

# NEWSLETTER

*The Official School Newsletter of Semester One 2020 - 2021*



*"Once your mindset changes, everything on the outside will change along with it." Steve Maraboli*

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

### Michelle Stevens

Our 'new normal' has certainly changed our mindset about education and how best to serve our school community. As Semester 1 draws to an end, I wish to celebrate 18 weeks of successful teaching and learning. Our students have shown the utmost resilience and have risen to the challenge of learning differently during these challenging times. Our social media posts have given a clear indication of the varied and exciting learning opportunities afforded to our students. Our staff have remained committed and passionate about ensuring that every student thrives.

Partnering with the parents has been another area of success as we work closely together to ensure that the education of our students is not compromised. Parents have diligently supported teachers in live Zoom lessons, completing tasks and collecting weekly resource packs. We would not have had the success we had without your unwavering support and dedication.

A first for us this semester, was conducting our end of semester assessments online. The staff were amazing in preparing the students and taking them through their paces. Credit has to go to our students who adapted to the new expectations and achieved some great results.

Your feedback is important to us and very useful to help us plan for the next semester. Please kindly complete the **Parent Survey** sent out earlier this week. We would like to hear from you about what we are doing well and the areas we could do better in.





## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

During the first semester, we made sure our FS learners are motivated and engaged during their virtual learning experience. The FS children experienced different learning opportunities that covered all the seven EYFS learning areas and have shown great progress in their social, intellectual, personal and physical skills.

They have become independent and confident to carry out assigned tasks that meet their abilities and interests capably and have always been challenged to do more. Planning daily group discussions, show & tell activities and the in-school sessions had a great impact on the development of the learner's confidence, abilities and social skills where they are now able to express their feelings, thoughts and views clearly and confidently while using a wide range of vocabulary.

FS learners are now able to use their phonemic awareness to read and write simple words and sentences. They have been introduced to a wide range of knowledge and understanding of concepts and information while using the related terminology and applying it in their daily lives. FS learners have successfully adhered to the virtual learning routines and expectations while enjoying learning and exploring new things around them. We are so proud of the achievements and progress our valuable FS learners have shown, and we hope their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning continue to grow.

“If we only did things that were easy, we wouldn't actually be learning anything. We'd just be practicing things we already knew.”

- David Dockterman







## LOWER PRIMARY

Our first semester for Lower Primary was a great success; we used a variety of online tools, facilities and interactive weekly packs; we have ensured that our students were kept motivated, engaged and feeling lots of enthusiasm towards learning; we have also had a very effective collaboration with our parents to ensure the process runs effectively and smoothly from the other side of the screen.

Lower Primary students have shown a great level of engagement and development in all curriculum areas, where they were also involved in many speaking and listening activities through a variety of projects, to develop their character building and confidence, alongside their academic progress.

Our students were exposed to all curriculum subjects in our virtual sessions and participated in real life experiences during our in-school days to ensure they have grasped our taught concepts and embedded their learning. They have also had access to online intervention classes that were used to fill in their academic gaps and support their academic performance in Phonics, English and Maths to ensure they are showing the expected progress for their academic year.

We can say that we are very proud of the effort our students and parents have put into this journey, showing a very high level of cooperation, support and commitment, which is one of the main reasons behind our students' success during the first semester of this academic year.

“No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow you progress, you’re still way ahead of everyone who isn’t trying.”

– Tony Robbins





## UPPER PRIMARY

In the first Semester I am very proud to say all our students have really risen to the challenge of learning online. We are so thankful to our parents and caregivers for the extra effort and attention they have provided our pupils to enable them to continue to learn, stay focused and progress. I am especially impressed by the leaps and bounds all the Upper Primary children have made in their reading; the Year 4 girls have excelled in this.

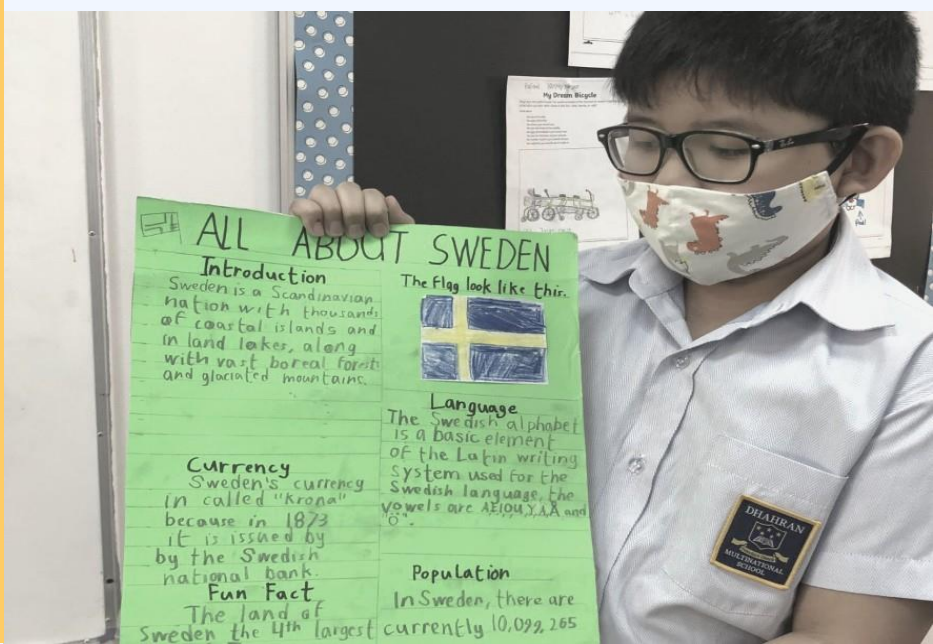
During our in-school lessons we have taken part in lots of fun educational activities, the Year 6 girls made some really good posters depicting the human body and in particular the position of vital organs. The Year 5 girls were the first to use our new STEM laboratory, they built a Lunar lander to link with their topic on Space and the Planets. The Year 4 boys and girls had lots of fun with Mr. Bones our life size Skeleton, some are budding Orthopaedic Surgeons and Chiropractors now.

When Mathematics is related to everyday life the Year 4, 5 and 6 students found measurement and problem solving easy! We measured and designed different parts of the school. They loved measuring, developing and designing a new gymnasium and school tuck shop.

We have been busy highlighting the effects of pollution on the planet, the Year 4 pupils made a pollution survey and made posters to educate the rest of the children to dispose of waste responsibly and recycle wherever possible.

I think that most of our Upper Primary students loved cooking, baking and following delicious recipes, learning about time, temperature, weight and healthy choices, not so healthy in the case of the Chocolate Cake, a special treat to share with family and friends.

“Did I win? Did I lose?  
Those are the wrong  
questions. The correct  
question is: Did I make my  
best effort?”  
- Carol S. Dweck







## ARABIC AND ISLAMIC

We are glad to announce the start of the new Reading Arabic platforms for Arabic speakers (I Read Arabic) and non-Arabic speakers (I Learn Arabic). Please also encourage your children to read during the winter break too! If you have not accessed the platform yet, communicate with your Arabic teacher.

Have you tried making a reading diet? Write down everything you read in Arabic every day from cereal packets, instructions for games, websites, road signs, adverts, magazines to books. You and your children may be surprised how much is in your 'diet'. Reading is everywhere!

We are super proud of our children and how they have coped with the pressures of this term, which has not been easy. We are delighted to welcome Ms. Aisha back from her maternity leave.

Everyone has thrown themselves into doing the best they can for our lovely children, and so many of them have gone over and above what is normally expected of them.

They have remained positive, cheerful and dedicated throughout and I hope you will join me in wishing them all a much deserved peaceful and restful winter holiday when it finally comes next week!

“Believe you can and  
you’re halfway there.”  
- Theodore Roosevelt





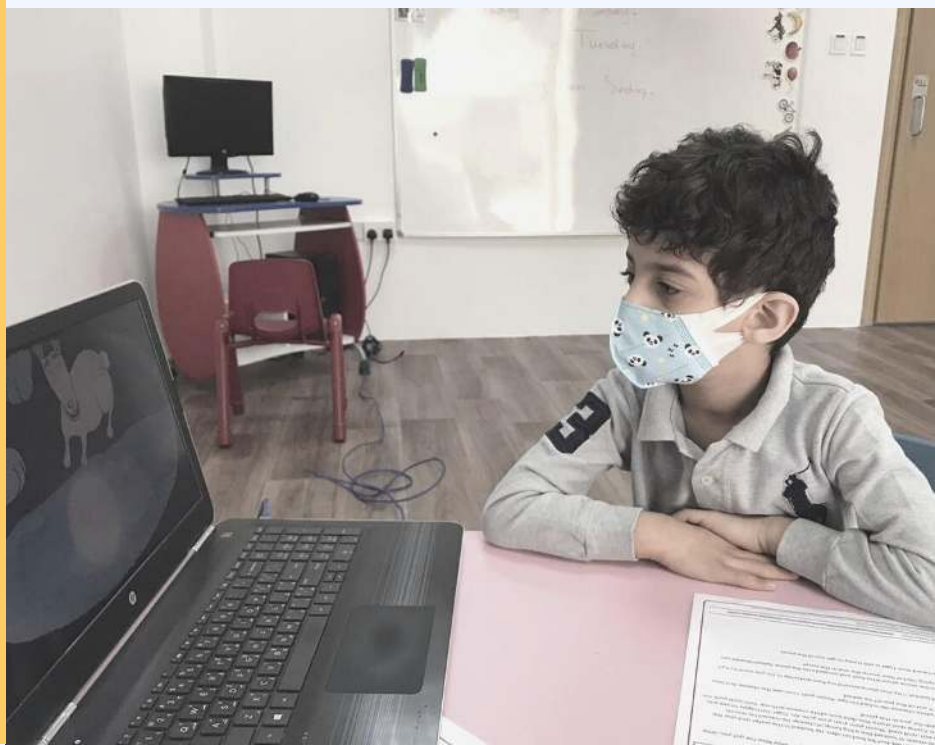
## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

This semester during the pandemic has brought new challenges that we as a school have dedicated all our efforts to overcome. In the Learning Support Department, we discovered new virtual tools that have improved the quality of remote learning and students' engagement to meet their unique needs/learning styles.

There has been significant improvement in the students' performance that has surpassed our greatest expectations. Without the effort and collaboration between all MNSD departments as well as the incredible dedication and patience from our parents, we would not have been able to witness our children shining so brightly. This achievement shows that we, as a society can work together in adverse conditions to flourish and support our children's education despite all odds.

Looking ahead to the next semester and beyond, we plan to further empower our students to be independent, successful, and active members in society through focus on teaching essential skills for living, accessing and using various remote Learning Support platforms/online programs, navigating social interactions, initiating and maintaining clear communication with others. This is in addition to focus on improving our students' writing and comprehension skills.

“We are each gifted in a unique and important way. It is our privilege and our adventure to discover our own special light.”  
- Mary Dunbar







## PARENT COMMITTEE

During this semester, our Parent Committee has played a very active role and were very engaged to ensure students have a well-balanced academic year with their virtual learning and social engagements.

Despite the new learning environment which might have included minimal physical and social interactions, our committee ensured that we got engaged in a community walk with the Eastern Walking Team and a winter charity collection.

Funds raised were donated to a well-known organisation. These events helped the students to keep active and encouraged them to get engaged in physical and social activities.

The two events were a great success and our committee is working actively, hand in hand with our designated school staff members, to ensure we continue to have a well-balanced second semester with many more engaging and fun events!

### Important Dates

- 1-16 January 2021  
- Winter Holiday
- 17 January  
- Start Semester 2
- 21 January  
- Semester 1  
Reports sent to parents
- 26 January Parent  
- Teacher Conferences  
13.00-18.00

