



M.P.A
MUSLIM PARENTS ASSOCIATION
HIGH WYCOMBE

Helping to raise standards in education

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2011

Contact the MPA:

Post: 34 Perth Road, High Wycombe,
Bucks. HP13 6XX

E-mail: r.raja@mpawycombe.co.uk

Tel: 07956 622 469



Eid-UI- Adha, one of the two major Islamic festivals takes place on Sunday, 6 November and the MPA would like to wish all our readers of the Newsletter a happy and peaceful Eid Mubarak. (Please see more about Eid on page 3)

A number of people have gone on the Hajj pilgrimage from High Wycombe and we wish them all a safe and spiritually fulfilling trip. (See page 7 for more information about Hajj)

Around about the celebration of Eid around the World, it is estimated that the seven billionth person will be born. This is the highest number of human beings alive at the same time. Do we need to change the allocation of the world's resources so that everybody at least has the right to food, water and shelter as well as access to education, healthcare and freedom to choose their own rulers.

The MPA organised a very interesting and informative seminar on Sunday, 9 October 2011 at Cressex School, High Wycombe, where members of the MPA and guests from other organisations were addressed by three young doctors from London before a general discussion on how to motivate parents and children so that standards in education can be raised for the benefit of all.

Those present were very impressed by Dr Claire Lemer (a paediatrician in a London hospital) her colleagues Dr Shama Usmani and Dr Anas Ul Turabi, who were described as not just inspiring but 'awe inspiring'.

A few of the points made to help children realise their full potential were about the need for support from home for a child and that children should be encouraged and nurtured. Moreover, the families, teachers and all stakeholders needed to have high expectations of all children. The schools in particular needed to have the right ethos and right leadership in place to have high expectations of all children. For a fuller report please visit the MPA website: www.mpawycombe.co.uk

We are also pleased to report that the MPA is joining hands with PFCACH (the Parents Forum for Children of African & Caribbean Heritage) and organizing a conference for parents from the Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. Full details are on the back page of this Newsletter. Please note that whilst the event is free, but to manage numbers it is requested that you apply for a free ticket. *Continued on Page 6*

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.



Services for Children and Young People in Buckinghamshire

DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FOR INFORMATION TO HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?

Many parents and carers do not know where to look for information for children and young people. But don't worry Buckinghamshire County Council has a specialist team that is dedicated to supporting parents and families in the county called the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service. This service is completely free, impartial and confidential and provides information, advice and guidance on a wide range of topics that may affect you and your family. They can help you with by providing the information you are looking for or signposting you to the most appropriate service.

Here are some of the ways in which BFIS can help:

- Information on activities for children and young people, including after school clubs, youth centres and organisations providing leisure activities.
- Advice and support for families with disabled children
- Where to go for help and information on family and personal issues, including support on understanding what financial help you may be entitled to.
- Options for childcare and free early education (for 3 and 4 year olds) in your area
- Lots of useful publications and websites on subjects such as parenting, bullying support, behaviour management and healthy eating, and much more.

We are very keen to work with the Muslim Community in High Wycombe to raise the awareness of BFIS. We want to empower our parents to access the information they need and have knowledge of local services and activities. We want to ensure that our children and young people in Buckinghamshire can both enjoy and achieve academically and socially.

You can contact the Family Information Service by:

Telephone: 0845 688 4944 (9.00am – 5.30pm Mon-Fri)
Text: 07786 202920
Email: familyinfo@bucksc.gov.uk
Website: www.bucksfamilyinfo.org



David Hood, Cressex Head Teacher updates us about his school and widens his search for new members of the governing body.

Here at Cressex it is good to report that the new (or now not so new) school year has got off to a flying start. Our numbers on roll are now rising healthily. The Year 7s who joined us in September have well and truly settled in and are making a good contribution to the school.

We were delighted to welcome over 200 families to our open evening and morning in September and even more delighted to receive encouraging feedback from so many of our visitors. We see this as evidence of our growing, positive reputation in the community and are proud that our efforts to build an outstanding school for the young people and families we serve are beginning to bear fruit.

It is pleasing to report that Cressex is once again recognised as an *Investor in People*. In her report to the school, our assessor commented that she had gained a "strong impression" that the school has "been successful in fostering a communal determination to improve, with consistent evidence of strong teamwork at different levels in the school and a strong sense that this is a place in tune with the diversity of the communities it serves."

Some readers of this article may already be aware that following a hard fought rain-delayed county final, our senior boys' cricket team have performed the outstanding feat of winning the league and cup double.

We continue to seek members of the community who are willing and able to make an active contribution to our school. In particular, we are very keen to find potential new members of our governing body or of our parent-teachers' committee. If any reader would like to find out more about participating in school life, then please do contact me at school.

And finally, we are very pleased as a school to be hosting events organised by the MPA, all aimed at securing the active support of the community in supporting improved attainment for children.

Festival of Eid

The Muslim community will celebrate the festival of Eid-Al-Adha, of the year 1432AH of the Islamic calendar on Sunday, 6 November 2011. Eid-Al-Adha is one of the two major festivals in the Islamic calendar and commemorates the story, shared with Christianity and Judaism, of Hazrat Ibrahim's (Abraham) willingness to sacrifice his son Ismaeil in the name of God. . It is thus also known as the festival of the sacrifice. For the Muslims the sacrifice in this context does not imply the usual meaning of atonement for sin or an attempt to appease a deity, but signifies the remembrance of Hazrat Ibrahim's (Abraham) sacrifice of his own desires and attachments in submission to the will of Allah.

Eid is a joyous occasion for the Muslim community, and although it is celebrated over three days, most people only mark the first day out of three as a special occasion. The day starts with a cleansing shower, new or the best available cloths, which for the children and ladies are bright and colourful and specially prepared as party wear, whatever the weather. For the men folk (it is not obligatory for females to attend Eid prayers out of the home), the local Mosque is the first port of call. In Muslim countries, where congregations can be overwhelming for Mosques especially in urban centres Eid prayers are offered in special "Eid Grounds".

In High Wycombe the Jamia Mosque in Jubilee Road and the Totteridge Road Mosque will attract the largest congregations for the first services at 8.30AM. The Jamia Mosque is no longer under the same pressure as it used to be 15 to 20 years ago as Eid prayers will also be offered in at least five other places around the town. Both the Jamia Mosque and the Totteridge Road Mosque will hold second services at 9.30AM. After the Eid prayers people visit friends and relatives with small gifts of food or Asian sweets and after midday, the dinning tables groan under specially prepared party food, which in the Asian community, consists of Tandoori chicken, Pilau rice, kebabs, Zarda (sweet yellow rice), tasty curries which are often prepared with fresh meat from animals, which the well off sacrifice in remembrance of the deed of Hazrat Ibrahim and other delicacies.

Eid -Al-Adha takes place on 10th day of the Islamic month of Zil Hajj and normally, a day after the annual Hajj, the pilgrimage to Makkah, the fifth tenet of Islam, which attracts around 2 million people from around the world, including a few groups from High Wycombe. The Hajj will climax on Saturday, 5 November, when the Hajjies would have completed all the religious requirements of the Hajj.

So Eid Mubarak to all our readers and well wishers.

Riaz Ahmed – Organiser of the Totteridge Islamic Mission English School takes students to the Natural History Museum

After the success of the Science Museum trip, last year, a group of young students from the Totteridge Road Mosque visited the Natural History Museum in London, before Ramadan.

The visit was arranged to allow the pupils to self manage themselves, in small groups, in an external environment and to independently organise their own learning about the natural environment we live in. The two girls groups under the wings of Ms Saimah and Ms Rubina found the volcano formation and eruption simulations very exciting. “It was like sitting next to a glowing volcano and I was really scared at the beginning”, said Sana. The earth quake gallery, in the wonders of the planet earth, was a shaky but a memorable learning experience in a safe environment for all the girls said Ms Saimah.

The boys group were excited by the real life size, moving and noisy replica of the big T. Rex dinosaur. They all enjoyed walking along the various models of carnivorous & herbivore species. The ecology centre had fascinating displays of plants, animals and their central link with the sun which drives the seasons and the



Children with Imam Sultan at the Totteridge Road Mosque before setting off for London



The excitement mounts as the children reach the Natural History Museum

This was another wonderful experience where everyone learnt something new including:-

- Walk through the replicas of different species of Dinosaurs, including T. Rex.
- Ecology centre – a walk through the seasons and weather changes.
- Birds and creepy crawlies – extinct Dodos and real size peacocks.
- Wonders of the planet earth- volcanoes & quakes and how it all forms.
- Minerals – how gold, copper, aluminium are formed & extracted.
- World of real size massive mammals like the blue whale and elephants.
- How the human body works- muscle, joints, eyes and reproduction.
- Practical investigation centre with microscopes.

Finally, special thanks to Neales for the discounted transport, Khan catering for the finger food and local shop owner Zafar Iqbal for donating the drinks.

Shena Moynihan, the Principal of *The Highcrest Academy*, explains the reasons behind the attainment of academy status.



I have been asked by the MPA to pen a few words to explain how things at The Highcrest Academy have changed since we became so successful. It is important that the Academy acknowledges all the help and support that it has constantly received from the whole of the Wycombe Community. The journey has been long and not always easy and The Highcrest Academy would not be the outstanding school it is now without this support offered by so many. Clearly the biggest reason for the success of the Academy is excellent teaching, magnificent support provided by the support staff, the high expectations that the students have of themselves and the unstinting support from Governors and parents.

When Hatters Lane School was closed by Ofsted and Highcrest Community School opened, it was a very different school and faced huge challenges. However, over the last ten years we have now become heavily over-subscribed and have doubled in size. Last November we were awarded the outstanding badge in our Ofsted Report and are now seen as a school of first choice. We were recently delighted to be nominated as one of only six finalists in the prestigious TES Schools Awards as “Secondary School of the Year”.

These achievements have been reached by ensuring our students have excellent behaviour and are aware that the staff have very high expectations of them. We provide outstanding teaching and pastoral care and we also ensure that our students feel they have a stake in the school.

The reason for becoming The Highcrest Academy is that we as a school want to build on the huge successes of Highcrest Community School and are now ready for next exciting part of the journey as becoming an Academy has given us a new freedom and independence to make a far greater range of decisions which we feel are right for our students.

From the students’ perspective, things will not change immediately as we continue the successful practices of Highcrest, although of course we have now changed our school badge. It is more “behind the scenes” freedom that will bring longer-term benefits for all.

Thara Stores would like to wish all their customers EID-ul-Adha MUBARAK!

Thara Stores offer a wide selection of all the Asian foods, spices and fresh fruit & veg plus everyday food items at lowest prices around. We have departments for fresh Halal meat and poultry, a department for ready made fashion ware and colourful fabrics of all kinds.

We offer great reductions on bulk purchases for restaurants, takeaways, parties or weddings. Visit us for more information and to see many offers we have in store.

2 Whitelands Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 3EQ • Tel: 01494 445653

This Newsletter was produced by Singlamarket.co.uk. Tel: 01494 853 899.

Is there something we can learn from the Chinese?

China's education performance - at least in cities such as Shanghai and Hong Kong - seems to be as spectacular as the country's breakneck economic expansion, outperforming many more advanced countries.

But what is behind this success?

Eyebrows were raised when the results of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's international maths, science and reading tests - the Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) tests - were published.

Shanghai, taking part for the first time, came top in all three subjects. Meanwhile, Hong Kong which was performing well in the last decade of British rule, has gone from good to great. In this global ranking, it came fourth in reading, second in maths and third in science.

These two Chinese cities have outstripped leading education systems around the world. The results are put down to "a devotion to education not shared by some other cultures", according to a Chinese education expert.

More than 80% of Shanghai's older secondary students attend after-school tutoring. They may spend another three to four hours each day on homework under close parental supervision.

According to a World Bank's education specialist improving the quality of teachers and making sure that teachers are highly regarded has also helped as well as providing information to make schools accountable and giving autonomy to schools and head teachers.

Under the banner "First class city, first class education", Shanghai set about systematically re-equipping classrooms, upgrading schools and revamping the curriculum in the last decade.

Dynamic Hong Kong was forced into educational improvements as its industries moved to cheaper mainland Chinese areas in the 1990s. Its survival as a service and management hub for China depended on upgrading knowledge and skills.

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

Continued from page 1The MPA is also pleased to advise that AWAAZ, the Local Community Radio Station in High Wycombe has commissioned weekly programmes, until the New Year, about education and as a result 'Taleem Ki Duniya' or 'The world of Education' programme is being broadcast, every Saturday between 4 and 6PM on 107.4FM. If you wish to contribute in any way to the programme's content or format or are prepared to talk about any educational issue on Air the please contact the MPA Chairman, Rafiq Raja or send him an email at: raja@awaazradio.com

Finally, the MPA would like to commend Muhammad Adnan Khaliq, a Year 13 Student at John Hampden Grammar School, for putting himself forward for the Youth Parliament (for High Wycombe). His candidature is being endorsed by the JHGS head who describes him as 'Articulate, confident and persuasive', as well as being energetic but with the ability to listen to others. So if you have a vote in the Youth Parliament election then please consider Adnan's credentials before voting.

Public spending on education in the UK is falling at the fastest rate since the 1950s, says the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

The independent financial researchers say spending will fall by 13% in real terms between 2010-11 and 2014-15.

In England, the deepest cuts are in school buildings, higher education, 16-to-19 provision and early years.

The IFS report says that after a decade of rapid growth in funding schools and universities, the UK is now facing the largest cut in education spending over any four-year period since at least the 1950s.

As a share of national income, the IFS is projecting that public spending on education will fall close to the level of the late-1990s - when it dipped to 4.5%. It had not previously been at such a low level since the early 1960s.

But these spending cuts will not be evenly spread, says the IFS, which has based its overall figures on UK-wide budgets and its sector breakdowns on figures from England.

School spending in England has emerged "relatively protected" from spending cuts, says the report. Although it says that the majority of schools will see real-term cuts, these will be offset in part by pupil premium payments for deprived children.

Among the areas with the deepest spending cuts will be capital funding on schools, which the IFS says will be more than halved. This follows the scrapping of the Building Schools for the Future school rebuilding project.

Hajj

The Final groups of Muslims from High Wycombe, as from the rest of the country, have left for the Hajj Pilgrimage in Makkah and Medina in Saudi Arabia, this week, as the Hajj will be performed on Saturday, 5 November. Hajj is the fifth tenet of Islam, (the others being 'Kalma' proclamation in the belief of ONE GOD and that Mohammed (peace be upon him) is his messenger, 'Nimaz' five daily prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadan and 'Zikat' the giving of 2.5% self assessed tax, levied on people with assets over a threshold) commemorates the story shared with Christianity and Judaism, of Hazrat Ibrahim's (Abraham) willingness to sacrifice his son Ismaeil in the name of God.

The Wycombe Muslims will join nearly 2 million other Muslims from all over the world and perform Hajj on the 9th day of the Islamic Month of Zil-Hajj, of the year 1432AH of the Islamic calendar, with Eid Ul Adha the following day. Able bodied Muslims, who can financially support themselves during Hajj and also have sufficient resources for their family members left behind are obliged to undertake Hajj, at least once in their life time. The Annual Hajj attracts a uniquely multi racial, multi cultural and multi lingual gathering of the faithful who have an opportunity to visit and pray in the holiest Islamic cities of Makkah, which houses the 'Kaaba' (Arabic for cube and reportedly the oldest and continuously in use religious building dating back to the time even before Hazrat Ibrahim) towards which all Muslims face when offering formal prayers. Medina is also of significance to the Muslim world as the holy prophet is buried under the Green dome of the magnificent 'Masjid-E- Nabvi' or the Mosque of the Prophet.

The Hajj has its own obligations, rituals and timetable which the future 'Hajjies' have to observe in detail. For about three days, from the 8 Zil-Hajj, the pilgrims leave Makkah for the Tent City of Mina in the plains of Arafat where they have to visit certain sites, symbolically stone satan and then return to the Kaaba for a final 'tauaaf' or walk around the Kaaba before they can discard 'aharam' the special dress, which for men consists of couple of plain white sheets, whatever your status or nationality, whilst the ladies can wear their ordinary cloths as long as their hair and their bodies are modestly covered. Incidentally, the covering of the face by a veil is not permitted during the performance of the Hajj. Once Eid-Ul Adha is celebrated on 10 of Zil Hajj, most Hajjies then make their way to Medina for the final few days of their stay in Saudi Arabia, unless they have been there before Hajj. The Hajjies will start to return by mid November and we wish them a safe and joyous experience of a life time.



Parents Forum for Children
of African & Caribbean Heritage
IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD



Helping to raise standards in education.

The PFCACH and MPA High Wycombe proudly invite parents to the :

BME Parents Conference

at 1pm on Saturday 10th December 2011

Entrance is **FREE**, with a ticket

Venue:

Main Hall,
Cressex Community School (Old School Entrance)
Holmers Lane,
High Wycombe,
Buckinghamshire, HP12 4QA

FREE Refreshments will be served

Are you a Parent?

- Do you want your child to do well in school?
- Do you want to learn more about how you can help them?
- Do you want to know more information about schools?
- Do you want to know more about Children's Centres?
- Do you want to know about NEET?

If you have answered **YES** to any of these questions,
please attend this conference and get your answers!

Organised by the
Muslim
and African Caribbean
Groups,
but ALL Parents are
welcome

- 1:00pm Registration & refreshments
- 1:30pm Introduction Dr Anas-UI-Turabi
- 2:00pm Workshop with Leaders and Facilitators
- 2:30pm Break
- 2:35pm Feedback and Forum
- 3:25pm Free ExtraTutions. (Where, Which & Benefits)
- 3:40pm Key Note Speakers
- 3:50pm End of Conference (Food)

SINGLAMARKET
BUSINESS SERVICES
NEW BUSINESS • ACCOUNTS • TAX • PAYROLL SERVICES • HR
singlamarket.co.uk

For tickets please call 0845 688 4944
or email john@mpawycombe.co.uk
More info: www.mpawycombe.co.uk

Sure Start
Children's Centres