



# TOOTHILL

BINGHAM • NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

*From the headteacher*

Dear Parents and Carers

A new academic year dawns – full of promise and expectation. It is a very exciting time of year with everyone rested and looking forward to the challenges a new year brings, and hopefully the success to be secured. Every year we aim to build upon the achievements of the previous year, and what a year of achievement it was:

		% Level 5+	% Level 6+
Year 9	English	<i>(awaiting re-marking)</i>	
	Mathematics	91%	77%
	Science	88%	64%
Year 11	GCSE	%5+ A*-C (incl. English and Maths)	70%
		% 5+ A*-C	86%
		CVA	1020 <i>(est)</i>
Year 13	A Level	% Grade A-E	97%
		% Grade A-C	67%

Our congratulations go to every achiever, each of whom should be proud of their individual success. Equally my gratitude is sent to every member of school staff who helped the students on their pathway to success, and of course to parents and carers for their support. As ever, achievement is a partnership activity with all parties working together with a clear focus and belief.

As commendable as these results are, we are determined to secure even higher academic standards in 2009. Success breeds success, and each student must play their part in setting themselves high aspirations and expectations of their own performance in every dimension of school life.

*(Continued on page 2)*

# CONTACT

This year we are focussed in school on a number of areas to help improve overall standards. We aim to ensure that:

1. Students arrive at school by 8.25 a.m. each morning and move promptly between lessons throughout the day;
2. Learners are correctly dressed for school on all occasions;
3. Learners take greater pride in their written work and try to improve their standards of literacy across all subjects;
4. The school increases the 'student voice' so that we can carefully reflect on how we can optimise the quality of the service we provide;
5. The level of litter on the site is continually reduced following a very successful effort in the past year.

The last academic year saw a significant improvement in the climate for learning as a result of the introduction of tiering and variable lesson length. We will endeavour to build upon this over the coming year. Later on during the year, we expect an OfSTED inspection. Due to the achievements secured since the last OfSTED inspection in 2006, we consider Toot Hill School to be Outstanding. Our task will be to demonstrate the accuracy of this judgement to the inspection team. Such a judgement is the product of

- a) Achievement at each Key Stage
- b) The quality of teaching and learning
- c) Provision – both curricular and extra-curricular
- d) The quality of care and support for students
- e) Leadership at each level in the organisation.

Of course the best demonstration of our success is the students themselves, who work with a sense of purpose and achieve so much in so many different ways. We aim to ensure that the OfSTED team see the school in a very positive light when they visit.

Please would you note the dates of our Student Review Days for the forthcoming Academic Year. They are as follows:

Autumn Term: Thursday 18th September 2008

Spring Term: Thursday 5th March 2009. This has been changed from the date originally advised, (Tuesday 3rd March), to avoid a clash with a Mathematics exam.

We look forward to welcoming all parents and carers to the school on Student Review Day in the Autumn Term. I hope that everyone has a successful and happy 2008-9 academic year so that all aspirations are fulfilled.

*Yours sincerely*  
**John Tomasevic**



## Attendance & Family Holidays

Every school's pupil/student attendance figures are now carefully monitored by the Local Authority and DCSF. All schools are required by law to demonstrate that every effort is made to ensure pupils attend lessons. The school uses an electronic registration system that enables us to take registers in every lesson as well as at normal registration periods in the morning. Once this data has been analysed we can instantly see any instances of unauthorised absence and quickly contact parents and carers. We are also working in liaison with the County Education Welfare Office and the local police to operate a 'late gate' when we survey the incidents of late arrival to school and the reasons given. We expect students to be *in* school by 8.25 a.m.

If a student is late to any lesson resulting from their own actions, this is recorded by the class teacher. The amount of time by which they are late is also noted, and once they have accumulated 60 minutes of missed lessons they will stop in school after the end of the school day to recover the lost learning time. The key message is: it is better to be prompt to lessons than late.

A critical concern, both for us as a school and nationally, is the number of sessions lost due to family holidays taken during term-time. We appreciate the reasons why many families wish to do this but it does place a burden on the school. Lessons need to be caught up – often involving the teacher in extra work – and it is widely accepted that the habit of taking time from schooling for holidays has a deleterious effect on a child's levels of attainment. Please be advised that I will not authorize family holidays booked for term-time unless exceptional circumstances prevail and I have been formally advised of these in a written request for authorisation, at least four weeks in advance of the holiday. This is in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006. Section 7, **Leave of Absence**, Section 3: states:

3) *A pupil may be granted leave of absence from the school to enable him to go away on holiday where:*

- a) ***An application has been made in advance to the headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and***
- b) ***The headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application***

There is no legal right to remove a child from education for holidays, and I am not obliged to sanction such requests. The DCSF actively supports headteachers in discouraging the removal of children from school for the purpose of a holiday. We very much hope that all parents and carers will understand the educational reasons for this stance. The County Education Welfare Office supplies a helpful leaflet that is available from school on request if you require clarification. Parents may wish to take advantage of the school's deployment of INSET days in the last week of the autumn term so as to benefit from reduced travel fares. Holiday in this week does not require advance permission from school.

Absence through illness, dental or doctor appointments, etc will of course be treated as in previous years and according to statutory requirements.

**John Tomasevic**  
Head Teacher



This is Toot Hill School's Parent Teacher Association  
As a parent of the school you are automatically a member!

We really do need your support  
and warmly welcome you to attend our  
Annual General Meeting on Thursday, 25 September  
this commences at 7.30 p.m. in the School Concert Hall

Please come along and find out what we do and how you can get involved  
and support and enhance the learning environment for pupils and students at  
Toot Hill!

### Direct Dial Numbers

For the convenience of our parents, here are some direct-dial numbers that you may find helpful:

Dept / Office	Number (01949)
Nurse	863001
Attendance	863063
Student Welfare	863039
Examinations Officer	863055
Finance	863061
Reprographics	863012
College Secretary / H&S	863072
Toot Hill Academy	863044

### Learning Support Department Monthly Review Meetings

Does your son or daughter have special educational needs or are you concerned about the possibility that they may have some difficulties with learning?

The Learning Support Department hold informal monthly meetings for parents or carers to come and discuss any concerns they may have, the support arrangements for their son or daughter or to share information. These meetings are usually held on the last Tuesday of every month in the Learning Support Department.

Please ring the school office to make an appointment with Mrs Nelson, the Inclusion Co-ordinator.

The first meeting this school year is on **Tuesday 14th October 08.**

## **'INSET' DAYS AND OTHER NON-TEACHING DAYS, AND THEIR ALLOCATION IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR**

Statutory Non-Teaching Day is the legal term for each of the 5 days in the school year when teachers are paid but school may be closed to facilitate training or to be set against training undertaken at other times. 'INSET' means In-Service Training and can be conducted during the school day or afterwards, as the school management deems fit. Toot Hill School does not have any direct input to or responsibility for managing the basic school working calendar. That task is undertaken by a working group under the aegis of the Local Authority.

The school, in consultation with the governing body, controls the placement of its INSET days and these are deployed to gain maximum training and educational benefit. We focus all of our training in the Autumn Term so as to maximise the resulting impact on the students for that school year. We avoid the Spring and early Summer terms because of potential clashes with examinations and their preparation. Training at the end of the academic year would be of limited impact because the staff then leave at the end of that term, and 'released time' from examination classes gives planning and review opportunities for teachers.

Toot Hill teaching staff will return to school one before their legal obligations begin in the Autumn Term 2008. They will give up one day of their summer holidays to access training and to refresh their skills, so as to provide our pupils with the best possible education right from the outset of the academic year.

One of the Statutory non-teaching days at the end of the year is allocated against this early return. In my professional opinion the autumn term is very long and during the dark days at the end energy levels of both teachers and pupils are low. For this reason I consider that a longer break than that provided by the LA calendar is of benefit in terms of both teaching and learning. The early finish also gives parents an opportunity to take advantage of cheaper travel rates if they wish to take holidays during this week.

The remainder of the statutory non-teaching days at the end of the year are set against 'INSET' that is undertaken after school. These sessions are structured by our Assistant Headteacher in charge of Staff Development and take place weekly throughout the school year.

The school has one extra INSET day this year. It has been granted to Toot Hill School following our application to the DCSF Innovations Unit and is in recognition of the need for continual review and monitoring of our re-structured curriculum and timetable. The INSET training will take place after school during what are known as 'twilight' sessions.

Therefore the School-determined Statutory Non-teaching days for the Academic Year 2008-9, as agreed by the governing body, are as follows:

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December  
Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December  
Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December

Several schools in the County conduct Student Review Days in a similar framework to ours and the practice is generally held to be highly effective for improving the conversation about learning. The DCSF has recently stressed the importance of schools and parents working together and establishing good communication links in the best interests of the child.

The Student Review Days for the Academic Year 2008-9 will take place on:

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2008

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009 (*this is an amendment to the previously advised date*)**

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## College Corner

Alongside welcoming the new Year 12 cohort, after such a successful set of G.C.S.E. results, Year 13 have been reflecting on the best results achieved as AS Level by Toot Hill students since the new system was introduced.

This does not mean that students are complacent; in fact there has been little time for students to dwell on their successes, with the need to tackle A2 courses and prepare university applications. Clearly students have been inspired by their open day visits and our trips to Leicester and Derby Universities if the 'buzz' in the Beach Hut is anything to go by.

Oxbridge and Medical school applicants have imminent deadlines, whilst those looking at career opportunities and higher education places should be busy researching opportunities, supported by the College Team and the Connexions service.

As you read this, students will already have been on an important trip to West Bridgford Fire station, to gain invaluable advice on the potential perils experienced by young drivers. This is an area of concern for us at the college and we hope to raise awareness of some of the issues surrounding road safety during this visit, with follow up sessions in our Mentor programme.

The College Committee has already met this term, looking to arrange our first social event of the year and to start planning those three traditional autumn term events, The Children's Party, Senior Citizens Tea Dance AND THE PANTO – WHICH WILL STILL GO AHEAD in the last week of term.

As always we anticipate an exciting and busy term!

The College Team

## Music Department News

### Autumnal News

The first days of September saw Mr Crabtree and Mrs Kelly frantically dusting and organising following the building work that took place over the summer. This is an exciting year for the department as every year 7 pupil will be taught an additional musical instrument; so, watch out for all the budding violinists, vocalists and guitarists appearing on a stage near you! The department would like to take this opportunity to welcome Ms Ward (violin), Mr Trivett (guitar) and Miss Jephcote (voice) whose role it is to implement this initiative. Thanks also to Mrs Ingram, Mr Crabtree and the site team who co-ordinated the music block refurbishment last year.

### Congratulations!

The department would like to congratulate the following pupils on their success in recent musical auditions and examinations:

Sarah Jones (Year 9) Nottingham Youth Intermediate Orchestra  
 Louisa Foster (Year 10) Nottingham Youth Intermediate Orchestra  
 Ali Wright (Year 8) Nottingham Youth Intermediate Orchestra  
 Marcus Bishop (Year 8) who achieved a Distinction in both the Cello (grade II) and Piano (grade III)  
 Francesca Bishop who achieved a Distinction in Piano (grade II)  
 Ali Wright who achieved a Merit in Viola (grade V)

### Extra Curricular Activities

The start of an academic year provides an opportunity to remind pupils and parents of the extra-curricular activities that take place within the music department. Don't forget, all interested pupils are welcome regardless of ability!

<b>Day of the Week</b>	<b>Musical Activity</b>
Tuesday Lunch	Vocal Group
Wednesday Lunch	String Group
Thursday After School	Concert Band

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## WORK EXPERIENCE – YEAR 11 – 6 WEEKS TO GO!

Can all parents/carers with students in Year 11 please ensure that they have their work experience organised for 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> October 2008. Recent changes in the curriculum make the work experience placement a statutory requirement of the student's final year and it is essential that all placements are confirmed by the end of September. I am available Monday-Thursday break times and lunchtimes in Reception to discuss any issues with students or alternatively I can be contacted on 01949 863044.

Fiona Farmer

## RACE THE SUN is full of ups and downs for Toot Hill staff

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2008

*This year Mr. Rossin, Mr. Mercer, Mr. Clark and Mr. Watts entered the charity event 'Race the Sun', a sponsored endurance event for teams of 4 people in the Lake District. The teams had to cycle 22 miles to the foot of Helvellyn, climb to the top and back, cycle 2 miles to Lake Thirlmere, canoe 2 miles and then cycle the 26 miles back to the start, just outside Penrith. At the evening presentation the organisers said it had been the toughest edition of the race by far, but our team had more than just bad weather to contend with.*

We have been raising money for ACTION MEDICAL RESEARCH over the last few months and preparing for the physical challenge of the race itself. As the weekend approached the weather forecasts became the biggest concern as we tried to keep kit to a minimum, without getting hypothermia! As forecast, the most constant theme of the weekend was the rain! It rained throughout the drive to the Lake District and the entire duration of the event, with strong winds and low clouds thrown in for good measure...



We were up at 5.00 a.m. on Saturday so we could be ready for our 7.09 a.m. start time, only to discover that two of our bikes had been stolen in the night. At that point we thought our race was over before we had begun. We felt utterly deflated. After talking through our options we telephoned the organisers to let them know what had happened and set off for the start, determined to take part in at least part of the event. When we arrived we were delighted to hear that two of the organisers were willing to lend us their own bikes so we could complete the race. It was then a rush to get our kit together and adjust the new bikes as best we could for 50 miles of hard pedalling.

We set off on time and despite some teething problems with our borrowed bikes, standing water that was more than a foot deep in numerous places and a rather spectacular tumble by Mr. Clark, covered the first 22 miles in 2¼ hours. The rain intensified as we changed our shoes and put on more layers for the ascent of Helvellyn, a climb of 2500 ft from our start point. The path to the summit was more like a river in places and by the time we got back on the bikes we had been on the go for over 5 hours.

There was a surprising swell on Lake Thirlmere when we arrived and the marshal who briefed us said that several teams had capsized already that morning. We covered the 2 mile course in 25 minutes and managed to stay the right way up, despite the conditions. Wet and cold, we set off to cover the final 26 miles home with the watch showing a total time of just over 6 hours.

The home leg proved to be predictably challenging and our legs were screaming as we tackled the hilly



course, once again going through knee deep water in many places. When we eventually got to the finish line, 8 hours and 56 minutes after setting out, it had blown down! It was a fantastic feeling to have finished, particularly given the events of the morning. Once we had showered and changed and the remaining teams registered their times, we were even more delighted to find that, out of the 74 teams that started the race, we had finished in 9<sup>th</sup> place!

I would like to thank my team mates for their physical endeavour and sense of humour in the face of adversity. Particular thanks must go to our team captain, Mr. Rossin, who organised our entry and led us throughout the event. I would also like to thank everyone who has donated towards our target of £2000 for Action Medical Research. It is a fantastic charity which touches nearly everyone in some way, funding research in everything from premature birth to osteoporosis. We will still be collecting until November, and any further donations will be gratefully received.

*Mr. Watts*

### **Toot Hill – Burladingen Exchange 2008 Wunderbar!!!**

The Modern Languages Department is delighted to report that our German Exchange continues to go from strength to strength. Twenty Year 10 pupils spent a very successful week in Burladingen, near Stuttgart in July.

We visited the Daimler Benz Museum, the Wilhelma Zoo to meet Wilbär the baby polar bear and crossed the Bodensee by boat to Austria for a trip up the Pfänder Mountains by cable car. We were given a very special reception by the Mayor of Burladingen and many of our pupils plucked up the courage to ask him some questions in German.



The pupils also spent two days in our partner school the Pro – Gymnasium in Burladingen, where they experienced a variety of lessons, including Science and Maths taught in German and were able to take part in the German activities week programme.

We all stayed with our exchange partners and their families, who made us feel welcome and looked after us like one of the family. The Toot Hill pupils coped admirably and by the end of the week, their confidence in speaking German and in surviving alone in a foreign country had grown considerably – no mean feat! The German party returns to Toot Hill on September 21<sup>st</sup> for a week of fun activities, trips to York, Trent Bridge and Alton Towers and a day experiencing the English delights of school uniform and school dinners – neither of which exist in Burladingen!

Well done to all who took part in July and enjoy the return trip. Viel Spass!  
Frau Myers

## Toot Hill Academy

Open your eyes to something new

### Family Art Day – Wednesday 29th October 2008

Toot Hill Academy will be running one of our hugely popular Family Art Days with Rachel Scanlon on Wednesday 29th October 08 - from 10am-3pm. Places are available for children to attend with their parent/carer. Come along to Toot Hill with a family member to create your own fun:-

#### “Home for a Gnome”



This is a family activity during half term with just a minimum charge of £5 per child to cover the cost of materials. (Suitable for children age 4-11 years old). Places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment.

#### Summer School Success

A big thank you to all of you who came along to Summer School, the week was a fantastic success.



#### Masterchef

“Just thought I’d drop you a line, my two daughters attended the master chef course at this summers Arts Academy at Toot Hill. They thoroughly enjoyed the two full days and both learnt new skills. They came away confident enough to tackle three or four different dishes.

Many thanks to all involved in such a super event, maybe next year could you arrange the courses over more days so they can have a go at more than one course, they all sounded great!!!”  
Marie Brentford



#### Family Art Day fun!

The children and parents had a fantastic day creating fairy Tale characters and lands with caves, castles, towers and forests. “I have really enjoyed doing all the things we have made, I just thought of fairy tale things to make them and have loved it.”  
Meghann Swann

## Autumn Evening Classes Start Soon!

Why not come along to our short 4 week courses running this Autumn? Courses cost just £28 and start on 24/25 September at 7pm for 2 hours. They're the perfect opportunity to try something different without the costs and longterm commitment of traditional evening classes. With something for everyone from West African Drumming to Computer Skills, workshops are led by professional artists and practitioners.

Signing up to a course enables you to enjoy new activities, learn new skills and make new friends, so why not drop in to their open evening on Wednesday 17 September any time between 6:00pm and 7:30pm to find out what the Academy can offer. We'll be holding demonstration sessions as well as an opportunity to receive a 10% discount on any bookings for courses made on the night. And with courses starting at just £28 what have you got to lose?!

## Starting Wednesday 25th September for 4 weeks:

Ballroom Dancing (Part 1)  
Creative Textiles  
Soapstone Carving  
Just Desserts  
Digital Photography and Photoshop (Part 1)

Youth Course - Digital Music - Soundtrack workshops

## Starting Thursday 26th September for 4 weeks:

Latino Dancing  
Jewellery Making  
Drawing (Part 1)

## Business Skills Academy

We delighted to be offering our new courses for the Autumn term:

**Basic computer skills**- Word and Excel – starting Thursday 25th September for 4 weeks

**Intermediate computer skills** – Advanced Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher – starting Thursday 13th November for 4 weeks

**The Basics of Buying and Selling on eBay** – starting Thursday 13th November for 4 weeks

See our Academy website for more information  
[www.academy.toothill.notts.sch.uk](http://www.academy.toothill.notts.sch.uk) or call 01949 863044 for a brochure.



**Greetings from Tanzania. I wish you all the best for this new Academic year.**

Wow, so much time has passed since I last wrote for Contact. When I write my blog, or send emails and texts, I really get a sense of just how life is so different. I communicate with someone from England and I imagine what they might be doing or what might be happening for them. Suddenly it hits me just how different life is for me out here. It is sometimes a shock because you grow so used to the life here and stop thinking about the huge differences. It is only when you see a tourist or two and they comment on things that I am so used to that I remember what life was like before I came here.

Firstly, I wanted to write to my RE classes personally. If you took an exam, so that's 9X2, 9Y2 and 9X5 and 10X6 as I taught them. Congratulations on a fantastic set of results. Many of you really deserve those results and I'm very proud of each and everyone of you. To my long course; wow. Stunning, is all I can say about your results, I hope all of your other results were equally as stunning. Just well done to everyone; teachers and students and also to all the staff involved in making the whole school a success. To the current Year 11, work as hard or even harder to achieve the same excellent results you did in your RE exams.

Even writing about GCSE's is a world away from life here. The examination system here is slightly tricky to work out. It is nationalised and standardised but of a different standard and many students at my school often don't take exams for lack of money, or poor health. They take all secondary school exams in English, rather than Kiswahili. Imagine students, taking all your exams in French and to all teachers imagine having to speak in French when delivering lessons to students! Crazy, since primary education is solely in Kiswahili. I don't think I even can remember what God is in French, and in German, well pass. One of the things I wanted to express in this piece is as you begin this new school year, really seize this opportunity to take as much knowledge and experience as you can from your lessons. You really are lucky to attend such a well organised and high achieving school. I know the buildings, are often commented on, but please remember you are in a fantastic environment and life is an opportunity for you to make the most of, so please try to value what you do have and feel that each and every day. If you require help or support, then seek it from your dedicated teaching staff who work incredibly hard to support you in your lives. Seek help from your family and friends so that you can have a happy and successful life. You have such an opportunity, please don't waste it.

We have been having lots of fun as well as intensive work. Come on it's me! You need have both fun and work in my happy little world. Anyhow, I have introduced the kids to Twister. We also played paper planes, which is where you make paper planes and throw them at a target at the board once you have completed an English grammar exercise. That was fun. Afterwards we swapped origami techniques. I am so glad I had that detention as a kid with Mr Haywood. I think he was a maverick supply teacher and kept most of us in and decided to teach us how to make paper flappy birds. I tell you it has been useful in endless ways since. Thanks to that man who I've not seen in 13 years. Anyways back to Twister. Essentially, I kept reading out four sentences of different contexts and they had to decide which past tense the sentence was in. It was very funny though only the boys could play because all the girls were wearing skirts, so next week they are bringing in trousers. The teachers even joined in too.

So what has been happening other than school. Well I'm not sure if any of you East Midland folk will have heard of the three counties show? I am originally from the West Midlands and each year there is an agricultural show which involves, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. Anyway, in the nearby neighbouring city of Arusha (2 hours is near), there was a show which was like the three counties show and reminded me of my youth. It was a display for various agricultural animals and products. I was so happy to see cows. I really am strange because my friends remarked that I was like a person on safari seeing a lion for

the first time. Also, there was a tent for HIV testing which although lacking in facilities like privacy and counselling, it was good to see. However, sadly by the side of this tent, was another which was a herbal tent where a doctor was promising a cure for HIV without the need for any other medical intervention. Sometimes, alternative medicines can and are a good supplement, but at times it can also lead to dangerous information being given to people such as no need for Anti-Retroviral drugs being needed to combat AIDS. HIV infection is such a problem in the region I live in (Kilimanjaro) being at 20% with the national average being at 4%. Roughly, 2 million people are HIV positive in Tanzania, though this is a figure for people who have been tested. There are lots of organisations which work to try to combat HIV infection, but access to education and information is still lacking in the more remote parts of the country. It's important to remember that the majority of the population stopped education at Primary Level, so its very important people can access the information as adults.

Shukuru a child I am currently working with has to be very cautious because he has a condition known as albinism. This is a condition which means the person lacks melanin so Shukuru although having two African parents has skin which is mostly white due to the lack of melanin. In Tanzania especially, people with this condition have to be careful because they are murdered at the rate of one a month in Tanzania. The government has got involved and started to try and protect people and to educate the population that albino people are as African as everybody else. .

Trying to build students confidence is an important job here, to allow them to express their opinions and develop their self esteem. Some of the children hold a deep respect and fear for teachers which often causes a lack of desire to volunteer answers or offer opinions. Yes, believe it or not I have to beg the children to speak at times even in the first language Kiswahili. It's only when we get on to the football pitch/ rubbish ground that the more boisterous side of the children comes out. They are impressed a woman from England can at least play football! I tell them I am from the land of Paula Radcliffe and instantly they are impressed. Out here she is a legend, since marathon running is popular in this part of the world, everybody knows her. They laugh at me when I try and imitate Paula's very unique style of running (the head bob). How much did I wish her to win the Beijing Olympics?! Sometimes I forget that these children are exposed to things we take for granted. Take for instance traffic lights. I was teaching about disabilities in the UK and Tanzania. I spoke about guide dogs for people with visual problems. They were intrigued to know what guide dogs were. I explained and they quickly grasped the concept. However, I gave the example that dogs can't see colour so at traffic lights they watch the cars to see when it is safe to cross the road. But then a kid put his hand up and said, 'Teacher Katie, what is this traffic light you speak of'. It was then that I remembered that where I live there are no tarmac roads, let alone traffic lights. Even in the town, Moshi there are no lights. I had to say in the city Arusha (where there is one) traffic lights are the things which control cars. Its things like that when I remember how far from home I am and how different life and children's experiences are.

If you want to check my blog out which has lots more amusing encounters and perhaps more in depth then please sign up to it at <http://www.travelblog.org/Bloggers/Katie-Silver/>



African Football—plus ditch through the middle of the pitch and a football made of plastic bags



The rock is my chair. I have a blackboard and 12 desks.



View from the back of the classroom. 50 kids sit here.



Niagra Falls eat your heart out. Marangu Falls.

**Drama Contact**

It's been a very successful summer for the Drama Department following some outstanding results at examination level.

We had a pleasing set of results at A-Level, with students achieving well in the subject in both AS and A2, with 100% achieving an A-E grade. Our greatest achievement, however, comes in the form of our GCSE results.

This summer, our students achieved a record breaking 98% A\*-C pass rate at GCSE, with 56% achieving an A\* or A. This is an amazing result and a credit to the students who worked incredibly hard to achieve these amazing results. Our target now is to hit 100% this year, which is the challenge laid down to our current Year 11 cohort.

Now that the summer is over and we are back to 'normal' school ways, we are once again heading into busy times for the Drama Department. Our newly invigorated Year 13 cohort have already begun working on their next performance examination, which is heading their way in October and sees them devise their own performance based on the theme of 'body image'.

The Year 12 and 13 students are also looking forward to the first theatre visit of the year as on October 13 we are taking an excursion to Northampton's Royal and Dearngate theatre to see a contemporary adaptation of Shakespeare's 'Othello', performed by Frantic Assembly. Soon after this we also have a trip to 'Macbeth' at Nottingham Playhouse and Splendid Productions coming into the department to work with our Year 11, 12 and 13 students.

Outside of the curriculum, the main focus of the Department is once again on the whole school production of 'Grease'. Rehearsals have already begun again and the cast are once again working very hard, having learnt lines and songs over their summer holidays and have come back buzzing with energy and excitement. Add to that a new paint job on the Theatre wall, advertising the show, and everything is gearing up once again to making Grease the best, true 'High School Musical' you will see anywhere this year.

N Stimson

Head of Drama

**YOUNG WRITERS**

Congratulations to the year 10 pupils who recently submitted work for the Young Writers' *Spark the Imagination* creative writing book series. Pupils were asked to write a mini-saga on any theme that inspired them. Work was then selected for publication based on perception, imagination, expression, good use of language and completing the deceptively difficult task of writing an effective story in 50 words or less. Pupils worked hard on this task in their English lessons and the following pupils' stories were chosen for publication:

Fiona Shaw, Bethany Smart, Jacob Turner, Eleanor Staley, Francesca Bishop, Lucy Allison, Matthew Carrington, Jade Baylock and Truly Ford-Ghatauray.

Well done, the book 'Spark the Imagination' is due to be published on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2008, we look forward to seeing you all in print!

Z Seaton(Head of English)

**X FACTOR**

The X Factor winners agree that their success was built on the “Rubber Band principle”. All rubber bands work on the principle that they must be stretched to be effective! Anybody who has ever achieved anything worthwhile has been stretched to their limit, without exception. Stretching made them vulnerable but they never gave up. Over the past few months Toot Hill School has been stretched by the changes and new ways of working. The students, parents, guardians, teachers and the support staff are to be applauded for making Toot Hill School a success with their support and help.

“Every child matters” is Toot Hill’s business philosophy, and invests in producing well rounded pupils able to succeed in the global competitive market. Even though the School’s focus is on the academic side it also recognises the importance of the pupils’ physical and spiritual wellbeing. The excellent academic achievements and the creative teaching reveal the mental aspect. In September 2007, the School was awarded with the Gold standard for National Healthy School. This is based on Emotional Health and Well Being, Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and PSHE as laid down by the Government. The increase in the uptake in Toot Hill School’s healthy dinners and the excellent Ofsted feedback on the recent PE inspection points towards the school’s emphasis on a healthy body. The well established pastoral system and the regular monitoring of the pupil’s progress and emotional wellbeing which when needed supplemented with counselling take care of the spiritual side in the development of the child.

Recently Toot Hill has been re-designated as a Specialist Business and Enterprise and Arts College. Here, pupils are encouraged and motivated to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and to communicate creatively in a rapidly changing diverse global economy and technology. As mentioned in the latest School Prospectus, “being a Specialist School, enterprise and creativity are an important part of daily life at Toot Hill School ....”, and the students are taught to recognise and develop these abilities in this area whilst at Toot Hill. These aptitudes enhance and bring out an individual’s personality and strength. It also facilitates the students education at School while enabling to cope with life outside both now and in the future. During the activity week, which takes place at the end of each academic year students skills are on display for all to see. Constant monitoring of a child’s progress, regular dialogue with the pupil, and the review of students progress with parents or carers makes learning more personal. This ensures that no one is over-stretched but helped to discover the individual’s X Factor.

Toot Hill Academy by providing extended learning opportunities for gifted and talented children, primary school, and wider adult community is an example of School’s creativity and enterprise. The School canteen has met its target and increased pupil uptake. Discipline is an important part of education, and the creative way Toot Hill tackles this problem frees up resources which are put to use elsewhere. The Reprographic section is self financing and run as a business. Contacts with schools in other continents broaden the experience of the pupils and furnishes them with the chance to compare their way of life with that of others.

All this confirms that Toot Hill has got talent. A Rubber Band may look a floppy thing without any use, but when stretched its usefulness comes into effect. It was initially designed to hold things together. But people realized that it produces cool sounds under tension; connects pulleys in Lego sets and so on. If the Rubber Band was unwilling to be stretched its X Factor would lay dormant. With your co-operation you will find out the X Factor that lies hidden within you. Remember, a good stretch is good for you.

Mr P Chandrakumar  
Parent Governor, Toot Hill School

## Autumn Term 2008 dates

Wednesdays	Throughout term-time	Toot Hill Academy and Adult Academy
Tuesday	16 September	Year 7 and 10 School photos
Thursday	18 September	Student Review Day – no classes
w/b Monday	22 September	German Exchange Week
Friday	26 September	Macmillan Coffee Morning
Friday	3 October	Year 8 Boulogne trip
Friday	10 October	Year 8 Boulogne trip
w/b Monday	13 October	Year 11 Work Experience Week
Thursday	16 October	Year 13 Parents' Evening
Tuesday	21 October	Achievement Evening, Key Stage 3
Wednesday	22 October	Achievement Evening, Key Stage 4
w/b Monday	27 October	Half-term holiday
Wednesday	5 November	Year 12 Parents' Evening
w/b Monday	17 November	Year 11 Mock Examinations
Thursday	20 November	Year 7 Parents' Evening
Tuesday	25 November	Year 7 and 8 formal assessments commence
Thursday	27 November	Toot Hill College Open Evening
Tuesday – Friday	2 – 5 December	'GREASE' show
Monday	8 December	Infants' Tea Party
Tuesday	9 December	Christmas Carol Concert
Wednesday	10 December	Senior Citizens' Tea Dance; Panto in the evening
Thursday	11 December	Christmas Activities; Panto in the evening
Friday	12 December	Christmas Assemblies & Term Ends
w/b Monday	15 December	INSET (Statutory non-teaching Days) as advised in 'Contact'