



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Scholarships

It is quite common in good international schools to offer scholarships to host country nationals who ordinarily could not afford such an education. There are many reasons to do so.

Firstly, and in many ways most importantly, it is a way of “giving back” to the country where many of us are, after all, guests. If we can help even just a few young Namibians greatly to improve their prospects, then it can only be to the benefit of the country. It is right that we should do so.

But there are also considerable benefits to the school. Clearly, the enrolment of academically strong and highly motivated students (whoever they are and wherever they come from) benefits everyone. In fact, my experience elsewhere suggests that scholars often become leaders and role models. And, in a school that attaches so much importance to diversity, here is another way to add to the mix.

Persuaded by such arguments, the Board in 2017 approved the establishment of a scholarship programme and we welcomed our first four scholars in January 2018. Two months ago, we were delighted to welcome four more and by 2021 (and thereafter) we plan to have sixteen – four in each of Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12.

We are proud of this programme and proud of these young Namibians who are enriching our community.

Peter MacKenzie

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

What is learning? How would you define it? Is it memorising facts and figures or is it bigger than that? How do you learn best - when you are interested and engaged in the subject or topic?; it's relevant and applicable?; challenging?

We have asked ourselves these same questions and have defined learning as follows:

Learning at WIS is a journey of inquiring, discovering, and experimenting while developing understanding and acquiring new knowledge, skills and concepts. In the process, the learner constructs meaning by making connections and applying these in daily life situations. The learner realises individual potential through continued reflection and exploration. The learning environment is multi-sensory, collaborative, enjoyable and encourages international-mindedness.

When questioning children about their day in school many parents ask, “What did you learn today?” Or “What did you do in school today?” The answer is often, “Nothing”. When thinking about the above definition, I wonder if the answer would

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Dates to Remember

March 2019

- **11 - 15:** *Sec Week B*
- **09:** *Chris Aiff Soccer Tournament*
- **12:** *SPTC - TBC*
- **13:** *Sec Interhouse*
- **15:** *End of Term 3*



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WEEKLY PUZZLER

Last week's puzzler was extra puzzling because it was flawed. Eric and Ezra (EY3), Eden (Gr3), Elias (Gr1), Tiancheng and Mathew (Gr6) not only saw that the puzzle had a flaw, but they fixed the problem and went on to solve it. Very astute! Future Puzzler Hall of Famers for sure!

On to a new one. You've got 27 coins, each of them is 10g, except for 1. The 1 different coin is 9g or 11g (heavier, or lighter by 1g). You should use a balance scale that compares what's in the two pans. You can get the answer by just comparing groups of coins.

What is the minimum number of weighings that can always guarantee to determine the different coin.

Send your answer to pfarrell@wis.edu.na



be different if children were asked such questions as, "What did you discover today?" Or "What did you inquire into today?"

Going back to my first question, What is learning? I would be interested in knowing your thoughts and definitions.

Regards,
Beth Smith

FROM OUR PAD

INTENSE AUTHENTIC FOCUS!



Little Chefs

When a brave teacher offers cooking as an after-school activity the spaces available are filled almost instantly and when Ms. Lizl Oppermann offered to do Little Chefs this term it was no different.

Ms. Debisa Cooper has been a very welcome helping hand during the icing, building and creating of fun treats.

Here are just two examples of the lovely goodies the children have been making. Oreo Spiders and Marshmallow Trains.



Dialogue VS Banning

Suspicious, Dodgy or Scary Messages/Videos on Digital Platforms

Some messages have been going around in a variety of formats; text or video and on different platforms. The videos, for example, scare children, encourage children to commit suicide or cut themselves among other things and in some cases, share extremist views.



Are you worried about your child’s use of social media and other tools? [CLICK HERE to find out how you can help your child stay safe.](#)

WIS will be hosting a **parent information evening on the 27th March 2019** to talk with parents about their child(ren)’s use of technology and what to do to avoid technology being used in the wrong way.

Danai Maramba

Questioning in the PYP Exhibition

Did you know there are at least eight different types of questions?! There are if you are a 5th grader in the thick of Exhibition! Last time we shared that students were *thinking about their thinking*. We now bring you **questioning the questions!** Students and teachers discovered that thinking up just right research questions is not as easy as it seems... Not if you want to conduct meaningful research. So we stopped. We took a breath. We practised some mindfulness. We danced it out. And then we came back to it. We decided- let’s try again. Inquiry is not linear. It’s not spiral. It’s not circular. It can be a bit of a crazy maze. One, that if you take the time to stop and reflect, think and plan, you begin to find your way. So that’s exactly what we did. We generated every sort of question we could think of relating to our Exhibition concepts. Then we asked ourselves, what kind of question is this?

We determined there are **knowledge-based** (or closed-ended) questions- questions that you can answer with specific facts. There are **Google-able**



questions (yes, it's a word! Ask a 5th grader!) these questions you type into google and voila- there is your answer. Then you have your **research-based** questions- these are going to take some digging. Research questions might lead you to realising it's actually a great **interview** or **questionnaire/survey** question! Some questions are **rhetorical**- not meant to be answered. Some questions are **irrelevant**- these ones will get you way off track. And finally, some questions are about **understanding**. Understanding (open-ended) questions can only be answered towards the end of inquiry/research. These questions may have lots of different answers depending on your beliefs, culture, perspective, experience and your interpretation of evidence presented to you. The reason *we* say understanding questions are answered towards the end is because we believe that until you've made an attempt to learn- any answer to an understanding question is just an opinion. And there are TWO types of opinions! Uninformed and informed. In 5th Grade, through our Exhibition journey, we are aiming to develop our understanding so that we can have well-informed opinions. So ... With that in mind... We bring you... RESEARCH!

Students are in the thick of researching their inquiry Concept. We are learning a lot. We are finding more questions to ask. We are considering who we will interview to get a good primary source of information. Based on our research we are thinking up messages we wish to communicate to our audience. Our messages will be conveyed in our Creative Synthesis and our writing. Even though we've only begun brainstorming them, we can promise you, they are powerful.

Who knew research could be so multi-faceted?!

Students' take on Questioning....

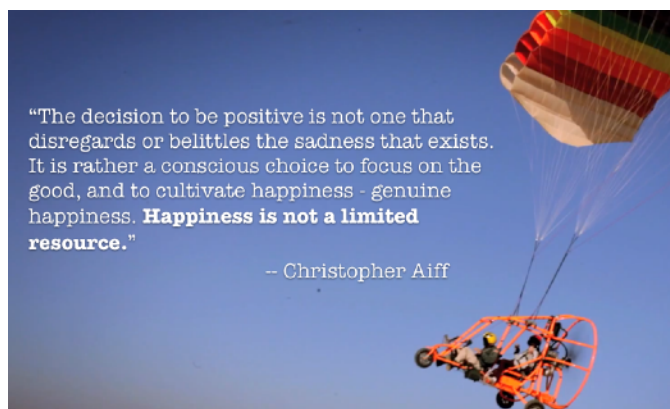
Lyndsay Bain

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

There is always something happening at WIS

Schools are always busy places. Here are some upcoming events worth noting.

Chris Aiff Memorial Football Tournament: This Saturday, the 9th of March, WIS is hosting the Chris Aiff Memorial Football Tournament. Christopher Aiff, who graduated from WIS in 2009, passed away from cancer in May 2014. Chris was an avid football player and in memory of Chris, WIS hosts this tournament. The tournament is organised by 4 of our Grade 11 students who are football players themselves. The proceeds from this tournament go to the Cancer Association of Namibia. We wish the organisers and the teams playing a great day of football. We look forward to welcoming Chris' mother Lis and his sister Melanie Aiff as well as some of our alumni at WIS on Saturday.



Parent Evenings: We have started hosting parent evenings to discuss with parents the changes in the Middle School. We have now decided to make these evenings a regular event to give us a chance to talk to parents about matters that concern us all. On Wednesday, 6th March, we hosted another parent evening for the Middle School to talk about the changes that are currently implemented in the Middle School, and especially Assessment.

We will have our next Parent Evening on the 27th of March where we will address technology and online safety and security for young people. This is always a topic that is relevant and current and there is a great responsibility on children themselves, their parents and the school to ensure that young people learn to use technology responsibly.

We will from now on host a parent evening every last Wednesday of the month to address things that we want to inform about and discuss.

University preparation: We will be hosting the [EU Business School](#) on the 28th of March here at WIS. The EU Business School has campuses in Munich, Barcelona, Geneva and Montreux and also has online courses. We have a year long relationship with the EU Business School and are happy to welcome them back to WIS. Even if the idea is not to necessarily apply at the EU Business School, it is important that our students from Grade 9 onward expose themselves to as many different options in their planning for their tertiary education. I do therefore recommend that students participate as much as possible in the opportunities that we have. On the 2nd of April, St. Paul's College is hosting their **Career Day** from 14:00 - 20:00. We will send more information to students and families as soon as we have more information. This is another opportunity for students and families to familiarise themselves with tertiary options available.



In the first week of April, from the 3rd to the 5th, our annual **Science Fair** will be happening. This is an opportunity for parents to see projects from learners with specific science topics.



Regards,
Maggie Reiff

Middle School Update

Happy Friday from the best part of the world! Middle school at WIS! A lot of of great things are happening in the Middle School.

This past week we had a wonderful visitor Dr. Mary Montgomery. "Dr. M" has a PhD in History (with the focus on African and American Relations in the post-colonial era); she lectured in university, taught IB DP History and ToK, but she found her passion as a Middle School Teacher.

Dr. M and I had the pleasure of working together at the Western Academy of Beijing from 2014 to 2017. We were both Heads of Department (I was Maths and Sciences and Mary was English and Individuals and Societies); we were homeroom partners in Grade 7, and together we joined development committees for Middle School Assessment, Formative Assessment and the Middle School Planning Team. We were also part of the Grade 7 team that was nominated for [Innovative Teaching](#) by the International School Awards.

Dr. M spent the week working closely with the Middle School English and Social Studies team. Together, Mary and our wonderful WIS teachers worked on mapping the Grades 6 to 8 English and Social Studies Units. The team focused on building units that help students apply and transfer knowledge and skills across subjects, grade levels and units. Mary also worked with the team to help develop authentic assessments that use the criterion rubrics to give students a clearer idea of where they currently are on the learning continuum. I had the pleasure of sitting in on several of the workshops and on Wednesday night Mary and I hosted another Parent Evening discussing assessments. The collaborative nature of the team and the progress made is truly inspiring. Here is an article on [Understanding By Design](#) and the philosophy WIS will be using to develop units in the future.



Thank you, Mary, Ms. Angie, Ms. D, Ms. Kate, Ms. Araujo and Ms. Rimmington for the dedication displayed this past week! Truly awesome stuff!

Michael Parsons - Coordinator of Innovative Teaching and Learning

WIS Book Week: 18th-22nd February 2019:

Coinciding with International Mother Tongue Day.

Some highlights from our week of book and literacy enjoyment, including some exciting engagements and events that brought our WIS school community together. "Languages can take you anywhere".

Our anchor feature of the week was the Mother Tongue wall, located at the thatch. We saw parents, staff and students of the community expressing themselves in their own language on our wall.

We saw a variety of visiting readers. Parents visiting classes, teachers and administration staff reading to students in the library, Secondary students "buddy reading" with our younger Primary students, our family reading evening. The community coming together to share stories from their cultures and a love of reading.



On Thursday 21st February, the whole WIS school community congregated on our middle footpath to stop and read (see our reading river video inserted in our album), "WIS Reading River". [WIS reading river video](#).



Book Week dress up parade for Primary, on the small sports field, finalised our week of love of books. Students, Teachers and EAs dressed up as their favourite story character from their favourite culture and book.

Finally a local Namibian author, Helvi Wheeler visited to share her books with our students.

Thank you to all the learning community of WIS - PTA, parents, teachers, staff and students who made this event possible. To see more photos from our Book Week album click [here](#).



Events Committee

PTA FAMILY DAY

The details and plans are coming together for the PTA Family Braai and Earth Day celebration on Saturday 27 April, and it is going to be an AMAZING day. Here are a few activities to look forward to:

- Fun run/walk with prizes
- Games
- Jumping Castles
- Live music
- Car boot sale
- ... and MUCH more

Save the date on your calendars and plan to come out for a fun time together!

