



Headlines

Easter 2009



School has continued at a busy pace over the last two months and it has been a great encouragement to see so many of our young people develop academically, emotionally and socially.

The focus of our school is of course Learning and Teaching. The outcomes have been seen in the recent school reports which every child has received. The majority of these reports reflect what I would expect: conscientious and committed students. In some instances, however, attainment is marred by lack of effort. While I don't expect every pupil to achieve top grades in every subject, it is in keeping with the ethos of this school that all pupils should always give of their best and reach their personal targets. Your support can help this be achieved.

Careers Education, Information and Guidance has never been more important. Opportunities have been provided for parents of Year 10 and Year 12 to meet with Mr Robb and his staff to help plan subject choices at GCSE and A-Level. Lower Sixth pupils have attended a UCAS Conference and a talk on studying at Scottish Universities. A group met with representatives of Oxford University. Parents' consultation evenings for a number of year groups have allowed for frank and honest dialogue between teachers and parents. The importance of parents and teachers, as well as pupils working together, as part of the same team, cannot be emphasised enough.

In the absence of some arrangement to assess pupils transferring to post-primary schools, our Board of Governors has endorsed its earlier commitment to AQE, a body comprising over 30 grammar schools in Northern Ireland, to ensure that academic criteria can be objectively applied to pupils entering LGS in 2010. A useful meeting with P6 parents was held recently in school. Further details of these arrangements can be found at www.aqe.org.uk

It has been a busy period for sporting events. Having dismissed near neighbours Dalriada in the 1st XV Bowl Competition, our rugby team narrowly lost to Royal School Armagh in the semi-final. The 2nd XV had a good run in its Cup, eventually exiting to Ballymena Academy. The Medallion XV is now through to the final of The Medallion Trophy, after a strong win over Cambridge House. Unfortunately, Cambridge House dismissed our U14 XI from the hockey Plate competition.

French debating is an impressive strength in LGS and we all look forward to our team doing well in the final round at QUB, having had earlier successes at Magee College. We have enjoyed the company of French visitors in our school and some of our senior pupils had a successful trip to Cluses, France. A large group from school recently hit the ski slopes in Switzerland.

As part of our International links, Mr Handforth and Mrs Moles had a fruitful visit to Sri Lanka, under the auspices of The British Council.

Mr S Bogle was invited to Hillsborough Castle to see former pupils Ceara McCool and Abbie Coulter presented with their Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Awards by HRH Prince Philip.

In preparation for next year a large number of staff have been involved in in-service training for revised GCSE and A2 specifications. I have been very impressed by the commitment of our teaching staff to planning for yet more changes in the curriculum. As a whole staff, we spent a day reflecting on the strengths and areas for development of our school. This will form the basis of our planning for the future.

Swimming galas, netball and football fixtures, Scripture Union meetings and charity work have all taken place. The many extra-curricular activities available serve to enhance the experiences of your son/daughter.

I thank everyone for their support. The Staff, Board of Governors, our active Parents' Association, the pupils and parents have, in so many ways, contributed to the work over the last two months as together we strive for our mission statement – learning, caring, preparing for life.

Mr R Wilson (Principal)

FRANTIC FEBRUARY FOR FRENCH DEBATERS



The month of February has been hectic for our French debating team of Chris Donnell, Lisa McNeill and Kirsten Wilson (all Year 14) and Matthew Haslett (Year 13). The late start to this year's competition has led to a fixture pile-up that would have caused many a Premiership football manager to tear his hair out. However, with total dedication and ultimate *sang froid*, our team have won two debates in the space of three weeks and now find themselves in the final of this year's "Alliance Française A-Level French Debating Competition" where they will compete against Friends School, Lisburn.

The final will take place at Queen's University, Belfast, on Wednesday 25 March.

The month began with a tricky quarter-final tie against St Columb's College where we had to speak against the motion "*Les femmes doivent se masculiniser pour réussir dans le monde du travail*" (Women must make themselves more masculine to succeed in the world of work). A strong performance saw us through with Lisa McNeill being awarded the prize for best overall speaker.

With no time to rest on their laurels, the team started preparing immediately for the semi-final debate against Thornhill College. Once again, we had to argue against the motion which this time was "*Avec l'augmentation de l'espérance de vie, on devrait prendre la retraite à 70 ans*" (With increasing life expectancy, we should retire at 70). As expected, this proved to be a close contest as neither team wanted to go out of the competition at this stage. Both teams argued passionately but with a mixture of reasoned argument, humour and even a little bit of flirting, we won through again with our captain, Chris Donnell, this time being judged best overall speaker.

I would like to congratulate Chris, Lisa, Matthew and Kirsten for their progress so far in a competition which is certainly not for the faint-hearted. Can they go one step further and bring the trophy back to the school for the third time in the last four years? Let's wish them well.

Mr I Sampson

PROCEDURES FOR PUPILS SIGNING OUT FOR APPOINTMENTS

Parents are reminded of the procedures for pupils who have to sign out of school for appointments:

- 1 A note or a pink Temporary Leave of Absence form which is available from Form Teachers, explaining the request to leave school, stating the date, times of collection and return and signed by a parent. The pupil must give this note to one of the Vice Principals at least one day in advance of the appointment.
- 2 Upon the Vice Principal's approval and signature, the pupil should obtain a buff coloured slip from the office. This is presented to the office at the time of departure when the pupil should sign the 'signing out' book.
- 3 To conform to Child Protection guidelines, parents should come into the school foyer to collect their child, rather than wait in the car park. Pupils will not be allowed to leave the premises without adult supervision.
- 4 Sixth form students may present a note to their tutor or study supervisor who may sign it. Sixth form students must sign out in the 'signing out' book also.

Mr N Handforth

TESCO FOR SCHOOLS AND CLUBS

It's that time of year again as we here at LGS begin our frantic search for Tesco vouchers. This year we are aiming to collect around 30,000 vouchers (just over 30 vouchers per student) to purchase much needed ICT and Sports equipment. Vouchers are available in store from Monday 2nd March until Sunday 7 June 2009 so please get collecting, your help is greatly appreciated!

Mrs V Campbell

HOCKEY

Congratulations to the following girls who have been selected for the Western Area Board's U15 XI and U17 XI.

Squads: U15XI – Rachel McCluskey, Becky McMullan, Nadine Mullan

U17 XI – Katy McKay, Lauren Butcher, Emma Haslett, Hanna Dickson.

They will take part in the respective tournaments next week at Lisnagarvey.

Katy has also been selected to play goal-keeper for the Ulster U16B XI against Leinster at Easter. Well done Katy!

Fundraising for our South American tour is still ongoing. Many, many thanks to all those who supported our fashion show last month. Feedback from those who attended was very positive – a fun and financially lucrative evening!

We still have some way to go to reach our target and would like to remind you of our 'Summer Promenade' on the evening of 22 May 2009 in the school. Tickets for this, our final fundraising venture, can be obtained from the school office or any member of the touring squad and are priced at £30. This includes a champagne reception and alfresco buffet in the Courtyard. Those taking part are Eugene O'Hagan (of the Priests), Joanna Higgins, Claire Gordon and the Altnagelvin Hospital Choir. We anticipate a large turn out at this event so advise you to purchase your tickets early to avoid disappointment.

Mrs J Higgins

THE ROE VALLEY LEARNING COMMUNITY VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

February 2009 saw the launch, in LGS, of The Roe Valley Learning Community Virtual Learning Environment.

Choosing to tailor the open source learning platform Moodle with the help of Leading Moodle Partner Synergy Learning www.synergy-learning.com, LGS and the other partnership schools in the Roe Valley are benefiting from technology tailored to the specific needs of staff and students.

Using a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), pupils will be able to log on, search resources, receive and complete homework and talk to teachers and peers and participate in online discussion forums.

Five LGS teachers have already been fully trained in the creation of these online courses and look forward to employing their newly acquired skills in the online environment. It is anticipated that this training will roll out to other interested staff in the coming months so that a wide range of subject areas will subsequently benefit from this partnership initiative.

The new VLE is found at <http://lgs.rvlc-vle.org>



Principals:
Mrs Long (Altnagelvin Hospital School),
Mr Riley, (Limavady High School),
Mr Wilson, (LGS), Mr McLaughlin, (Rossmar School),
and Mrs McKenna (St Marys High School).



School Leaders of the ICT Focus Group:
Mr M Gormley, Mr J McAlister (Synergy), Mr S Keown,
Mrs K Henry, Mr D Young.

KNIFE CRIME AWARENESS

As part of the Learning for Life and Work strand of the Revised Curriculum, pupils from 9X will be attending an interactive theatre production at the Waterside Theatre in Londonderry on Wednesday 25 March to promote awareness about knife crime. This event is organised by NIO and PSNI and will be followed up by all Year 9 pupils in Personal Development classes.

Mrs J McCluskey

GCSE ART AND DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMS

GCSE Practical Exams will take place on: Monday 30 March from 9.00 am-12.25 pm
Tuesday 31 March from 1.30-4.30 pm
Wednesday 1 April from 1.30-4.30 pm

Mrs J McCluskey

NOTIFICATION OF DATA CHANGES

Parents are requested to inform the school if there are any changes to personal circumstances which would affect our records. Typically, this would include changes of address, telephone and other contact information, including e-mail, parental responsibility, travel and meal arrangements, doctor and medical conditions. You can phone the school on 028 7776 0950 or e-mail at office@lgs.limavady.ni.sch.uk

Mr J Calwell

PUPIL MEDICATION

In keeping with the Department of Education's Guidance on supporting Pupils with Medication Needs (2008), parents are asked to note the following points:

- 1 The administration of medication to children remains the responsibility of the parent or those with parental responsibility.
- 2 Medication should only be taken to school when absolutely essential.
- 3 Parents should be encouraged to request, where possible, that medication be prescribed in dose frequencies which enable it to be taken outside school hours eg medicines that need to be taken three times a day could be taken in the morning, after school hours and at bedtime.
- 4 There may be occasions where school staff may be asked to administer medication, but they cannot be directed to do so. Any parent who wishes the school to administer their child's medicine should contact Mr Little or Mrs Cromie.
- 5 Schools should be alerted to the particular risks for young persons in taking Aspirin or Ibuprofen and these should not be routinely administered unless there is no clear medical guidance.
- 6 Parents should request Form M6 from the school office if there are any changes in their requirements relating to medicines.

Mr C Little

PERSPECTIVES – LEARNING TODAY FOR TOMORROW

Do you feel your child is being prepared for the 21st Century world in which they will live and work?

Do you want to know more about how the Northern Ireland Curriculum is doing this?

Then don't miss: Perspectives – Learning Today For Tomorrow.

This television programme, produced specifically for parents by North Eastern Education and Library Board TV, will be broadcast on Information TV (Sky channel 166 and Freeview channel 85) on Monday 23 March at 5.30 pm. It will be repeated at the same time on 25, 27, 28, 30 March and 1, 3 and 4 April.

The programme will be simultaneously broadcast on www.information.tv and available to watch or download on www.neelb.tv from 24 March onwards.

If you do not have access to satellite television or the internet – a copy can be obtained by calling the North Eastern Education and Library Board Centre in Antrim on 028 9448 2200. Please quote Parents' TV programme.

Mr R Wilson

Senior French Exchange – Cluses 2009

On Sunday 8 March (at three thirty in the morning!), eleven girls from Year 13, accompanied by Mr Sampson and Miss Coid, set off for France. We flew from Belfast International to Geneva and crossed the border by coach, arriving at the *Lycée Charles Poncet* in the town of Cluses to meet our exchange partners. After a brief reception at the school we were left in the very capable hands of our host families.

The group enjoyed an exciting, action-packed week with activities and excursions including guided tours of Geneva and the United Nations building, a meeting with the deputy mayor of Cluses, a recording session with French rap artist Herakles, a lively debate on the subject of drugs, a trip to the beautiful town of Chamonix and an afternoon sledging in the mountains with our partners. Even the teachers managed to enjoy some “down-time” in the snow!

Of course, what is a trip abroad without a taste of the regional cuisine? During the exchange we were given the chance to sample such local dishes as crêpes, Tartiflette, Reblochon cheese, Fondue and (yes, really) sausages stuffed with cabbage!



We all had an amazing time during our stay in Cluses: we learnt a lot about French culture during the week, as well as some interesting new vocab! We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of our partners in Limavady at the end of the month.

Emma McMullan (Year 13)

Sri Lanka

Three years ago I was invited by The British Council to take part in a Global Seminar in Colombo, Sri Lanka with the aim of establishing an educational partnership with a local school. As a result, Limavady Grammar and Bishop’s College in Colombo were twinned. In March 2007, Mrs Nimnaaz Fouzik visited Limavady, whilst in June of that year, Dr Alan Bogle taught for a week in Colombo. The joint project work has now been formalised into a three year Global Contract which allows two teachers from each school to exchange each year.

Mrs Moles and I travelled to Colombo on Thursday 26 February. During our time in the 2,500 pupil school we taught for five days, not only topics in our subjects, but also exchanging knowledge about the two schools’ different cultures. We were fortunate to be able to travel to Galee in the south of the island during the Sunday of our stay. This gave us first hand experience of the beauty of the island, the friendliness of the people as well as the sheer madness of the driving!

Bishop’s College was founded by the Anglican Church and whilst the School retains its deep Christian ethos, many of the girls are Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu as well as Christian.

We found the pupils focused, very eager to learn and very proud of their diverse culture. This was evident in the Ethnic Fusion show that the girls produced for us.

Our hosts were the epitome of kindness and consideration, not only in their hospitality, but in their concern for us in the daily 34°C heat.

We look forward to developing our project work by improving our communication as well as welcoming Mrs Anushika Liyange and Mrs Niveditha Gunathilake to Limavady Grammar School in June.

Finally, as we are proud of our International Schools Award, we are delighted that Bishop’s College has become one of the first schools in Sri Lanka to be accredited with the ISA.

Mr N Handforth

CHARITY NEWS

As many of you are aware, we have been using our weekly charity collections to sponsor a child in Sri Lanka. We have recently received a letter from World Vision to inform us that, Dilani, our sponsored child, has decided to complete her education at a different college. This means that we can no longer sponsor her. Our new sponsored child is called Kadija Brima and comes from Sierra Leone. We hope that you will continue to support us in this worthwhile venture.

At the end of the Christmas term almost 100 pupils took part in a sponsored fast for Concern. We were happy to raise over £800 for those living in difficult circumstances in the developing world.

In February we delivered over 700 Rolos for Valentine's Day and raised £280 for the Chest Heart and Stroke Association. A special thank you goes to the girls in Year 9 who contributed most! Also in February we presented a cheque for £1,420.78 to the Northern Ireland Childrens' Hospice. This money was raised by the Modern Languages Department "Sponsored Speak" and the School Christmas Concert.

We also sold 360 red noses for Comic Relief. Once again we would like to thank everyone who has supported us so generously throughout the year.



The Charity Committee

WALKING FOR SCHOOLS

Over the past four years over £60,000 has been raised to help us build a secondary school for girls at Oolusyan in Kajiado District, Kenya. Last summer, 36 teachers and pupils spent four weeks helping in the construction of this school. We hope to raise a further £30,000 to complete our involvement in this project. This year's "Walk for Schools" will take place on Saturday 25 April and will follow our normal route from Eglinton (St Canice's Church Hall) to Limavady Grammar School. We invite you to join with us for this event. Application forms are available from the School.

Mr P Ferguson

School breaks up for Easter holiday on Friday 3 April at 12.30 pm and reopens on Monday 20 April at 9.00 am. Buses along the Londonderry route **only** will leave the school grounds at 12.40 pm. All other buses are at usual times.