

# THE ORYX

*The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### Surveys

Last week all parents were sent a survey and a request to complete it. It is part of the continuing conversation that was started in June about the future of the school. We would like to know what it is about WIS that makes us special. As we consider various options for the coming years, what do we particularly need to keep in the forefront of our minds?

Thank you to those who have so far completed the survey. As of this morning, we have 63 responses.

The survey will remain open for another week and I urge everyone to seize this opportunity to have your say.

### Road Trips / Road Safety

Thank you to those who attended the meeting on Wednesday evening to hear about the precautions that the school takes (and has always taken) when our learners are on the road going to an educational experience out of Windhoek. I explained how recent events have prompted us to look again at our practices and procedures.

Qualified and experienced drivers, well-maintained vehicles, speed limits, seat-belts, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, trackers in all vehicles, more than one driver for longer trips, avoid driving at night... We try to think of everything but we are always very open to constructive suggestions.

One innovation is that we have just bought two breathalysers. (They are sitting in my office as I type.) On Monday a number of us will be trained in their use. One will be kept here to test all drivers before departure and the other carried on the vehicle, as appropriate, to test the driver again before the return journey. And if we find we need more than two, we'll get more.

The reality, of course, is that Namibia has an exceptionally high rate of road traffic accidents. But we can, and we do, ensure that we take every possible precaution to attempt to minimise the risks.

And, while I'm at it... It has taken me four years to pluck up the courage to say this but now may be a good time. I know it is part of how many of you were brought up but is it really sensible to drive your children home from school with them standing up in the back of a bakkie? It makes me cringe every time I see it. Just saying.

**Peter MacKenzie**



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## Dates to Remember

### September 2019

- **16 - 18:** School Photo Day
- **19:** Inter schools Athletics
- **20:** Secondary Inter-house
- **21:** World Peace Day
- **21:** World Clean-up Day
- **22:** Gr. 9 Trip Depart
- **25:** Gr. 6 Trip Depart



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## Teacher Feature

### Karen Amolo Learning Support Teacher

#### **What is your educational background?**

I hold a Bachelor of Philosophy in Education degree from Warwick University [UK] and a Special Education Diploma from the Kenya Institute of Special Education. I also hold a Special Diploma in Music and a teaching certificate from Siriba Teachers College in Kenya.

#### **Where did you grow up?**

I was born at a place called Kisumu in the Western part of Kenya, situated along the shores of Lake Victoria. Lake Victoria, one of the freshwater lakes of the world, is the largest in Africa and is shared by three East African countries namely Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. I grew up in the capital city of Nairobi.

#### **Where were you before Namibia?**

I was teaching at Aga Khan Academy, Nairobi; an IB World School offering the three IB programmes, supporting students with a wide range of learning challenges and including those with whom English is their second language from Grade 6 to diploma. Previously, I taught at Braeburn School, Nairobi, a British National Curriculum school, for close to sixteen years where I spearheaded the Gifted and Talented program. I also taught in various special schools in Kenya.

#### **What motivated you to be a Teacher?**

When I was growing up, my dream was to become a lawyer. This changed when I was in fourth form, the equivalent of Grade 10. I was really struggling in mathematics! I would always sit at the back of the class and I always found math lessons the longest.

## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Have you ever asked your child this question, "What did you do in school today?" and have the following response - "Nothing". There is so much happening in your child's daily school life. "Nothing" can mean many things.

The following poem describes what a Pre-School/Kindergarten child's day might be like.

### The Nothing Poem

When children come home  
At the end of the day,  
There's a question they're asked  
As they scurry to play.

*"Tell me, what did you do in school today?"*

*"Nothing. I did nothing today!"*

Perhaps nothing means that I played with blocks.  
Tied my own shoes, or found beautiful rocks.  
Maybe the monarchs hatched today.  
Or maybe I found a new friend to play.

Maybe today was the very first time  
My scissors followed a very straight line.  
Perhaps I learned a new song, and sang all the words,  
Or I touched a feather from the strangest of birds.

When you're in preschool and your heart has wings,  
"Nothing" can mean some wonderful things!  
- Author Unknown

*Children in Grades 1-5 also have new discoveries and experiences in a day. I've adapted the "Nothing" Poem for this age range.*

### The Nothing Poem for Grades 1-5

Nothing can mean that I read a new book,  
Wrote a story on my own, or in After School Activities learned to cook.  
Maybe I made a new friend today.  
Or maybe I learned a song on my recorder to play.

Maybe I understood a Math concept finally at last  
Or in PE I ran really, really, really fast.  
In Language class, I learned to speak a new sentence or two,  
Or perhaps I used an app on my iPad in a way that was new.

During Art, I used wax and dye to make batik  
Maybe in Drama, I acted out a character in a way that was unique.  
Today during Break I played soccer and scored!  
My day was full and I was never bored.

When you're in Primary School and your heart has wings,  
"Nothing" can mean just about anything!

The next time you ask your child, "What did you do in school today?" and the answer is, "Nothing", consider the above and that "nothing" is really saying much more.

**Regards,  
Beth Smith**

**Teacher Feature continued**

*My teacher called me one day and told me that he believed I could attain at least a pass mark in math if I changed my attitude towards the subject and if I practised at least ten sums every day. This motivation and the fact that the teacher believed I could make it worked for me. I actually managed to get a pass in my O-Level final exams. I decided that I would be a remedial teacher!*

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

*I enjoy seeing my students move from one level to the other, however slow the pace might be. I love their 'Aha! moments, when their faces suddenly light up that at last, it's there! When they give me a thumbs up for understanding!*

**What do you think are important qualities an international school teacher should have?**

*An International school teacher should be open-minded, courageous, balanced and above all, a risk-taker. This is because of the cultural differences that are expected both from the students, teachers, parents and the community at large*

**Can you tell us a little bit about your personal life?**

*I am blessed with three sons, Jerry, Joe, Reuben and a daughter Esther. Jerry and Joe are married to my daughters in law, Christine and Lulu respectively while Esther is married to son in law Jeff. Reuben, the baby of the house is at Stellenbosch University [South Africa]. I am also a proud grandma to six [three boys and three girls - Michele, Chantelle, Jojo, Leko, Marcus, and Nisij]. I have been widowed for over twenty years but blessed with one big, happy family!*

**What are your hobbies?**

*I love watching football, especially when my favourite team, Chelsea is playing. Sunday afternoons are usually my time to cook and try new recipes. I also enjoy travelling and just hanging around with friends.*

**How would you describe your personality?**

*I am assertive, dynamic, open-minded and caring. I speak my mind, often with a sense of humour. I look tough but that is from the outside. I am actually like an egg; tough on the outside but soft on the inside. I am social and make friends easily.*

**What is your favourite educational motto that you use with students?**

*"Yes, you can."*

## CERAMICS Exhibition

The CERAMICS Exhibition is still on and runs till 20th of September 2019. Both our visual arts teachers, Heike Rubbert and Genie Albrecht are exhibiting at this exhibition. Please do pay a visit with your child/ren to see what ceramics in Namibia is all about.



## SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

### Through my Principal lens

Being able to go into different lessons is a privilege I treasure in my role as the Secondary Principal at WIS. It is great to see different classes, teachers and students interacting positively and witnessing open and sincere discussions in different lessons.

Our students here at WIS always amaze with their friendliness and politeness. It is not something we should take for granted, but it is something we should value and celebrate. Being able to voice your opinions and be yourself is something special and creates a strong community.

When I sit in different lessons, I always have the feeling of somehow being part of the lesson. I get acknowledged and students don't seem to mind me being there. And by being able to be part of different lessons, I get a feel for the atmosphere and the relationship between our students and their teachers. There is a strong positive vibe in the classes I visit. This is certainly testimony to the Learner Profile attributes that we aspire to in-still in our children.

Our students are willing to take risks in the classroom when they voice their opinion, because, I think, they feel safe to do so. They are open-minded and accepting of others' differences. More so, they embrace differences, because they are inquirers, thinkers and knowledgeable.

When I watch students on the field during break times, I see that they care for each other - I see smiles and kids enjoying each others' company. Being able to be part of a community that views differences as positive opportunities for learning is exciting. We know that we all make mistakes, but we try to use mistakes as lessons to learn from.



Researching in Biology



Looking at the scientific method and finding out it works.

## WEEKLY PUZZLER

Tiancheng (Grade 7) and Eden (Grade 4) solved last week's puzzler. Well done!

The puzzle illustrated well the idea that there's more than one way to skin a ... (sorry cat lovers). One way is to print out the puzzle, cut out the blue pieces in such a way that they cover exactly all and only the white area. Or you could cut it up in your imagination and see the same thing. Or you could use formulas for the area of a square and a circle and with algebra show that blue = white.

Here is one that can cause controversy:

Which number is bigger 1 or .999... (that's .9 repeating infinitely)? You should give some proof for your answer.

Please send solutions, or any fun and interesting puzzlers to [pfarrell@wis.edu.na](mailto:pfarrell@wis.edu.na)



In conclusion, I would like to encourage our students to take this positive approach to life out into their lives and to be part of those who make a difference - as a student in the Grade 10 History class said this morning: "We should not just talk about our aspirations to achieve global peace, we need to act, do something".

Is global peace only a utopian dream or can we strive to do what is in our power to contribute to peace in our community, in our country and globally? I believe we can always try to contribute to the efforts of achieving peace around us but also in the wider community.

**Regards,**  
**Maggie Reiff**

## Professional Learning @ WIS



Teachers Teaching Teachers @ WIS is a new initiative here at the International School! Our Professional Learning programme at WIS is an opportunity for teachers to focus on reflection and development. This is a recommendation stated in the accreditation report received from NEASC.

A Professional Learning plan was put in place and a schedule has been created to help guide this new and exciting initiative. This professional development will take place each Wednesday from 1:50 p.m. to 3 p.m.

The first Wednesday of the month will be a whole school session to make sure all the staff have a common understanding of the month's theme and a "toolbox" piece will be included to help teachers implement the ideas from this session.

The second Wednesday of the month will be a tech integration session based around the month's theme. The third Wednesday will be given to departments or school sections to discuss as a smaller group how the theme can be addressed.

Finally, the last Wednesday of the month will be Teachers Teaching Teachers. The idea of this day is for teachers to share their experiences with other members of staff. Sending people away for development is not always possible, but with the diverse experiences of teachers here at WIS, we can offer some excellent learning opportunities for each other.

During this past month the topic of learning was "Reflection @ WIS". Teachers were introduced to "The What, So What and Now What" framework of reflection. We discussed the importance of giving students time to reflect and how this can enhance student growth. SeeSaw and Google Sites were demonstrated and some teachers are themselves in the process of creating their own digital portfolio.

There were seven separate Teachers Teaching Teachers sessions offered for the staff



to join. Teachers, EAs and some admin staff joined the different sessions. It was a community effort of learning. The sessions included: Benefits of Instructional Coaching, SeeSaw, Google Sites - Digital Portfolio, Assessment As A Learner @ WIS Brainstorming (Omer, a student joined this discussion), Turning a Summative into a Formative Assessment, Turnitin and Team-Based Learning.

Thank you to the teachers who offered to lead the different sessions.

This month's topic is Inclusion @ WIS. The Learning Support Department and the English as an Additional Language

Department are leading this month's Professional Learning. This past Wednesday's session was "The Inclusive Classroom". It was an excellent session where all the teachers got a better understanding of the different types of learners at WIS. Development and conversations about the different themes are happening all throughout the year, through the whole school. Just because Inquiry is not the focus until May does not mean learning and development of Inquiry is not happening now. In May, however, this particular theme will be the focus of the month.

The topics for the year are as follows:

August	Reflection (For students)
September	Inclusion (EAL/LS)
October	Assessments (Map)
November	Assessments (Formative/Summative)
January	ACT/CAS @ WIS
February	Engagement
March	ATL/SDL
April	Mentoring
May	Inquiry

**Michael Parsons**

## Caribou Math Competition 2019-2020



The Caribou Mathematics Competition is an online worldwide Maths Competition for students from Grade 3 up to Grade 12. In fact, more than 26000 students from 29 countries are competing in Grades 5 to 8 alone!

It comprises of six separate online tests held throughout the school year. Students are scored after each individual test and at the end of the year, they are ranked against their peers based on their five best test scores.

The dates for the competition this year are:

- *Thursday, 17th October*
- *Thursday, 14th November*
- *Thursday, 16th January*
- *Thursday, 27th February*
- *Thursday, 2nd April*
- *Thursday, 7th May*

The tests will be completed during the After school Activity called Maths Competition Club in Room 71 from 13:45-14:50. All students are welcome to come along and have a go each week for brain teasers and other maths/logic problems! Even if you are working in a different AA and would like to participate only on the test dates while practicing at home, we can help with that too. We are always looking for more MATH-letes.

If you are interested you can find more information on the Caribou Contests website: <https://cariboutests.com/>  
**Jeff Bonazzo**

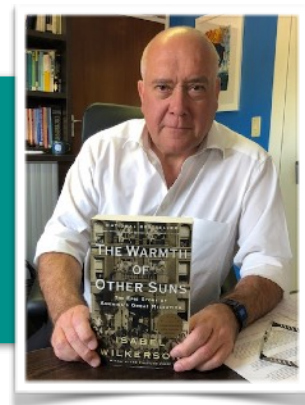
## Middle School Student Council 2019-20

Please meet your Middle School Student Council for 2019 - 2020.

*Naeem Robiati - Gr. 6, Pandu Nandjiwa - Gr. 6, Leo Jackson-Read - Gr. 6, Tapiwa Murwira - Gr. 6, Diana Tjombe - Gr. 7, Gerhard Fischer-Buder - Gr. 7, Kgosi Hekandjo - Gr. 7, Rachael Arowolo - Gr. 7, Undamuje Kavendjii - Gr. 7, Matthew Walden - Gr. 8, Jade Yan - Gr. 8, Taboka Takawira - Gr. 8, Peya Shimuafeni - Gr. 8 and Ms. Angie Janse van Rensburg*



**W.O.R.D.**  
Guess who is also reading during our  
scheduled reading lessons...



## WIS Staff Team Building

### A Chore, or Genuine Fun?

Last Saturday the whole WIS staff spent the day at school taking part in a social committee team-building initiative - a Potjie Competition! Below are some thoughts...

**P**lease tell me I don't have to spend a Saturday ... my weekend ... at school!

**O**h, you mean it? Really? It's compulsory?

**T**otally get it. It's team-building. It's important. I'll do it then!

**J**ust then, the negativity turned into excitement.

**I**n the end, my team was made up of a mix of people who don't often work together.

**E**nthusiasm then ensued as we had our first meeting and realised we would have fun!

**C**ompetition is on as all the groups meet and secret whispers are going around school.

**O**xtail, beef, lamb, chicken, vegan? Which will we go for?

**M**eat for sure - our team wants meat!

**P**arty atmosphere is happening. Secrets and excitement - staff buzzing around school.

**E**veryone is now realising what a great idea this is and team spirit is building!

**T**heme? Oh heck, we need a theme! We decide to go fancy! "Class Act" is our name!

**I**mpending deadline - all have their role to play - everyone is involved.

**T**he day arrives! Set up is exciting! Stealing glances to see the other teams!

**I**n the end it was so much fun! Teamwork and fun rule the day.

**O**h my, the judges ate some great food, chose their winners and all were happy!

**N**ight time came and the day was over. What a fantastic time was had by all!

Thank you to the social committee for converting us from cynical teachers reluctant to give up our Saturday to excited teammates bonding over dinner!

**Lian Cohen**



## ISTA

*Our world depends on confident, internationally-minded, collaborative and culturally literate young people who are empowered to engage with and change the world. ISTA brings together young people, artists and teachers from different countries in different settings to experience, create and learn about theatre.*

*We passionately value diversity, collaboration, celebration, play, friendship and collegiality.*  
(<https://ista.co.uk/>)

The Drama department is proud to announce that WIS is a member of the International Schools Theatre Association. This means that we can take advantage of the many wonderful ISTA events happening throughout the year all over the world. One event which we will be embracing fully is hosting an ISTA middle school festival at WIS. Watch this space and get in contact if you would like to join!

**Kate Matzopoulos**

## PTA NEWS

Yes! The wide-brim-hats are back, come and get them while stocks last!

We have also recently had delivered the navy field trip t-shirt in sizes 9-10, 11-12 and we have put in an order to top up the rest. We shall let you know when they have arrived.

Don't forget to purchase the diverse buff to keep the dust and chill out, hide a bad hair day or as something comfortable to go under a helmet.

Have a peaceful weekend.

With warmth,  
PTA



### Certificate of School Membership

This is to certify that

### Windhoek International School

is a member of  
the International Schools Theatre Association

Membership valid from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

*Sam Robertson.*  
Executive Director



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