened by Chief Inspector Colin Seaton, but at short notice he was unable to attend. Sarah Poolman, Community Cohesion Inspector, spoke on his behalf about the importance of communities working together and the original concept of the Police force, which was ‘Police by Consent’.

Then questions were asked of the panel who for this section consisted: Peter Roberts, Youth Service; Sarah Poolman, Community Cohesion Inspector; Tonnie Adoh, African Caribbean Forum and Simon Dust, Vicar of St Andrews Church.



Mike Jones, Holmer Green Senior School Head, gives an update

At Holmer Green Senior School we are enjoying huge success with examination results at 70% at GCSE and a Sixth Form that has doubled in size over the past three years. We set our expectations sky high, "Achievement and Opportunity for all", and believe every single one of our children can attain good GCSE results. Those of the highest ability are able to attain as well as their peers at Grammar schools and those who arrive with low attainment at Primary school are able to leave with a place secured on a high quality vocational programme.

This year our most able Sixth Formers are set to gain A or B grades across all their subjects and as a result we have applicants to Oxford colleges as well as top Russell Group universities such as Warwick and Bristol. We have set up a vocational skills centre to teach construction and work based skills and have Year 11 students ready to progress to apprenticeships on leaving us this summer.

This success and the breadth of our provision are passionately supported by our parents who support us through our staff, parent and pupil partnership programme. Every child in their examination year has a meeting with their parents and a senior leader to explore a wide range of strategies to ensure the best performance in every subject.

Positive, respectful and supportive relationships between pupils are of course another vital factor and we take great pride in the harmonious culture at HGSS. Year 10 pupils have already volunteered and been trained to mentor our new Year 7 pupils from September. Our anti bullying committee made up of Year 11 and Sixth Form students are on hand to offer support every break and lunchtime and run a series of inspirational assemblies throughout the school year.

It was a pleasure to invite Rafiq Raja to visit and enjoy a tour of our school last term. We want to share our success with all parents, from all backgrounds and to ensure that, as an inclusive school, the needs and concerns of every child and parent are met. Parental expectation is at the heart of any school's success. It certainly is at HGSS. I look forward to keeping you all updated through future MPA publications and hopefully, welcoming many of you to HGSS.

Michael Jones - Headteacher HGSS

Why not tell us what is going on in your school?

Now for something a little different. The human mind is capable of filling in the gaps or correcting patterns of writing, which do not follow the normal rules. Here is a good example, which you should have no trouble in reading.

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Academies – Opportunity or Threat

As you may have heard in the press, the Academies bill is moving through the Houses of parliament. This will allow your child's school to become independent from the local authority. If your child's school has been rated as "outstanding" by OFSTED, then this can happen virtually automatically. Schools not in that category will still require a sponsor.

However these schools won't be required to consult parents or the local community, and we believe this is wrong. The academies that exist currently had to undergo consultation with the local authority, parents, the community and staff.

What you must remember is that these 'outstanding schools', have been part of the local authority when they became outstanding, so what's the point of them moving away from local authority support now, and losing the expertise of the support services that help them currently?

The effect of a significant number of schools in Buckinghamshire becoming academies will be to threaten the capacity of the Local Authority to provide a wide range of services, from special needs and EMA support to Occupational Health and pensions and payroll services; from school transport to NQT induction; from governor support services to in-service training. The only extra money that Academies will get is the money that currently funds these services. School admissions arrangements will become increasingly chaotic, and the mechanism for schools to work together on all sorts of issues will be broken.

A small number of Academies that are well-intentioned can work within a framework largely determined and funded by other schools and partners, but a larger number all taking the money for central planning and central services out of the pot and not being involved in the consultative mechanisms will soon destroy effective arrangements previously put there to benefit all.

The local authority is not and never will be perfect, but it is a safety net when there are problems with budgets, potential redundancy and deficit situations, problems with financial management, heads and governors facing complex situations around staff health, induction, training needs, disability provision, challenging parents and pupils, emergency situations such as fires, floods and major crimes, and so on. It is also a source of advice and guidance on a wide range of everyday issues that schools have to deal with, developed locally, based on people's practical experience.

The role of the local authority in its whole range of services, such as EMA and SEN support, education welfare, buildings support, health and safety, payroll and pensions, library, music, interfaith and outdoor education services, curriculum support, legal services, governor support, risk and insurance management, financial services and more is very hard for smaller or more distant providers to replicate.

Making sure that the school's needs in these respects are covered becomes a whole new aspect of management for a school, magnifying the risk that running a school as a deliverer of education is overshadowed by running the school as a business.

Annette Pryce- Buckinghamshire National Union of Teachers

The MPA has been exploring ways and means of reducing the educational achievement gap which exists between the Pakistani origin and mainstream children in Bucks and we welcome the success of the Karima Supplementary School – Year 11 GCSE Intervention Project.

In 2009 the Karima Foundation in partnership with Cressex Community School and Bucks Education Authority delivered a 3 month pilot project that provided community based learning support for year 11 pupils in order to prepare them for their Maths and English GCSE examinations.

The short term intervention programme had the primary goals of:

1. Increasing the motivation of the student
2. Increasing the academic performance of the student

The programme was aimed at those pupils who, based on predictions, were not expected to achieve a grade C or above. The criteria for pupil selection were:

- a. Students had to be performing below their school targets and specifically below the grade C in Maths or English
- b. Students' involvement had to be voluntary

We worked closely with the school but also with Youth and Outreach workers to identify 45 BME students from Yr 11 groups, to take part in this pilot.

Specialist Maths and English teachers were commissioned to design an Intervention Programme based on feedback from Schools and identified gaps in learning needs. .

With a team of 5 teachers the 3 month programme was delivered successfully. 20 girls and 18 boys took part in the programme, with pupils attending from Cressex, Holmer Green, Highcrest and Great Marlow Schools.

Students attended 2.5 hour weekly sessions for 3 months on a Saturday morning with the majority of students having 100% attendance.

Outcomes:

- 62% of pupils achieved a grade C in English or Maths over this period. (None of these students was expected or predicted by their respective schools to achieve a grade C in Maths or English.)
- According to the Exit Surveys: 100% of students felt the unique learning environment and focussed teaching improved their preparation for their GCSE exams
- Students and Staff shared a good relationship and were able to relate to each other
- Lessons were delivered in contexts that engaged students

Continued on next page....

NEWS: Gulshan-e-Wycombe group is carrying out a feasibility study about the possibility of an Islamic Garden in High Wycombe. The group has organized a trip to High Grove, on Tuesday, 7 September 2010. There are still a few seats available on the mini bus at £20 per seat. Those interested can contact the group through the MPA.

NEWS:

The MPA has a website, which is under construction at the moment but it is hoped to be functioning soon.

mpawycombe.co.uk

If you would like to contribute any articles or information, then please contact Rafiq Raja

Since then....

At the Karima al-Marwaziyya Foundation we firmly believe that there is a continual need for short term intervention projects such as the pilot programme to support young people who are currently in need of support with their studies. Early Intervention is a key route by which we can significantly reduce the number of students leaving school without the crucial 5 A*- C grades. They offer an efficacious, holistic approach to providing both short and long term interventions.

We have delivered the programme via our supplementary schools, which have been established since 2005. We have focused heavily on recruiting Community based Teachers and providing structured CPD programmes to meet the needs of those Teachers, so that we provide the best possible education to the Young People in our care. The Foundation has built up a large pool of paid and volunteer staff who deliver on their specialism's to best support the Schools.

Background of the Karima al-Marwaziyya Foundation - KMF

The Karima Foundation is a grassroots organisation that has been established since 1998. The Foundation became a registered charity in 2007.

The Foundation operates numerous projects including 3 supplementary schools, Language school, Arts, Sports, Community Cohesion projects and full time youth provision.

The Supplementary Schools are Faith inspired and base their foundations on early 19th century educationalist Charlotte Mason's philosophy of creating highly literate living books written by writers (teachers) who like the writers have a rich story to tell/live. Two Saturday schools (a primary and a secondary school) as well as a weekday after-school program, operate serving approx 150 young people from the Pakistani/Bangladeshi/Kashmiri community in the Wycombe area (with a particular focus on Castlefield and Oakridge)

Further details of our activities

can be found on our website: www.karima.org.uk

For contact please email: school@karima.org.uk or general enquiries to info@karima.org.uk

Sir William Ramsay School (SWR) needs a Community Governor, John Bajina a SWR School governor asks for help in finding the right person.

Sir William Ramsay School (SWR) a secondary school in Hazlemere, north side of High Wycombe, has a sizeable number of Pakistani Heritage students. Ofsted recently found the school to be a 'Very Good', with Outstanding Headteacher, Governing Board, Arts Department and Curriculum.

In the past, we have enjoyed some outstanding Pakistani community leaders as Governors, we are most grateful to them for their input and representation. Currently, we have no Governors from the Pakistani origin Community. The SWR Board of Governors is constantly aware of all the pupils' need and feel strongly that there should be a fair representation from the community on its Board.

If you feel you could be a School Governor, contribute to our school, help us raise awareness of the need for children's education with parents and within our Community, then the School would very much like to talk to you.

Being a School Governor is neither a paid position, nor will you be required to contribute anything but your time and commitment. Perhaps you could email me for an initial, no obligations chat. john.bajina@virgin.net

John Bajina

SWR School Governor & MPA Executive Committee member.

PRESS RELEASE

Olympic Open Weekend event at Wycombe Community Festival

As part of the Cultural Olympiad Open Weekend celebrations, the Wycombe Community Festival will take place on Saturday 24th July from 12pm-6pm, at the Sir William Ramsay School, High Wycombe.

The event is a free family fun day for anyone to attend and enjoy the vibrant performances, colourful parades and learn about a variety of activities happening within the area. An international day in welcoming the world through the sharing, and participation of cultural celebrations. As part of the open weekend challenge this year, the public attending will be encouraged to take part in playing a world instrument for free. Steelpan, DSamba, African and Dhol drumming taster workshops will be available to book early July.

The event provides a platform to showcase for young musical talent, with performances by visiting professional artists. Local organisations, creative artists and students will also be showcasing their work. Pupil's artistic performances and visual arts from Sir William Ramsay School that includes an Olympic sculpture trail.

The key feature will be three of the South East Inspire Mark projects showcased on the day.

Milton Keynes, Festive Road – Brewing Up Kettle project (Giant kettle & musicians for a tea performance)

Bucks New Uni, Creative Campus Initiative – Rhythm of Sport project (dance performance combined with the rhythm of music and their link to sport and fitness Choreography & Music composed by Bawren Tavaziva)

SV2G, Steelpan Stepping Stones project (Wycombe Steel Orchestra performing diverse genres of music on Steelpan)

If you would like to get involved please contact me to book space or discuss further please contact SV2G Office: 01494 436269, Mobile: 07967 296789 or Email: sv2g.office@tiscali.co.uk.



Become more involved with the MPA?

Contact MPA at: rafiaraja@hotmail.co.uk

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 still limit it to one page of this Newsletter and e-mail it as soon as possible.

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Making Connections

Wycombe Museum Inter Generation Project

We are looking for young people aged 14-19 years to be trained in interviewing, recording and editing techniques, to record oral histories of the Black and Asian community in High Wycombe.

This will be a fun and exciting project starting in the Summer Holidays 2010.

If you are interested or know of anyone who is please contact Zara or Carol at Wycombe Museum on telephone number 01494 421895

**wycombe
museum**

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