



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO 6, JULY 2006

MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTING DEPARTMENTS

We have come to the end of another very busy year for the School and the Maths and Computing Departments in particular. We continue to strive to achieve very demanding targets. We wait to see if we have achieved our targets for GCSE and A-Level. However, we have received our KS3 results and they are as follows:

	Target	Actual
Level 5 and above	97%	94%
Level 6 and above	79%	84%

This is an excellent achievement! Well done to all of Year 9. In particular it is worth mentioning that 21% of Year 9 achieved a Level 8!

This year has been a very busy one for the ICT Department who have successfully achieved two externally recognised awards namely: Naacemark and Becta Mark. At the same time they have been preparing to deliver the GCSE short course to Key Stage 3 students from next year.

Congratulations to Mr Meredith who has been appointed to the post of Director of Community Learning. His new role will involve liaising with our feeder primary schools and developing closer links with the local community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Holttum for his hard work while he has been at the School and wish him every success in his new post as an ICT and Maths teacher in Colchester. At the same time I would like to welcome Mr Gillespie to the ICT Department and hope he has a happy and enjoyable time at TBSHS.

SIXTH FORM LAPTOPS SCHEME

Over the last three months, the School's ICT strategy group have been working on proposals that will allow ICT to fully support the "personalising learning" agenda in the sixth form.

In essence, this will allow the use of laptops by sixth form students on the school wireless network to gain access to learning resources via the VLE. In order to deliver this vision, there have been a number of challenges to overcome.

First and most obvious the technical issues. These include the upgrading of the wireless network to allow for a significant increase in traffic, additional enhancements to security and the introduction of a laptop health-check scheme. With this work now in hand, the next challenge has been to consider the sourcing of equipment.

To this end during the sixth form induction week, following a presentation to the new Year 12 intake, the students were introduced to a number of companies who were offering laptops for sale or lease at “special student rates”.

It is hoped that in September when the scheme goes live the sixth form will be able to fully enjoy the benefits of “anytime anywhere” learning.

Mr A Hood

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT TRIP TO CAMBRIDGE

A number of Lower Sixth students managed to excuse themselves from the Sixth Form’s induction showpiece to go to Cambridge for a tour of their University buildings and attend a lecture entitled “Will the sun rise tomorrow?”

The tour was a reminder that Maths should be a discursive art when the skills become advanced and not the solitary pursuit that people often think of. It also took in the innovative grass roof of the main three floor building to remind us not to put too many limits on our thinking. The lecture drifted from algebraic tricks to evil galactic lizards and showed that problem solving learned in Maths is a skill that applies across all possible studies.

SUMMER SCHOOL—Bletchley Park visit, 23 and 24 August 2006

The School is organising a visit to Bletchley Park, which is the home of the world-renowned Enigma machine. We will undertake a guided tour of the site and we will be attending a lecture about the Enigma machine and its uses during the Second World War. This will provide a valuable cross-curricular link with the History Department. The following day the students will then do some code-breaking and other similar logical problem-solving work at The Bishop’s Stortford High School



PRIMARY SCHOOL ICT TECHNICAL SUPPORT

In our work with the Community we have extended our ICT technical support to cover all five Primary Schools. At Thorley Hill we provide them with a spontaneous response when they request it. At Northgate support is being given in all areas especially in updating the ICT suite and installing new software. We recently saved the school from disaster when their UPS failed!

A recent project for St Michaels was an installation of an interactive whiteboard in one of their classrooms. The school had a projector which they wanted mounting so we helped to source all the equipment needed and installed it free of charge. We are now working on some computers that have been donated to the school by a local company which will be installed in classrooms throughout the school to be used by the students..

All Saints have agreed to use their weekly 2 hours support on a Wednesday afternoon. Support is being given in all areas including in-class support as well as work on their server. We have also helped them to produce a new school website which continues to be developed.

Little Hallingbury have chosen to use their time for us to develop a new school website for them. This has meant a complete re-write of their website and re-coding all existing pages. The goal of the site is so that the staff at the school can add their own content and change the calendar without the need of technical support. We also recently went into the school to teach a class of students PowerPoint, this was a fantastic day and we are looking for them to come to us to use Turing in the future.

PRIMARY SCHOOL NUMERACY SUPPORT

The Mathematics Department have provided booster sessions to all of our five Primary Schools. We are pleased to report that all the teachers enjoyed the teaching when they were there and the materials used are improving each year. Feedback from the Primary Schools confirms that the children really enjoy the experience of 'guest' teachers and are motivated well by the activities our staff do with them.

WORK WITH OUR SECONDARY PARTNER SCHOOL

Mr Atkinson continues to assist **Herts and Essex High School** with the joint initiative: Computer Club for Girls - an out-of-hours extra-curricular group of Year 8 students. They have been working on web design using HTML and a bit of Javascript. The first completed site is available for online viewing at <http://www.multiwingspan.co.uk/hosted/omega/>

NEW PRIZE FOR YEAR 8 BUSINESS PLANNING DAY,

A new annual prize for Year 8 Business Planning Day was presented to the winners of the day on Thursday 25 May in the Lower School Assembly by the business adviser who advised the team, Mr Mike Adams, MD of Y2 Ltd.

The team of Year 8 students, Matthew Ayrton, James Ellams, James Sargisson and George Singer (from Form LR2) who produced an excellent business plan for setting up a nightclub that they called "Disco Disco". The boys spent the morning working on a plan which focussed on marketing, operations, people and finance and presented their powerpoint to the rest of their group and then the rest of the year. The advisers were impressed by many of the plans. One commented "some of the boys produced better plans in two hours than I have seen from real business people over three months".

The criteria for the three judges, the Headmaster Mr Andrew Goulding, Steve Watson (HSBC) and Jane Quantrill (Lloyds TSB), were how realistic their plan seemed to be, how comprehensive it was, how well it was presented.

Other businesses helping the School on the day were, John Parker (Forever Living Products), Gill Bastick (National Westminster Bank), Guy Watson (Fleet Mobile Tyres), Susan Morland (Price Bailey), Nigel Day (RLS Ltd) and Mike Staples (Hayters). Mr Ian Hudson (Chairman of Bishop's Stortford Business Connections) kindly agreed to organise the annual trophy for the winners of the Year 8 business planning day.

The staff involved were Mr Beran, Mr Simmons and Mr Hood from the Business Education Department and Mr Chamberlain, Mr Burani, Mr Stone and Mr Dwyer from the Maths Department together with 155 boys who seemed to thoroughly enjoy the day and hopefully learnt something about business, namely how demanding, complex and exciting it is.

YEAR 9 WAITROSE PARTNERSHIP DAY

Despite the soaring temperatures and increasingly complex human resources problems, Year 9 students kept their cool in an excellent day in partnership with Waitrose. Sara Farnsworth (Branch Manager of our local Waitrose store), Laura Fisher (a regional Human Resources Manager who looks after six stores); Dominic Adams, the Bishop's Stortford store's Human Resources Manager, Michael Livings (Dry Goods Manager), Thea Smith (Checkouts Manager) provided real and interesting insight into their work. The Mathematics and Business Studies Departments provided the teachers and the teamwork theme worked really well.

The students looked at how they would manage different problems relating to human resource management: people skills, sorting out a late delivery, recruitment of new staff, motivation, dealing with



customer complaints and a department budget variance problem where they used numbers to focus priorities. The small teams prepared power point presentations during the day and delivered these to each other with the best ones being presented in the Hall to the Headmaster and the Waitrose Branch Manager in the afternoon. Excellent content but not always good enough delivery in terms of speaking and presentation was the verdict.

Thank you to all the students who took the activities seriously and made the most of the experience. Thank you to the Waitrose team and The Bishop's Stortford High School team—our ginger pudding and custard was favourably compared with Waitrose's own product by Dominic Adams (Human Resources).

The winning team under Mr Smith's capable leadership won the day with sensible references to football teamwork as well as high quality content expressing a clear understanding of the process and challenges of management. They are the recipients of vouchers to spend at Waitrose.

STUDENT VOICE AT TBSHS

This year has been the first time that students in Key Stages 3 and 4 at TBSHS have been formally consulted about their views on their learning. This has been done through Student Think Tanks, which were set up at the beginning of this academic year. The project forms part of the agenda for Personalising Learning in schools. The idea is that if we can find out how students best like to learn, then we can modify our teaching to better suit the needs of individuals and specific groups of students.

Student Think Tanks are small bodies of students who are interested in finding out more about how they and their fellow pupils learn best. There is a Student Think Tank for each Key Stage and each Think Tank contains approximately five representatives from each year who have volunteered to take part.

Student Think Tanks have created a document on the learning needs of a student at TBSHS in each of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. This was done by asking students to complete the following sentences about their learning:

- I learn quickly when ...
- I learn slowly when ...
- Learning is easy when ...
- Learning is difficult when ...
- Learning is enjoyable when ...
- Learning in groups is ...
- Learning from books is ...
- I need to feel ... (*motivated / safe / able to do a task*)

These surveys raised some very interesting issues which were discussed in the Think Tanks. Some of the points made by students were expected, for example learning in groups proved to be much more popular than learning from books. However, many of the things that came out of the questionnaires could help to inform classroom practice in future. Students in Key Stage 3 emphasised the importance of learning by doing – using a practical approach in lessons. Key Stage 4 boys, on the other hand, felt that an enthusiastic teacher facilitated learning more than anything else. Questionnaires from KS3 students showed that they needed to feel comfortable with the work, whereas at KS4, students said they needed above all to feel motivated.

Student Think Tanks have used this information to carry out another survey asking boys if these ‘optimum learning conditions’ that they have picked out actually exist in the classroom. Boys are working on collating the results of the second survey to find out to what extent their learning needs are currently being met at TBSHS.

To further inform the process of finding out about students’ learning needs, three Year 10 students, who have been heavily involved with Think Tanks throughout the year, joined me on a conference at the end of June. We attended the 2nd Annual Student Voice Conference at Comberton Village College in Cambridgeshire. The day was highly informative and a great opportunity for the boys to see how other schools have worked on giving pupils a mouthpiece. TBSHS has volunteered to lead a workshop at next year’s conference, which we hope will put us on the map as a school that is pushing forward student voice in the Eastern region.

Student Think Tanks will continue to run throughout next year and beyond to give boys the opportunity to voice their views on what takes place in their classrooms. This is viewed as a key component of personalising learning in our school and the students have shown a great willingness to push this agenda forward. With the continued hard work of the boys in the Student Think Tanks, Student Voice will play a pivotal role in influencing the learning of pupils at this school in the future.

Tom Capewell

COURSES FOR COMMUNITY USE AT TBSHS

In the Autumn Term we are offering a variety of courses at subsidised rates. For further details regarding any of the courses, please contact Sue Smith at the school : 01279 868686 or susan.smith@tbshs.herts.sch.uk

ECDL – The European Computer Driving License

This is a vocational certification consisting of 7 modules which include Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Databases, Graphics and Email. Self paced learning with instructor assistance. Exams are multiple choice and taken when the students are individually ready.

**CompTIA A+**

CompTIA A+ certification is an international industry credential. Major hardware and software vendors, distributors and resellers accept CompTIA A+ as the standard in foundation-level, vendor-neutral certification for service technicians. Earning CompTIA A+ certification proves that a candidate has a broad base of knowledge and competency in core hardware and operating system technologies including installation, configuration, diagnosing, preventive maintenance and basic networking.

CompTIA NETWORK+

The CompTIA Network+ certification is an international industry credential; a typical candidate would have CompTIA A+ certification or equivalent knowledge. Earning a CompTIA Network+ certification demonstrates that a candidate can describe the features and functions of networking components, and possesses the knowledge and skills needed to install, configure and troubleshoot basic networking hardware, protocols and services. The exam tests technical ability in the areas of media and topologies, protocols and standards, network implementation, and network support. The exam also covers new technologies such as wireless networking and gigabit Ethernet.

CompTIA SECURITY+

CompTIA Security+ certification is recognized around the world as the benchmark for foundation-level security professionals. The exam covers industry-wide topics, including communication security, infrastructure security, cryptography, access control, authentication, and operational security.

NUMERACY

In partnership with Hertford Regional College and Next Step we are delivering FREE classes in Improve Your Maths. This course is aimed primarily at students but if parents wish to attend as well that would be fine. Learn how to use numbers well, cope with fractions, decimals, percentages, measurements, shapes, reading and dealing with mathematical information. Classes are small and friendly and the Tutor is understanding and supportive. An ideal forum for students who wish to retake GCSE Mathematics.

THE YAMAHA MUSIC SCHOOL

Here at TBSHS we are privileged to have The Yamaha Music School offering keyboard lessons to anyone aged 9 and above. If you are interested in joining a class to learn to play the keyboard, telephone Clare Jonas on 01279 868686 for more details.

THE TURING SUITE

The Turing Suite is a fully equipped ICT resource for business users and the wider community. Turing is a high-quality learning environment equipped with the latest educational learning tools and ICT resources. The facility is equipped with i-desk integrated computer desks and 60 individual workstations. As a Specialist School in Mathematics and Computing, the hire rates would be highly subsidised for businesses, schools and community groups, as would use of the School's IT technical support if required. To discuss booking The Turing Suite as a **One Stop ICT Training Shop** for meeting your training needs, please contact Sue Smith at The Bishop's Stortford High School, telephone number 01279 868686 or email susan.smith@tbshs.herts.sch.uk.

STOP PRESS

The TBSHS has designed a post 16 website (www.bspost16.net) detailing all the courses offered by schools in the local consortium.

A new course commences in September for Year 10's in partnership with Hertford Regional College and the local consortium: An NVQ in Computer Upgrade and Build.

The School will be taking a lead in the local consortium in developing a Specialised Diploma in ICT to come on line in September 2008.

As a member of the Cambridge Consortium the school will be delivering two courses next academic year in the strategic use of ICT in schools. They will be advertised nationally in August.

