

# News from the school

April 2008

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a good half term but the six weeks have gone very quickly.

However, the school has been buzzing with different events and the girls have taken part in good humour. I am very fortunate to have a staff that are hard working, caring and committed to the school and organise such a range of different activities.

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April is the last day of term**, as usual pupils in Years 10 & 11 will finish at midday and the Yrs 7 8 & 9 will finish at 1pm. Any pupil wanting a packed lunch on Friday needs to go the office to collect one.

**The new term starts on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April** and pupils should be in school by 8.20am.

## STAFFING

Mr J. Dalton has been appointed as Second in the Maths department. Mr Dalton has been in the maths department at Connaught since January and has made a good impression with staff and pupils. He will work with the head of Maths, Mr A. Flynn to improve maths achievement at KS3 and KS4 and also plan developments in our maths college work.

## ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

I am concerned about attendance because of occasional days' absences. Heads of Year are working on this issue and are contacting parents.

However, my major concern is that over the past two weeks I have received a total of 22 holiday forms from parents in different year groups stating that the pupils' grandmothers have had a heart attack and that the family must take an extra two weeks holiday joined to the fixed spring break in early April.

As I have explained to these families

- the flights should not have been booked before receiving the school's permission
- two weeks is sufficient to visit family abroad
- if it is an emergency, the absence should be immediate & not planned for 5/6 weeks

All these holiday requests have been denied and the absences will be classed as unauthorised. All extended holidays affect the pupil's progress and achievement. It is not a right of families to demand 10 days extra holiday per year. Obviously extra time off school is authorised in an emergency or for compassionate reasons.

### Attendance averages for the half term, Feb - March 2008

Wk 8 : 96%      Wk 9 : 95%      Wk 10 : 95%      Wk 11 : 94%

Punctuality continues to be very good.

**BEHAVIOUR** continues to be very good Figures with comparison for similar times in

the year :- "On call" incidents : serious incidents of disruptive or rude behaviour

Feb - March 06 : 19 incidents, Feb - March 07 : 20 incidents, Feb- March 08 : 4 incidents

**Exclusions : used for very serious incidents**

Feb - March 2006 : 10 incidents : totalling 20 days exclusion

Feb - March 2007 : 9 incidents : totalling 9 days exclusion

Feb - March 2008 : 4 incidents : totalling 4 days exclusion

## JUMP ROPE FOR HEART

On February 14<sup>th</sup>, thanks to fine weather, over 100 Connaught girls as well as some staff skipped their way through the lunch hour to raise money for the British Heart Foundation. Our thanks go to everyone who took part and to the many sponsors who have given so generously. There is a gallery of photos on the school website

**A staggering £2091.00 has been raised, this total is the highest ever raised at Connaught.**

## LOCAL ELECTIONS

The school will be closed on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May as unfortunately the building is being used as a polling station for the local and mayor elections.

School will be open on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May as usual. We need all the possible lesson time before the Year 9 SATs and Yr 11 GCSE exams.

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May, is a Bank holiday so school will be closed

## PUBLIC SPEAKING

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, Connaught once again played host to the English Speaking Union's annual Public Speaking Competition for eleven to fourteen year olds. A number of schools in the borough competed, each entering a maximum of two teams.

Connaught entered a team from Year 8 (Racha Sobratee and Sahani Halwathura) and a Year 9 team (Khadeejah Undre and Eleanor Walsh)

Both teams performed excellently and Sahani was a joint winner of the "Best Chairperson". All the girls should be extremely proud of their achievements

## POETRY LIVE

In late February the majority of pupils in Year 10 went to a special poetry event at Westminster Central Hall. The event involved listening to several of the poets studied at GCSE perform their poetry live. The students were also able to listen to an examiner giving advice on how to approach the poetry questions in their GCSEs. It was a really helpful experience for all and a particular highlight was seeing poet John Agard perform: his lively and humorous readings

## SCIENCE WEEK 10.3.08 - 14.3.08

A wonderful week, pupils were able to learn about & touch snakes and owls and also learn about badgers. Yr 9 pupils enjoyed a workshop investigating clues about dinosaurs. There were also talks about the mysteries of science and Year 10 learnt how to make a compressed air rocket. At the end of the week, all Year 7 pupils, their science teachers and tutors enjoyed a wonderful day at London zoo, Such a week involves a great deal of organisation and all went very smoothly.

## Construction workshop

Darcy Turner is a local inventor who works with schools promoting the key skills of design. This year Darcy worked with the whole of Year 9 in a D & T workshop and they made a sculpture from wire. The girls made lots of fantastic sculptures made solely from wire and masking tape. He will be back to work with 60 students from Years 7, 8 and 9 in the summer.

# SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Congratulations to the following Yr 10 pupils who have been elected to lead our School Council

**Chair person:** Keziah Kissi **Vice- Chair:** Aysha Ingar **Secretary:** Reqaiyah Khwaya

## Year 8 Drumming

Twenty Year 8 girls have had six sessions. Year 8 students have shown real commitment and enthusiasm and they have made excellent progress so far and look forward to performing to an audience.

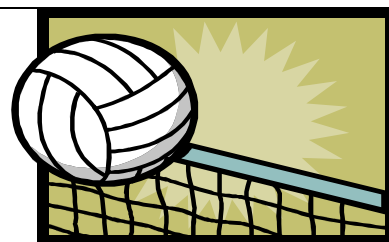
"African drumming gives us better knowledge on tempo and rhythm as well as enabling us to experience a different and cultural sense of music. Although our hands sometimes hurt we think it is totally worth it - no pain, no gain"

By Sahani Halwathura, Saima Hussain, Razina Patel, Racha Sobratee and Saima Undre 8F

## NETBALL

Pupils from Years 7, 8, 10 and 11 have all competed in netball tournaments this season with a mixture of success.

Netball club continues to run on Mondays after school and Mrs Parker would like to thank the Year 11 team for helping to organise practice.



## Year 11 Gene Therapy

Twenty Year 11 Biology pupils were selected to attend the prestigious "Gene Therapy" event held at Birkbeck College, University of London. Accompanied by Miss Ali and Miss Cousins they joined some of London's most able GCSE and A level pupils to listen to lectures given by scientists

Five lecturers explained their cutting edge research and explained how their findings could improve medicine in the future. By altering the genetics of patients, scientists hope to treat cystic fibrosis, cardiovascular disease and even alleviate some forms of cancer.

Pupils had an opportunity to ask the scientists questions then were treated to a buffet lunch. The two research scientists took our group on a tour of the Imperial College laboratories Pupils and staff watched science in action comparing healthy and diseased lung tissue through high tech light microscopes. Pupils also measured their own lung capacity by exhaling through a Spiro meter. The research scientists then led a discussion forum with our pupils about university life and the career opportunities in Science medicine. They emphasised that the long hours and the repetitive nature of clinical trials were worth the excitement and job satisfaction of doing modern ground breaking research which would dramatically improve patients' lives. Our pupils behaved impeccably and were a credit to the school. They expressed mature opinions and were keen to discuss the scientific and ethical issues surrounding the world of genetics.

S.Ali, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Science department

## NO UNIFORM / FANCY DRESS DAY

On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March we enjoyed a very special day. Pupils and staff wore fancy dress and helped to raise £546 to sponsor Mrs Slack who is running the London Marathon in aid of Macmillan Nurses. **We wish Mrs Slack good luck on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April.**

# STEEL BAND COMPETITION

On the 27<sup>th</sup> February, seven of our Year 10 students performed at the Music for Youth Regional Festival Series 2008 as part of Connaught's Steel Band. Alicia Brown, the Steel Band teacher, accompanied the girls to Morley College, Lambeth. The event gave our girls the opportunity to experience performing alongside others and to observe the ways in which others perform.

Many other schools took part at a very high standard with a mix of choirs, orchestras, trios and steel bands, all performing in varying styles and at different age groups. The afternoon was a brilliant combination of sounds and the girls really did the school proud. They performed 2 songs: "Sunny" and "One More Time".

The adjudicators commented on the girls "being a tight ensemble who are committed to your performance, you are naturals when it comes to rhythm. A very exciting and well-rehearsed performance which we enjoyed very much" **The girls who took part were: Lydia Amartey, Shanice Bowes, Nicole Brown, Meliqua Jones, Keziah Kissi, Ayesha Nicholls and Selina Williams. Well done to these girls.**

## PARENTS' / CARERS' EVENINGS

### Year 8 Parents' & Carers' evening

This evening on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February was very busy.

It was good to see so many parents and I know that most were very happy with their daughters' progress. I was, however, disappointed that some girls were not represented by their families. It is very important that pupils know that their parents are closely involved with their studies and that school and home are working together. We look forward to seeing everyone again at the next parents evening in 2009.

**A.Hordyk, Head of Year 8**

**Year 9 Options Evening** took place on 5th March 2008. This was a very successful evening with 112 pupils attending and many parents accompanying their daughters. The feedback from the pupils and parents was positive, as they felt it gave them a clearer insight into the new media and creative arts diploma, plus giving them much food for thought about their options choices.

### Year 9 Parents'/ Carers' Evening

was equally well attended and this took place on 11th March 2008. Parents were very supportive of the school and felt it gave them another chance to discuss option choices with subject teachers, as well as discussing their daughter's overall learning and progress.

I was very pleased that both events were a success and it was very good to see many parents and pupils. I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for their support regarding their daughter's education.

**S.Diamond, Head of Year 9**

Please email me any comments :- [ann.betts@sch.lbwf.gov.uk](mailto:ann.betts@sch.lbwf.gov.uk)

Ann Betts     Head teacher