

Letter to Parents

Summer Update August 2012



“Learning never exhausts the mind.” Leonardo da Vinci



Dear Parents,

We hope that you are enjoying your summer.

Returning back to work after the Santa Maria recess I am reminded that the Summer Update is due! In spite of the sweltering heat we have continued to focus upon learning.....

Results at CHSMC

Although learning is a far, far deeper experience than sitting examinations, synoptic and annual examinations should give a significant picture of the learning that has taken place. It is for this reason that we are proud to share many of our students' results:

Sixth Form Results at MATSEC

Although we have not yet received official results, we do know that we have secured 100% passes in English (A Level), Art (A&I), Accounting (A)* Chemistry (A) *, Marketing (A&I), Philosophy (A&I), Information Technology (A), Italian (A&I)*, Physics (A&I)*, Religious Knowledge (I), Sociology (A&I) and German (I) as well as 99% passes in SoK. Please note that in the areas marked with an asterisk, there are one or two students who have not given us their grade so these figures could change. We have also achieved between 85-99% passes in Pure Maths (A&I), Accounting (A&I), Maltese (I) and English (I). We are delighted that around five of our science students are able to go straight into medical courses in Malta and abroad. Although we are delighted with all our students' performance – they have done their best- our outstanding students are Abigail Galea and Sophie Degiorgio, both being awarded As in Biology and Bs in Chemistry 'A' level. Abigail also got 2 more As in Systems of Knowledge and English Intermediate exams and 2 more Bs in Maltese and Religious Knowledge at Intermediate level. Sophie got another A in Physics (Intermediate), and 3 more Bs in Religious Knowledge, English and Systems of Knowledge – all at Intermediate level. Straight As and Bs! We are all so proud of them!

Once all the official results are received we will send you an update. The consolidated Sixth Form Programme has attracted a record number of first year registrations and at the recent open evening held at the College for prospective students, parents and lecturers spoke freely and happily about the forthcoming academic year. A specialised career-counselling session before registration has assisted students with their choices. All Sixth Form students will be continuing to tertiary education in Malta, the UK, US, China and many European cities.

Form 5 Results at SEC

We are very pleased with the results that our Form 5 students have worked hard for.

Teachers, parents, students and the school are pleased that:

74% of students who sat Maltese have passed!

We have also managed to achieve:

92% passes in English Language, 88% in English Literature, 76% in Maths, 87% in Religion, 91% in Physics, 93% in Chemistry, 74% in Biology, 43% in Environmental Science, 75% in History, 44% in Graphical Communication, 91% in Computer Studies, 89% in Italian, 90% in French, 56% in German, 71% in Accounts, 77% in Economics, 84% in Art and 62% in P.E. Apart from these very good results we are delighted that 2 students secured 1s in Maltese.

Students also managed: 15 1s in English Language, 17 1s in English Literature, 20 1s in Maths, to mention the areas that managed 15 or more 1s! All official results will be discussed in school by the Area Co-ordinators to ensure that results and more importantly learning - continues to improve across the board. Please see the section about Learning 360 for further details. Also do look out for the Benchmarking session with Mr Kevin Gatt later on in the scholastic year where all our results are benchmarked against National Averages.

Our outstanding Fifth Form student was Simran Mohnani who passed 10 Sec exams in the May/June 2012 session: she was awarded 9 Grade 1s and 1 Grade 2. Daniele Gafa, Sarah Zrinzo, Matthew Farrugia and Rachel Farrugia performed admirably too. The whole cohort did well and we are pleased that around 99% of our students have indicated that they will continue to pursue their studies at further education and tertiary levels. We are enthusiastic about the fact that over 25% of Form 5s will join us at Sixth Form level.

Please remember that these are also unofficial results. The pass rate in core subjects (English, Maths and Maltese) and the three science subjects will be improved by the September re-sit session. Form V students who were not successful enough at the May/June SEC session are receiving free coaching at SMC in preparation for their September re-sits.

Junior 6 Results Benchmarking Exercise

Our Junior Sixes sat for the Benchmarking Exercise which is now in its second year of operation. We have seen level changes in the actual papers and a thorough analysis of the Maths paper has resulted in an 18% drop in the National median mark from 77% to 63%. When we compared these results with our Annual results we found that there is little correlation between the two exams. Both assessments are being analysed. We intend to hold some extra sessions in Maths for students moving up to Form 1 to ensure that concepts are well understood and applied.

The results were as follows: 73% of our J6 cohort scored over 50% in English, 55% in Mathematics and 60% in Maltese. Last year's cohort scored far better: 96% in English, 94% in Mathematics and 73% in Maltese. Please look out for further discussion on this topic.



Summer School at CHS

The busy programme at Chiswick House School Summer Club has done wonders to fire the children's imagination. The themes this year have focused on the four seasons and an all-time-favourite topic, under the sea. Creativity and fun activities enhanced our learning programme throughout the summer months to make it a pleasurable and memorable experience.

Many of these memorable experiences have been captured by our cameras.



Summer Club at SMC

Many of our SMC students have experienced yet another successful Summer Club with lots of adventurous activities and fun outings. From the much awaited tuna farm visit, to cook outs and lots of water games. Memories that will definitely last a life time!

School of Performing Arts

The School of Performing Arts by Drama Troupe has been buzzing with activity this summer. Students have been able to participate in activities that are not included in the winter programme. These activities included face painting, puppetry, circus skills, props making, acting, singing and dance, in the Drama Programme, while the Music and Dance Programmes have included ballet, Hip-Hop, Jazz, Contemporary, Spanish, Tap, Music Appreciation, Percussion work, Rhythm Games and instrument making. Our specialised teachers have ensured a fun packed programme which has led to exciting activities thoroughly enjoyed by all those attending.

School of Performing Arts (cont.)

As part of the End of Summer performances for the younger groups, Ms Krista Paris, Ms Elena Zammit and Ms Nadia Vella have worked on a 'Panto,' which has involved all children attending aged 3 to 9 years. The older groups also had the opportunity of painting their own set and props.

For the 10+, the 'Les Mis' experience has been an unforgettable one. The 40 strong group has explored the history of the Barricade and the Revolution in France and will be able to showcase their work at St James Cavalier at the beginning of September.

Ms Deborah McNamara, the newly appointed artistic director at Dance Expressions, together with Christina Aquilina, Elena Zammit and Warren Bonello have kept the dance students on their toes during the Dance Programme on Mondays and Fridays. Students had the opportunity of trying out new disciplines such as Tap, Spanish and Contemporary. Due to the popularity of all these classes, Dance Expressions will be including these disciplines as part of its winter programme.

The School of Performing Arts will be opening its doors for the Winter Term in October. Mr Jean Marc Cafa and Ms Nadia Vella have now assumed full time roles within the school as Artistic Director and Development and Administrative Officer. New tutors will also include Janet Vella for Jazz, Sandra Mifsud for Contemporary and Valerie Burke for Tap. Ms McNamara together with Irene Zarb Adami will be taking the Ballet and Spanish classes.

A full programme of activities is available on request while further information may be downloaded on our website www.performingartsmalta.com

Registered students will be able to participate in the production 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' at the end of November.



Trip to Bulgaria

As part of our summer activities, a group of Middle and Senior School students are participating in our annual summer trip abroad. These trips abroad are extremely positive for the students as they take social and emotional learning beyond the classroom walls and truly contribute to the holistic programme offered at our college. Mr Kurt Cini, our Extra-Curricular Team Leader who heads a group of four other SMC teachers, says that these trips "create positive memories which the students cherish for a lifetime."

This year's trip takes us to Bulgaria. Students arrive in Sofia and move to the Balkan Mountains where they spend a week surrounded by natural, unspoilt greenery in Beklemento which is 1460m above sea level and 14km away from the town of Troyan. In one of the most picturesque parts of the Balkan Mountains, students participate in a number of activities which include archery, paintball, team sports, orienteering and hiking in the forest. They also learn about Bulgarian culture through classes in ceramic and Bulgarian cooking. A Maltese night is also organised....our children, proud of their own culture share culinary and literary delights with their peers.



World Shakespeare Festival

St Martin's College will be represented at the World Shakespeare Conference which is being held in London between the 6-8th September, 2012. As you know, Form 5s take a module in Active Citizenship and Cultural Studies. We put together a short film each year. (To see all our films please get into the Film Gallery on our CHSMC website).



Last summer I took our good practice to an educational conference at Cambridge University. My paper entitled *Past Futures: Transmedial and Transcultural appropriations of Shakespeare in the 21st Century Classroom* has been chosen and our work will be presented at the Symposium on September 7th. All details will be available on our website after the conference.

Worlds Together World Shakespeare Festival 2012.htm

First Steps @PwC

We are delighted to announce that Chiswick House School and



Giggles Nursery and Day Care have come together in a joint venture to open a child care centre for children aged 6m-36m for the staff at Pricewaterhouse Coopers and other interested parents. The Centre in Qormi will start operating in September. For further details please contact Ms Sharon Scerri at sharonscerri@chs.edu.mt or call CHS on 21374396.

In preparation for scholastic year 2012/13:

As we approach the commencement of the new scholastic year, we are busy putting new and exciting programmes together while consolidating many of our well-established practices. Ms Anita Seguna (Head at CHS), Mr Patrick Padovani (Head at SMC) and Mr Tonio Pace (Head at Sixth Form) will be sending out a newsletter in early September including all the relevant details and dates.

Learning 360

I have been asked by many parents to give more details about this



school improvement project. Essentially, this three-year project aims at placing learning at the centre of all we do and works with all stakeholders to create and sustain a Professional Learning Community (PLC). The characteristics of a PLC: shared values and vision; collective responsibility for pupils' learning; collaboration focused on learning; group as well as individual professional learning; reflective professional enquiry; openness, networking and forged partnerships; inclusive membership; and mutual trust, respect and support. The first phase of the project was completed last scholastic year. The Core Team and the whole Senior Leadership Team collected and analysed the data that was collected in the Data Collection Phase, where parents, staff and children spoke up about their learning experiences at CHS.

All this information will be shared with parents and all stakeholders at the start of scholastic year 2012/13. Professor Louise Stoll and Mr Richard Townsend, our critical friends and trainers will be visiting CHSMC next term to embark upon the second phase: Discover & Dream Phase which encourages the community to know, understand and discover the best things that take place in the CHSMC community and to dream up the best the community can become. It will involve a re-visioning of the best we can be at 110!



Concretely: The following will be further developed:

Personalised and Collaborative Learning for Students: We have often spoken about differentiation, and this will continue to be more evident and have a positive impact upon the children's learning. This means that teachers will be well aware of the children's prior learning and how far they have got in their learning. Teachers will therefore be able to devise personalised and collaborative learning programmes for each child. Teachers will be receiving professional learning opportunities to guide them in this.

ALP Programmes:

- IEPs for children with specific learning difficulties

The Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) is a specific teaching programme which aims to address the various learning needs of students with learning difficulties. The programme is run by a team of teachers with expertise in the field of special education, co-ordinated by an Inclusion co-ordinator who sees to the day to day running of the programme, as well as, everyday classroom teaching practice which plays a hugely important part in a child's learning experience and must be of the highest quality if students with individual needs are to make progress. Each student enrolled in the programme has his own Individual Educational Programme (IEP). Parents and students are active participants in the productive planning and implementation of the IEP. The ALP programme embraces a transdisciplinary approach to education. Members of the educational team, which include class and subject teachers together with other professionals meet and contribute knowledge and competence, pool resources with other members, and cooperatively determine and allow for services, that encourage the student with learning difficulties.

The ALP Department ensures that:

- the needs of the student and his/her family are recognised.
- the environment is adapted to reflect individual student's needs.
- services are coordinated to ensure that both the needs of the student and their family are met.
- support and training for staff is ongoing, working with children with individual needs is provided.
- Individual needs are identified through the following methods:
 - 1) Referral by the individual teachers
 - 2) Standardised in-house assessments; these standardised batteries of tests assess various learning processes. These are used to identify the student's learning and psychometric profile.
 - 3) A whole-school screening process, such as the Cognitive Ability Testing, NFER Nelson is utilized,
 - 4) Annual screening in Reading and Spelling tests at Primary Level starting at Junior 2.



Parents whose children use this optional service are asked to pay a special fee (€15/session) to cover some of the costs of the programme.

- IEPs for Gifted and Talented Children
NEW PILOT SCHEME

A new pilot scheme for GIFTED and TALENTED students is being launched this year. The scheme will commence with Junior 2 and Junior 3 children. Ms Lizzie (ex Junior 2) is developing this scheme with the ALP department at CHS. Supported by new technology (iPads and projectors etc) this new scheme is aimed at identifying the gifted children at these two levels, devising IEPs that target and further develop their giftedness and ensuring that their creative and imaginative skills are enhanced.

During the pilot phase, this service will be free. Once we have established this scheme parents whose children will use this optional service will be asked to pay a special fee (€15/session) to cover the costs of the programme.

Pastoral Programmes:

The Pastoral Care Programmes and Behaviour Management Procedures at CHSMC have long been established. We shall continue to develop this area by devising the following:

- IEPs for Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
- IEPs for Children with exceptional Emotional Intelligence and Resilience
- Leadership Programmes for Children

These are in their embryonic stage of development and further information will be given in due course. We are confident that such programmes will continue to ensure that a variety of learning approaches are in place.

Professional Learning Programme for all Staff

The Re-structuring processes taking place have necessitated far more professional learning opportunities. Therefore a three-year programme for all staff members is in the pipeline.

The Administration Departments at CHSMC have undergone big changes. Our Admin Teams have worked very hard this summer and I thank them wholeheartedly for their constant support and sterling work. The only way that our learning programmes can function is to have a robust, effective and efficient administrative infrastructure. Our Admin Teams are providing this with style. The full re-structuring process will be further explained.

All CHSMC staff will be up-skilled and this has kicked off with our Kindergarten section.

New Salary Scales for Teachers at CHSMC

All Kindergarten assistants will undergo further training. All Kindergarten 1 helpers have been asked to sit a Trade Test and to attend a First Aid Course. We are delighted to announce that all teaching staff at CHSMC will be receiving a salary increase this year. At SMC we concluded a new collective agreement last year and further benefits and increases will come into force this year. At CHS a new salary scheme is in place for KG and Junior School teachers. We take this opportunity to thank all our wonderful and hard-working faculty of teachers. It has truly been a pleasure to work with them all to improve our programmes for the students entrusted to our care.

Fees for 2012/13

New fees will be charged in 2012/13. We have managed to stay within the usual year-on-year increase of 5-10%. In fact, CHS has seen a 5% increase and SMC a 5.5% increase. The increase is due to cost of living increases, improvements in educational programmes and increases to teachers.

Government Funding

It has taken the ISA over three years to promote the need for Government Funding. As you know, all Independent Schools are delighted that Government has made the following schemes available:

Grant to all Schools: A Grant calculated on student population will be given to allow schools to improve their sports facilities, professionally train staff, and improve IT facilities. More details will be available at the start of the scholastic year but the following will take place throughout 12/13:

- New Science lab at CHS
- New Science lab at SMC
- 3 Play areas at CHS will get an overhaul

The extensive three-year programme for Professional Learning Programme will be possible thanks to these funds.

A whole-school IT overhaul – including infra-structure improvements ... iPads for Gifted Students' Scheme at CHS, iPads + Interactive Whiteboard for new Science Lab at SMC, new computers in IT lab at SMC.; New Interactive Whiteboards at CHS and SMC for many more classrooms. Further IT training for all our staff.

Another Grant which offers schools (this is for Church and ISA Schools) 15.25% on capital expenditure has also been established. CHSMC will also benefit from this.

LSAs Grant. Parents who used to employ LSAs will get full financial assistance for these. LSAs will now be employed by the schools and schools will be reimbursed for all costs for full-time LSAs.

Parents at Independent Schools have also seen their Tax Rebate on fees increase.

We are thankful to the Prime Minister, Ministers of Education and Finance and the ISA for making all this possible. The ISA will continue working to see that these Grants are improved for the benefit of all ISA schools. We believe that this is the only way that ISA schools can survive and thrive. We are working to create a level playing field.

Parents' Forum

The hard-working Parents' Circle will be transformed into a Parents' Forum. After the great success of our Parents' Focus Groups it has been agreed that these should become regular meetings where parents air their views, discuss relevant issues, present new ideas and give regular feedback to the SLT. At an initial meeting the Parents' Forum has already welcomed the change.

Dear Parents,

This has been a very long update! I wanted to give you a glimpse of the work being carried out and thank you for your constant support and enthusiastic encouragement.

All this work would not have been possible without the vision and dedication of all teams at CHSMC. Special thanks go to the Core Team at Learning 360, the Senior Leadership Team, Patrick Tabone and the Board of Directors.

I am really looking forward to September.

Best Regards,
Ms Bernie Mizzi
Director