

Thank you for working so hard to make a nice *mela*. I was most interested to see the nice food that had been made. I hope the boys had helped to do some of the cooking also. One of the things that has happened in the UK as boys and girls have been given subject choices is that a lot of boys have taken up Cookery for an O level subject and they do it very well, because, of course, boys enjoy eating and are very fussy about food so they often make very good cooks! Our new room upstairs makes a lovely Upper Assembly Room, doesn't it? We really enjoyed those lovely extra fans. Thank you, Superintendent for hiring them, and we look forward to ceiling fans one day.

I was sorry to see just two things – one was that, even though the letter home had specified that you should come in school uniform, a lot of Junior School pupils came in their own clothes which was naughty. The Senior School were allowed to allowed to come in their own clothes as a special privilege - and very nice you looked too. We all tried to look nice and this is one of the things that it is right to do at a social function. It is one of the ways in which we show our respect and affection for each other on such occasions – to look especially nice. There are some people who think it is not cool to look as though they have bothered – but they are usually just very immature.

I think that the social life of this school is developing very nicely. Everyone looked as though they were enjoying themselves and I noted a lot of you being very helpful. It is interesting how having a good time DOES involve hard work but, afterwards, we say, "Phew! But that was fun, wasn't it?" Some of you have been writing on 'An unforgettable holiday' in your creative writing for me and, time after time, you told me that a really nice holiday needed someone to plan it carefully, not lose the tickets, work hard to pay for it and arrange that everyone in the group, especially if it was a big family group, arrived safely. Good things always need someone to do the planning. If we have an entertainment, people need to rehearse and that is hard work too.

Guitarists, do remember that you need a 'technical run-through' - the expression in the professional theatre for a practice with all the equipment, checking on plugs and mikes and where people are going to sit or stand. You played very well and please will you play your second song to us in Assembly this week some time?

Each time the school arranges something new, we are a bit worried. Will it work? This time, we had our Parents/Teachers Meeting on a Saturday, which was new; there was a *mela*, which was new, there was a cultural event, which was new and we did it all upstairs, which was new. We did not know if it would work but, thanks to all of you, it worked very well and I am sure that, next time, it will work even better as we learn to have a good time together socially.

I know some of you and your parents were very disappointed in your term and examination reports. Please do not be depressed. Do your best and work hard in school, using the teachers here to the full and always asking your teacher if you do not understand. At home, let your parents help you to plan your evenings properly so that you get a good balance of relaxation and home-work – and get enough good food and sleep. Then you will see better results at the end of this term.

God bless you.



SHARING WITH OTHER SCHOOLS LIKE OURS

Assembly 69 – May 12th 2003

Our Superintendent and I went to a meeting of DISA yesterday – Dhaka International Schools Association. It began about 2 years ago when the Superintendent of the American International School, Michael Popinchalk, was being interviewed for his job

and heard someone talk about the competition, the rivalry, that has traditionally existed between schools in Dhaka. He said, "Surely the schools can achieve far more by cooperation with one another than in competition with each other," and the meetings began. When I arrived, I was told about them and I was very happy to attend.

The world of education is not easy and there are lots of new ideas going around and it is very valuable to discuss things with one another and see what we can do together. Already, there is a very active sports programme which, of course, is partly competition but is also just fun. Unfortunately, we do not have the room to play basketball and we do not have a swimming pool and they do not do handball – yet – but they do volleyball and cricket and football competitions. We had the wonderful dance extravaganza a week or so ago.

We are discussing procedures for emergencies. "What do you do in your fire practices? Have you started earthquake practices yet?" No, but the book is being circulated and we shall probably have a small committee, called a focus group, for such specialist topics. We discuss the need for constant teacher re-training and inform each other of good courses that are available. We discuss how best to create strong parent-teacher associations and what to do about security and hartals. One day, it may be possible for all our schools to speak together on important educational matters to the government. If we speak with one voice, representing as we do, so many thousands of pupils and influential parents, then maybe we could have a good influence. There is also the personal support we get from talking with other people who are doing their best to run good schools in difficult modern circumstances that we all share.

But the moment people meet, we have a choice. Are we honest with one another, or do we play games? Do we refuse to admit any difficulties and say, "Everything in my school is wonderful! We do not have any problems!"? Or do we admit to one another

that there are things we find difficult, things we know we should be doing but we do not know how to start, things that were good in the past but no longer work. "What do YOU do about this?" we can ask one another, openly admitting that we ourselves do not have all the answers.

Let me show you the poster that has the theme for the next few Assemblies – NONE OF US IS AS SMART AS ALL OF US. Can you understand this design? All of us together can do so much better than any one of us separately.....

At this meeting also we shared our dates for the school year, from August to July 2004 and it looks as though, slowly, we are getting our terms together. Two other schools are also, like us, changing from a January to December school year to an August to July one. By 2004 our schools should be in alignment. The future meetings of the Principals were planned and the one on October 9th will be in this school, so all the other school heads will see us. When I compare our buildings and grounds with what some schools can offer whose fees are lakhs of takas, I do wonder what they will think of us. But what is important is not the buildings but the education that goes on inside them – and none of us need be ashamed of that. God bless you.



LIVING 'TOGETHER' OR JUST 'ME AND....' *Assembly 70 - May 14th 2003*

Do you remember this saying - "None of us is as smart as all of us"? Can you say that?

On Monday, I told you of some of the international and larger English-medium schools were beginning to work together and today I would like you to see how this saying is true of our school. 'None of us are as smart as all of us'. Some of you may