

Andalusia Academy



Issue 1

February 2008

WELCOME!

Assalamualaykum and welcome to our first newsletter of the year. We hope you will find it to be an enjoyable read as well as informative. There have been lots going on since the beginning of the school year in September, from library visits to fashion shows, from Hajj celebrations to trips to Chepstow.

We will Insha'Allah do our best in producing a newsletter which gives people a sense of 'What's happening' at Andalusia Academy and gives outsiders a little glimpse of what this school is all about.

Sickness

Could parents/ carers note that the school procedure for reporting absences is a phone call before 9.15am, on the 1st day of non-attendance. This must be supported by a letter on the day of return.

Please also note that children who have been sick (vomiting or diarrhoea) should not return to school for at least 48 hours after symptoms have settled.

Parking

We understand it is difficult to park near the school but if you do park in front of a garage please return to your car as soon as possible. Local residents may need to use their cars parked in the garages. Thank you for your co-operation.

HAJJ CELEBRATION

The Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam and one of the five pillars on which Islam is built. This is a journey which is fard on every Muslim who is able to make it.

To emphasize the importance of Hajj and to celebrate the Hajj season, Andalusia Academy was very keen to get all the children and staff involved. On Friday the 4th of January they held a non-uniform day and the theme was based around this great pillar.

In the morning there was an assembly in which the Reception children sang a Hajj song. The Year 1 children performed the actions of Hajj i.e. walking around the Kaba, stoning the shayateen etc. The Year 2 children gave a detailed description of the rituals of Hajj and related the story of Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as).

All the children had a wonderful time and the girls Mashallah looked wonderful in their Jilbabs.



Library Visits



As many of you already know the primary children go to the library on a weekly basis. This really helps to build a love of reading books as well as a love for learning in general. This year, Year 1 and Year 2 classes went to Bristol Central Library to see the 'Discover Islam' exhibition. This was an excellent exhibition which was on for just over a week. It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to listen to stories and they thoroughly enjoyed seeing all the Islamic exhibits.

There was some very positive feedback from the library that the children were very smartly dressed and their behavior was outstanding! So a big Well Done to the little kiddies and keep up the good work!

Contact Details

Please could all parents and carers ensure that the school has up to date contact details. There should be at least three contact names and numbers, these could be relatives or close friends. This is vital information that the school needs in case of emergencies.

There were a couple of incidences last week where children were ill and consequently were very upset. In such situations the school will occasionally need to get in touch with the parents and this will not be possible if they do not have the correct details.

So please check which details you have given and ensure that they are all up to date.

Did you know.....?

The chameleon's tongue is the ultimate fly catcher. To catch a fly as it passes by, the chameleon unrolls a tongue that is longer than its body, in a split second.

Cheetahs are the world's fastest sprinter reaching 110km per hour. But they can only keep this up for 10-20 seconds.

LATENESS

'Come on Ahmed lets go. Hurry up with your breakfast'. It's always a rush in the mornings no matter how hard we try to be organised. We have the perfect excuses for lateness – too much traffic, more than 1 school run, overslept etc etc.

Very often the biggest cause of our lateness is the fact that we don't give punctuality the importance it deserves. Once we've fallen into the bad habit of thinking it's not really important we inevitably fall into the habit of arriving late and crucially we get our children into this bad habit.

You may be wondering 'Well what difference does a few minutes make'. What you don't understand is that your child may be missing more than you realise if he or she is continually late. Research shows that mornings for most children are the most productive time of the day. A child who is 15 minutes late to school each day misses one week of school every year!

Lateness not only affects the child who is late but also affects the teacher and indeed the whole class. Imagine the teacher has begun the lesson and then is continually disrupted by 'latecomers'. She has to stop, has to reiterate information already given to the class and then repeat the process every time for a late arrival! Not only would this be extremely frustrating but hugely time consuming. Hence the learning of the children who have come on time is also greatly affected.

One vital effect of lateness which we probably don't consider is the effect it has on the child. Walking into a classroom where lessons have begun and everybody turns around to see 'the latecomer'. We ourselves would be embarrassed and at the very least uncomfortable.

Latecomers can miss vital information as often announcements and timetable changes are made at the beginning of the day. Also children who are rushed and arrive late may not be in the right frame of mind to begin their activities.

Let's all follow the example of our beloved prophet Muhammad (saw), who showed great punctuality in all his actions.

Changes in the Reception Class

We have to unfortunately say a fond farewell to Mrs Ahmed, the Reception class teacher. She and her husband are off to the United Arab Emirates due to her husband's work. It will be an exciting time for both of them as they plan to improve their Arabic and learn more about their Islamic faith. The children will be able to say goodbye at a special whole class Assembly on Thursday February 14th.

Mrs Ahmed is amongst those who were here at the beginning in September 2005. She recalls the very first day when the staff and pupils were extremely low in number. In fact there were five children in the reception class. Luckily the table they sat around was hexagonal so one teacher and five pupils was a perfect fit. Mrs Ahmed's role has always been job sharing with Mrs Hursthouse. In the early days she also taught Islamic Studies and D&T to the secondary girls.

Before coming to Andalusia, she had experience with slightly older children, she none the less took the opportunity to work with younger children and has enjoyed it thoroughly. In her words "it was challenging but yet very rewarding."

One of her best memories was on the first day she started when everyone at the school made dua (said a prayer) thanking Allah for what they had achieved so far. They asked for Allah's help in making the school successful and helping it to grow year by year. It's wonderful for Mrs Ahmed and others like her who were there from the beginning to witness this dua being fulfilled slowly but surely. We hope and pray that the school continues to grow from strength to strength, ameen.

Mrs Ahmed feels very privileged to have been a part of Andalusia Academy and although she recognizes that we still have a long way to go, we have certainly progressed in many ways. The school population itself has grown so rapidly, in the primary alone numbers have gone from five to fifty in the space of two and a half years.

Before Mrs Ahmed began working at the school she had a notion of "yes there should be a Muslim school in Bristol" but since working here she is convinced that although it is not yet ideal there is indeed a real need for a full time Muslim school in Bristol, a school which welcomes you whatever your background. A school which has given parents that choice. She has been an inspiration and example to all of us – friendly, keen to learn, helpful, thorough, considerate and above all faithful. She will be greatly missed by very many people at Andalusia and we all wish her much happiness in the next stage of her life.

The school has appointed Mrs Hashmi, who will be taking over Mrs Ahmed's responsibilities in Reception class and Year 2. The children have already been introduced to her making the transition process easier for all. Mrs Hashmi brings a wide range of experience to the school and we wish her a happy and fulfilling time.

Year 7 History Trip to Chepstow Castle

For the second year in a row, Year 7 travelled to Chepstow Castle in South Wales as part of their study of medieval castles. When we arrived it was still raining so we explored the lower levels of the castle first, starting with the kitchens and deepest cellar, which is so cold that it was used for hundreds of years as a natural refrigerator. After coming back to the surface, we visited the castle exhibition and found out about the men who had Chepstow Castle built, from William Fitz Osbern, who started building the castle more than 900 years ago, to Roger Bigod, who in 1245 made it into the magnificent fortress we can see the remains of today. In the exhibition we also found out about medieval weapons and were even able to try on some very heavy metal helmets from the English Civil War.

Once the rain stopped, we could continue exploring the rest of the castle. We went to the huge main keep and up to the highest point of the castle, in the upper bailey. We climbed spiral staircases and walked along battlements, we looked through the arrow slits and down into the deep dungeon at the bottom of the tower. Although most of the dungeons are closed off, we were able to go into one of them and everyone had a go at telling scary stories in the dark!

After lunch, we went to the Chepstow Museum where Ms Ellery showed us some old pictures of the castle and everyone had a chance to draw their own. Just before we left there was some time to see the parts of the castle we hadn't discovered yet, and to visit the gift shop.



Although it was a wet and windy day, everyone who came had a great time and learned a lot about medieval castles and the history of our local area.

FRIENDS OF ANDALUSIA

The Friends of Andalusia is a parents association which was set up in October 2007. Its main aim is to organize ways to raise money for the school.

Their first event was a Cake Sale held on the 13th of December which raised £118.30. Books for Reception and Year One were purchased.

Jazak Allah to everyone who donated and bought cakes on the day. Your generosity is very much appreciated and hope you will support future events.

The second event is a Food Sale and is going to be held on the 14th of February at 3.15pm.

Currently the association is led by a small number of parents who really need the help of others. Please speak to a member of staff if you are interested in joining the group or attend the next meeting.

This association is open to all parents of the school and it is an enjoyable and ideal way to get to know other parents. If you have found it difficult in the past to attend meetings and would like to be involved please leave your contact details with Sister Hanifa who will pass your details to the group. You can also contact them by email to aabnews@hotmail.co.uk.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FRIENDS OF ANDALUSIA FOOD SALE

14TH FEBRUARY 3.15PM

INSET DAY

15TH FEBRUARY

TERM 3

3RD JANUARY TO 15TH FEBRUARY

TERM 4

MONDAY 25TH FEBRUARY TO FRIDAY 4 APRIL

INSET DAY

14TH MARCH

INSET DAY ON 4TH APRIL HAS BEEN CANCELLED

BANK HOLIDAY 21ST MARCH AND 24TH MARCH

WORLD BOOK DAY - THURSDAY 6TH MARCH 2008



I need your help:

- Please donate any unwanted suitable reading books for Primary and Secondary pupils to the school, so I can arrange a book swap/sale on World Book Day. Please leave these books in the school office clearly marked 'World Book Day'.
- Please give me any ideas on how we can make this year's World Book Day better than last year's. Can you think of any suitable activities linked with books that will benefit the school? Please pass any ideas to me via the school office.

Thanks in advance for your help.
Miss K Butterworth
(Secondary English and PSICHE Teacher)

Did you know.....?

The blue whale is the largest animal in the world. Its heart alone weighs 700kg – that's about 10 adult humans.

The world's biggest lizard is the Komodo Dragon of Indonesia, which weighs up to 135kg. It's so big it can swallow pigs' whole.

Snakes kill more people than any other animal.

Insha'Allah the Andalusia Newsletter will be produced once every term. If anyone has any ideas or suggestions and indeed any constructive feedback please send an email to the team.

aabnews@hotmail.co.uk

