



**M.P.A**  
MUSLIM PARENTS ASSOCIATION  
HIGH WYCOMBE

*Helping to raise standards in education*

# NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2011

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And let us know what you think!

As the school year approaches the end of its annual cycle most school children will be looking forward to their summer holidays, whilst others will be anticipating the GCSE and 'A' level results, which can determine the shape of their future by either allowing them to go on to further and higher education courses or the job market. Those who will be lucky enough to fulfil the entry requirements for university will be concerned that from autumn 2012 they will have to fork out the much hiked up tuition fees, which might burden them with a substantial debt.

Some school pupils may also have noticed that we are living in very interesting times, indeed. We are having an indifferent summer, the economy is still sluggish which means that the job opportunities for the school leavers are likely to be at a premium, Britain and France are still bombing Libya, the Americans are trying to extricate themselves from the quick sands of Afghanistan and the horn of Africa is once again gripped by drought and famine.

At home we are in the middle of a firestorm resulting from the phone hacking scandal which seems to be turning the public against the press, police and politicians, as they try to make sense of all that is being unravelled in front of them. People are wondering how one person could have captured the press, the politicians and even the police. It looks that what we have been told so far may just be the tip of the iceberg and the corruption of institutions by one man makes our votes practically valueless.  
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*Find out what these year 9 students were up to on page 10*

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The MPA would like to wish  
all its readers & supporters  
**RAMADAN MUBARAK**

see page 12

## *Cressex Community School Update by David Hood, Headteacher*

The summer term is always a busy and exciting time for schools. It is a time of special events such as school fetes, project days, leavers' events, school trips and sports days. As I write this, our older students are just finishing their GCSE and BTEC examinations. It has been pleasing to see the serious way that students have gone about preparing for their exams and we wish them every success when results day comes, on 25 August. We look forward to welcoming a number of them back into the expanding sixth form at Cressex.

On Friday 24 June, Year 11 marked the end of their statutory schooldays with the traditional leavers' ceremony. As ever the students had put a huge amount of effort into preparing for the event and looked absolutely fantastic. They were entertained and given food for thought by their tutors and the head boy and head girl, who shared pictures and memories of the students' time at the school.

Later this term, a group of younger students will be contributing to Buckinghamshire's preparations for the Olympic Games when they perform at the "Driving Inspiration" project in Stoke Mandeville. Working alongside disabled performers, athletes and artists, they have been creating a dance and paintings to celebrate Buckinghamshire's status as home of the Paralympic Games.

A definite high point for our students this year has been the visit at the end of May to Paris and Disneyland. Seeing the beautiful sights of Paris from a boat on the River Seine as the sun went down will, we hope, be a memory that stays with the young people for a long time. Most of Saturday was spent in glorious sunny weather enjoying the sights, sounds, tastes and thrills of Disneyland. The students were a great credit to the school and we are looking forward to our next visit.

Back in March, two Ofsted inspectors spent a day with us. I am delighted to report that they were very positive about what they saw, including the behaviour and attitudes of the students, the quality of learning and teaching and the continuing improvements in the overall quality of the school. The letter containing the inspectors' findings is available from the school or via the Ofsted website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

It is hard to believe that we have spent almost a year in our new premises. It is not only the students and staff who are thrilled with the facilities they offer. Many other groups and organisations are enthusiastically making use of the building and grounds. We are very proud that we have been selected as a base for some of the GB hockey team preparations for the 2012 Olympics. Cressex can be booked for theatrical and other arts performances, conferences, training events, sports activities, weddings and much more. Please contact Mrs Judy Herdman at the school for more details (email: [jherdman@bucksqfl.org.uk](mailto:jherdman@bucksqfl.org.uk); tel: 01494 437729). A small brochure is available on request from the school.

As ever, please feel free to visit us and you are welcome to contact me if you would like to find out more about what is happening at Cressex.

**David Hood**  
**Headteacher**

## Some useful tips from the Castlefield Children's Centre to help your young children

- **Have fun together.** Play with your child and don't be afraid to be silly with songs, noises or funny faces – this will keep them interested. Playing is how children learn about the world around them. So get down on the carpet with them and enjoy playing together!
- **Speak in your home language.** It's really important for your child to learn their first words and sentences in their home language. They will learn English later, at nursery and school.
- **Talk about everyday activities.** Talk about things as they happen, e.g. unpacking the shopping, having a bath. Children need to hear the same words repeated lots and lots so that they can understand them and learn to use them.
- **Give your child time to think.** Look at children when you are talking with them. Children need more time than adults to think about what they have heard and then decide what to say back – give them plenty of time to respond and look at them while you wait.
- **Comments not questions.** Don't ask too many questions...use comments instead. Lots of questions can put pressure on your child to talk. E.g. instead of "What's that?", try "It's a teddy".
- Playing and talking with your child is the best way you can help them to learn, grow up and be happy!
- **Build on what your child says.** If your child says something incorrectly, say it back the right way. Do not make your child repeat it. You can even add a word or two which shows children how words can be put together, e.g. if your child says 'tar' instead of 'car' you can say 'yes daddy's car' or 'driving car'.
- **Make TV time special.** Turn the TV off when you're not watching it and limit the amount your child watches. Talk about what you have watched together.
- **Look at books together and sing songs with actions.** Help your child to talk by sharing books - try reading books at other times in the day, not just bedtime. Nursery rhymes and action songs help children with the rhythms of language and make talking and listening fun. Sing an old favourite or just make one up!

***For More information contact Castlefield Children's Centre on 01494 475475 or come and visit us at Rutland Avenue, High Wycombe HP12 3LL (see our advert on Page 13).***

### ***Does your child need help with his or her School work?***

**If YES, Are you willing to get him or her some help with not just the school subjects but about Study/learning techniques. If YES again, then please email the Child's details to Rafiq Raja (rafiqraja@hotmail.co.uk).**

## New Asian Community Radio Station Awaaz Radio is a huge success.

Awaaz Radio High Wycombe 107.4FM, which started broadcasting in March, appears to be filling a void which has existed for the Pakistani community in High Wycombe.

It broadcasts music, entertainment, public information discussions on issues of public interest, 24/7 and is reaching parts of the community not reached through other mediums. It has over a dozen volunteers who are producing and presenting programmes, as if they have been doing it for some time. About 90% have not been involved with broadcasting before this opportunity.

### *Editor notes:*

*The MPA congratulates the thinking and vision of the Chairman of Awaaz, Azhar Husain and wishes all involved, with this enterprise, the best of luck for the future. In a short space of time Awaaz Radio has become a focal point for the Asian community in general and the Pakistani community in particular, as any event of importance gets a good airing.*



**Awaaz Radio team on the day it launched.**

### ***Do you have something to write about?***

If you wish to write about something then please e-mail your contribution as soon as possible. Articles should be or about 500 words; however, if there is something of a more serious nature then please still limit it to one page of this Newsletter and e-mail it as soon as possible.

### **Thara Stores would like to wish all their customers RAMADAN MUBARAK!**

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## > Continued from Front Page:

Back to education where schools have seen a teachers strike; the first in over 30 years and a rush to attain academy status by a number of schools with two local upper schools having attained or are in the process of gaining academy status.

Would academies make the breakthrough in raising the levels of educational achievement by some recognised low performing groups such as the Pakistani origin, Afro Caribbean heritage or the white working class pupils.

According to Dr Peter Asquith-Cowen, a retired schoolmaster and historian, schools will only be as good as the staff that run them, as good as the quality of the children attending and the kind of attitude and support their parents give to the school and its staff and it matters little how schools are dressed up; whether they are Direct Grant Maintained, County Council run schools or academies. He has also stated in an article in January 2011 "that it is a fallacy to believe that the pre war days were the 'halcyon days' when children left school literate and numerate. The fact is that many didn't and his research found many older people who still have trouble with spelling, writing and basic numeracy.

It is therefore no surprise that literacy is still an issue in the early part of the 21st century, which has moved the London Evening Standard to launch a campaign to raise levels of literacy in the capital. It may be that the levels of literacy are much higher in Buckinghamshire compared to London, but improving levels of literacy can be undertaken by all parents. Education experts say that regular reading at home is vital for youngsters to build up English skills. In London they have found that a third of the children do not own a book and in some parts of London one third of 11 year olds cannot read properly and it is estimated that one million Londoners are functionally illiterate.

We do not need experts to tell us that illiteracy severely limits life choices, closing doors on further education and career aspirations and it also impacts on the local economy, starving business of the skilled workforce it needs.

Parents are the first role models for their children therefore, if you want your child to be a reader you have to show them how; why not make reading a book part of the nightly routine for your child.

Disturbingly, the figures from the capital also show that 70% of pupils permanently excluded from school have difficulties in basic literacy; 25% of the young offenders have the reading age of a 6 year old and nearly half of the prisoners have the reading level of a 7 year old or younger and 80% of prisoners have the writing skills at or below the level expected of child sitting the 11+.. Is the situation in Bucks much different?

As is well documented whilst 62% of the mainstream pupils in Bucks, attain 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and Maths, only about 37% of Pakistani origin pupils attain this passport, which is needed for further education or training. Interestingly, the Secretary of State for Education outlined his vision in June when he mentioned that by 2015, he expects 50% of all GCSE pupils in every secondary school in England to be achieving the national average or passport mentioned above. It is understood that this will require 870 of some 3,000 secondary schools to improve. Now it will be interesting to see how this improvement is to be achieved within the next five years. He is said to believe that the poor performances are partly due to a low expectations culture. Now this may have something, but may prove to be a too simplistic analysis of the problem.

The MPA would be more than happy for the standards to rise so spectacularly in five years and has identified low expectations from teachers to be a factor in underperformance by the BME pupils but in our view parental involvement in the education of their children is even more important. We have been trying to engage the 'hard to reach' members of the Pakistani community and to this end a public meeting was held at the end of March in the Totteridge Road Mosque, which was addressed by Mike Jones and David Hood, head teachers of Holmer Green Senior School and Cressex Community School respectively and Tariq Mujahid, a nationally renowned poetry reciter, from Bradford.

The MPA is also trying to identify role models in the Pakistani community and to this end a first meeting for Pakistani origin young professionals was held at the end of April. The meeting was held at the offices of the fledgling local radio station called 'Awaaz'. The meeting was very successful in not only bringing over 20 young professionals from all fields. It is hoped that very soon a core group will emerge which will address the need for 'capacity building' at the same time as finding role models for our youngsters. So if you think you can make a difference then please do not hesitate to get in touch with us, without any commitment on your future time.

A follow up meeting with the young professionals is planned in the autumn and a practical workshop for young mothers is being planned for September. Again you have any thoughts about this or would like to help in any way, then please get in touch with the MPA without delay.

Our aim is to raise educational standards of all pupils and those from the under performing Pakistani origin pupils in particular. We can do this by having a meaningful dialogue with the Local Education Authority, (which we have been doing for the last few years with some results) but more importantly liaising with parents to inform them of their responsibilities and rights as parents and to give them practical help, ideas and advice in assisting their children to realise their full educational potential. At the same time we have been and will continue to be instrumental in encouraging parents from the Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) communities to become school governors and act as role models for other parents and pupils. We wish our parents to engage more positively with schools and be more effective in helping their children.

So, this is an appeal to all young professionals and young mothers in particular; please come forward and get in touch if you have any ideas or experience of getting parents together, or helping them or of organising meetings. We need you to make a difference, as it concerns the future of us all.

Would you like to get involved with the MPA? Do you have an article you would like to submit? Then please get in touch via our website [mpawycombe.co.uk](http://mpawycombe.co.uk)



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## Tranzcript - A journey to pioneering legal outsourcing services provider in Pakistan.

I set up Tranzcript in 2008 as a professional and outsourcing services solutions provider in United Kingdom. My objective in conducting all operations of Tranzcript exclusively from Pakistan was due to the fact that firstly I knew Pakistan and secondly I was aware of the niche to be exploited in the area of Outsourcing and Professional Services sector; with the cross winds engulfing Pakistan's political and social climate it was not easy.

My journey began as a consultant to a well known firm of solicitors with multiple branches in London. I had worked 6 years in the profession and seen the firm from being a high street practise with emphasis on mainly legal aid work to a firm based off the high street with emphasis mainly on private work and increased efficiency, quality and profitability.

During this time I came across many challenges and few portions of it in relation to legal secretaries were:

- ❖ **Budget constraints**
- ❖ **Limited Space**
- ❖ **Human Resources (HR) issues**

Our natural instinct was to work our way around the constraints while keeping the same model in mind. One day I came across a letter which had offered legal transcription outsourcing. Upon investigating further we found that the offering was on the basis of either

- ❖ **Per minute**
- ❖ **Per line**
- ❖ **Per word**

This did not work for us and we developed a model which had our dedicated staff based in Hyderabad, India. They would do everything we asked them to do in relation to the role.

Since then it has worked so well that we wanted to shout out to the whole world about it and let them benefit from it. I, on the other hand, had it in me that the team should be setup in Pakistan; hence leading to the setting up of Tranzcript Limited.

India has a well established BPO sector since the 1980s with revenue worth around \$36 billion; Pakistan on the other hand has had very late entry into this field with limited areas and expertise. Legal Transcription was unprecedented in Pakistan. I could not even find foot pedals as well as the software required for transcribing digital audio files. Pakistan also provided a host of other challenges which ranged in political instability, power shortages and bad media coverage. However my own experience has proved to me that there is immense talent and drive in Pakistani individuals.

We setup an office in Lahore in 2008, importing most of the equipment from the USA and UK with huge costs involved. We hired Pakistani Lawyers and trained them to the standards followed in the UK.

...Continued on next page.

Marketing for our services to Pakistan was not easy. We approached many law firms and every time the mention of Pakistan had a detrimental effect on the ability to acquire business. We had our breakthrough after around 6 months of setting up the business.

Since then we have had clients from city firms to sole practices even to non profit organisations and the pleasing thing is that not one of our clients has left us since becoming our outsourcing clients. I must say all the credit goes to the Pakistani staff, who are able to work six days a week and ten hours a day.

With Tranzcript Ltd running its operations from Pakistan we believe we have introduced the Legal services portfolio for Pakistan, Job opportunities, Quality training for individuals and better long term prospects for them as well as there would be other businesses being set up and will need trained staff in the future and In general increasing and adding value to the Pakistan industry in terms of revenues and skills.

Another brain child of our establishment is Tranzcript Training School. It reaches out to the universities, undergraduates and graduates of law. The law graduates which come out of even the top universities in Pakistan have very limited drafting skills. As a result in their careers they undergo at least 2 years training on drafting before they are allowed to draft letters to clients upon joining the law firms.

We expose them to the most widely accepted and practised English Law. We train them in drafting skills and improve their ability as a whole to a standard close to an English Solicitor. This has given our students excellent opportunities not just within Tranzcript but also in Pakistani and International Law Firms.

I hope this gives a taste of the opportunities available to young people in carrying out business ventures in the developing world, especially in a country where you have other reasons to be interested.

**Muhammad Bilal Sheikh**  
**Owner, Tranzcript Limited.**  
**0845 224 9465**  
**0796 000 7442**  
**mbs@tranzcript.com**



### **Mosque Elections News**

A management committee of 25, to run the three mainstream Mosques, in Jubilee Road, Totteridge Road and Castlefield in High Wycombe, is to be elected by a secret ballot on Sunday 24 July 2011, between 9am and 6pm. There are 53 candidates ranging in age from 32 to 83 and interestingly this time a couple of ladies have put their names forward as candidates. Only people who were registered as members by 10 July 2011 will be allowed to vote and they will need to produce two items of ID before they can cast their votes.

It is hoped that the new Management Committee realises the central role the mosque plays in the life of the Muslim community and will not only have regular training sessions but every member of the committee will work for the benefit of the community and not for the benefit of some vested interests, who like to pull the strings from a distance. Indeed, the new Management committee can use the school governing body as a model where all members of the governing body, whatever their political, social or religious affiliations, work for the benefit of the school.



AMERSHAM & WYCOMBE COLLEGE

## Amersham & Wycombe College outlines plans for new Flackwell Heath campus



***Proposed new entrance to the campus***

Amersham and Wycombe College is redeveloping its campus at Flackwell Heath, creating new college buildings and training facilities that will benefit thousands of students and the local community.

The project, to be completed in November 2011, will see an extensive refurbishment and modernisation of the existing college buildings at Flackwell Heath.

Plans for the new campus include a new gym, a flagship Construction Skills Centre for the region and reconfigured and refurbished facilities for a wide range of subjects, including Health & Social Care, Sport, Public Services, Leadership and Professional Development, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Foundation Studies. These outstanding facilities will be in addition to the existing commercial standard Hair and Beauty Salon facilities already onsite. The new building will also feature improved internal and external social spaces for students and greater wheelchair access.

“We are very excited about the new development and what it will bring to the local community. The new campus has been designed to reflect the professional workplace and provide an environment that will greatly enhance the study experience for all. It will offer fantastic new learning, leisure and training facilities for employers and students,” said Gill Clipson, Principal and Chief Executive of the College. “We believe the new campus will be a great asset to Flackwell Heath and the surrounding area.”

The Flackwell Heath refurbishment project runs alongside a major project to upgrade the library facilities at the Amersham Campus. Both projects support Amersham & Wycombe College's continued focus on providing high quality further and higher education programmes. The College is a resource for the whole community, preparing young people for their future in higher education or work and employers looking to professionally develop their staff through CPD courses or Apprenticeships.

**Full information can be found at: [www.amersham.ac.uk](http://www.amersham.ac.uk)**

## Silverstone Creative Challenge Winner!

Holmer Green Senior School were crowned champions in a South East counties enterprise competition held at Silverstone Race Circuit in November 2010. Year 9 students (13 to 14 years of age) from 25 schools in Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire had the chance to gain business knowledge in motorsport, tour the world renowned motor circuit and compete in a challenge to design the best promotional advertisement for a Volkswagon Beetle car!

Holmer Green's team of 8 students came up with the winning presentation and Hussain Ali was a key member of that team. Indeed, Hussain came up with the winning slogan: "Bringing Nature to Life!"

Hussain commented: "We were asked to take part by our ICT teacher, Mrs Shaughnessy, because we had made such a good start to our GCSE work." Holmer Green students begin their ICT GCSE work a year early. "It was good fun and great to take part in something like this out of school. I hadn't really been interested in motor racing before but it was amazing seeing the cars and the work they do. I'd love to get a job as a mechanic working on the machines."

We're naturally proud of Hussain's and the team's success in the competition as it follows previous successes as a Business and Enterprise school. Like all the other students in Year 9, Hussain will be making his other GCSE options later this term and has an ambition to study Resistant Materials and Business Studies. With such a winning attitude, as with so many other students in Year 9, he is set to do really well.

**Michael Jones**  
**Headteacher**  
**Holmer Green Senior School**

## 10 THINGS TO EMULATE FROM JAPAN

The Japanese Tsunami and Nuclear tragedy in March 2011 has shown the rest of the world how to behave at the time of a disaster. Can we not learn and emulate such behaviour?

1. THE CALM - Not a single visual of chest-beating or wild grief. Sorrow itself has been elevated.
2. THE DIGNITY - Disciplined queues for water and groceries. Not a rough word or a crude gesture.
3. THE ABILITY - The incredible architects, for instance. Buildings swayed but didn't fall.
4. THE GRACE - People bought only what they needed for the present, so everybody could get something.
5. THE ORDER - No looting in shops. No honking and no overtaking on the roads. Just understanding.
6. THE SACRIFICE - Fifty workers stayed back to pump sea water in the N-reactors. And now an army of over 60's volunteering to clean up in hazardous radiation levels. How will they ever be repaid?
7. THE TENDERNESS - Restaurants cut prices. An unguarded ATM is left alone. The strong cared for the weak.
8. THE TRAINING - The old and the children, everyone knew exactly what to do. And they did just that. No heroics or grandstanding.
9. THE MEDIA - They showed magnificent restraint in the bulletins. No silly reporters. Only calm reportage.
10. THE CONSCIENCE - When the power went off in a store, people put things back on the shelves and left quietly, together with the humility of the leadership to accept responsibility and not look for scapegoats.

## **Working Together: Dr Mark Fenton, Headmaster of Dr Challoner's Grammar School, describes the productive way three local schools are co-operating for their mutual benefit.**

Over a year ago, when the incredible new Cressex Community School building was still rising behind the old school, a group of local partners came together to form a Trust to support the further development of the school. Two other schools were involved: Dr Challoner's Grammar School in Amersham and Wycombe Abbey. One of the aspirations of the Trust is to provide opportunities for the students of all three schools to work together on projects and the partners believe that their students have a huge amount to learn from each other which will contribute significantly to their development as young adults. The first such opportunity for the students to work together arose in the Autumn Term 2010 which is narrated by one of our Year 11 students, Oliver Taylor.

The flood situation in Pakistan that unfolded during July 2010 was dramatic. As a result of extreme monsoon rains almost one fifth of the country was under water at one point with some 20 million people affected. The impact on health and the economy was catastrophic, causing suffering and misery for millions of people. It was this heart breaking story which galvanized a group of three Buckinghamshire schools into doing what they could to help.

Cressex Community School, Wycombe Abbey and Dr Challoner's Grammar School created a charity team formed from three students and a teacher from each school. Dr Challoner's was represented by the Challoners for Charity team with Alistair Hull, Nathan Ruttley and Oliver Taylor, supported by Mr. Sinden. Through a series of meetings an action plan was constructed with the aim of raising awareness of the situation in Pakistan and to collect money for relief in the area. We decided that grabbing attention (and donations!) was much easier if we could combine awareness raising with fun and/or food so that was a key factor in the design of the campaign. A 'roadshow' was devised to visit the student assemblies of each school to explain what was happening in Pakistan and the need for action, coupled with a fund raising activity.

The student team visited each school and each member helped deliver the presentation at every assembly. The first road show date at Dr Challoner's raised money by selling somosas kindly provided by Cressex Community School. Taking advantage of insatiable teenage boy hunger, we sold 400 somosas in 15 minutes raising £200! Wycombe Abbey came next with some very nervous boys presenting to a hall packed with girls followed by an appeal for donations. The final stop was Cressex Community School with a lunch time tug-of-war competition organized by students from Challoner's, followed by an assembly.

Working on the charity team has been an eye-opening experience and provided us with opportunities to work with students from other schools in the area as well as learn how to organize and execute a fund raising campaign. A boys school, an independent girls school and a mixed school would at first glance look like a clash of cultures but we quickly discovered how much a common goal breaks down prejudices and stereotypes. Fund raising continues with a goal of reaching £1,000 which given the energy and enthusiasm of each of the schools involved we are sure we will reach it. That's £1,000 to help in a small way with what appears to be a gargantuan challenge to get the people affected in Pakistan back on their feet.

Thus began the process of collaboration between the students of Cressex Community School, Dr Challoner's and Wycombe Abbey. The Trust partners hope that this will be the first of many such co-operative ventures which will bring the students of these very different schools from vastly differing backgrounds closer together.

**Dr Mark Fenton**  
**Headmaster**

**Dr Challoner's Grammar School, Chesham Rd, Amersham, Bucks HP6 5HA**  
**Tel: 01494 787525 | Fax: 01494 728302**



**Ramadan Mubarak – This year Ramadan starts and finishes during the summer holidays, as it falls practically in August this year. Here is a view of Ramadan.**

This year the first day of the holy month of Ramadan, of year 1422 AH of the Islamic calendar is expected to fall on 1 August. (AH stands for After 'Hijra' and Hijra in Arabic means flight and refers to the flight of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) from Makkah to Medina in the early days of Islam, when the local populace took exception to the teachings of Islam, as it believed in ONE God and abhorred idolatry, which was the practice of the time in that part of Arabia.).

During Ramadan Muslims, all over the world, fast daily from dawn to dusk and take as much time as possible for praying, reciting the Holy Koran, Giving to charity and doing other good deeds, as during Ramadan, the faithful believe, the doors leading to the blessings of God are opened, whilst those leading to hell are closed. Fasting during Ramadan, one of the 5 tenets of Islam, (the others being 'Kalma' the declaration that there is only ONE GOD and Mohammed (peace be upon him) is his prophet, 'Nimaz' (regular 5 daily prayers), 'Zikat' (giving to charity) and 'Hajj' (pilgrimage to Makkah) is not just mere abstention from eating, drinking and smoking during the period of the fast, but also forces the observer to refrain from being untruthful, unkind, cheat or gossip otherwise the merit gained through fasting is negated. The fast therefore, is a very strong regulator of the believer's behaviour, without the need for a police force to monitor the situation.

Ramadan imposes a special discipline on the faithful for at least one month, which can often lead to moral improvement and uplift during the rest of the year. The purpose of the fast is to obey the command of God, who ordained fasting in the Koran. It also makes one understand what it is like to be poor and have to go without food as your worldly status is unable to offer any protection. Fasting is also seen by many Muslims to increase the spiritual strength through self-denial and prayer. Apart from making an extra effort to attend prayer sessions, as part of a congregation in a Mosque, a Muslim organises his or her day around the fast. It is often the only time in the year when the whole family sits down together for the early morning meal called the "Sehri",

The fact that the pre-dawn meal is not only allowed, but also encouraged suggests that fasting is not meant to be simply a feat of physical endurance. It's more about changing ones daily routine by controlling the appetites. Depriving oneself of, say, the bar of chocolate at break-time is a small exercise in self-discipline. The idea is that slowly through the month one is able to generate enough self-discipline and control, that dealing with serious character flaws, such as envy and jealousy, becomes possible.

At the same time, virtuous qualities of patience, generosity and love are to be developed. Fasting is a spiritual tool; it unlocks the psyche and gives the individual a practical methodology for changing and becoming a better person.

During the month of Ramadan, the Muslim faithful also give freely to charity and make special donations, as well as host "Iftar" (breaking of the fast) parties for friends and relatives. Ramadan therefore is a very special month for Muslims, who endure the lack of food and water (and indeed any medicines and even smoking) for the sake of God. It should be understood that abstaining from food and water during the period of the fast is not enough. All Muslims are expected to conduct their daily lives without giving cause for concern to a friend work colleague or neighbour, nevertheless you feel better for having followed the Ramadan routine.

During the month of Ramadan, the Mosque becomes the hub of the community with largest congregations for the late evening prayers, which during Ramadan will be performed at about 10PM.

All the Mosques will have the services of a 'Hafiz', one who has memorised the whole Koran and he will recite a portion during Nimaz -E- Travee, the special prayers only offered each night during Ramadan. The aim is to complete the recitation of the whole Koran by the 27th night of Ramadan. Fasting in the middle of winter, with very short days is not a problem but fasting in the middle of summer with the fast to last from around 4AM to 8.45PM at the beginning of August will certainly be challenging. Thus, very good wishes for a happy and joyous Ramadan to all.

Working together to reach your goals



Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Trust

### Speak in your home language

It's really important for your child to learn their first words and sentences in their home language. They will learn English later, at nursery and school.



## Sure Start Children's Centres

### Comments not questions

Don't ask too many questions...use comments instead. Lots of questions can put pressure on your child to talk. E.g. instead of "What's that?", try "It's a teddy".



### Give your child time to think

Look at children when you are talking with them. Children need more time than adults to think about what they have heard and then decide what to say back – give them plenty of time to respond and look at them while you wait.

### Have fun together

Play with your child and don't be afraid to be silly with songs, noises or funny faces – this will keep them interested. Playing is how children learn about the world around them. So get down on the carpet with them and enjoy playing together!

### Talk about everyday activities

Talk about things as they happen, e.g. unpacking the shopping, having a bath. Children need to hear the same words repeated lots and lots so that they can understand them and learn to use them.

**Playing and talking with your child is the best way you can help them to learn, grow up and be happy!**



### Look at books together and sing songs with actions

Help your child to talk by sharing books - try reading books at other times in the day, not just bedtime. Nursery rhymes and action songs help children with the rhythms of language and make talking and listening fun. Sing an old favourite or just make one up!



### Make TV time special

Turn the TV off when you're not watching it and limit the amount your child watches. Talk about what you have watched together.

### Build on what your child says

If your child says something incorrectly, say it back the right way. Do not make your child repeat it. You can even add a word or two which shows children how words can be put together, e.g. if your child says 'tar' instead of 'car' you can say 'yes daddy's car' or 'driving car'.

For More information contact Castlefield Children's Centre on 01494 475475 or come and visit us at Rutland Avenue, High Wycombe HP12 3LL

