



# THE ORYX

*The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School*

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## Dates to Remember

### February

- **12:** PTA Coffee Morning
- **16:** Early Close
- **18:** IGCSE & IBDP information sessions
- **23:** Lower Primary Sports Day
- **24:** Upper Primary Sports Day
- **25:** Secondary Sports Day



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### RECRUITMENT

The vast majority of international schools operate on an August to July school year. The northern summer is therefore when the game of musical chairs is played and many teachers leave one school and move to another. Teachers like to have their new jobs lined up and schools like to have replacements appointed as early as possible so now – January and February – is the peak season for recruitment for August.

In fact, turnover at WIS is relatively low and this year is typical. At present we have four vacancies for August (or sooner) and we are actively seeking suitably qualified staff.

What does “suitably qualified” mean? Well, for starters, it means having a recognised teaching qualification. Secondly, previous experience of teaching one or more of our educational programmes (the PYP, Checkpoint, IGCSEs and the IBDP) is an obvious advantage. And thirdly, I really want to find people with substantial experience of living and working internationally.

But...

It's hard. The number of international schools is growing faster than ever and competition to attract and retain the best teachers is fierce.

We do have a lot going for us. The school has a good name internationally and Namibia is an attractive destination. Many good teachers would certainly consider us seriously when looking for the next job.



## Teacher Feature

### Junelle Stroh: Primary Drama

My earliest memory of 'what I would like to be when I grow up?' was at the age of five and it was to be a teacher. This dream however, was short lived after I shared it with my Year 1 teacher.

She had a double-take, almost startled and then after a long serious pause, she said with an intense voice: "Well, I hope you have ten Junelles in your class!" So I reconsidered and decided that I'd be performer.

Growing up on my grandfather's farm near Grootfontein (North of Namibia) and going to school in Windhoek in the early 90s didn't quite create as many opportunities as I would have hoped for to follow this dream.

I started doing Drama extra-mural classes at the College of the Arts (then known as the Conservatoire).

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Our biggest handicap, however, is that most (i.e. almost all) other international schools pay a good deal better than we do. Remember – whether it is teacher salaries or school fees – the only meaningful comparisons we can make are not with other schools in Windhoek but with other international school offering the same curriculum and style of education and competing for the same teachers.

It is a handicap the school is going to have to address.

### HALF-WAY

Believe it or not, but this week is the half-way point of the school year! Monday was Day #92 and we have scheduled 183 teaching days this year.

### THANKS

Saturday's dinner at the Hilton was a huge success and brought to a conclusion a series of celebrations making the school's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I want to thank Uschi Webb, Genie Albrecht and Jolene Nel who have been working tirelessly since September to plan and organise the events we have so much enjoyed. The school's admin staff have also been going beyond the call of duty, and, as always, the PTA has supported us throughout. I have no doubt forgotten and omitted numerous other people who helped in myriad ways and to them I apologise. But, in reality, it was a community effort and the whole community should enjoy a collective sense of pride and achievement. Thank you all!

With best wishes

**Peter MacKenzie**

## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Have you subscribed to your child's class blog yet? Do you read the posts? Have you posted a comment in response to what you've read? Writing for a public audience is a continuous learning process for everyone. This week the homeroom teachers reviewed their blogs, with a focus on what is included on the blog and how the blog could be improved; while the specialist teachers discussed how they can be involved in blogging. One of the concerns that arose during the discussion is that many parents don't seem to be participating with the blog: either parents haven't yet subscribed to the blog, they aren't reading the blog, or that parents aren't posting a comment.

Why is participating in the class blog important? First, it's a means of communication between school and home, providing a window into what your child is learning and how your child is spending his/her day at school and most importantly to celebrate student learning. The information on the blog is current. Links to websites are included, as well as other information for how you can support your child at home. The older students are participating in their class blog, posting comments, homework and writing articles. This is helping them with their writing skills and being aware of internet safety and protocols.

When parents post a comment on the blog it shows the students that you are interested in what is happening in the classroom. If the truth be known, I read the blogs but haven't until yesterday posted a comment. During the

**Teacher Feature continued**

In my time there I was invited to South-Africa twice to compete in the National Dalro High School competition in Pretoria and was then subsequently chosen to attend the Tswane University of Technology to study Drama. Four years later with degree and papers in hand, it was off to London.

Ever since I can remember I have always wanted to travel extensively. The bug really bit me bad when at 16 I was chosen to be an exchange student for 3 months in Germany. But, let's just say that being an exchange student and surviving in London was like chalk and cheese. In the years to follow I learned many many invaluable life-skills and gained profound knowledge...

I learned how to audio type, how to pour a perfect Guinness with a shamrock in the foam, how to fight for a spot on the tube without being arrested, how to live on N\$20 a day, how to surf, that football is not a sport... but a religion, how tea is the miracle cure for everything from a bad day to a broken arm, that Cockney does not sound like English at all, that you can either travel the world or stay in London and wait until the world travels past you and so much more! My most amazing experience in London is working for a season at the Shakespeare Globe.

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blog review one of the teachers commented that students are recognized on the blog and when someone posts a comment the blog is shared with the class. I realized then how important taking the time to write a comment is to the students as well as to the teacher. So I've made the commitment to post a comment on each class blog at least once this term. I encourage you to make the effort to post a comment every now and then to let the children know that you are reading the blog and that what's happening in school is important.

If you haven't subscribed to your child's class blog yet, please do so. (There maybe some technical issues with some blogs' subscription service. While we are looking into a solution for this, we advise you to add your class blog to your favorites so that you can visit often.) If you aren't reading the blogs, make a plan to start. If you haven't posted a comment yet, I challenge you to do so at least once in the next two weeks. If you have any questions or problems regarding access to the blogs, please contact Mr. D via email: dmaramba@wis.edu.na.

I look forward to seeing more parent involvement with the blogs and to reading your posted comments.

Kind regards,  
**Beth Smith**

## Primary Year 2B Exhibition

Last Friday we had excellent attendances in our Primary Art Department at drop off times. The Year 2Bs were so pleased to show off their art work for the Unit of Inquiry "How we organise ourselves" with cool art tools where they used to paint with, including painting in the style of Jackson Pollock (American painter) where they made their own brushes. Other works on display are the 'drawings' with a pair of scissors to create some delightful art works of Dancers in the style of Henri Matisse (French artist) as well as positive and negative spaces. Thank you so much for coming. Year 2A pictures will follow next week after Friday's exhibition.



**Teacher Feature continued**

In 2003 I started working in Johannesburg with educational theatre groups and traveling school shows, facilitating teacher training using Drama as a tool in education, private tutoring and educational puppet shows.

In 2006 I started at WIS as the Drama teacher and aim to inspire and educate through my art. My students are my teachers everyday while I'm still growing up!

**Saturday Morning Dodge-ball Club with Mr Jackson-Read**

**NEW TIME:  
9 AM until 11 AM**

**Y3 - Y6**

**All Welcome**

**Please bring a drink, sports cloths and lots of energy!**

**Session will be on on the following days**

- Saturday 23rd January
- Saturday 30th January
- Saturday 13th February
- Saturday 20th February (NO SESSION)
- Saturday 27th February
- Saturday 5th February
- Saturday 12 February
- Saturday 19th February

## SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

We often talk about knowing what our children do in their private time and how important it is that parents do know what their kids are up to when they are having their own down time.

Lots of our children spend many hours a day on an electronic device, on their iPad, laptop, and phone. They chat on social media platforms and participate in discussions about their lives and experiences.

At school, we encourage the responsible use of technology for learning. During lessons, iPads are often used for research, exercises, and different activities. We do have a policy in school however, that children are not allowed to have their phones switched on during the school day from 7:20 to 13:30.

However, we find it time and again, that students call their parents with their phones during the day, that parents call their children during the school day and that some students find it hard to avoid playing games on their devices while they are expected to use the device for lesson activities.

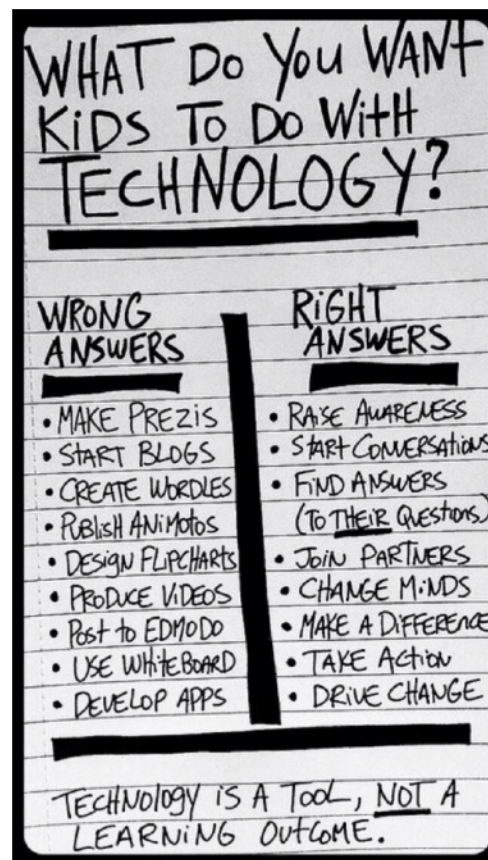
We find ourselves in a watershed moment with regards to technology. On the one hand we blame it for taking our kids away from playing and reading, on the other hand, it makes our lives so much easier - communication, information, staying in touch.

In school, we have the same challenges. It is hard for a teacher in a class of 25 to always see everything every student is doing.

### What is the conclusion?

We have to try to educate our children to use technology responsibly. This is a big challenge for us as parents in the first place, because our kids spend a lot of time at home on their devices, often unsupervised. The role the school plays in this process is probably more a role to direct the children's tech-expertise - let them use what they know in a manner that assists their learning in some way.

Kind regards,  
*Maggie Reiff*



# AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

This term's afternoon activities have had a good start and we are so excited to share the fun!



Capoeira - Fidel



Chess



Karate - Sensei Simba



Girls Soccer



Tennis - Mr. Wellington



Sensory Play

### IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL PARENTS

Please be advised that from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 the school will charge interest on overdue fees. The rate will be 10% p.a. charged on a monthly basis.

#### Family Fun Day Results:

Well done to all the participating teams:

Final Positions

Most Enthusiastic Team: Double 'G' Stars

Best Team work Team: Rock and Roll All Stars

The winning teams will be presented with their prize this week

## dePARTSment Corner

Year 9 - Free-Form Sculpture:

**Fredy van de Velde**  
**"Crocodile-Chef"**

Wood, Wire, Pantihose, Acrylic  
Paint, Palmtree Thorns





WIS Primary School

SNAP & WIN

A GIFT VOUCHER TO Recess Café

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

WINNER!



PHOTO BY SALOME YEAR 4B

Theme for the picture above: Bugs

Theme due Thursday at 3pm: Messy!

What is it?

This is a digital photography competition where primary students are given a theme every week for their photographs. Students can submit photos they've taken by Thursday 3 pm. Each week's winner will be announced on Friday and receive a N\$20 gift voucher to the WIS Recess Café (aka, The Tuck Shop). Winning photograph will be displayed here every Friday morning.

Please submit your photo by Thursday 3 pm to Mr. Marc. Try to submit file size 500 KB to 5 MB.

mderagon@wis.edu.na or USB flash drive to Room 33

Photo credits: melislorance.files.wordpress.com, zazzle.com, Peter Dalton

