

Al-Qalam

THE AZHAR ACADEMY GIRLS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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A A G S D I A R Y

End of Summer Term
Friday, 18th July 2008

Autumn Term 2008:

29th August 2008
(Yrs 7 only)

1st September 2008
(Yrs 8-11)

A A G S H O U S E S Credits

Daar-ul-Ilm	1095
Daar-ul-Hikmah	825
Daar-ut-Taqwa	1260
Daar-ul-Haqq	940

Assalaamu alaykum

The summer term at AAGS is perhaps more unusual than the others due to the diverse nature of activities that take place within it. In May, Year 9s have to get their head down to sit their SATs examinations, Year 10 leave for work experience and Years 11 to 13 disappear on study leave for their finals. The rest of the school soon starts feeling the pressure as the end of year examinations and then reports draw near.

Alhamdulillah for everyone, exams like all earthly things

SUMMER TIME!

come to an end and there is finally some release as Sports Day and the End of Year Trip gives everyone a chance to relax and let out all their pent-up energy.

"Whilst it is important to de-stress at the end of the year, it is just as important to sit back and reflect on what has just passed"

Whilst it is important to de-stress at the end of the year,

it is just as important to sit back and reflect on what has just passed; what we have achieved; what we could have done better and what are our targets for the year to come.

Insh'Allah this issue of Al-Qalam reflects this link between our past, current and future actions in order to help us plan ahead and improve ourselves and our school. Hence you'll find in it not just a record of some of our achievements this year but also tips on how to do even better in the next one.

SPORTS DAY REVIEW

ON your marks, get set, go ...

On 25th June 2008, AAGS' pupils and staff were back at Blake Hall racing to the finishing post in a variety of Sports Day challenges - including chocolate egg and spoon, relay and the traditional three legged race.

Sports Day has been a school tradition in Britain for the past century and whilst its main aim is about keeping fit, it also involves teamwork, as cooperative effort was needed by the members of each house to achieve their common goal.

This year pupils from all year groups successfully came together and work as a team, creating friendship amongst students of different ages. It was rated "10 out of 10" and

described as "bringing the whole school together" by Ms Al-Hadad, the Humanities teacher.

Despite the scorching heat of the day, pupils were able to put their pre-training in P.E lessons to the test in a range of fun challenges and races. Many new Year 7s found the day especially amusing. Safiyah Mushtaq in year 7A described her first AAGS sports day as "exciting and to me it was a fun new experience".

"I think it was the best day I had at Azhar Academy so far this year." - Maryam Shariff, 7A

With all four teams working very hard to be the proud owners of the Sports Day Cup, the day was intense with

many nail-biting moments for members of the teams as they watched their fellow members in competition.

Many pupils agreed that the funniest and exciting games to watch was the teachers' obstacle race, with Apa Hajra (Red), Ms. Al-Hadad (Yellow), Ms. Nabila (Blue) and Mrs. Rubina (Green). However, the game finished with an unruly ending, as Ms Nabila fell, resulting in a swollen knee. Describing the event in less than four words, all that Mrs. Kajeer had to say was "Poor Miss Nabila". Apa Hajra on the other hand was jumping for joy at having once again done Daar At-Taqwa proud and coming first in the race. Overall, it was mash'Allah a wonderful day.

QUOTATIONS

*Knowledge is not what is memorised;
knowledge is what benefits.*

Imam Shafi (RA)



*"A person is upon the way of his friend.
So, let one of you look to whom he
keeps as a friend."*

Prophet Muhammed (SAW)



*Knowledge raises the low, but
ignorance brings down the mighty.*

Ali ibn Abu Talib (RA)



*Improve yourself before seeking to
improve others.*

Umar ibn Khattab (RA)

KEW GARDENS

In April, Year 9 went to Kew Gardens for a Maths (yes, Maths) trip!

Pythagoras' Theorem

We went by coach and once we reached Kew, we headed to the cacti house. We then met a ranger who taught us how to measure all a tree without climbing it. This tied in with Maths because it helped understand Pythagoras' theorem and its applications in the real world.

Exotic Plants

Thereafter, we went to



the beautiful Palm House and saw palm trees from all over the world. It was baking hot in the Palm House because the palm trees needed very humid conditions to survive.

my group went on two expeditions through Kew Gardens with Ms Kajee. These took us up and down hill, around rivers, through trees and past unusual statues. The beautiful landscape put us all in high spirits as did the exotic peacocks who merrily displayed their tail feathers for us.

Finally, we went to the gift shop and bought many appealing gifts and souvenirs of a great day.

Before going to lunch,

Saimah Sarwar, Yr. 9A

WORK EXPERIENCE

Back to Primary School

It was such an exciting feeling for me when I started my placement at Sandringham school. I felt so blessed to have an opportunity to work in the place of my choice. My mentor gave me various tasks to carry out such as helping the children and creating displays for the class. As she felt that I would get a better experience if I had a chance to work in the upper years, she put me in the year 6 class. They were all busy working hard for their SATS. I encouraged them to try their best and revise.

My friend, Kaskha and I were fortunate to be accepted into the same school. Knowing that we were going to work together increased our confidence. Although on our first day, when we were allocated to work in different classes by

our mentor, our nerves started to build up again. Due to our separation, we had different experiences.

The best thing about the school was the adorable kids. We got quite attached to them and it was hard at the time of our departure. We both received gifts from the children and the teachers. As the school was in our local area, we decided to ask our mentor if we could attend the school in our free time. Our mentor agreed to allow us to come back to the school on Friday afternoons.

Sharmin Akhter, Yr. 10A

At the Dentist's

As part of our work experience, we (Maryam and Hafsa) were placed at different dental surgeries. At our placements we had many responsibilities to take on and tasks to com-

plete. Our many tasks included: booking appointments, filing patient records, inputting data into the surgeries system and answering phone calls.

When we first began working at our placements we felt nervous, excited and worried that things would go wrong. Fortunately our mentors gave us the confidence we needed to successfully carry out our tasks. At the start, our mentor gave us a tour around the surgery demonstrating how to use the surgical equipment. We were then allocated roles to carry out during the time we were there.

At first, the tasks which we were given were challenging and a little confusing. However throughout the week we worked around our difficulties and gradually completed

each task with great ease. Whenever we completed set tasks we had been shown great gratitude and set more demanding duties to accomplish. This made us feel pleased and gave us a sense of achievement.

A Sense of Achievement

The most memorable aspect of our time at the dental surgeries, were when we booked appointments and answered phone calls. The part which we did not particularly enjoy was when we had to watch the dentist take out patient's teeth - Yuck! At the end of our experience we were both extremely upset that our time at the surgeries had ended. Nevertheless we were delighted to be offered a further placement for the summer due to our hard work.

Maryam Mohammed &
Hafsa Saleh, Yr. 10A

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

This summer, make it an aim to develop into *swifter* readers with *higher* comprehension skills and *stronger* vocabularies. Here are just a few of the ways you can meet this goal.

Host a fun and friendly reading competition with your friends, family and neighbours:

Friendly Competition

Step 1: Meet together and determine the rules, events, themes and prizes for your Reading Challenge. The events could range from "Most Books Read" to "Most Minutes Read;" from "Most Improved Reader" to "Most Adventurous Reader."

Step 2: Organise an awards ceremony and give certificates or prizes to the winners (and losers if you're feeling generous!)

Personal Reading

Alternatively, if you feel like going solo **why not set yourself a reading challenge to complete seven books** during the holidays. In other words, try to finish one book a week. Check out one of the websites below to get ideas about what to read. You can even add your own book review to some of them.

- ◆ www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/Booklists.html
- ◆ www.rif.org/summer/
- ◆ www.coolreads.com

Finally, try popping to your **local library** and join one of their summer reading clubs or schemes.

FAREWELL

*A petite woman wearing an abaya and black headscarf
An Apa who does the best assemblies by far
No one could teach us Ihsaan Urdu better
No one could teach us Noor-ul-Idha faster.*

*An Apa who always tells us right from wrong
An Apa whose lectures can be so very long.
She always strives to teach us more
Although to her it must be a dreadful chore.*

*No one gives the best assessments like her easy tests
Still we fail them and give her no rest
She tries to give us good advice as if she was our mother
Fools we are, it goes in one ear and comes out the other.*

*The three years she has taught us seem to have flown
like the passing wind,
But we will try to keep her words of wisdom deep within.
May one day it will be our turn for teaching students to
spread the word and let the beauty of Islam be heard*

*So farewell Apa Hajra, enjoy life's journey.
You've been our Apa for three years
and you've taught us so wonderfully.*

Tayabbah Iqbal & Zainab Kashif, Yr. 9A

SUDOKU

Complete the puzzle below AND the crossword on page 4 to win 25 points for your House.

5	1				7			
		7	3		5			
8		9				5		7
2	6			5	8			3
				9				
3			1	4			8	6
9		2				3		5
			5		1	9		
			2				6	4

Winner of last edition's puzzles: Raqiya Omer, Yr. 8A (Ilm)

HOLIDAY TARGETS

Whilst it is important to relax and give our bodies a rest after all the hard work we've done this year, as Muslims we are accountable for our time, so this summer don't just laze in front of the tv or on the phone but try to set yourselves a target or two to help ensure that your time away from school is *spiritually* as well as physically beneficial.

Listed below are just a few of the things you could do to this summer to help build your character and increase your hasanah:

1. **Memorise the Asma Al-Husna.** The Prophet (SAW) said, "There are 99 names of Allah; he who commits them to memory would get into paradise." (Bukhari)

2. Make use of the long

nights and late mornings to **pray Qiyam-ul-Layl on at least one night of the holidays.** The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "O people! Spread the salams, feed others, maintain family ties, and pray at night when others sleep and you will enter Heaven safely." (Tirmidhi).

3. **Research and raise money for a new charity;** You could organise a family event, dinner, competition, etc. "Believe in Allah and His messenger, and spend (in charity) out of the (substance) whereof He has made you heirs. For, those of you who believe and spend (in charity),- for them is a great Reward." (Al-Hadid 57:7)

4. Try to complete a whole **reading of the Qur'an in English and in Arabic.** "This will

boost your understanding of the Book of Allah.

A TIME TO REFLECT

5. Visit and help an elderly relative or neighbour. "Any young person who is kind to an elderly because of his age, Allah will send him someone who will be kind to him when he becomes old." (Tirmidhi)

Once again we have come to the end of an academic year. Now is thus a good time for us to reflect over our year's ambitions and aims to see where we have reached in terms of achieving our goals.

So when the time finally arrives to reflect, we need to ask ourselves, how well have we used our time? And how has this contributed towards bettering ourselves in terms of our deen.

producing the likes of Einstein in terms of the world and the likes of Rasulullah in terms of Islamic personalities if Allah's help be by your side. It can also be a means of serving the Muslim Ummah, fulfilling our duty of looking after one another in this world.

6. Sincerely reflect and try to change one of your bad habits into a good one. "The best of deeds are those (good ones) done consistently, though little by little."

Firstly however, we all need to realise the value of time, and how we can use it to our advantage. One Surah of the Holy Qur'an always springs to mind when thinking about time, Surah 103 - Al 'Asr:

If it so happens that you are someone who did not base your aims and ambitions around deen, then reflect and ponder over how next year you can make that big change so that you can make all your affairs part of your deen and even a means of worship. Keep Allah's pleasure as your aim, and strive to ensure that whatever you do it is to please Him.

If our aim is selfless and for the pleasure of Allah and to help others, not only will it turn our academic life into a form of, it may even become a means of our salvation in the hereafter to enter Jannah. "Who takes the path hoping for knowledge, Allah makes easy for him the path to Paradise. Verily the angels lower their wings for the seeker of knowledge out of pleasure at what he is doing" (Abu Dawood)

7. Select and memorise at least one new dua, hadith, ayah or surah of the Qur'an.

In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful.
(I swear) by the Time, man is in a state of loss indeed, except those who believed and did righteous deeds, and exhorted each other to follow truth, and exhorted each other to observe patience.

8. Discuss a different hadeeth for at least five minutes every day.

A great example is when we are studying or for teachers, in essence what we are doing is gaining and spreading knowledge. This knowledge will be a means of

Safiyya Dhorat, Yr. 13

9. Say salaam to ten people with a smile in one day.

10.. Write an Islamic article for the next newsletter!

CROSSWORD

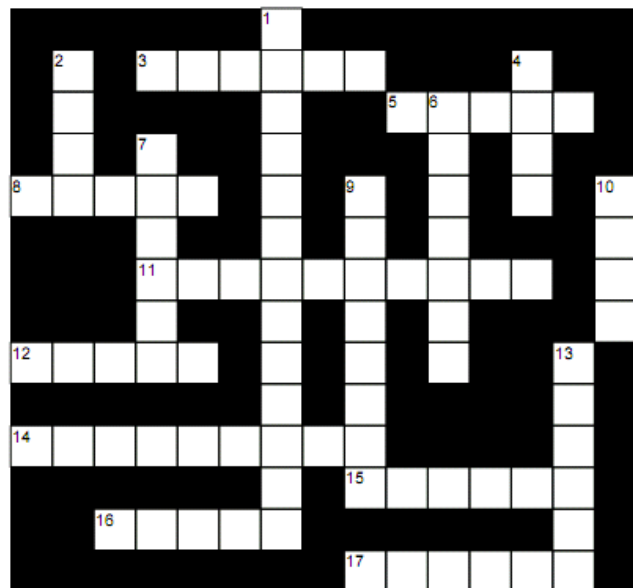
Clues:

Across

- 3. A local forest
- 5. Alaa & Hafsa's surname (10A)
- 8. How many gardens in paradise?
- 11. A famous painting by Van Gogh
- 12. The Jewish Holy Book
- 14. Wife of the evil King Richard III
- 15. The element that reads 'Na' on the Periodic Table
- 16. A group of lions
- 17. Sherlock Holmes' faithful sidekick.

Down

- 1. The perimeter of a circle.
- 2. Angels were created from this
- 4. *Roll of Thunder*, _____ *My Cry*.
- 6. The capital of Algeria
- 7. Home of Salman Al-Farsi (ra)
- 9. A triangle with two equal sides
- 10. The name of the Victorian Ripper



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