



## Newsletter 12

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Dear Parents and JIS community

### JIS Christmas winter concert 2016

The gym at JIS was filled with seasonal spirit and festive fun as we put on our concert. Many thanks to everyone who came along to create the atmosphere and buzz. It was a really enjoyable evening for all – the students enjoyed being on the stage and we enjoyed being their audience!



**A fabulous effort from everyone concerned – we wish everyone a very Merry Christmas 2016!**

## **ESSPA – updates from our Parent and staff group**

**Concert** - Many thanks to ESSPA for their arrangements and support for the concert on Friday evening, it all worked really well.

**Charity book sale 2017** - ESSPA will be collecting used books for their bi-annual charity book sale after the holidays. Please clear your shelves (before Christmas and CNY) of good condition unwanted books and send them in to school where ESSPA will be selling them to the school community to raise money for Room to Read, a very valuable literacy based charity. In early February all the students will be invited to the book sale to get some really good bargains for their new book collection. It also sends a very positive message to all the students about recycling and making good use of unused or now outgrown books etc.

**Please send in books for the sale before and after the Christmas holidays if you have time for a clear out.**

## **Library info from Mrs. Wan for this week: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> – last change day**

The last library session before the holidays will be on Tuesday December 13<sup>th</sup>. Students will be able to check out an extra book for the holidays, so please remind them to bring in their library folder

## **Parking and traffic flow in the school grounds at drop off and pick up times**

Please be reminded that we need to keep the school car park areas safe and also allow for easy movement for all cars. We have had some drivers blocking the main driveway area in the mornings by not parking appropriately before letting children out of the vehicles. Please be safe and also aware of other road users. Thank you.

## ***Christmas party lunch for all classes on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December from 11:30a.m.***

Wishing everyone a really enjoyable week ahead

**Music lessons for term 2** – see attached information from Ms Jill in the music department



## **Curriculum in the Classroom – from Cath Wan PYP Coordinator**

### **Performances and the Curriculum**

What a busy year this is turning out to be! With our commitment to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert in November, we were planning on more ‘casual performances’ for the rest of the year. However, although Friday evening’s performance has been put together in 2 weeks, student enthusiasm has meant that our ‘sing along’ now contains ensemble, dancing and much more. It was impossible to take a break from our annual whole production as since August, students have been following me in the playground expressing their enthusiasm and generally making sure that it happens!

Sometimes, I worry about the amount of time spent preparing for these performances, but then I observe the development of cross -disciplinary skills that the students develop. Numerous research has also shown that when schools focus on their arts programmes, academic results are positively influenced. Here are a few notes: a combination of what research is saying about performing arts and observations of our students over the last few weeks.

### **Performing together**

If you really think about what our brain is doing when we all follow a beat together, it’s pretty amazing. We are doing subdividing time into fractions to millisecond accuracy. To perform music well also requires an internal understanding of pattern – one of the main building blocks of both language and mathematics. It also requires a great amount of non – verbal communication: cues such as picking up on another person’s facial expression, tuning into their breathing and body language are all being deployed in just ‘staying together’. In fact, there have been some scientific studies out which conclude that heartbeats of choir members actually start beating in time with each other as they sing.





Last week, I was helping Ms. Jill with some members of the music ensemble. At the start, the students were playing ‘all over the place’ – just focusing on their own playing. It took just one rehearsal for them to be playing together – listening to each other’s cues, picking up on each other’s body language and breathing. You could lecture students for hours on non-verbal communication; and it would be hit and miss as to whether they would understand it or not. But to experience the effects for themselves is an entirely different matter – students learning by doing.

A group of students approached Ms Jill asking to perform a dance to accompany the piano duet. Dancing is far more than looking nice in a tutu. To get their dance together, students had to analyse the pattern in the music and ensure that their movements fitted the structure. (I also have a sneaky feeling that they might show a good understanding of their 8 times table when they do start learning it...we spent ages counting in groups of 8!)

I hope you enjoyed Friday’s concert and that all our heartbeats synchronised as we sang together. I’ll leave you with a quote from author Douglas Reeves and a series of links to interesting articles/ videos which I hope you’ll find interesting.

“When music and art...are recognised for their academic value and their potential for student engagement, then we have a much greater possibility of nurturing and sustaining learning communities” (Reeves, 2009 p.87)

### Interesting links

News article on choir singers’ heartbeats:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-23230411>

TED talk on how music affects your brain:

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-playing-an-instrument-benefits-your-brain-anita-collins>

Marcus du Sautoy on Music and Maths

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHZVrigOubY>

American Mathematical Society – lots of links about music and maths connections

<http://www.ams.org/samplings/math-and-music>

### *Dates for the diary – this week – December 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>*

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup>** – P3/4 arts and drama workshops

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>** – Japanese Noh theatre performance – 10:30a.m. in gym

-Battle of Books meeting for staff

-P6 ingredient shopping in Tai Po – cooking on Wednesday a.m.

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>** – Whole school Christmas party lunch – 11:30 onwards.

-P3 / 4 arts and drama workshops

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>** – Library book exchange day – final one for term 1

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup>** – Final day of term 1 – school closes at 12pm midday.

We look forward to a busy but very enjoyable week as head towards the holidays and a break with our family and friends.

Simon Walton