



THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF KUWAIT

AWARDS EVENING 2017 Middle Phase Head Teacher's Report

Al Baraka Ballroom, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 11 October 2017

Honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen and, most importantly, students.

It is my very great pleasure to stand before you this evening as a new Secondary Head Teacher in charge of the Middle Phase of The British School of Kuwait, particularly in this our 40th ruby anniversary year.

The Middle Phase is made up of students from Years 6, 7 and 8, and the Middle Phase Leadership Team consists of myself, Miss Alya Muflihi (Assistant Head teacher) responsible for academic matters, Mr Sylvain Kerzerho (Middle Phase Coordinator) and Miss Sophie Ali (Assistant Middle Phase Coordinator) both responsible for pastoral matters.

The creation of the Middle Phase has afforded us the opportunity to focus all our attention on our younger Secondary students.

Our Year 6 students, transitioning from the Primary section where they have been taught predominantly by a single teacher to the secondary section where they have specialist teachers for every subject, need a lot of care and attention as they learn how to organise themselves as they move around the school. As a Middle Phase team we have particularly focussed our attention on trying to make this transition as smooth as possible. I was very pleased to spend some time with the Year 6 students at our recent film and pizza evenings and am looking forward to organising more social events in the future.

We are also working on some very exciting opportunities for the Year 7 and 8 students, details of which I will give later on in this speech.

Awards Philosophy

This evening we are celebrating the achievements of over 270 award-winning students who were in Years 6-10 during the academic year 2016-2017.

All the students who we will recognise here this evening are extremely dedicated and highly capable young people. As the evening progresses you will have the opportunity to see and hear for yourselves the variety of fields in which they continue to shine.

Some have excelled in specific areas of the curriculum, obtaining the top marks in their end-of-year examinations and thus achieving the status of Subject Prize winners. New this year we have also decided to recognise the considerable achievements of those students who placed second and third in a subject with a Commendation.

Others, who having achieved the top grades (A or A*) in at least 50% of their subjects, will be recognised as Excellence Award winners. Of these students, those obtaining A or A* grades in over

70% of their subjects will receive an 'Excellence Award with Merit' and those with over 90% A or A* grades will receive an 'Excellence Award with Distinction'.

At BSK we not only celebrate students who have excelled academically, but also those who have enjoyed notable successes in extracurricular pursuits, these students are our Special Award winners, and tonight we will be celebrating their accomplishments in a diverse range of areas including mathematics, creative writing, Quran recitation, debating, drama, art and music.

Moreover, students in each of our four Houses; England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales who have excelled in the Housepoint Competition, achieving impressive numbers of positive points and minimal negative points, will also be recognised.

Finally, the Head Teacher's Award will be presented to the one student in each year group whom it is felt has best exemplified the overall achievements and attitudes which we value here at The British School of Kuwait.

We often use three words to define the educational philosophy of BSK – Rigorous, Rounded and Relevant.

RIGOROUS: Academic rigour and student progress is undoubtedly at the core of what we do, the very impressive examination results that Ms Emma Bowie the Higher Phase Head Teacher will be reporting on later in the evening are a testament to both the hard work of your children and the dedication of our teaching staff

ROUNDED: Here at BSK we firmly believe that *every single student* should be making the most of the opportunities which they are afforded. Whether that be through pursuing sporting activities, involvement in the creative arts, participation in service and leadership programmes or any number of other opportunities, there really is something for everyone. That so many of our students demonstrate not only enviable levels of academic achievement, but also the enjoyment and successes which come from being involved in extra-curricular activities is something of which we are very proud indeed. Many of the award winners here this evening serve as especially impressive role models because they continue to strike the right balance. They manage to focus on their studies *and* get involved in enrichment activities.

RELEVANT: BSK prides itself on delivering the most up to date curriculum through modern teaching methodologies. Most recently in the Middle Phase students have had the opportunity to learn the programming language Python through dedicated computing lesson. In Year 7 this year students are learning Fusion 360, professional Computer Aided Design (CAD) software used extensively in industry.

Extracurricular Successes

Large numbers of our students enjoyed noteworthy extracurricular and personal successes during the course of 2016-2017, too many for me to list this evening. Nevertheless I will endeavour to highlight a few notable successes.

In music a number of our BSK musicians participated in the Young Musicians of the Gulf competition in Bahrain. Our nine person La Camerata group placed first in the Large Ensemble category and Middle Phase student Hai Wei Li was announced overall Young Musician of the Gulf, an outstanding achievement given the intense competition.

In addition to this BSK attended the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) Music Festival, where La Camerata was once again named winners of the Large Ensemble category, the trio E Piccoli was named winners of the Small Ensemble Category, moreover violin soloist Vivian Sequeira was named winner of the Key Stage 4 and 5 Bowed Strings Category. This resulted in BSK being awarded overall COBIS Music Festival winners.

The German Team has continued to build on BSK's status as a German Government Partner School. Last year five students attended the annual German Language Camp in Oman, and three students were awarded a three-week study scholarship in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Another exciting development this year was the hugely successful Berlin Buddy Bear project. BSK's art students working in collaboration with the German Embassy and the German Team submitted a huge array of designs for this exciting project. The winning designs produced by Elizabeth McEwan, Farah Badr, Atiya Chetty and Sadia Islam were then painted onto the six foot bear.

In French BSK is working with the Institut Français to prepare students in Years 6-10 for the French Government DELF A1 and A2 exams.

The Spanish Embassy also gave us unprecedented support and encouragement. The wife of His Excellency the Spanish Ambassador, Senora Carmen, becoming a regular visitor to BSK participating actively in our very popular Spanish clubs.

In Mathematics a team of BSK students competed yet again in the Gulf University of Science and Technology Mathletes Competition, and for the first time we also entered students into the United Kingdom Merit Trust Junior Challenge where our students excelled achieving three bronze, four silver and eleven Gold awards. Six students were also offered entry into the prestigious Mathematics Olympiad and achieved two qualifications and two merits. We hope to continue this success in this coming year.

It was another very busy year in the field of visual arts. As well as supporting many of the local art competitions and the Berlin Buddy Bears project BSK took a select group of students to the KIMMCO "Paint the Future" competition where Middle Phase student Jamie Santos took second prize.

BSK students also had the opportunity to showcase their work as part of the tremendously successful Art, Design and Technology Exhibition in March, and also in the GCSE Exhibition, a new addition to our events calendar.

In the dramatic arts, students took part in the terrific school production of Scrooge and outstanding performances were seen from students in Years 6 to 12. Tremendous talent was evident not only onstage but also backstage; many of our students working as stage managers, costume designers, stage hands and aiding technically with lights and sound.

Our collaborations with external organisations continue to go from strength to strength. Last year volunteers from INJAZ Kuwait taught three courses from their Junior Achievement Worldwide programme, allowing students in Year 8 to learn more about Personal Economics, Year 9 to develop their understanding of Personal Finance and Year 10 to explore ideas pertaining to careers success. In June we were delighted to yet again be awarded the accolade of 'Top Private School' partnering with INJAZ Kuwait in 2016-17.

The British Schools of the Middle East (BSME) sports competition, where 12 of the best British schools from across the Gulf participate is the height of sporting competition available to schools within the Middle East. Our Under 13 team represented BSK superbly with Renee Sarmiento winning gold in the 800m race being a highlight. Our Under 15 team produced even more fantastic results as they had numerous successes on the athletics track. The Girls and the Boys Relay Teams both won the bronze medal, Faisal Khaleefah also won bronze in the Boys Long Jump, Sara Henderson added to her relay bronze medal by claiming silver in the Girls 100m race, and Gabriela Pickard claimed the gold medal in the Girls 800m race. Moreover the Boys Football Team claimed the bronze medal thanks to a last minute goal scored by Faisal Khaleefah in their play-off game.

Locally there are 38 sports championships that BSK competes in, against other schools in Kuwait. Last year, from those 38 championships, BSK reached the semi-final on 35 occasions, the final 19 times and won the final 10 times. The 'Perfect Season' was experienced by the Under 13, Under 15 and the Under 19 Girls' Basketball teams who all won every single game. A truly remarkable feat.

Middle Phase Developments

Within the Middle Phase, some initiatives that are new this year include:

A Middle Phase only Sports Day, where the students get to compete in a mix of fun games, as well as more traditional athletics

A Variety Show that will provide an opportunity for our younger students to showcase their many theatrical and musical talents.

The Bonus Badge. A new Housepoint badge for Middle Phase students to reward citizenship such as acts of kindness or service to the school.

A cross curricular enrichment day, where students will be off timetable for the day and will be able to experience a series of fun activities designed to augment their current classroom curriculum, including self-defence and first-aid classes.

For our Year 7 students Miss Lindsay Gilmore is introducing a new and exciting PSHE programme that includes what is currently the largest global educational initiative, the F1 in schools STEM Challenge. This exciting initiative will have our students learn industry standard design software, used by professional Formula 1 designers, to design, analyse, manufacture, test and then race miniature compressed air powered Formula 1 cars. This amazing opportunity will allow students to use physics, aerodynamics, design manufacture, branding, graphics, leadership, teamwork, media, marketing and financial strategies and apply them in a practical, imaginative, competitive and exciting way.

Finally we are currently in contact with Camps International, a UK based charity, to provide a once in a lifetime opportunity for our Year 8 students to visit Sri Lanka on an expedition including trekking through the rainforest and helping out at a turtle sanctuary.

Concluding Remarks

The time has now come for me to draw this address to a close. But before we introduce your children, our very talented award winning students, all of whom make me very proud. I wish to congratulate our Founder, Mme Vera Al-Mutawa MBE, on the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the school. It has been my privilege to be with her on this journey for the last 20 years.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the evening and I look forward to meeting many of you afterwards and in the upcoming parental consultation days.

Thank you all very much.

Nicholas Smith

Secondary Head Teacher