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Garden International School Newsletter

From the Principal

5 September 2008

Dear Parents, Students and Friends of GIS,

Firstly a **big welcome** back to you all and a special welcome to the families that have joined us this term.

The school role has increased to a record 400, and this reflects the recognition of the quality education that all our students receive. Growth has occurred in all sections of the school.

Congratulations to all who took **International Baccalaureate Diploma and IGCSE exams** in 2008 on their excellent results!

This year the results were the best IGCSE results that GIS has ever achieved: 83% of all IGCSE exams entered attained at least a C grade. Of these, 97 were A* or A. This is a fantastic effort and one of the best sets of results of any international school in Thailand. This is certainly something for us all to be proud of. A 'well done' to all 39 candidates, and here is a special mention of the students who achieved A* and A in at least 7 subjects: Lavish Lalwani, Hee Young Kim, Jae Min Shin, Keteki Saoji, Tanya Sookmanus, Stian Jonsgard, Amornthep Khanijou, Seerechon Pisitpitthayaserree. Most have these students have stayed with us at GIS to study the prestigious IB Diploma. This qualification opens doors to universities around the world.

In July we had our first **Summer School**, designed to improve the students' English skills. It was very successful and we look forward to another, bigger and better one next summer.

Parents/Guardians and Friends of GIS as well as interested members of the general public are cordially invited to attend the opening of the GIS **IGCSE Art and Design Technology Exhibition**, Wine and Cheese Night, Wednesday 10th September from 7pm, in the GIS Secondary School Library. The exhibition will run for two weeks finishing on 24th September. Please come along and celebrate the impressive IGCSE results for this year and the diverse range and talents in all subjects and to invite interested viewers to enjoy this exhibition by our talented students.

An important aspect of any successful school is the link between the school and the parents. I would like to set up a **Parent-Teacher Association** to build on the strong GIS community we have. We can work together to continue to improve the school. If you think you would like to be involved please feel free to call in and discuss your ideas with me. I will write with more information about this in the next newsletter.

I was delighted to see the **smart appearance of the students** across the school in the first week. Please continue to encourage your children to be proud of their appearance as they represent the school in uniform. One or two who did not meet our high standards have been spoken to.

A date for your diary: on **15th of October we will hold an open day**. The school will run as normal and parents and friends of GIS are invited to join tours of the school in action.

We have several **new teachers** this year, both to replace the leavers and due to expansion. They are a terrific group of professionals, and join an already excellent group of dedicated teachers. I have asked them each to say a few words about themselves. Here are the Secondary teachers in their own words and later you can read about the Primary teachers.

K. Aw –Thai

My real name is Pakwipa Supakosol but the children call me Teacher Aw. I'm from Bangkok and had lived there all my life until I moved to Ban Chang. I studied Thai Language at Srinakarinwirort University. Since graduating I have taught in both Government and private schools. I have also written a series of textbooks for use in the Thai classroom. At the weekend I enjoy going to 'Chatuchak' weekend market.

Laura Stanton –cross school PE

I've gone through education without stopping along the way. When I was at school I always loved sport and took part in every after school club I possibly could, I also helped the PE department run extra curricular activities. I also love traveling. Going to Argentina for a month became my biggest achievement as I trekked from the south to the north of Argentina across the Andes for 15 days.

I love my job and helping children create opportunities for themselves for their future.

Jan Nordgreen –Head of ICT

I was born in Norway, but have lived abroad for the last 25 years. My wife is from Bolivia and we have two young boys. We both like to experience different cultures and learn from them. At university I studied mathematics and information technology. My hobbies are tennis, sailing, chess, and go.

Charl Campbell –Head of English

After a year as Head of English in Bangkok, the attraction of the waves and a much quieter life lured me South to the lovely little hamlet of Ban Chang. I have settled in well and made a lot of new friends here. My partner (Lauren) has opened a hair salon and has so far cut or dyed a good number of our teachers' hair! I am a huge dog-lover and have 5 of the little devils (although some aren't really all that little anymore). Before Thailand I spent many years teaching at schools throughout Asia and it seems that the Orient has always held a particular fascination for me and that has not diminished over the years at all. My hobbies are reading, fishing, cooking and watching rugby. I hope to get to know all of you over the coming academic year, whether it be through teaching you, through doing the production or perhaps on the sports field.

Simon Fowler –EAL

I am from Wales in the UK and I have been teaching English to non-native speakers in the UK and Taiwan for the past 6 years. Having lived in Asia for several years I feel that I have grown to understand and respect Asian culture, so I am very pleased to remain in Asia. Prior to teaching EAL I graduated from university with a genetics degree, and worked in a multi-national company in the UK. After becoming disillusioned with the static office environment I decided to take up a career in teaching, and haven't looked back. Although I teach EAL I still retain a healthy interest in the sciences. The staff and the students have made settling down in Ban Chang very easy for me, so I am looking forward to my time here.

Nim Hegarty –Biology

I have made the move to Thailand with my husband Michael and 2 children, Harry (5) and Jack (16 months). I spent the past 3 years working at a selective school in Slough, England. Prior to this, I worked at a comprehensive school in North London. This was a diverse school, with over 70 different languages spoken by the students. It was my experience at this school that first inspired me to work abroad in an international setting. The Thai culture, food and climate have always been an attraction for me. I have been made to feel welcome by the staff and students at GIS and I am sure that I will have an enjoyable time here.

Bill Cleal –Maths and Physics

I Studied maths with the Open University in the UK and gained a BSc, then studied for my BEd with the University of North London. My teaching career has been in the UK, working in London, Dorset and Wiltshire. This is my first overseas job and I have an 18 year old daughter in UK.

Emma Jones -Geography

I have been teaching for three years having graduated from university in the UK. Last year I was teaching in an international school in Shanghai. I love to travel and really hope to go walking in the Himalayan foothills next year. I would go mad if I didn't play sport and enjoy everything from cricket and climbing to swimming and scuba diving. I moved to Thailand to escape the rain in England and really hope I am able to learn some Thai while I am here!

David Yarwood –Business Studies and ICT

A big thank you to everyone who has made me feel so welcome, not just here in the school but in the local area too. This is my first ever visit to Asia, let alone Thailand, but already I feel very much at home in such a beautiful and exciting environment. I'm looking forward to getting to know you all, as well as experiencing a different culture. I am a keen sportsman and I am looking forward to contribute to the sporting life of the school. My main passions outside of work are football (soccer) and music. The thing I will miss the most about Manchester, my home town, will be my season ticket at Manchester United, however I was pleased to learn that most games can be watched here on cable TV! I bring to the school experience in teaching Business Studies and ICT to various ages and abilities, as well as several years working in industry with a variety of well known organisations including Mercedes-Benz.

Julian Barnsley –Head of PE

I taught PE for many years with previous positions in the UK, Kuwait, Japan, China and Australia. I enjoy the challenges of international education and was delighted to accept the position as Head of PE at GIS. I have come here with my wife and two children and we are all looking forward to discovering Thailand.

Phil Orbell-Durrant –Maths and Science

I am a Maths/Science teacher and have taught in the UK and Australia as well as Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Portugal, and Columbia. I enjoy good food (cooking and eating), diving and waterskiing –all good reasons for coming to Thailand!

A big welcome to all of these teachers. I know they will settle down quickly and be a great asset to the school.

I intend to send **future newsletters** out **electronically**. We will email them to families if we have your email address and also we will post them on the website. We will be showing you pictures of events happening in the school. If you do not want your child's photograph shown please inform me in writing –the easiest way is gisprincipal@gardenrayong.com. The names of children will not be shown by the photo or as the file name of the photo.

The last page of this newsletter shows the school calendar with some key dates. Finally I wish you all, students, families and friends of GIS, a great year.

Kind Regards,
Dave Moroney, BSc, PGCE, MA
Principal and Head of Secondary

News from the Primary School

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Rob Grisdale. I am the Head of Primary and Foundation. If you have any queries regarding the running of Primary or Foundation or want to contact me for any reason my e-mail address is robertg@gardenrayong.com I am on duty in the front of school from 7.50 to 8am daily. I will also aim to be in the Foundation Garden daily from 8.05 until 8.30 if you want to chat about anything.

Welcome back to Garden International School for the Academic Year 2008 – 9 and a special welcome to the new parents who join us. I hope you and your children will be very happy at GIS. I know that a new school can be a scary place but hopefully your child will settle down quickly. We have a large number of new children, so many in fact that we have a record number of children enrolled. This means that some of the classes are larger than we would like and to remedy this we are actively recruiting for Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 which will be split as soon as we have teachers in place.

I would also like to welcome our new teachers – in Early Years we have Ms. Jane Vincent. She is a very experienced teacher and has most recently been teaching in China. Miss Horwell is taking Year 4 and has come to us from the UK after having spent some time teaching in Chile and our final new teacher Mr. Watkins is taking Year 6 and he comes to us directly from the UK; GIS will be his first overseas job.

Thank you to those parents who supported our open evening on Thursday and our open morning on Friday - I hope we managed to answer all your questions. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any more.

Some things to remember about primary:

- We encourage the children to wear hats to protect themselves from the sun and would like you to ensure that they have a hat as soon as possible
- We discourage children from eating unhealthy food and would advice you to either pack them a lunchbox with tasty, wholesome food or buy a coupon from the canteen which would allow them to purchase food here. Coupons cost 450 Baht and save the hassle of children bringing money daily to buy food.

- If you have a concern, please note it in your child's communication book and the class teacher will see it the next day. If you wish you may contact me on the above address.
- In Foundation this year we are running an **after school care club** for the children who have to stay until their siblings finish school. We realize if your children depend on the school buses for transport, if they have a sibling in Secondary School here at GIS, or if they have a parent who works at school, they will have to stay until 3.10 every day. For these children the after school care club is **free**. However, there are some parents who **do not need** to leave their children with us as they do not depend on school transport nor do they have a sibling in Secondary. These parents will be requested to **pay 100 Baht per session** for us to continue looking after their children when the Foundation School Day finishes at 14.00. All monies raised in this way will be used to buy playground resources for Foundation.

Rob Grisdale M.Phil, MA (SESI), BA(Hons), PGCE

Sports Information

The **PE Department** is pleased to be in a position to build on last year's sporting successes and asks for parents' continuing support by ensuring that students wear the correct kit for PE and swimming. Please use the communication diary to inform the PE staff of any illness, injuries or difficulties with uniform. Lastly, please remind your children that valuable items are not be brought to or worn during PE lessons as PE Staff can not take responsibility for them.

GIS Sports Season 1

U15 Soccer (Boys and Girls) Try-outs Monday 8th September 3.15-4.20pm
 Swim Team (Boys and Girls) Try-outs Monday 8th September 3.15-4.20pm
 U13 basketball (Boys and girls) Try-outs Tuesday 9th September 3.15-4.20pm
 Senior Volleyball (Boys and girls) Try-outs Tuesday 9th September 3.15-4.20pm
 Senior Soccer (Boys and girls) Try-outs Tuesday 9th September 3.15-4.20pm

Sign up sheets by the PE Office

The **Fobissea under 15 games** will be staged in Brunei 4th – 8th March 2009. Something to train for!