



# Challney News



April 2009

NAME:

FORM:

## Letter from the Head

The Christmas edition of Challney News seems a distant memory! Even winter seems long past and we look forward to longer hours of daylight and better weather. Most of us are looking forward to the holidays and we commiserate with Year 11 who will be working hard throughout in preparation for their exams.

The severe weather before half term caused us considerable disruption. I cannot remember losing three days to snow before. I would like to thank parents for getting girls to school safely on Tuesday and Wednesday of that week. Girls responded well and, although some huts remained closed the following week, it was good to get some hard work done before the half-term holiday. Whilst we hope weather of that severity will not be repeated, we do recognise the need to improve our means of communication in emergency situations so that families can be informed in good time of any closure. The Local Radio stations perform a very good service but the extreme conditions posed a challenge for everyone. We will continue to do our best to improve communications. The health, safety and wellbeing of your daughters remain our prime concern.

Plans for the new building are all but finalised.

As I drive down Stoneygate Road at this time of year I am always impressed by the blossom on the trees. We hope to incorporate some similar trees in the landscaping of the new site. This will both cheer us up as spring begins and remind us of the long history that Challney Girls' School has on this site.



*Garden Club members showing their potted plants for Mother's Day*

I would like to remind all girls and families that we do not allow canned drinks on the site, nor do we allow Red Bull, Boost or other similar stimulant drinks. Water is freely available, as explained in our policy which is printed inside this edition, and flavoured drinks are available in the Dining Rooms at lunch time. I hope you have an enjoyable and restful holiday with your daughters. I wish Year 11 well in their revision and look forward to their success.

*M. Arthur*

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## Arrivals and Departures

Such has been the consistency of our staffing this year that only one permanent member of staff has left us since February half term. She is Mrs M King – Welfare Assistant. We wish her well in the future.

Happily, we have meanwhile been able to expand both our teaching and teaching support staff. We offer a warm welcome to the following who have joined us since Christmas:

Mrs B Toor – Assistant Department Leader in English; Mrs S Jones – Design Technology Teacher, on a temporary basis; Mrs C Hamdi – Teaching Assistant (Behaviour Support); Ms J Elliot – Teaching Assistant (Behaviour Support); Mrs R Nawaz – Teaching Assistant (Behaviour Support); Mrs S Raju – Teaching Assistant (Behaviour Support); Mrs F Matin – Teaching Assistant (Language Support), on a temporary basis; Mrs P Wright – Midday Supervisor; Mrs J Williams – Midday Supervisor. After Easter we also look forward to being joined by: Miss E Kirkby – RE Teacher and Miss J Simpson – Key Stage Liason Officer, attached to Year 7.

## Drink to Learn

As we approach the Summer Term and temperatures begin to climb, pupils will inevitably start to bring drinks more regularly into school.

We are very happy that they do this because we want our pupils to be comfortable.

What is more, educational research shows that drinking sufficient water is essential for best learning to take place. When our body runs short of water we become sluggish and tired, we do not think clearly and we become less productive and even confused. We would therefore like to encourage pupils to bring water to school which they may have access to throughout the day.

Given that drinks and exercise books do not mix very well, some years ago we introduced a policy to help pupils drink responsibly in school, our rehydration policy, and this seems to be a good opportunity to remind you of it:



## Rehydration Policy

Pupils must respect this opportunity and observe the following guidelines:

- The only drink permissible in class is water
- Pupils wishing to drink in class must bring their own named bottle
- Bottles must not be shared
- Bottles must be transparent plastic, hold a maximum of 75 centilitres, have a lift-up/push down facility (a sports-type bottle), and be stored either on the desk or on the floor at the teacher's discretion
- Drinking must not disrupt the lesson
- Staff may ask bottles to be put away for Health and Safety reasons and bottles are not in any case allowed in the Science laboratories or near electrically operated machinery.

Thank you for encouraging your daughter to follow these guidelines

## Complaints Procedure

The questionnaire that we conducted in October last year showed that some parents and carers were not confident about the school's complaints procedure. On the positive side, 81% of respondents said that they either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement "I understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints". Of the remainder, however, 10% said that they did not know whether they understood the policy or not and a further 9% indicated that they "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with this statement.

We would like you to know that all parents and carers have the right to a full copy of the school's complaints procedure which can be gained simply by contacting the school. It is not practical to reproduce the whole document in this newsletter, but to help you understand the action you need to take should you need to make a complaint, the key points are explained below:

### **Rationale:**

Each person, parent, teacher, governor or employee has a right for their complaint to be considered in a fair and recognised way.

### **Procedures:**

Pupils – should first inform either their class teacher or Head of Year.

Parents and Carers – should first inform a class teacher, their Head of Year, the Deputy Head or Headteacher.

### Investigating the Complaint:

The Headteacher will need to appoint a senior member of staff to carry out an investigation. This member of staff will explore the facts, including interviewing witnesses and gaining signed statements where appropriate.

### Appeal:

If you feel that your complaint has not been heard or dealt with to your satisfaction you should send details of your complaint to the Clerk to Governors via the school who will arrange a meeting of a committee of the Governing Body.

## Maths Leader Award

We have 15 dedicated Year 9 Maths Leaders who have attended the first two lessons in this programme. The girls have been considering the attributes and qualities of good leaders and how these qualities affect leadership.

Our Leaders are compiling portfolios of the work they are completing during the course as part of their assessment. They are about to begin planning and presenting learning experiences for pupils at Challney Girls and for a local primary school. The dedication to task which they have displayed so far is almost certain to ensure success.

## Islamic Union

The Islamic Union has continued to prosper this year. Each Thursday lunch time a group of pupils gathers to attend a talk on an Islamic topic presented by an outside speaker, followed by an enjoyable discussion. Topics discussed this year have ranged from “Generosity or Greed” to “Humility or Arrogance” and from “Good Company” to “Shaytun”. Special thanks are due once more to the staff who have given up their lunch times so willingly to supervise and support the girls. They are Mrs Rehman, Mr Abdul, Mrs Akhtar, Mr Khwaja and Dr Khan.



Enjoy  
and  
Achieve

Attend and enjoy school

## Breakfast Centre Deal

The Breakfast Centre continues to attract a steady flow of girls who enjoy the opportunity to meet their friends in school each morning over breakfast before lessons begin. At the moment they are enjoying the benefits of a special offer. If they buy a cup of hot chocolate for 50p, they receive a free croissant, crumpet, tea cake or slice of toast absolutely free.



The Breakfast Centre is open every school morning to all pupils from 8.00-8.30am in the Junior Dining Room.

## Pancakes

On Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February, being Shrove Tuesday, pupils and staff were treated to an option of pancakes in the Junior Dining Room. Served as a dessert, Mrs Smith, our Kitchen Manager, offered a tasty choice of either syrup, jam or lemon and sugar fillings. Shrove Tuesday commemorates the day before Lent, the traditional 40-day period of abstinence for Christians. Pancakes are traditionally made so as to use up all eggs and fats, foods not normally eaten during Lent.

## Fundraising Week

For the first time in memory, our annual Fundraising Week had to be postponed on account of the heavy snowfall which we experienced in February. Although we were back in school by Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February, the official start of our fundraising efforts, the pupils had not been able to organise during the school closure of the previous week. News of our re-scheduled fundraising will naturally follow in the spring edition of the Challney News along with a report on our Gift Day Celebrations. This year Gift Day will be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, the last day of term. We intend to present a cheque for the money raised during Fundraising Week to a delegate of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, our chosen charity of the year.



## Comic Relief

This year, at the request of the Culture Club, the school supported Comic Relief through the sale of Red Noses. In all, £268.41 was raised by the girls which will go towards supporting a wide range of projects in support of people in need around the world. Well done to everyone who participated.



## Garden Club News

Following an announcement in assembly, a group of Year 7 girls took up the chance to pot some beautiful pansies for Mother's Day.

All pupils are welcome to join the Garden Club on a Monday and Wednesday lunch time to learn to make exciting things. They might try to grow the largest sunflower or even their own tomatoes and perhaps attend our termly visit to Luton Hoo to take part in the Walled Garden Project.

## Revision Classes Year 11

Revision classes are already underway in several subjects either at lunch time or after school from 3.20 to 4.20 pm. Students should see their teachers to find out when these classes are held.

Study days have also been organised during the Easter holidays and the parents and carers of girls invited will already have been notified.

## Alice, Alice, please take your stand!

Yes, a standing ovation was due to the cast and everyone else involved in our first play production for 10 years. Following months of hard work, learning lines, learning songs and stage directions, Alice finally made it to the "most beautiful garden you ever did see". Alice was the only cast member who remained on stage throughout the production. There was much to learn but Patricia responded with tenacity and enthusiasm and her confidence "grew and grew" especially through the three performances. Many changes took place during rehearsals, some cast members even taking on the role of two characters, allowing everything to come together like the workings of the White Rabbit's watch. The stage sets and props, designed and painted by Miss Rose and Mr Brown, were incredibly lifelike. The costumes, designed and created by Mrs Johnson and her team, brought the characters alive so that we felt as if we were actually in Alice's dream. The Year 10 Hospitality and Catering class designed, made and sold a remarkable range of character goodies which were happily consumed during the interval ..... "Mmm.... delicious!"



*Launch of the 'Starchaser Rocket', see page 7*



*Nasreen Akhter, 90 produced this colourful collage*



*Alice cast members in full song, see opposite*

It would be great to stage a Musical every year and hopefully include dance too as in a London West End Show. There will be a suggestions ballot held after Easter to help us choose our next production. All pupils are invited to take part in the ballot and, indeed, the next musical production. So come on girls, get your thinking caps on and vote for the next production. Get involved by singing, acting, dancing, assisting backstage or making stage sets and props. Let us all show Luton how talented Challney girls are.

## Challney Girls High School Association

Our parent-teacher association, the CGHSA, held its latest meeting on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March at which Mr Nasir Kayani was elected as a parent and carer committee member. We would like to extend a warm welcome to him. We now have four parent and carer representatives on the committee and four staff members. The other three parent and carer members are: Mrs Minette Quinton, Mrs Lesley Smith and Ms Karlene Stephenson.

There remains just one parent and carer vacancy. If you would be interested in joining us, please do contact the school. In addition, there are vacancies for co-opted members of the committee who need be neither parents nor carers but need only have an interest in supporting the school.

The aims of the CGHSA are:

- To support the school through involvement in activities which help the education of the pupils
- To help develop good relationships between staff, parents and others connected with the school

For more information about our work, please visit [www.challneygirls.luton.sch.uk](http://www.challneygirls.luton.sch.uk), the school website, and click on the "Challney PTA" link.

## Parent Survey

Investors in Families

Thank you once again to all parents and carers who

completed a questionnaire for us at the Consultation Day last June. Due to your replies, we now have a fairly good idea of what you think about many aspects of our school.

As we reported to you in December, the good news is that, for the most part, you seem to be happy with the work we are doing here. You were



asked to give your views on 17 statements. 80% or more of you "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with 16 out of 17 of these statements which covered topics as widely varied as "My child likes this school" (92%) to "Staff expect my child to work hard and to do her best" (91%), and from "Teaching is good" ((88%) to "The school is well run" (92%).

While almost three quarters of parents and carers (73%) indicated that they feel pupils behave well, the only statement with which fewer than 80% of you either "agree" or "strongly agree" is "Pupils behave well in school". 11% of respondents indicated "Don't know" while 16% said they disagreed with the statement.

We believe that behaviour in our school is good. In fact we regard the attitude of our pupils to be an area of real strength in the school. Nonetheless, we are not complacent. We have therefore since discussed the findings of the questionnaire not only at Leadership Team meetings but also with our governors and with the Challney Girls High School Association, our Parent-Teacher Association. We have also conducted a survey of pupils similar to our survey of parents and carers and are about to discuss these findings with the staff group and the pupils' School Council.

We will also carry out a full review of our Behaviour Management Policy. As part of this review, we would like to talk with a sample of parents and carers who suggested through the questionnaire that they were unhappy with our pupils' behaviour. Early next term we will be contacting parents and carers to invite them to meet with us. If you would especially like to be invited, please do contact the school to let us know. Thank you.

Please see the bar graphs on the back page which show your responses to the first four statements on the questionnaire.

## Parent Governor Election

All pupils have recently been issued with a letter to take home to their parents or carers inviting them to stand for election as a parent governor to the school governing body. There are currently three vacancies.

You will probably be aware that the governing body is made up of parents and carers, teachers

and other members of the community and meets every term to support the work of the school. Together with the headteacher, the governing body is responsible for making sure that the school provides a good standard of education for the pupils. The closing date for nomination papers was Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April.

## Learning at Home

As part of our series of Information Evenings, parents and carers have again been invited to come along to our computer rooms after school, with their daughters, in order to become involved in developments in online learning. It was interesting for them to see at first hand the opportunities that their daughters now have to use up to date facilities both within their normal lessons and from the comfort of their own homes. Parents and carers from all year groups were able to attend and gain excellent hands on experience. They are now able to check if their daughters have any 'MyMaths' homework outstanding and have immediate feedback on the grades that their daughters are achieving without even contacting the school. They were also introduced to SAM Learning and shown how to logon to the site via the school web page using their daughter's login and password. Unlike 'MyMaths', SAM Learning offers both revision and tuition in most subjects that the girls study in school, including English, Mathematics, Science, Design Technology, French, Geography, History, ICT, RE and Spanish. These are offered at both Key Stage 3 and GCSE. Students should ask their teachers which sites are the most appropriate for the syllabus that they are studying, then logon to the sites and explore them.

As a student's regular usage of these sites increases, so do her grades improve. Statistics indicate that continuous use of e-learning facilities may improve GCSE grades by up to a whole level and all students are actively encouraged by staff to get into the e-learning habit from Year 7 onwards. As for pupils in Year 9, SATS may no longer exist but the school will still have examinations in the summer term and both 'MyMaths' and SAM Learning will still be very useful revision aids.

To be able to logon to either SAM Learning or 'MyMaths', firstly login to the school webpage and then click 'Online Learning' on the left side of the screen. You are then able to directly access either of the sites by clicking on the appropriate

logo. Failing that you can go directly to [www.samlearning.com](http://www.samlearning.com) and [www.MyMaths.co.uk](http://www.MyMaths.co.uk). Your daughters have their own login and passwords for both these sites.

## Challney Ski Trip 2009, Folgaria Italy.

To sum up the holiday in one word, it was epic. I don't think any of us expected the trip to be so amazing. It wasn't just the fact that where we were staying was gorgeous, or that the ski resort had the most amazing views, or that we actually successfully learnt to ski, it was the little things like watching everybody struggle to get off the chair lift the first time we came up the mountain that made the trip so memorable. Joanne and Farah decided to jump under the chair lift, instead of actually skiing off it.

At the end of the week we were so bruised from constantly falling. Lola got the award for the most falls and Miss Orr got the award for the most spectacular fall. We were quite jealous, because she got to ride on the ski motorbike. The most violent fall (which I'm sure she did on purpose) goes to Natalie who, when I fell in front of her, decided to just ski over me. This made her fall on me, but instead of getting up, she continued to sit on my head while I inhaled snow. A tip in case you ever think of skiing with Natalie Jones: don't! Another life lesson: don't ever lock Sabreena out of her room, because she'll simply climb in through the window and beat you up. Amna, Harsimrun, Parysa and Georgia earned the title of karaoke queens, singing a stunning rendition of Genie in a Bottle. Victoria and Lauren fell in love with Albert, the hotel guy, and everybody fell in love with the hot chocolate, which had to be the icing on the cake of the whole trip.

In all seriousness, the trip was incredible, mainly thanks to the teachers who made a big effort in making sure we were happy and having fun at all times. We went, we skied and we conquered the mountains and made some great friendships on the way.



## Science Week 2009

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> of March Year 9 students attended a presentation by Dr Selwa Alsam, Senior Lecturer at the University of Bedfordshire. Dr Alsam has carried out research into the Biology of pathogenic amoebae. In particular, students were introduced to *Acanthamoeba keratitis*, a parasite that attacks the cornea of the eye and can cause blindness. The risk factors contributing to infection by this parasite include swimming while wearing contact lenses, handling contact lenses without proper hand washing and the use of home made saline. The symptoms of the disease are similar to meningitis and so it is often misdiagnosed. Students had the opportunity to ask Dr Alsam questions at the end. We have invited her back to talk about other aspects of her research in the autumn.

On Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March Years 7, 8 and 9 Science groups had the opportunity to create their own rocket in the Starchaser Rocket workshop. A simple design, just a tube of paper could be modified with fins for stability and patterned for style. All rockets were able to be launched using a compressed air pump. Challney launch site was the grass at the front of the school. We even had a member of the public, a woman with her baby in a push chair, stop to watch. Terminal velocity was not reached, however, and what goes up must come down. Students and staff dodged the rockets as they fell back to earth which pupils were then able to take home with them.

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March a small group of Year 11 students attended the Luton Astronomical Society, meeting at the University of Luton at Putteridge Bury. They enjoyed a very interesting meeting about the role of radio astronomy in our understanding of the universe.

Various radio telescopes around the world have provided evidence for the existence of interstellar monatomic hydrogen gas clouds, the building blocks of stars. There are even radio telescopes that are being used to find evidence of alien radio transmissions from neighbouring solar systems.

We now have our own school telescope (not a radio telescope, however) donated by the SPA telescopes for schools project. It will be suitable



for looking at features of the moon and planets such as the rings of Saturn and the clouds on Jupiter.

We will soon be forming our own Astronomy Club in school. Any pupil that is interested in joining should leave her name with Mr Mackenzie.

## Poetry corner

### The Pen

My pen and I are like Bonnie and Clyde,  
Nothing without each other, not write in the mind.  
We do everything together, just me and my pen:  
Take strolls in enchanted forests,  
Fight evil, make amends.  
When he was black, and I was feeling blue,  
We helped each other move on -  
We pulled write through.  
I remember it like yesterday, when my pen and  
I first met,  
In Staples, just sitting there, looking rather fetch,  
Pristine and inviting, waiting for the word,  
And as pens go - excuse my French -  
The 'creme de la creme', a bonny catch.  
His name is Parker, my pen friend, my Clyde,  
It's good to know he's on my side, my guide,  
Write where I want him.

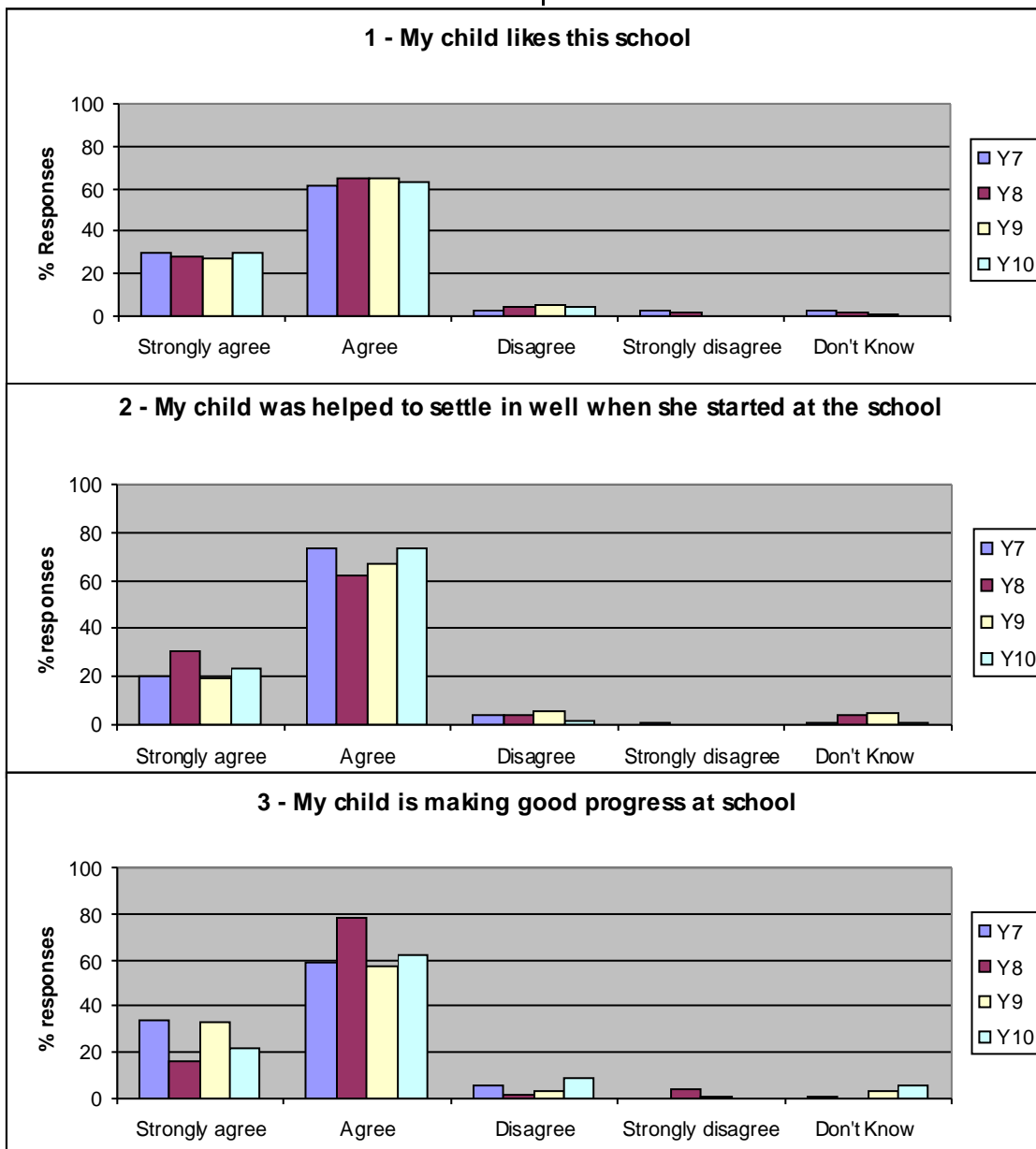
*Maryam Tidjani, 10I*

### The Map

Rough estimations have evolved into precise guides,  
Complex patterns now represent our immense cities.  
Once an inspiration for individuals to explore the unknown,  
Now technology has advanced into World's every corner and civilisation.  
As our knowledge hungers more, we do not stop at cities,  
But reach out to grab at stars and planets.  
Rapacity unleashed in the souls and minds  
Of individuals, made greedy by discovery.  
Born of our own creation to many shameful consequences.

*Tereze Gaile, 10B*

# Parent and Carer Survey Results (see page 5)



## Diary Dates 2009

**Mon 20<sup>th</sup> April Training Day**

Tue 21<sup>st</sup> April – Term begins

Thu 30<sup>th</sup> April – Year 7 Parents Consultation Eve

Mon 4<sup>th</sup> May – Bank Holiday

Week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> May — Years 7 & 8 exams

Wed 18<sup>th</sup> May – GCSEs begin

Week beginning 25<sup>th</sup> May – Half Term

Week beginning 1<sup>st</sup> June – Years 9 & 10 exams

Thu 11<sup>th</sup> June – Year 8 Parents Consultation Eve

## SummerTerm

Fri 26<sup>th</sup> June – Day Trip to France

Tue 30<sup>th</sup> June – Sports Day

Wed 1<sup>st</sup> July – Year 6 Information Evening

Thu 2<sup>nd</sup> July – New Intake Day

Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> July — Year 6 Coffee Morning

Fri 10<sup>th</sup> July – Town Sports

Fri 17<sup>th</sup> July – Chemistry at Work Day.

Tues 21<sup>st</sup> July — End of Term