



From the Principal

Graduating Class



This week we farewelled our graduating class who have just completed their final exams. The following is the text of my speech at Secondary School assembly this week. The poem, while very relevant for our senior students, is applicable to all of us.

What is Success?

*To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty;
To find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better,
whether by a healthy child, a garden
patch or a redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed
easier because you have lived;
This is to have succeeded.*
Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is a strange feeling to write this piece to farewell my first group of graduating students. Mixed emotions abound. We all grow a little bit older every time we see a student graduate, and while that is something the student might welcome, for us as teachers and parents, it is not something we want to remember! One of the great joys but also great sadnesses of being a teacher, is watching young children grow into fine young men and women. It is a joy to see them grow, but a sadness to say goodbye. This is especially so now, as personally, I have barely even said hello!

Finishing school means the prologue to the story of each life has now concluded. In it each young person has (we trust) built a foundation - intellectual, moral, and physical - for the next chapters. Those chapters will contain ups and down, successes and failures, joys and sorrows as they recount the details of travel down many paths.

Last week, I encouraged you not to be left wondering, 'what if?' In other words, use the foundation that you now have through school and home, to make the most of the opportunities that will come your way in life. If we do this, we will never be left with that awful feeling of, 'what if?'

Today I would like to expand that thought by reflecting on how we look back on life. I have included the above poem because in the end, when we look back on life, it is not how much money we made, or how famous we became, that will be how we are ultimately remembered; rather it will be the type of person we were. This is even more so this week as we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the UAE and in doing so, remember the greatness of its founding fathers. Each one of us hopes that we will be judged successful. True success comes from our ability to use the gifts that we each have been given to their fullest benefit for our world. It is indeed about being the best we can be. This is why we emphasise our values: excellence, learning, diversity, integrity. Remembering them in your life will always keep you in great shape.

Congratulations ladies and gentlemen on what you have achieved at school. You have set a standard and made the most of the opportunities. As the goodbyes are said, remember the importance of saying

thanks - not just to your friends for supporting you or your teachers, for all their efforts, but more importantly to your parents, without whom none of these opportunities would have been possible. I trust too that over time you will not forget the foundation that was laid here, at VISS, and that you might seek to make a contribution in some form to future generations of VISS students. Know that the door is always open and that we look forward to your return.

All the best ladies and gentlemen - May God be with you - and in words of the great Dr Suess

**Congratulations! Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places! You're off
and away!**

*You have brains in your head. You have
feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself any direction you
choose.
You're on your own. And you know what
you know.
And YOU are the guy who'll decide where
to go.
you're off to Great Places! Today is your
day!
Your mountain is waiting. So...get on your
way!*

UAE National Day celebrations

I look forward to welcoming all families tomorrow to our day of celebrations for the UAE national day. Full details were distributed last week.

**Dr Roderick Crouch
Principal**



From the Head of Junior School — *Confidence*



Over the past month the Junior School students have been focusing on the 'Confidence Key' of the *You Can Do It Program*, in their classrooms.

Confident children are not afraid to make mistakes when learning something new. They believe that they will be successful if they try hard. They only ask for help after they have "had a go" themselves. Confident children are not afraid to make new friends. They expect to be liked and develop new friendships. Confident children make themselves tall and speak out in a voice everyone can hear. Confident children are not looking for adult approval or approval from their friends, as they are self-reliant and independent.

At school we provide a range of activities and strategies to develop **confidence** in the students.

- Providing opportunities for responsibility and recognizing achievement. For example, classroom monitors, SRC (starting soon), special awards such VIP awards and Star of the Month, celebrating achievement of goals.
- Oral language activities that involve talking in front of the class. For example, role play, show and tell, sharing ideas and special items.
- Oral language activities that involve speaking in front of others. For example, assemblies, across class sharing, sharing with the Head, Deputy Head or other staff.
- Experiences that develop a positive

body image and enhance brain development. For example, awareness of healthy eating, importance of drinking water, regular exercise.

- Activities that involve supported challenges for the student. For example, learning to climb, swim, play music, create art pieces, learning a language.

The VISS Outdoor Education Program is a good example of a well-rounded activity that develops confidence. Last year VISS commenced a very successful Outdoor Program which focuses on developing the 'whole child', physically, emotionally and socially. The staff was delighted with the growth in student confidence and independence during these experiences last year. We look forward to seeing all students involved in this year's experiences.

- ⇒ Grade 5 Camp – an overnight camp at North Star Camp, Dibba
- ⇒ Grade 4 Camp – an overnight camp at Adventures in Oman
- ⇒ Grade 3— Sleepover at the school.

Practical Things You Can Do to Develop Confidence in Your Child

- Develop their self-image by encouraging a healthy lifestyle, this includes both healthy diet and exercise. The World Health Organisation states that one of the biggest challenges for the twenty-first century is obesity. We need to educate our students in this area, at home, as well as school.
- Give your child a special responsibility at home.
- Set aside a special time for your child to share his/her school day with you.

- If your child has negative feelings about school, friendships, or other things they don't like doing, model and develop a positive mindset and a sense of optimism. Assist your child to turn a challenge into an opportunity.
- Help your child identify individual interests and talents.
- Praise your child for trying something new and/or challenging.
- Encourage your child to make eye contact (if appropriate for your culture), when he/she speaks to others or when being spoken to.
- Teach your child to say their name and age and something about themselves with a clear confident voice.
- Encourage your child to 'have a go'. Share your own experiences with your child, so they see that having courage to 'try' is normal behaviour.
- Talk about being independent and developing a number of friendships.
- Discuss being courageous in dealing with issues with friends and saying "No" if they feel the behaviour is not acceptable.
- Encourage them to think through issues and develop their own opinion and view.

Health is the greatest possession. Contentment is the greatest treasure. Confidence is the greatest friend.

Lao Tzu - Philosopher

Jan Senior
Head of Junior School

Secondary School News

The Secondary School at VISS continues to be a very busy place with our focus over the past three weeks being on our external examinations in the Senior School. Our Year 13 students have been studiously preparing for and sitting external examinations and I congratulate them on all of the hard work, perseverance and resilience they have shown over the past two years in completing this rigorous qualification. The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) examinations were held between the 7th and the 23rd of November, which has meant our senior students have had some very early mornings (mostly 7 am starts) and they were also required to sit numerous examinations during the Eid vacation. Thankfully for them this is all now over and I look forward to reporting on the results of all of this hard work in the coming months. To celebrate the final year of school and to acknowledge all of the effort that these students have put in, a graduation assembly was held on Monday the 21st where Dr Rod our Principal, had the opportunity to wish the students well in the future and to thank them for their contributions to school life over the past few years. To add to this, the students also had the opportunity to gather socially with family, friends and staff to reflect on their years at VISS during an informal graduation dinner at the Corniche Al Buhaira Hotel - Sharjah. I will say more on both of these events in the next newsletter.

On another note, can I extend my thanks to Mr. Khalid and all of the teachers who contributed to the recent Eid dinner on Saturday the 5th of November (see Mr Khalid's report below). It was great to be part of such a positive evening and to share such a special time with so many members of the school community. Stu-

dents, families and staff shared food, held prayers and then participated in activities and games to celebrate this holy occasion and I look forward to more events of this nature in the future.

There is a lot coming up in the next few weeks at VISS, including the UAE day celebrations, sporting fixtures and further celebrations of success. I look forward to reporting on the Secondary School's involvement in all of these wonderful occasions in more depth in the near future.

Dean Pyrah
Head of Secondary School

The Day of Arafah

The Day of Arafah is the most important part of the Hajj (pilgrimage). Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) said: Hajj IS Arafah. The Prophet used to fast on this special day. Based on this Islamic tradition, students from grade 9 wanted to encourage Muslim students at VISS to fast on this day, Saturday November 5th, and they organized an event to break the fast (iftar) at school. A good number of students attended, along with their parents. Students were able to receive the reward of fasting while having a great time with their friends in an atmosphere filled with happiness and fun.



These are some comments about the event:

- "I have not fasted on the Day of Arafah before, but when I learnt about the reward of fasting this day and I found that a group of my friends had decided to fast, this helped me to get through the day of fasting. After breaking my fast I felt so happy because I was able to receive the reward and I found out that I have strong willpower and that I can try to do things I didn't think I was capable of before." – A student.

- "I like to taste different kinds of food and I have been to many restaurants and grand hotels, but I have never seen such a variety of foods as I have tonight. I really enjoyed the delicious food, not to mention all the delicious sweets. I ate so much my stomach hurt!" – A Muslim parent.



- "I was very interested for me and my children to be part of this festive and religious occasion, so we could learn more about Islam. I was very impressed with the organization involved in the way that Muslims pray. Truly, my perception of Islam and Muslims has changed since I came to this country." - A non-Muslim parent.

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Personalised learning | Quality teaching | Excellence for all

Through the Window of Grade 4 — *Multiple Intelligences*

- "This event today was a wonderful opportunity for VISS students to meet and interact with each other, away from the regular school environment. This is a good way of forming stronger bonds between students, and making the whole experience of teaching and learning more beneficial. How beautiful it was to see the students working together as a team with respect and joy. – A teacher.



- "I really like this school. I hope to be a student here next year. I really like the way the teachers and students deal with each other in a respectful but friendly way. I felt very welcome and was very happy to be here." – A student from outside the school.

- "The football game was excellent even though we lost. We were just happy to play and we didn't really care who won and who lost." – Another student.

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all those who participated in this event and made it a success, organisers, teachers, parents and students.

Mr Khaled
Head of Islamic studies – Secondary School

This term, during our Inquiry topic 'Learning to Learn', the students completed a Multiple Intelligence quiz, based around the theory by Howard Gardner. They wanted to discover the way in which they learn best. They were given opportunities to explore a range of activities that catered for different learning styles. The students loved participating in these activities and furthering their understandings as learners.



Lulu has 'Word Smarts'. She used the dictionary to help her publish her writing.



Yousuf has 'Music Smarts'. He performed a song about a pirate.



Asil has 'Body Smarts'. She built a symmetrical structure.



Hessa, Ibrahim, Mo-hamed and Raihanna used their 'Picture Smarts' to create an artwork inspired by French artist, Claude Monet

Learning Tool Box

The Grade Fours were also busy exploring tools that help them learn during their Inquiry topic. They re-created their favourite learning tools and placed them in a decorated 'Learning Tool Box'. They also included information cards that explained how they use each tool for their learning. After working tirelessly on their tool box, they presented it to the class. Students needed to focus on effective communication by maintaining eye contact, speaking in a clear voice and speaking at an appropriate pace.



Amir confidently presented his tool box to the class.

Shania showed her beautifully decorated tool box to her friends.



Look at Zaynura's fantastic tool box!

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Lucy included many helpful learning tools.

The Grade Four students now have the right tools and are ready to tackle any learning task that comes their way.

Well done, Grade Four!

Grade 4 Team

Early Learning Centre News

This year I was given the opportunity to be the VISS Nursery teacher. Nursery children are aged from 2-3 years and it has been an absolute pleasure watching their growth in confidence, independence and social skills since the beginning of the school year.



Fundamentally, the VISS Nursery program focuses on developing our children's English language, social skills, and self-help skills, both physically as well as their fine and gross motor skills. Our curriculum involves children developing their already innate skills. They participate in **painting, cooking, story-**

telling, singing, dancing, dressing up, and experimenting with sensory materials like **sand** and **water**. These play experiences help younger children develop **language**, learn to **socialise** together for the first time and increase independence. Hence, children initiate the learning of life-long skills: concentration, motivation, persistence, discipline and a love of learning.



The children are learning that they have friends at school! We are encouraging them to

learn the names of their new friends by singing and playing games surrounding their names and introducing each child individually by name in **'Circle Time'** every day. Not only does this encourage children to become well acquainted with one another and grow in their social development, it also provides them each with a sense of belonging as well as a sense of identity, that is unique to themselves.

Most of the children are beginning to use social language conventions such as saying 'Good morning', 'Thank you', and 'Please'. During our interactive **'Circle Time'**, children are encouraged to express their thoughts and contribute in the story telling, puppet shows, or card games. Thus, it follows the fundamental ideology of our ELC that play leads to learning as does learning lead to play. Circle Time is also imperative in providing children with an opportunity to express themselves as individuals, and see that their thoughts and ideas are valued in their learning environment. Children spend 30 minutes every day

outdoors, playing in the ELC playground. This is an opportunity to interact with the wider learning community of the ELC, as well as enhance their gross motor skills.



In such a short time, we have been able to see the Nursery children grow in several facets of their lives. And we as a team know there is potential for much more growth and development, and feel privileged to be a part of their learning journey at VISS.



Julia Shadid
Nursery Coordinator



VISS UAE Day Celebration — 24 November, 2011



Early Learning Centre UAE Day Program

8:00 am Students arrive to their classrooms at the ELC.

9:30 am – 10:30 am ELC - Tasting at the Middle School Canteen available.

10:00 am KG2 attend official ceremony in the Senior Gym.

10:00 am KG1 and Nursery attend the Birds of Prey Show on the oval/field.

11:00 am All students from the ELC have a parade on the oval/field stage.

12:00 pm Students dismissed to enjoy the day with their parents.

Afternoon buses will only be at 2:30 pm

All students are expected to take part in the UAE Day celebration.

If you would like to pick up your child early, please see the Home Room teacher.

Primary and Secondary Students VISS UAE Day Program

9:30 am Primary students walk to the Senior Gym.

9:45 am Senior students walk over with Homeroom teacher to the Senior Gym.

10:00 am Official Ceremony in the senior Gym KG2 – Grade 13.
[Parents Welcome](#)

10:45 am Birds of Prey Show on the oval/field near the stage.

10:30am – 2:00 pm

- Food tasting at the Middle School Canteen available
- Art/ History display in the Performing Arts Centre
- Stage performances throughout the day on the stage on the field
- UAE Car display
- Souvenirs for sale, rides such as camels and jumping castle

1:30 pm All students sitting on the oval/field.

1:45 pm Start of soccer match, teachers v students.

2:10 pm Soccer match ends.

2:10 pm All students return to their Home Room for dismissal.

Afternoon buses will only be at 2:30pm

Hijra—Islamic New Year

The Islamic new year is due this weekend. As yet, no official announcement has been made as to whether it will be Saturday or Sunday, and there have been conflicting reports on which day it might be! Although, the likelihood is Sunday, until officially advised, please assume Sunday is a regular school day at this stage.

The school will pass on any information we receive as soon as we receive it.

Dr Roderick Crouch
Principal

Dates for Your Diary

• **November 22 — 23**
Grade 5 Camp— North Star

• **November 24**
National Day Celebration at VISS

• **December 2**
UAE National Day

• **December 6**
Grade 8 & 9 Amazing Maths Race

• **December 18/2011 —> January 8/2012**
School Holiday