



# Longsands College Newsletter

www.longsands.cambs.sch.uk

## From the Principal

**Welcome to our first newsletter for the academic year 2009-2010.**

This edition is largely taken up with 'official' information but, as the year gets underway, input from and by students themselves will feature far more prominently.

We have started the year fully staffed and with the prospect of being able to report later in the term on plans for new facilities for PE and Sport. These will be in addition to the extensive programme of works carried out over summer, which included refurbishment of the Sports Hall and changing rooms. All students will benefit including the 293 students we have welcomed into Year 7 and 223 into Year 12.

The College's summer 2009 examination results were, in several respects, outstanding. Several subjects matched or exceeded their 'personal best' at GCSE level. The proportion of Year 11 students obtaining five or more A\*-C grades rose to 76.9%, with those doing so including both English and Maths increasing to 65.5%. The

latter figure – a rise of over 12% compared to 2008 – reflected the highly focused efforts of the departments concerned. There was also substantial support from across the College including from departments and teachers who themselves secured excellent results. In one case at least, this was achieved while having to cope with changed or increased commitments arising from staff illness.

After a rather mixed set of AS results last year, results at AS and A2 were far more secure, with a good number of students obtaining grades in line with or above expectations. The College has revised its requirements for entry onto Level 3 (A Level) courses. However, a key, often determining, factor will continue to be the individual student's approach to learning. We will be intervening a little more firmly where a student's efforts or attendance are not allowing them to fulfil their potential.

The report on the 2009 Student Survey that  
*(Continued on page 4)*

This term  
at Longsands...



Page 1



Page 1



Page 2

## Open Evening

Our annual Open Evening for parents considering Longsands as the secondary school for their son/daughter is on Tuesday 20 October 2009. Many students from across the College will be returning in the evening to assist in subject areas and act as guides.

Timings of the day will be adjusted as follows:

1 pm	:	lunch available and formal end of school
1.20 pm	:	buses arrive
1.30 pm	:	buses depart
1.30 – 3.30 pm	:	study facilities available
5.45 pm	:	student helpers in position
6.15 pm	:	start of Open Evening
8.30 pm	:	end of Open Evening.

The College's Published Admission Number (the limit of its intake) is 290 students.

## Academic Planning Day - Advanced Notice

Longsands' annual Academic Planning Day, will be taking place on **Thursday 26 November**. Some interviews will also take place on **Tuesday 25 November**. Thursday 26 November will be a non-teaching day for all students. Students will have an appointment with their form tutor to discuss their progress so far this year and set targets for the rest of the Academic Year. Students will reflect on previous targets and set new ones for the rest of the Academic Year. Parents will be invited to attend their child's interview. A letter outlining more details of the day will be sent out later this month. This is a valuable opportunity for students to discuss their learning and to set new goals. We look forward to your support.



Longsands Road  
St. Neots  
Cambridgeshire  
PE19 1LQ

## Key Policies

Please note that copies of College policies that may be of particular interest to parents are available via our website: [www.longsands.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.longsands.cambs.sch.uk)

Please follow the links for Parent Info at the top of the Home page.

Documents that can be downloaded include policies on: Mobile Phones; Discipline; Use of Images.

## University Beckons for School Science Students

A number of students have recently experienced science within the surrounds of some of the UK's leading research universities. **Nathan Austin** and **Danny Cain** (Yr 11) were selected to represent the school at the Salter's Chemistry Camp held at Nottingham University. This 3 day residential course introduced students to a wide range of chemical techniques as well as what it is like to live on a university campus. Throughout the year, **Jacob Saxton-Smith** (Yr 13) has represented the college at a series of Saturday morning lectures and workshops at

Cambridge University. Working with some of the country's foremost academics, Jacob has been able to taste chemistry as it is at undergraduate degree level. Finally, **Sam Barnett** (Yr 13) was able to represent the college at a residential Course in biochemistry at the University of East Anglia. Again, this course gave insights into the workings of university science labs and the university application procedures.

## Military Coups, Killer Snakes, Lost Baggage and More ..... The Sixth Form in Honduras!

In July 2009, twenty three Yr 12/13 students accompanied by Dr Millington, Mrs Millington and Mr Cooper had the school trip of a lifetime when they visited the Central American country of Honduras. The trip had been wonderfully coordinated by Dr Mulcahy and Mrs Murphy with assistance from colleagues across the school.

The aims of the 3 week trip were:

- to carry out ecological surveys in an area of rainforest and to learn about how important management of this natural resource is to the local community;
- to learn to dive and to explore an area of pristine coral reef.

There were doubts as to whether the trip would go ahead right up until a few hours before the coach departed. A military coup meant that there were restrictions on travel into and out of the country. However, on advice received from the foreign office, the group set off at 2 am on Tuesday 7 July.

After pleasant flights to Costa Rica we learned of two minor problems. Firstly, that we could not fly into Honduras as planned until the following morning, and secondly, that not a single rucksack had made it from Madrid to Costa Rica! Leaving Costa-Rica at 6 am without bags and flying via El Salvador we finally arrived in Honduras. We were greeted by our host organisation—*Operation Wallacea*— and travelled safely to the rain forest, via a shopping mall where Dr Millington had to purchase 26 sleeping bags!

Base camp was a 3 hour drive along a dirt track in jeeps and provided accommodation in simple tents. The camp had a lecture room and each evening the group were taught about different aspects of the rainforest by academics carrying out field studies there. Thankfully most of the baggage arrived



on the Friday afternoon, 4 days late, but everyone had remained in very positive spirits even if the whiff of feet was a little too evident! Students then had the opportunities to climb up into the canopy on ropes, in the style of a David Attenborough wildlife shoot and to experience a more primitive camp, a 3 hour walk from base camp. This second camp featured hammocks rather than tents and some interesting trench toilets. There were a number of incredible experiences whilst in the rain forest including seeing at first hand how to trap and radio monitor frogs in the middle of the night!

Students had some amazing experiences during their visit, from staying with the local Garifuna community to visiting the remote island of Cayos Major, an island inhabited only by a small group of researchers and many thousands of crabs, iguanas and boa constrictors!

The trip was an incredible experience for all involved and the memories of this visit will live on for years to come.

A detailed more report and photos will shortly be uploaded onto the College website.

# Learning Support

The Department offers several levels of basic skill and in-class support, including a lunch-time activity and homework club in E2. All new Year 7 students are screened for reading and spelling skills. There are currently 21 Teaching Assistants working across the curriculum. If you have concerns about your child's additional learning needs, please contact Mrs A. Brodie, the SENCO, by letter, telephone or e-mail. Mrs Brodie attends all Key Stage 3 and 4 Parents' Evenings and is usually able to see parents without an appointment.

## Support for Parents

The Parent Partnership Service of Cambridgeshire County Council has launched a new group in St Neots to support parents of children and young people with special educational needs.

Contact the Parent Partnership Service on 01223 718099 or by e-mail: [parentgroups@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:parentgroups@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) Leaflets are available in the College Reception area.

## Just a note ... from the Music Department

Every year the Music Department arranges an orchestral instrumental morning for musicians in the College. Its purpose is to provide the opportunity for musicians of all standards to get together and rehearse a selection of music whilst providing a spring board for our extra-curricular programme.

This year the event will take place on the morning of **Friday 25 September** and we would urge all instrumentalists in Key Stage 3 to take part.

The various ensembles that run in the College are open to all instrumentalists, even if they have lessons outside school. It is, however, expected that, if lessons are taken at school, the student should support one of our groups.

If you would like any information regarding the availability of instrumental tuition in the College, please do not hesitate to contact either Mr Dack or Mrs Pearcey in the Music Office at College, Tel. 353535.



## Emergency Closure

There is no change for the time being to the procedures that will be operated for emergency closures, eg as a result of adverse weather conditions. Over the past year, we have established the possibility of contacting parents by email or text message but this is only possible if particular staff can get into College. For that reason, local radio is likely to be the means of communication.

The decision on whether or not to close has to be based on the likelihood of sufficient staff being able to get to work for us to be able to deliver a reasonable curriculum. Because many staff live some distance from College, conditions in St Neots itself may not be the determining factor.

These are the key points from previous issued advice:

### Emergency Closure Before School

If the College is to be closed, we shall inform the local radio station at the earliest opportunity. Our main line of communication will be through Radio Cambridgeshire on 96.0 FM. We may also use the front page of our website.

### Closure During the Day

**It is essential that each student knows what she or he is to do if the College has to close early in the interests of safety.** The temptation is to say, "Wait at College until I can pick you up." However, if roads are blocked or trains cancelled, this option can be far from satisfactory. For most young people, waiting for you to pick them up in the warmth of a friend's home in St Neots where telephone contact is relatively easy and there could be a bed for the night is a far better prospect.

The health and safety of students will always be our first consideration. However, experience tells us that students get very anxious indeed when they are left in College. The situation of staff who stay behind to look after students but who also have families waiting for them needs to be borne in mind.

Sometimes coach companies ask for students to be released early – a request that has to be met in fairness to the drivers and the majority of students living in a particular location. In this case, students need a refuge near home if they cannot gain access to their own house.

**It would be most helpful if every parent discussed with their son or daughter the course of action to be followed as suggested above.**

accompanies the newsletter is well worth reading. It indicates areas in which the College has developed very strongly since the previous survey in 2006. The endorsement given by students to key aspects of our work is gratifying.

Finally, I am required each year to draw the attention of students and their parents to the Governing Body's Disciplinary Policy and an associated statement about discipline from me, which appear on the College's website (paper copies available on request). Our current policy on the Use of Images is also available; an update that takes into account additional ways of celebrating students' work is scheduled for October.

This new academic year will no doubt bring new issues and challenges. Already, we are making strong representations to the DCSF about underfunding of the Sixth Form. We are also aware that an Ofsted inspection is likely this year. Nevertheless, I hope that we can all look forward to a happy and fulfilling year.

Yours sincerely



Robert Whatmough  
Principal

### Excellent start for Year 7

- Following the transition visit in July, Year 7 are now very much part of Longsands.
- Early feedback from Year 7 tutors and teaching staff report that Year 7 have made an excellent start. A large number of students have already achieved over 10 merits – well done!
- Please remember that the Key Stage team are happy to meet and talk with parents should they have any questions or queries. A note in the logbook or a quick 'phone call conversation with a Year 7 tutor or Head of School can often resolve any concerns.
- Heads of School are proposing to hold an 'informal surgery' with any parents who would like to have early 'transitional chat' – please contact Mrs English at the Key Stage 3 office if you would like more details.

#### Longsands' College PE Kit:

Red top, plain navy shorts and red socks  
Studded boots for Rugby, Football and Hockey.  
Safety studs for Rugby.

Shin pads for Football and Hockey.

We recommend a gum shield for Rugby and Hockey.

To support these fixtures, there is an on-going programme of practices which changes each half term. A 'Gold Sheet' is produced and displayed in every tutor base pointing out where and when these activities take place.

Monday evening after school is the main practice session

## Autumn Term Fixtures

Fixtures are subject to change. Students should keep up to date with any changes via the PE notice board.

Fixtures will start at 4.30 pm (approx) and finish at 5.30 pm at the venue.  
Return times will vary, but will always be written on the team sheet.

Date	Versus	Age and Sport	Venue
17.09.09	St Peters	Yrs 7,8,9,10,11 Rugby	Home/Away
23.09.09	SI/SP/Sw	Yrs 8,9 Hock/Yrs 7,11 Net	St Ivo
23.09.09	Hinchinbrk	Yr 11, 1 <sup>st</sup> XV Rugby	Home
24.09.09	Hinchinbrk	Yrs 7,8,9,10 Rugby	Home/Away
29.09.09	Sawtry	Yr 10 Rug	Home
30.09.09	St Ivo/Ab	Yrs 7,11 Net/Yrs 8,9, Hock	St Ivo
30.09.09	Swavesey	1 <sup>st</sup> XV Rugby	Home
01.10.09	Swavesey	Yrs 7,8,9 Rugby/Hock	Home/Away
07.10.09	Hills Rd	1 <sup>st</sup> XV Rugby	Camb
07.10.09	Ab/Sw/SN	Yrs 8/9 Hock/Yrs 7/11 Net	Ab
08.10.09	District	Yrs 9/11 Net	Home/sncc
08.10.09	Swavesey	Yrs 10/11 Rug/Hock	Home/Away
14.10.09	St Ivo	Yrs 8/9 Hock	Home
15.10.09	Abbey	Yrs 7,8,9,10,11 Rugby	Home/Away
19.10.09	Sawtry	Yrs 7,8,9,10,11 Rugby	Home/Away
20.10.09	Open Eve.	Yr 7	Home
21.10.09	District	Yr 9 Hock/Yr 11 Net	Hinchinbrk
22.10.09	IF	Yrs 9/10 Rugby/Yrs 9/10 Hock	Home
23.10.09	IF	Yrs 7/8 Rugby/Yrs 7/8 Hock	Home
04.11.09	District	Yrs 7/8 Foot	Hinchinbrk
05.11.09	District	Yr 11 Rugby	Home
07.11.09	District	Yr 9 Rugby	Hinchinbrk
11.11.09	St Ivo	Yr 10 Hock	St Ivo
11.11.09	Knights	Yrs 8/9	Home
12.11.09	Knights	Yrs 10/11 Rugby	Away
14.11.09	District	Yr 8 Rugby	Sw
16.11.09	The Leys	Yrs 7/8 Rug/Hock	Camb
18.11.09	District	Yrs 10/11 Foot Girls	Hinchinbrk
21.11.09	District	Yr 7 Rugby	St Ivo
25.11.09	X-Country	Yrs 7/8/9/10/11	Home
25.11.09	District	Yrs 10/11 Bball	St Ivo
28.11.09	District	Yr 10 Rugby	Home
02.12.09	District	Yrs 7/8/9/10/11 X-C	Hinchinbrk
09.12.09	District	Yr 9 Bball	St Ivo

**We expect that all officials and opponents be treated with respect and that all decisions are accepted in good grace and without question.**

**Captains as a matter of course should thank the referee/umpire immediately at the end of the game. All players, before they leave the pitch should participate in the usual procedures of etiquette without reminder.**