The British School of Egypt

Crossing the boundaries of excellence…

Spring Newsletter

April 2020

Learning in Focus

Message from the Executive Principal

As the world is fighting against the COVID-19 outbreak, more than 130 countries have now closed their schools nationwide, impacting nearly 80% of students globally. This is unprecedented; the world has never seen this many children out of school at the same time. But we all understand that keeping our families at home, is the safest way of preventing the spread of the Coronavirus. I want to express how proud I am of the BSE community, both staff and families, for what we have achieved together over the last 4 weeks.

The Voices of Youth

In a situation like this it is normal to feel sad, worried, confused, scared or angry, these are feelings we are all experiencing at one time or another. If you are interested to learn how other pupils in the affected countries keep learning and staying positive during these times of uncertainty, visit

https://www.voicesofyouth.org/

Do you want to share your own story with the world? Then don't forget to include #youthvoice

Graduation - To the class of 2020

We understand how disappointed our Year 6s and Year 12s due to graduate summer, are about the uncertainty of the current school closure. To show our support and to identify some positive ways forward, we are developing a 2020Task Force to explore the opportunities to celebrate with you.

If you have any ideas you would like to share, or if you would like to join the Task Force, please send an email expressing your interest and include your name and class to letusknow@bse.edu.eg

Staying Safe Online

May I remind you, it is important to stay safe online during this period of distance learning. You can click on this link to visit Childline and find more information and tips about staying safe online.

Pastoral and Welfare Support

We are continuing to support our pupils and families in these difficult circumstances.
Our school counsellors have devised a programme of group well-being sessions that pupils can sign up to and then attend online.

We will continue to offer counseling to pupils as requested or as well feel appropriate at this time. Should you or your child wish to access our counselling services, please send an email to follow address and we will be in touch to support you wecare@bse.edu.eg

Staying at Home – How to maintain a healthy mind

Your child may be experiencing some anxiety at this time. Please click on this link and visit the Young Minds website access some advice and guidance to parents on what you can do to support your child.
We also recommend reading the article How to cope with change which we have uploaded to the Well-BSEing section of our website. This is an important new section which we will continue to update with helpful resources and advice about well-being.

Taking a pause

The pandemic and school closure has naturally taken a toll on all of us. Please use the break to rest and relax. Enjoy your time together with your families, if we look to positives of this current crisis, it has given us the opportunity to spend more quality time with our loved ones and this is something we should all cherish.

Wishing you all a restful, safe and enjoyable pause with your families!

Best wishes,
Mrs. Yasmin Tabram
Executive Principal

Message from the Principal

Dear Parents and The BSE Family

I am writing to you with a number of firsts to report……I am certain that this is the first ever BSE newsletter that has been compiled whilst the school site is closed, I am also sure that it will the first time that you as pupils, parents and the wider community find yourself experiencing such a unique set of circumstances that simply affect everyone daily and it is also my first BSE newsletter.

I am very fortunate to have joined the BSE just five weeks ago and at a time when everything was still relatively 'normal'. Of course we knew that there was a virus and that it was starting to have an impact on many countries around the world but it was definitely a time when we did not anticipate the scope and far reaching implications of what would rapidly become a worldwide pandemic. To reflect on the last five weeks now it is incredible to appreciate how things have changed.

From the first week I started at the BSE however I was impressed with the way that the school as a whole was able to adapt to the changes needed. I have been working in Egypt for seven years and I have worked at two schools during that time both in New Cairo. When I first arrived in August 2013 it was a time when schools were also having to make changes to their operations and routines on a daily basis. I learnt then that Egypt is able to adapt well to change and whilst it was a challenging time for all of the Country for the people I worked with, they showed a dedication and a passion for ensuring the education and welfare of the pupils in their care was foremost in their minds.

The same is true now. In the first ten days at the BSE I saw how quickly the school management, the school administration, the school staff and of course the pupils were able to adapt and change to the situation that was rapidly developing around them. I was very impressed with the schools preparedness to make the switch to distance learning and how quickly a high quality distance learning provision was established for all pupils.

I can assure you that very few schools would've been able to make that transition as effectively and quickly as we were at the BSE. I taught in the UK for fifteen years before coming to Egypt and certainly those schools wouldn't have adjusted as effectively as the BSE did. This ability is a credit to all of the staff, pupils and systems that were in place before this time – and importantly how the staff responsible for them were able to adapt their teaching systems and practices to suit the new requirements.

For all of the BSE Senior Leadership team to be able to call on subject heads, year group leaders and academic services such as the ICT department to react to the demands of the rapidly changing situation and 'step up' when needed was impressive to see. It was definitely a highlight of those first few weeks.

The last three weeks have been just as impressive to be a part of. Given that no one person has ever experienced this situation before, no school leadership can say that they are able to draw on lessons learnt previously and no school can say they were ready for this situation (without making considerable changes to the way their school operated and ran) it was outstanding how everyone that needed to pulled together.

For the BSE the ability to make the quick transition it made is fundamental to why the school is a success and will continue to be so and why I feel very fortunate to be a part of it and the community that it serves.

I am sure that we will get through this situation. I am sure that there will yet be more difficult times ahead and that there will still need to be more changes made. My message here is that the BSE is very well placed to adapt and change to whatever situation is required of it – in my opinion much better placed than many schools are, as has been proven so far over the last few weeks.

With this in mind it is important to be positive about the future. It is also important to understand the role that everyone receiving this newsletter can play within the community in ensuring that the important and valuable messages that need to be shared are shared and promoted. Everything that each one of us does plays its part in helping to fight the virus and ensures the community remains as healthy and well as possible.

My final thought is one that was promoted so well this week by our Junior School pupils on the school Facebook page Stay Home and Stay Safe.

Tim Hoban
Principal
The British School of Egypt

Learning in Focus

News from EYFS

Learning in Focus

Distance Learning at its best!

Young hearts and minds appreciating their learning journey through distance learning.





Pre Foundation

Pre-F children have been very busy with their phonics, learning initial phase 1 sounds. In order to support their learning, they use different tools to help them retain the information. In this picture you can see the children are building a 't-t-t-t-t-all tower' to help them learn the sound for 't'. They had great fun trying to build the 't'allest tower they could.

In Understanding of the World, we are always looking for ways to encourage children to investigate and find out new things.

This term Pre-F children were learning how to follow basic instructions in order to plant their own seeds. Children of all ages enjoy investigating, using their curiosity to help them grow and now the children are waiting to see what happens to their seeds when they grow!

Foundation 1

F1 children are having a fin-tastic time distance learning and even though they are missing their friends they love working with all the new technology and the new games they are playing. Here you can see they are learning to count items in small groups then put them all together to get a total – this is one of the first steps to understanding addition and aren't they doing a great job?





Another important learning area is writing but before we can write we need to do 'mark making' and yes you got it! It's SO much fun and can be messy too! F1 children just love it and they have been very creative too! They used different mark making tools around the house in order to create different prints. Wow! Super job F1!

Foundation 2

Even though F2 children are getting older they still believe in active learning, through play and they are right! It's simply the best way to learn and retain the information we are giving them. Just look at what F2 have been up to while distance learning.

Phonics can be fun, but it can be hard too. F2 are learning digraphs. A digraph is a single sound which is represented by two letters. These can be tricky to learn and remember, but F2 have been going strong with the 'qu' and 'ch' digraphs, using different techniques to learn the sound and formation of these letters.

Here we go F2…..we're learning addition, starting to use the language of addition and recognising the symbols we use to make an addition sentence ; 4+2=6. This is so cool and F2 children get to use a variety of interactive games in order to understand addition more fluently, recognising different strategies and techniques in order to develop their skills further.







In EAD (Expressive Art and Design) F2 had the most awesome time – we were asked to design our very own egg! Can you believe it? Faberge here we come! EAD is used in early years to help develop a child's imagination, creativity and their ability to use media and materials to support their learning. This, in turn, helps children to represent and understand their own feelings an idea's, which supports them to becoming lifelong learners!





News from JS

JS "Book Week" becomes a real page turner!

This half-term, Junior School celebrated all things literary with an amazing book week. The school foyer became the centre of attention as it was turned into an Aladdin's Cave with books to suit all ages and tastes. The children, as usual, threw themselves into the action with their usual energy! The week culminated in the entire school coming in dressed up as their favourite book character – showing some amazing creativity!





The launch of our "ECA's"!

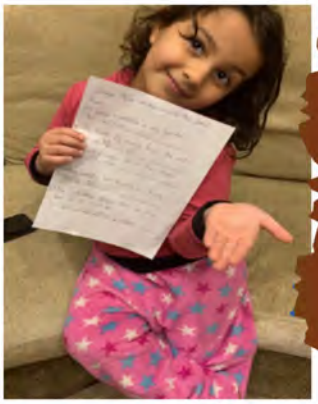
At The BSE, we strongly believe that learning does not just happen during the school day in a regular lesson. We are very proud of the learning opportunities that we offer to our pupils during the "Extra-Curricular Activities" program that we offer. The clubs were launched this half-term and ranged from such diverse activities as science, dancing, history club, yoga and mastering mathematics.

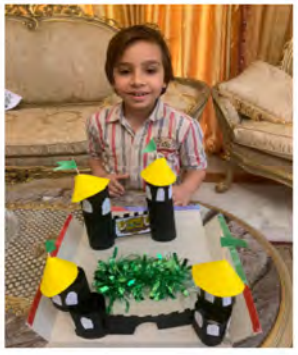


JS steps up to the challenge!

Facing up to a challenge is what The BSE does best and the challenge of continuing the learning journeys of our amazing pupils during the period of school closure has been no exception! Using different online platforms, combined with some very creative thinking, has enabled JS to provide engaging and challenging learning opportunities for all pupils in their home environment. JS staff have, with the support of our specialist teachers, maintained a full and balanced curriculum and we are confident that this provision will be strictly maintained for the duration of the current situation. The JS is very proud of all our teaching staff for their ongoing commitment, creativity and professionalism during these unprecedented times. They say that a picture paints a thousand words…so we thought that there is no better way to show the amazing learning that is happening at home than with a showcase of pictures of the pupils and examples of their wonderful work.









Learning in Focus

News from JS

A challenge from Mr. Giles.

Having to stay at home could mean…boredom…more boredom…and even more boredom! But here at The BSE, we are better that that! I have a challenge for all JS pupils. I know that our school is bursting with talent so, while you are at home, I want you to showcase your talents. How you do this is entirely up to you, you could make something, write the next "Harry Potter", do whatever you want! But I want to see you using your talent at home. There will, of course, be prizes for the most original and creative talents.

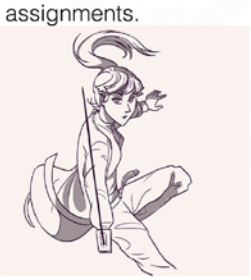


Learning in Focus

News from KS3

Keeping the creative energy flowing from a distance

We are delighted to share that Mariam El Kady, 7B, has created some wonderful work at home when completing her Art assignments.



She has developed a strong interest in Anime art and this shows in the portrait she has created below.

She is also working on a magazine story project with several friends from 7B where Mariam has become the predominant artist. The team members have taken on personal challenges to pursue their own and collaborative ideas in a combination of creative writing and art. They set themselves goals and meet regularly to discuss progress and plan their next steps.

Nour El Din, Bassem and Mariam look forward to sharing this magazine story project with a wider audience.

Well done for showing such passion and independence!

An insight into KS3 Book Week….

DEAR - Drop Everything and Read Photography Competition importance of reading.

Well done to **Ahmed Helmy** in 7E for sending us the winning entry. We all enjoyed the creativity and originality of the photo and we are thankful to him for helping us to highlight the importance of reading!



Spelling Bee



Year 7 and 8 pupils showcased their spelling knowledge as they competed to be the Spelling Bee BSE Champion for 2020. The final rounds of competition included the top performers from the preliminary rounds. The word list for each class varied in difficulty.

Well done to all the brave pupils that participated in the Spelling Bee competition. The winners were:

Marwan-8B Natalie-7F Gamila-7E

Innovation in English - Twitter Book Review Competition

Innovation in English - Twitter Book Review Competition

This term we launched a twitter book review competition during our daily Tutor Time. This is one small part of our drive to continue to raise the profile and stress the importance of high standards of English at The BSE. The children were asked to write a twitter article which provides a brief review of the book in a tone that would encourage others to read it too, we have included to great examples of pupils work below….



Book Name: Shooting Kabul
Author: N.H Senzai

This book is about a family that lives in Kabul, Afghanistan. They have decided that they'll move to America but on the way Fadi (the main character) loses his younger sister, Mariam. The whole story is about the family trying to find Fadi's sister. There's one problem, the family told Mariam to use a fake name.

Did they find her? You need to read to find out!
By **Maram Abdulrahman 9A**

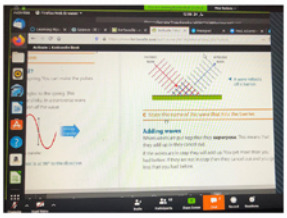


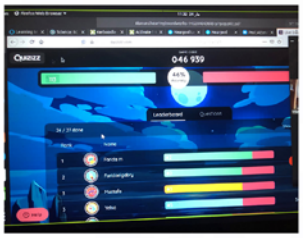
Book Name: Narnia, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader
Author: C. S. Lewis

'The true treasure is in the journey.' An amazing book to conquer any quest and face any fear. You might say I am overreacting. When you read the book you will understand why…
By Hamza Rizk 7A

Scientists of the Future! Welcome to Interactive Learning Online

Year 7 and 8 pupils are actively involved in interactive online science classes with Mr. Darrell, Mrs. Marina and Mr. Ahmed. Students are using their iPad devices and are engaged in interactive PowerPoint presentations using different online applications.





The classes are integrating Zoom with Nearpod, Quizziz and Schoology. Nearpod allows our pupils to share their answers directly on the presentations that our teachers are using. Feedback can be given instantly, this has been really useful to us in ensuring our pupils are getting the feedback necessary to move their learning forward and make progress. Quizziz allows pupils to compete in live interactive assignments and all pupils appear to like the interactive and competitive element to this.

Learning in Focus

News from KS4 and KS5

We would like to congratulate all our senior school pupils and staff for their amazing efforts to shift quickly and efficiently to the distance learning plan following the sudden school closure. We fully appreciate that this has been a far more stressful experience for our pupils in the senior school than any other sections because of the uncertainty regarding exams. We have taken the opportunity to share answers to 10 frequently asked questions below:

1. Did the exams need to be cancelled?
The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is expected to continue having a significant impact on the education system, and the world, for months to come. Therefore, exams have been cancelled now to give pupils, parents, and teachers certainty about their futures.

2. What will happen to those who have already done some non-exam assessment?
Students who were due to sit A level, AS level or IGCSE exams this summer will receive a calculated grade. The calculated grade process will take into account a range of evidence including, for example, non-exam assessment and mock results, and the approach will be standardised between schools and colleges. There's separate guidance from Ofqual on awarding IGCSE, AS and A levels which includes the implications for non-exam assessment.

3. Will all students be awarded their predicted grade?
No. We know that simply using predicted grades would not be fair to all students. The 'centre assessment grade' which the exam boards will ask schools and colleges to submit for A and AS levels and IGCSEs will take into account an assessment of the likely grade that students would have obtained had exams gone ahead, and these will be standardised across schools and colleges. For this reason, students' final calculated grades will not necessarily reflect their predicted grades.

4. Will the past performance of the school be taken into account when devising the calculated grade?
Ofqual's guidance says that one of the sources of evidence schools and colleges should draw on is the performance of this year's students compared to those in previous years. However, this is only one of the sources of evidence that will be taken into account.

5. Is this an entirely new system?
This is a new system, but one which builds on existing practices, as education professionals are used to making holistic judgements about their students. These judgements will be standardised at national level to give grades that are as fair as possible.

6. Will universities, colleges and sixth forms accept these grades?
The calculated grades awarded this summer will be formal grades, with the same status as grades awarded in any other year. They will therefore be accepted by all institutions.
University representatives have already confirmed that they expect universities to do all they can to support students and ensure they can progress to higher education.

7. What if I am unhappy with my calculated grade?
Ofqual and the exam boards are working to ensure that candidates are awarded a fair grade that recognises the work they have put in. If an A level, AS level or IGCSE student does not believe the correct process has been followed in their case they will be able to appeal on that basis.
In addition, if a student does not feel their grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam, as soon as is reasonably possible after schools and colleges open again. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021, in line with usual practice.

8. What about private candidates or entries?
Where schools and colleges have accepted entries from external candidates (students who they have not taught themselves, because they have been home-schooled, following distance-learning programmes or studying independently), those students should be taken account of in the process of producing centre assessment grades, where the head teacher or principal is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement.

9. Can private centres run IGCSEs or A levels if they chose to do so?
No. Exam boards will not be issuing papers for this summer's IGCSE, AS and A levels so there will not be the opportunity to sit them at any centre.

10. Does this mean every exam in every module in every subject being cancelled, or will a limited number go ahead at IGCSE and/or A level?
Exam boards will not be issuing papers for this summer's IGCSE, AS and A levels so there will not be the opportunity to sit them in any subject.

Final Note:
Most families have now confirmed whether they intend to sit or withdraw from exams in the summer session. Should you still need to do this, you have until Monday 20th April to complete the google form. You can still access it here: https://forms.gle/HMbxhXyWnfyCtSKu9

I hope you are all keeping safe and healthy during this unprecedented situation, please consider your child's well-being and encourage them to take some rest and stay connected with their friends remotely during the school holidays. Where possible, ensure your child/children get outside every day for some fresh air and exercise, please just remember to keep a safe distance from anyone else!

God bless you and all your beloved ones,

Mr. Magdy Todros
British Qualifications Academic Director

Learning in Focus

The ALDD in Focus

The Assessments and Learning Development Department

The support team have been working hard through out this distance learning phase, attending with their pupils their online classes, giving them small group or one-on-one online sessions and sending work for pupils to complete and send back. As support teachers we would like to take this chance to express our strong appreciation of the efforts of our parents, who are being overwhelmed now by being exposed to the daily learning experience of their children. We are truly grateful for your continuous efforts to help your children during online support sessions, sending back work completed. We hope that this partnership in your child's learning would continue after the Easter break whether online or in school. Wishing you all a good break and praying that you are all safe and healthy.

Useful Links

Do you have some spare time in the holidays?

Please find some useful links below for activities or websites that can make use over the Spring **Vacation.**

https://www.themathsfactor.com/

https://www.englishmastery.org

https://stories.audible.com/start-listen

https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUNYSwNARexFwxXp3oPAtvg

https://www.businessinsider.com/8-awesomely-simple-science-experiments-you-can-do-at-home-2016-7



Learning in Focus