



NEWS

Quintin Kynaston School

No. 27

28th April 2006

Headteacher's Message

Year 9 students complete their Key Stage 3 Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) next week. These are important exams taken by all students across England to measure their progress since leaving primary school and to help set targets for them at GCSE.

We know that students have been revising hard for the past few weeks and will be fully focussed on their exams next week.

All Year 9 students should be using their Bank Holiday weekend wisely for:

- last minute revision
- plenty of sleep – early nights!
- and some relaxation.

On the days of your Tests, make sure that you get up in plenty of time, have some breakfast (even if you normally skip it!) and leave home a little bit earlier than normal in case of any transport problems. (If you do have any problems the morning of a Tests, please phone school urgently).

Good luck Year 9!

Jo Shuter

Early Closure – Advance Warning

School be closed on Friday 12th May for Staff Training (Inset) and tudents will be dismissed after lunch on Thursday 11th.

Dates to Remember in May

Monday 1st: School is closed on Bank Holiday

Tuesday 2nd: SATs begin

Monday 8th: Years 7-9 exams begin

Wednesday 10th: Year 10 exams begin

Wednesday 17th: Welcome Evening for Year 6 Parents

Examinations

As detailed in last week's QK News, Years 11, 12 and 13 are all busy preparing for their external exams which start soon.

Years 7 and 8 will also be taking exams in all their subjects using the Lower Gyms for English, Maths and Science as practice for sitting exams properly but classrooms for other subjects. Please read the letter that is being sent out to the parents of Y7 and 8 students carefully for more information.

Year 10 will be taking their Mock GCSE exams in the Lower Gyms. These are from Thursday 11th to Friday 19th. Students are expected to be off-site and at home revising for the next day's exams during these nine days.

Letters are being sent to parents of students in Years 7, 8 and 10 with more information.

Please take time to look at the QK School website – it contains lots of useful information about the exams:

- timetables
- how to revise
- links to revision websites for subjects

www.qkschool.org.uk

Gifted & Talented Students

After a brilliant trip to the Wallace Collection before the Easter holidays, students in Years 8 and 9 have a 6-week Technology workshop with Miss Taank. They will be designing and making their own products in marquetry. Starts on Monday May 8th in Room DT4 from 3.45-5 pm.

Performance

A-level Drama and Theatre Studies students will be performing in the Drama Studio on 2nd June. Curtain up at 5 pm.

Trip to Lavenda Springs, Kenya

Nick Johns, Jessica Schembri, Said El Boukili, Rebecca Young, Serena Naidoo, David Toyloco, Sylwia Domaradzka, Anne Marie O'connor, Debbie Bell, Robert Deane, Cheri Carrington, Peter Smith and Fiona Mckay visited our partner school Lavenda Springs over the Easter holidays.

One teacher writes...

It was an amazing experience – one that those of us lucky enough to go will never forget.

We arrived at Nairobi Airport bright and early (6.30 am!) on Sunday 2nd April to be met by Jeff – co-founder of Lavenda Springs – and Charlie who had come to pick us up in their newly-purchased School Bus. The bumpy roads out of Nairobi gave us our first glimpses of Kenya as we travelled through the outskirts. It seemed like a different world, with hand-painted advertisements for products I had never heard of, oxen and goats grazing by the side of the road and fruit stalls that sold the sweetest tasting mangoes in the world!

I had expected to see yellow savannah grass (and lions!) everywhere and so I was very surprised at how green everything was. En route to Lavenda Springs, everything was in full bloom. The weather alternated between very strong sunshine and heavy rain – Kenya has two rainy seasons per year. Jeff told us that it hadn't rained for four months until the day we arrived – we must have brought some UK weather with us! There was some concern about whether the bus would be able to make it through the mud to Lavenda Springs but it struggled on heroically and we arrived at the project safe and sound!

We were given the most amazing welcome by the students who greeted us with a lovely song. Despite the rain, the whole school had turned out to say hello. We headed into the huge tent that was to be our dining room and meeting place for the next couple of weeks and treated to more song and dance performances from the students.

After a hearty dinner of githera (a traditional bean, maize and spinach stew), we headed for some much-needed rest. Our rooms were in the newly built Kivuli [shelter in Swahili] Houses which will accommodate some of the orphaned children who attend Lavenda Springs. Many have lost one or both parents to AIDS. One of our tasks for the trip was to help build another Kivuli House. The builders would start work at around 5 each morning, so there was no need to worry about oversleeping!

The traditional outside 'drop toilet' was a new experience for me but, like everything in life,

practice makes perfect! The bathroom was just a small room with a plastic jug and a washing up bowl. But we were provided with warm water and very soon got used to a new way of 'showering'. How much we take for granted in the UK; I look at my own bathroom with new-found gratitude!

We had a tour of the whole project on our first morning. In the carpentry shop everything is made for the school – from the rafters for the roofs to school desks. Then to the primary school. As we approached, we could hear the younger students chanting in Swahili, the national language which is taught in all Kenyan schools as is English. On to the high school to meet the four classes. Students were revising hard for their end of term exams later that week.

Highlights of the visit included: observing and teaching lessons; helping out in the kitchens; joining in with the school sports day; seeing Thompson Falls and the Great Rift Valley; visiting the Aberdare Country Club; spotting elephants, giraffes, warthogs, buffalo and zebra on safari in the Aberdare National Park.

A particularly memorable experience for me was visiting Marallal in northern Kenya, the home of about twenty Samburu children who attend Lavenda Springs. While we were there, we met with children at their local primary school and their parents. It is not a building but a clearing in the open air. After some amazing tribal singing and dancing, we treated them to a fabulous rendition of 'If you're happy and you know it' which they were kind enough to applaud. Getting everyone to do the hokey cokey was surreal but enormous fun. We also found time in Marallal to go on a camel safari which, depending which teacher you ask was either 'FANTASTIC! or 'absolute hell, never, ever again!'

When it was time to leave, I felt very mixed emotions. I was very pleased to be coming back to mod cons but a big part of me would have loved to have stayed longer. Because of the generosity students and parents at QK and others, young people on a different continent have enormously improved life chances. Thank you to everyone who donated money or items – your generosity makes a HUGE difference. For more information about the project, to make a donation, sponsor a student, or even check out details of how you can visit the project, check out

www.lavendasprings.com

Debbie Bell