



# News@KIST

The Newsletter of K. International School Tokyo

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*"An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you know and what you don't."*

-- Anatole France

## Dates to Remember

### Term 1



#### October 6th:

Parent, Teacher, Student Interview Day

#### October 9th:

School Photo Day

#### October 18th:

School Explanation Day

#### October 24th:

Festival preparation day  
(No Primary or ECE students)

#### October 25th:

School Festival

#### October 31st-November 2nd:

IBO Conference at KIST

#### November 5th—7th:

Grade 7 Camp

#### November 19th— 21st:

Grade 6 Camp

#### November 28th:

Inter-house Cross Country

#### December 5th:

Inter-school Cross Country

## Principal's Message

Welcome to the start of the 2008-2009 school year. It was wonderful to see so many of you attend our Parent Welcome Nights last week. We hope that you enjoyed this opportunity to meet your child's classroom/homeroom teacher.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the activities that our staff participated in during our staff development week at the beginning of this term.

### Vision for Learning:

During this week our teachers worked together to create the first draft of our School Vision for Learning. Through this process we worked as a group to reflect on the learning process and identify key ideas that make learning situations successful and meaningful for all students. From this we then developed statements that define the type of learning opportunities we believe are valuable for learners across the school. We are currently in the process of reviewing these statements as a team and we hope to share these with you soon. The purpose for us in completing this process was to ensure that as a school we are able to clearly articulate to you as parents the type and range of learning experiences that your child will have access to each and every year of their time here at K. International. As a Principal I was very proud to see the way that our community of teachers committed themselves to and participated in this activity. It is clear from their work that our staff are truly reflecting on the learning process and continually looking for ways to ensure that learning is maximized in their classrooms.

### Building Positive Classroom Relationships:

Another focus of our week together was a series of activities that were designed to assist us as teachers to continue to strive to find ways to develop positive classroom environments and positive relationships with our students. We identified our role as Teachers and Administrators in ensuring that students feel safe and supported at school as well as the key role that we play in supporting the relationships that exist between our students. Given scenarios and situations we were encouraged as a group to reflect on how we would handle situations involving a child as well as the choice of words that we use when helping them to identify inappropriate behaviors and their role in situations of conflict. We hope that you will be able to see the 'fruits of our work' through the learning experiences and classroom environments that your children have recently joined. We look forward to working with you throughout the year and to sharing with you more about the school-life experiences that your children are a part of.

Kind regards,  
Sasha Marshall  
School Principal

## Parent Welcome Night

I would like to extend my thanks to all families who attended the Parent Welcome evenings during week 2. The change in format for welcome day aimed to give both parents and teachers an extended and more focused time together to share information about the year ahead. So far the response to this change has been positive and I thank you all for your participation in this. Information presented on parent welcome night reminded us of the importance of positive home-school partnerships, the freedom and wonder of inquiry and the ongoing challenge of a differentiated program.

## Integrated Language Learning in ECE

As many of you know, foreign language learning can be a difficult and frustrating process. Fortunately, for our ECE students this process is less problematic and much more efficient. Research and literature tell us that from the time of birth to around the onset of adolescence, children experience a sensitive period for language development. It is during this time that positive and meaningful language experiences can assist the efficient development of both first and second languages. Current understanding of language learning, and personal experience, tells us that positive and meaningful language experiences are those that are purposeful and based in real life contexts where the learner uses language that is linked to needs, wants and interests.

In order to facilitate this contextually based language environment for our young children, we have made some changes to the implementation of Japanese language classes in K1 and K2 (and some K3 classes). Starting this year, Japanese language teachers are now using their allocated specialist time to join the English language teachers in the regular classroom environment. During this time they will interact and integrate with classroom activities, encouraging and promoting the use of Japanese language. This integration will vary throughout the year. At times the Japanese language teacher will engage the students in their play activities so that use of English and Japanese can be applied to everyday tasks. At other times teachers will set up specific Japanese language activities and invite students to participate. Both English language and Japanese language teachers work alongside each other, helping students to hear and use both languages in the same context.

We hope that these changes will assist both our native and foreign speakers of Japanese to develop confidence and efficiency in their Japanese language skills.

Amanda Cooke  
Lower School Principal

## News from the Secondary Department

*“Tribe: A class or community of persons, working together with strong common traits and/or interests” (Webster’s Dictionary)*

In the past, moving from the Primary school to the Secondary school might have marked a scary transition. Where do I keep my things? Who will be my teachers? Who will be my friends? In order to establish a smooth start to the beginning of grades 6 and 7, the 6/7 team of teachers programmed a week designed to ease this transition. It was designed based on a set of beliefs about how to maximize student’s academic, social and emotional performance.

During orientation week students participated in numerous activities designed to build community. It was our aim to build an inclusive learning community where all students feel supported and valued. The students were divided into small learning communities or tribes where they had boys and girls from grades 6 and 7 in each group. During the week each Tribe was faced with numerous challenges from creating a Tribe flag and chant, to building a bridge, to solving a real life problem in the community. Groups worked through these challenges while also learning more about each other and ultimately themselves. In addition to building community, students were able to problem solve issues such as a fair way to choose a locker, to how to make our classrooms a more nurturing, supportive place where everyone feels included.

The week ended with an excursion where the students could enjoy the day together as a 6/7 group before moving into regular classes. The 6/7 Tribe groups will continue to meet over the year as they continue to develop relationships with one another and problem solve issues relevant to this particular age group. The teachers felt that the week was a great success and saw many positive aspects of the program, however, the comments from the students speak for themselves;

- “It was a great program as we had to cooperate”*
- “Meeting and talking with the other grade was good”*
- “It was good to solve problems together and think of plans carefully (tribes)”*
- “Learning teamwork is fun”*
- “I was able to work cooperatively”*



Congratulations to the students on a fantastic first week! Also, I would like to extend a big thank you to Mr. Ash, Mr. Hough, Ms. Johnston, Mr. Vinegrad and Mr. Southall for all of their hard work, commitment and support.

Alison Cox  
Grade 6/7 Coordinator

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## Parent Evenings – Building Home-School Partnerships

All parent evenings held last week demonstrated the wonderful amount of support which is available to our students. Parents who attended were given the opportunity to find out about the philosophy behind the **Primary Years Program – Inquiry Learning**. Amanda Cooke and I both spoke about the importance of inquiry learning. Below are the key points which I addressed:

### **The PYP**

The PYP (Primary Years Programme) is a multi-faceted programme of international education that is designed to foster the development of the *whole child*; mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.

The PYP prepares children for a future that goes beyond school; encouraging and developing real life-long learning.

The Programme comprises of rich **concepts**, significant and relevant **knowledge**, academic and social **skills**, **attitudes** of well-being and personal **action**.

### **Inquiry Learning**

People explore the world in many ways; through observation, reading, pondering, writing and listening.

Inquiry learning occurs when a child brings another (child or adult), into the act of sense-making.

Wonderment, puzzling and surprise are often the initiating events for inquiry journeys.

Inquiry learning is a world where children's minds come alive with possibilities and where students learn through experience, investigation, and hands-on activities that engage their minds and foster their interest.

### **Parent Information Sessions**

Throughout this year, parents will have the opportunity to learn more about the PYP and inquiry learning through:

Workshops that introduce parents who are new to our school or the Primary Years programme to the PYP

Workshops that focus on inquiry learning

Workshops that focus on areas which respond to requests from parents.

### **Communication**

Throughout the year, I will publish ideas for how parents can support their children at home in the school newsletters.

Also, from time to time your child will bring home special **PYP Parent Overviews**. These will provide parents with greater detail about current units of inquiry, as well as ideas for supporting your child at home.

### **The Programme of Inquiry**

By now all parents with children in the PYP should have received our Programme of Inquiry 2008-2009.

This overview provides everyone in our school community with an outline of the units of inquiry that each grade level will study throughout the year.

Please contact your child's classroom teacher if you did not receive a copy.

Paul Langtree  
PYP Coordinator















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## Primary and ECE Portfolios

At K. International we strive to keep ahead of current education research and thinking. In order to do this, at times we need to engage in our own research as a way of investigating and improving our practices. For the 2008-2009 school year, teachers of K1-G5 will be doing action research based on the use and organization of our student portfolios. Our portfolios are a means of students sharing and reflecting on their learning journey throughout the year. They help both students and families see the growth and development that has taken place in terms of developing understandings, skills and knowledge across a range of curriculum areas. This year, our staff and students will be experimenting with a variety of new ways of collecting, presenting and thinking about these developments and how they are shared through the portfolios. Staff are currently working in teams both within and across year levels to put together a plan for their portfolio approach for this year. This means that there will be variety in presentation and content in portfolios, depending on the approach your child's teacher will take. Within the next few weeks you will receive information from your child's teacher notifying you of their approach to portfolios this year. At the end of the year teachers, students and families will have the opportunity to respond to the various approaches which will then help inform us about appropriate changes for the following year. We hope that with support from all members of our community, this research project will help to make positive changes to the sharing of learning for all of our students.

## Welcome to our New Staff

On behalf of our school community we would like to use this opportunity to introduce you to the new staff that have joined us this year. Despite only having a small number of teachers depart last year, we have many new teachers join us through increased enrolments and school growth. We are fortunate to have such a dynamic and experienced team of teacher join us and look forward to working with them over the coming years. We hope that you enjoy meeting them and getting to know them over the coming year.

 <p><b>Jordi Casas:</b> <a href="mailto:j_casas@kist.ed.jp">j_casas@kist.ed.jp</a> Jordi Casas is a new member of our Primary Physical Education Team.</p>	 <p><b>Allan Gale:</b> Mr Gale joins us again this year after a two year break from teaching at KIST. He is working this year in Grade 1.</p>	 <p><b>Heather Watson:</b> <a href="mailto:h_watson@kist.ed.jp">h_watson@kist.ed.jp</a> Heather is a new member of our K2 teaching team working with Peggy in K2HP.</p>	 <p><b>Beverley Sterling:</b> <a href="mailto:b_sterling@kist.ed.jp">b_sterling@kist.ed.jp</a> Beverley is a new member of our K2 teaching team working with Jessica Larson in K2JB.</p>
 <p><b>David McKinnon :</b> <a href="mailto:d_mckinnon@kist.ed.jp">d_mckinnon@kist.ed.jp</a> David McKinnon is a new member of our ESL team working with Grade 4 and 5.</p>	 <p><b>Desiree Brown Quilty:</b> <a href="mailto:d_brownquilty@kist.ed.jp">d_brownquilty@kist.ed.jp</a> Ms Brown Quilty is one of two new Secondary Mathematics teachers to join us this year. Ms Brown Quilty teaches HL Mathematics in the DP programme.</p>	 <p><b>Daryl Bates:</b> <a href="mailto:d_bates@kist.ed.jp">d_bates@kist.ed.jp</a> Mr Bates is our new secondary art teacher. He will be working with students From Grade 6 through to Grade 12.</p>	 <p><b>Anne Grahame:</b> <a href="mailto:secondary@kist.ed.jp">secondary@kist.ed.jp</a> Ms Grahame is returning to KIST this year in the role of Upper School Principal. She is currently on leave and expected to return soon.</p>
 <p><b>Morena Christian (Mrs Christian by primary students, Morena by ECE students)</b> <a href="mailto:m_christian@kist.ed.jp">m_christian@kist.ed.jp</a> Morena Christian has joined our ESL department working with Grade 3 and K3.</p>	 <p><b>Michael Bates:</b> <a href="mailto:m_bates@kist.ed.jp">m_bates@kist.ed.jp</a> Mr Michael Bates joins our secondary team this year teaching IB—ITGS and Business Management. He will also be teaching Grade 10 Technology.</p>	 <p><b>Brian Doyle:</b> <a href="mailto:b_doyle@kist.ed.jp">b_doyle@kist.ed.jp</a> Mr Doyle is a new member of our Mathematics department. Mr Doyle will be teaching from Grade 8 through to Grade 12. In the DP he will teach SL Mathematics.</p>	 <p><b>Glen Johnston:</b> <a href="mailto:g_johnston@kist.ed.jp">g_johnston@kist.ed.jp</a> Ms Johnston makes the 4th teacher in our Grade 6/7 teaching team. She teaches Mathematics and Science to the grade 7 classes.</p>
 <p><b>Mario Citta:</b> <a href="mailto:m_citta@kist.ed.jp">m_citta@kist.ed.jp</a> Mr Citta joins us this year teaching English and Humanities for Grade 8 as well as ESL across the secondary.</p>	 <p><b>Ross Ferris:</b> <a href="mailto:myp_co@kist.ed.jp">myp_co@kist.ed.jp</a> Mr Ferris joins us as our new MYP Coordinator. He will also be teaching PE and Technology in the middle school.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Welcome!</p> <p style="font-size: 3em; font-weight: bold;">We hope that you enjoy being part of our team!</p>	