



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

Content

- *From the Director p1*
- *Car Park Rules p2*
- *Car Park Map p3*
- *Primary School News p3*
- *Dates to remember p6*
- *Secondary School News p7*

Primary School Class Blogs

See what our primary school classes are up to. Visit their blogs: [Click Here](#)



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Thank you to all the parents who commented favourably on the first issue of The Oryx. I hope that each week it will show you something of what is going on in school, remind you of forthcoming events, and help us to communicate with parents regarding school processes and procedures.

I would particularly draw your attention to the item this week regarding parking arrangements for parents. Please familiarise yourself (or, if necessary, remind yourself) of the rules and expectations. To state the obvious, they exist to ensure the safety of those on foot and to try to ease the flow of traffic through the school at the two busiest times of the day.

In fact, the traffic arrangements generally work quite well and that is in spite of a record number of cars passing through the school. And it must be a record number of cars because we have a record number of students! As of this week, we have 536 students enrolled at WIS and that is unprecedented this early in the school year.

Yesterday, for the first of two times this year, children went home early and time was created for important staff professional development. Teachers met in groups to plan and to reflect on current practice. I joined the IB Diploma teachers and we analysed the results of recent



Teacher of the week

Teacher: Gisela Barrion - Year 1A

I began my career as an educator 11 years ago, first as an elementary teacher then as a division and regional mentor in the Department of Education, Philippines. I completed my tertiary education in the Philippines where I obtained a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with Specialization in Guidance and Counselling and completed the coursework for a Master of Arts in Educational Management. I am currently undertaking a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) at the University of South Africa (UNISA), as I have a keen interest in Educational Law.

I have been living in Namibia for five years now. I came to Namibia as a Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Lower Primary School Teacher Trainer assigned in the Kunene Region by the Ministry of Education.

years and discussed ways to further improve student learning. It was a discussion we all found stimulating and productive.

Closing the school early inevitably costs valuable teaching time and it is something that we will only ever do sparingly. But it is important to create opportunities for teachers to stand back and consider the bigger picture. And, ultimately, the beneficiaries are the students.

With best wishes

Peter MacKenzie

Parking Arrangements for Parents

With very few exceptions, all WIS staff park to the West of the basketball court leaving the main car park for parents and visitors. Compared to many schools, we have quite generous parking space but in the mornings and at pick-up time(s) the traffic flow can be close to capacity.

It is therefore important that everyone observes the rules and is familiar with the geography of the school campus.

Please see the map on the next page.

Please note where you may park (in green) and where no parking is permitted (in red).

Please also note the following:

- *Between **6.30am and 8.00am** and **1pm to 3.30pm** a one-way system is in operation. Please enter by the Main (East) Gate and exit by driving past the basketball court and through the West Gate.*
- *The speed limit on campus is 10Km/h.*
- *Taxis are not allowed on campus.*
- *No vehicles will be admitted during Fire Drills.*
- *All pedestrians must use the marked and raised walkways.*
- *Never 'double back' against the flow of traffic.*
- *Only stop to let out or pick up children in a designated parking slot.*

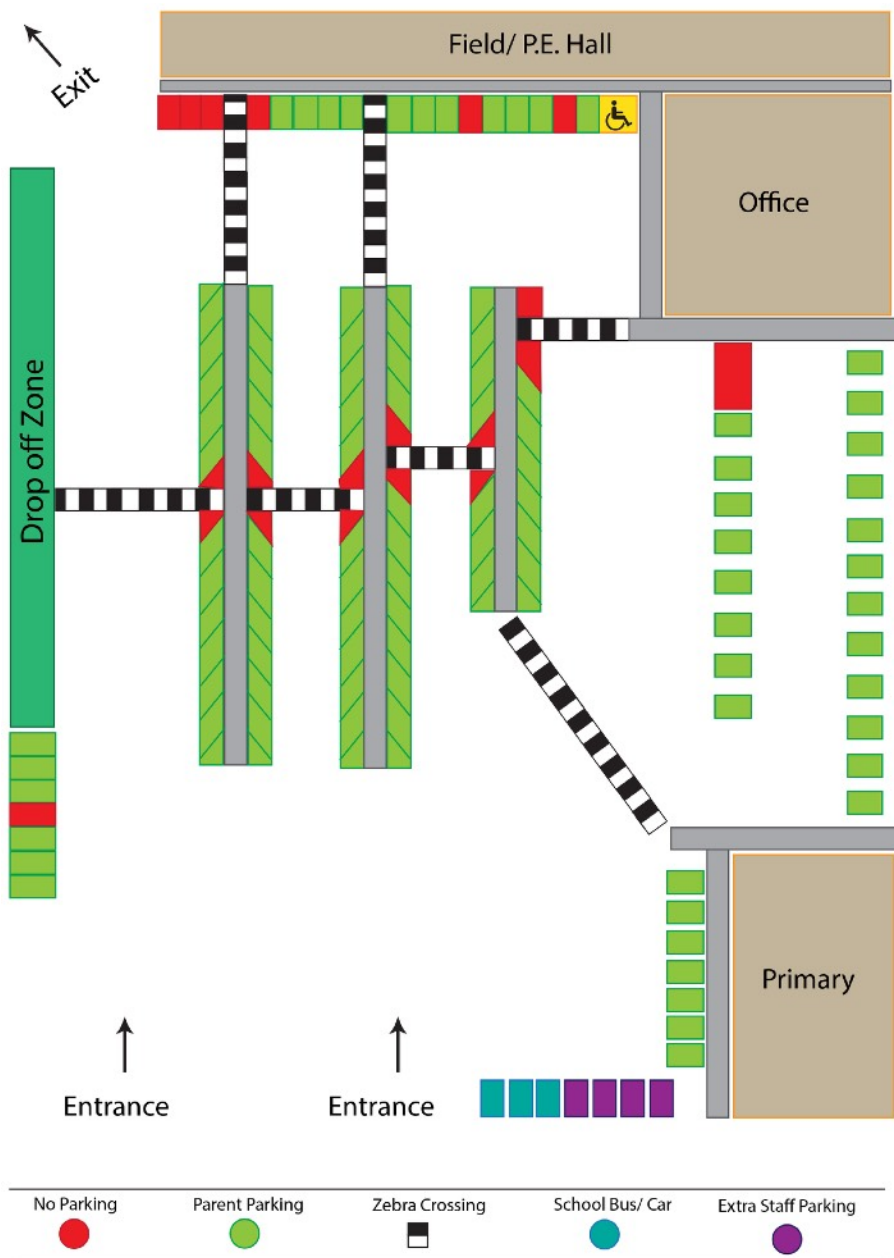
Thank you for your cooperation.

Some of my duties included providing in-service teacher training in Reading, Lesson Planning, Basic Education Curriculum to lower primary school teachers.

I developed instructional materials for teachers and the Teachers Resource Centres. I was a member of a team that conducted a National Test of the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) for Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS) and Non-THRASS Schools.

Thereafter, I became a Tutor-marker at the Namibian College of Open Learning (NamCOL) in Windhoek for the courses Diploma in Early Childhood Development and Certificate of Early Childhood Development, which involved writing orientation and feedback tutorial letters, setting and marking assignments and examination papers and provided academic support to distance learners through face-to-face tutorials.

I am fortunate to have been exposed to different educational schemes and modes of education delivery as I can always draw lessons and observations from my past experience. I have been at the Windhoek International School for a little over a month now and I am looking forward to learning new skills, adventures and taking on new challenges.



PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

At the beginning of the school year, each class collaborated in their homerooms, as well as in each subject area, to create Essential or Classroom Agreements for the year. These agreements focus on the behaviors that are important for the children and teacher to ensure a positive year. I've been invited to several homerooms to meet with the children and hear from their perspective what the classroom agreements are about and why we need them. Whether it be a KG2 class, Year 4 or Year 6 class, the children have enthusiastically shared their understanding of their agreements at their own year level. Now the hardest part comes with putting them



Check the cupboard!

Please make sure that you check the Lost & Found cupboard regularly! At the end of each term all items not claimed will be donated to a charity. The lost and found cupboard can be found just across from the PTA Hut. Please inquire at reception if you experience any trouble.



Dates to Remember

September:

15 - Board Meeting @ 18:00

16 - PTA Meeting @ 12:00

27 September - 2 October:

Orange River Field Trip

30 September - 2 October:

Parent Teacher Conferences

(Secondary & Primary)

into practice not just in the classroom but on the playground as well.

Year 4 students have been inquiring into how our actions affect our health and the health of our community. This week they were engaged in creating a model of the digestive system out of play dough. As they were working such comments as, "Where's your liver?" "What color is your gall bladder" could be



heard. This hands on activity encouraged a clearer understanding of the various parts of the digestive system and how they are connected. As you can see, no two digestive systems are alike!

KG2 students enjoyed a field trip of a city tour around Windhoek to coincide with their unit about how Journeys create new experiences. The classes have had many visitors who have been willing to share a song, story, game, etc from their specific country.

Reading Buddies - Each Upper Primary class is paired up with a Lower Primary class as reading buddy class. Approximately once a week the classes get together to share and read books. In addition to encouraging reading, this activity also encourages a spirit of community in the Primary School. The pairings are as follows:

- Year 6A - Year 2A
- Year 6B - Year 2B
- Year 5A - Year 1A
- Year 5A - Year 1B
- Year 4A - KG 2B
- Year 4B - KG 2A
- Year 3A - KG 1A
- Year 3B - KG 1B

Thursday's Professional Learning afforded the teachers and teaching assistants the quality time to meet and have the opportunity to discuss and plan for the next unit of inquiry. It also gave the specialists the chance to meet together, as well as to collaborate with the various year level teachers about their specific subject's integration with the unit.

Primary Student, Teacher, Parent conferences will be held during the day of 30 September. The students will only come to school that day for their conferences and not have classes. This will allow for children to be more rested for their

Elements of tone

Year 5 have been inquiring into the ELEMENT OF TONE (learning about the German Albrecht Durer) by exploring a variety of shades of colours whilst creating depth to pictures using different pencils. Students have discovered that any colour can have an infinite number of tones. Here are some delightful pencil artworks depicting tone.



conferences and also to provide more time for the students to show their parents their work and some of the activities they have been doing during the specialists classes. Sign-up for the conferences will be via a Google form, which will be sent next week. More information about the conferences will be in the next Oryx newsletter.

Kind regards,

Beth Smith

From the PYP Coordinator

Welcome back to another busy and exciting year in the PYP.

A question for those new to our programme is What is the PYP?



The International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme is a curriculum framework designed for students aged 3 to 12. As of 22 May 2015, there are 1,266 schools offering the PYP, in 106 different countries worldwide.

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.



Exploring our world around us

The PYP focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside. In promoting this aim, the programme is committed to developing the attributes of the IB Learner Profile among its students. At Windhoek International School we provide an inclusive programme for students from age 2-11 years. We currently have a toddler programme (2-3 Years), which embraces the philosophy of play based learning and whole child development.

The **Primary Years Programme** begins when children enter Kindergarten 1 (aged 3-4 years), our levels also consist of Kindergarten 2 (age 4-5 years), Year 1 (age 5-6 years), Year 2 (6-7 years), Year 3 (7-8 years), Year 4 (8-9 years), Year 5 (9-10 years), up to Year 6 (age 10-11 years).

Each year level consists of a Homeroom Teacher and Teaching Assistant in Lower Primary and a shared Teaching Assistant in Years 4, 5 and 6. The students also access specialist classes outside of their homeroom, which includes experienced teachers for P.E., I.C.T., Art, Drama and Music, French/Portuguese, and Library lessons. We have the expert support of the Learning Support Department and an EAL teacher, providing support for students and teachers from Year 1 to Year 6. With all these facets of learning available there is a great need for a high level of communication and collaboration to integrate this programme and make it successful and work for the individual learner.

To me the beauty of the PYP is that it is a programme that is constantly evolving being reviewed, thought about, and considered. As teachers we are constantly challenged to consider our practices. Is our goal as educators to just give information about the world? Or is it to really encourage students to explore, question and investigate their own understanding of the world in which they live? This idea of exploring through conceptual understanding makes the learning engagement a whole lot more exciting for both the teacher and the students as they work and strive to 'learn' together. The main focus of the philosophy we hold is that learning is 'student-centred'. It is not the job of the teacher to make meaning of learning but the job of the students themselves to make meaning for themselves. Our programme embraces a philosophy of constructivism; inquiry based learning and holistic approach to learning.

In the PYP, purposeful inquiry, guided by open-ended student and teacher questions, form the basis upon which all learning experiences are built. Good PYP teaching stimulates learners into widening their interests, exploring their environments and conducting global research to answer questions. For PYP students learning becomes a positive experience, self-motivated and long lasting.



International Fun!



Roald Dahl Day - Inquiring through literature

Sensory Play

WIS encourages children to take responsibility and construct their own learning through inquiry. Teachers carefully guide their learners through the inquiry process and the learning that is developed often crosses over traditional subject boundaries. Inquiry learning is not about learning lots of facts by a certain age or year level. It is about the process or journey of meaningful learning, and being able to relate to or give meaning to what we have learnt and apply this in real life circumstances.

Magnificent abilities uncovered
by: Fiona Farrell

In the dusky open at the midnight hour,
 I quietly assemble, clutching the grass,
 Holding it tight as if time cannot pass,
 I then feel myself sprout, like a newborn
 flower.

**Then a sudden bright flash makes me
 shiver,
 And the earth seems to have gone
 ablaze,**

The moon, the clouds and even the sun's
 rays,

**Seem to have blossomed, blossomed
 with a new message to deliver.**

A sorrowful blend of notes grasp my ear,
 Related to the tears of hope and grief,
 Like somebody calling for desperate
 relief,
 I can't help but follow, and follow till
 near.

**Shortly there's fire, that sways and
 turns,**

Surrounding a building that's wound up
 and broken,

Within, a girl lies hurt and unspoken,
 She then stares in my eyes with vanished
 concerns.

Roaming through the dark forest,
 I uncover a stone, and scratch out a
 message of peace,

The message then glows as if never to
 release,

A glow in my heart excites me that the
 world would follow my message of
 peace.

*The bold verses are onomatopoeia,
 imagery, repetition and personification.*



Please look forward to more information about the PYP coming up this year!

Kind regards

Avril van Zyl

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Learning is the main purpose of our interactions at school at all times. In this week's issue, I'd like to give some examples of a few great learning experiences in some Secondary classes to outline the approach we are following to ensure that learning happens as positively as possible.

In an attempt to address different learning styles and to reach each student, teachers plan activities that are suitable for learners that are mainly visual, auditory, kinesthetic or tactile. Most learners are a combination of different learning styles.

Year 10 - Science

Our Year 10s have had their first additional practical class and the feedback is very positive. We have recently taken the decision to teach the three sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) as separate subjects to give students a more thorough exposure to the sciences. This decision has been met with great enthusiasm and we hope that this will in future also ensure that the sciences in the IBDP are more accessible to students.

Year 8A - Geography - Topographic Play dough maps

8A is learning about Topographic Maps. They created their own with play-dough/clay! They labeled gentle and steep slopes on their relief/contour lines and named their mountains!

- Mount Tnuom (Tanatswa)
- Mount Mineisthebestmountain (Mac)
- Mount Gru (Loic-- it really did look like Gru!)
- Mountain Dew (Diego!)

Year 8 - Poetic Geography - Geographic Poetry

Mrs. Kandido (Geography teacher) and Mrs. Janse van Rensburg (English teacher) combined English and Geography class.

Find out from what country each of the poets come.



More Secondary News!

Year 13 - English Language and Literature

Following the conclusion of the first text of Part IV English, The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy, we took a trip to Garnish Indian Restaurant today, Friday 11 September as the book was set in India.



Soccer U13 - the first friendly will be played on Friday 11th - WIS vs. SKW. We wish our boys all the best.

Welcome Back!

Mrs. Keil (German teacher and IGCSE Coordinator) will be returning from her maternity leave on Monday, 14th September.

- **Create a PICTORIAL map on the world map we provide. Each poet should have a graphic/image/icon next to their name in the key.**
- **Place that graphic/image/icon on the correct country (from where they are.)**
- **LASTLY, find poem by one of the poets that they like. Write out one stanza of that poem on your map and read/perform it aloud to the class.**

Great interpretive movements by Zandrea and Bruna for Jonathan's reading! Beautiful French + Spanish + English Trilingual poetry by Nishant, Maria and Diella! Noam read in Hebrew and his partners translated the Israeli's poem! Yozika did a great (giggly) job reading her Caribbean poet's patois! Acting from Zaylin, Natangwe and Viktoria was entertaining!

Year 8 - English

The Year 8 students are working on Poetry in English. They had to inquire into their family history, finding out about their DNA. The students were asked to use their mind maps to write a poem about themselves but turning their physical features and medical history into a superpower poem. They were required to have at least three stanzas using four different types of poetic devices. **See page 7 for poem.**

BUT - Learning does not only involve students learning. Like any good school, we are constantly investing in our teaching staff and in the coming weeks we are sending a number of our teachers to appropriate and relevant conferences and workshops.

- Mrs. Nadar-Japal, IBDP Coordinator, will attend an AISA workshop on Cognitive Learning in Johannesburg.
- Ms. Heike Rubbert is going to Thailand for a workshop on formative assessment.
- Mrs. Janse van Rensburg (Middle School Coordinator and English teacher in Middle School), Mrs. Smit (Biology teacher), Mrs. Gorelick (School Nurse and Counsellor) and Mrs. Knouws (Learning Support teacher) will be attending a workshop on "Teaching Emotional Intelligence" here in Windhoek.
- Ms. Cohen (Mathematics teacher) and Mrs. Sharma (English teacher) will attend the annual "Learning2Africa" conference at the American International School in Johannesburg. "With its mission to innovate social learning globally Learning2 stretches the ideas of what a conference should be": [Click Here](#)

Upon their return, each of the teachers above will of course be sharing their experiences and impressions with their colleagues both formally and informally.

Kind regards,
Maggie Reiff