

Dear all

The school term now feels well underway and for students the summer break will seem a distant memory as the pattern of early wake ups, a school day and then the demands of homework becomes the norm. However, there is much to be positive about as we contemplate the term that lies ahead.

The new primary school at Dukhan continues to progress at pace and impress all who get the chance to visit. The project team continue to meet deadlines and work within the agreed timescales and students will begin to move in to the new accommodation as from next week. There is great excitement from both staff and students as they contemplate working together in a purpose built, modern learning environment and I look forward to seeing the transformation from a construction site to a place where our children will be inspired to achieve success in the future.

I visited the site this week and seeing the first classrooms all ready and waiting for the first students to arrive really was an inspiring experience. I thank all who have worked so hard on the construction project to date and for the staff who gave up so much time during the school holidays to ensure the school would be ready for students on time. There will be opportunities for parents and visitors to see the new building once all children are accommodated and all is in place, I will keep you informed.

This theme of inspiration and achievement was very much in evidence at the Celebration Event held at MIS last week where student achievements from the previous academic year in examinations, sports, music and community involvement were recognised. The event was very well supported by parents and many families expressed their pride in what had been achieved by students. It was a good opportunity to recognise not only student achievement but also the importance of families supporting the education of their children. Educational research states that parental involvement in schools is central to high quality education and it was positive to be able to meet so many parents and acknowledge their support.

I asked a number of students and their parents about their aspirations for the future, all showed a commitment to future learning and the career possibilities that this could bring. As such I was interested to read the report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) earlier this week. The OECD report 'Education at a Glance 2018', provides an international comparison of education in industrialised countries, providing a snapshot of trends.

The report covered a number of themes but highlighted that *“Participation in higher education today matters more than ever, Technological change, digitalisation and innovation have placed a significant premium on advanced skills, as lower-skilled jobs are being squeezed out of the market. Those who have attained only upper secondary education will earn 65% as much as a tertiary graduate, on average, perpetuating this vicious cycle over future generations.”* It is clear that despite the move to a digital age, education is still of paramount importance to the future and wellbeing of our students and therefore the quality of the learning experience along with effective home – school partnership is as relevant as ever.

I am aware that there are a number of meetings planned where families will be meeting with teachers in schools, I hope these events go well and I look forward to having an opportunity to meet with many of you over the coming weeks.

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