Dear Parents,

It gives me great pleasure to pen the introductory note to this term’s Autumn newsletter. It has been a very busy term, with a few new staff, some new ideas, and a lot of achievement. The website has been revamped (it looks great too), the student body has grown greatly and teaching and learning is improving all the time.

Overall, though, our thoughts turn increasingly to the new campus. I really want to take the opportunity, on behalf of all of us at the school, to say a big ‘thank you’ for your patience. The parents, staff and students have been very understanding and we appreciate that. The school has done all it can, on many levels, to hurry along the key decision makers. Ultimately, though, we do have to wait for the authorities to clear the way. This has now been done and we can begin to really plan for the future move.

So please enjoy this newsletter. It is but a small window into the great work that goes on at SIS, but it gives a taste of how the teachers, parents and students try ever so hard to make this a great place to learn. The future potential of the school is also exciting. I hope that you all feel welcome to become involved at SIS and play a role in our future.

And just a last message! For those who celebrate, please have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. To all our community – happy holidays! I look forward to seeing you all when we return to school in January for what promises to be a very important and exciting term.

Regards

Charlie Grayhurst
Principal – Straits International School
Round Square (RS)
Round Square is a network of schools in 40 countries on five continents that share a passion for experiential learning built around six IDEALS of learning: Internationalism, Democracy, Environmentalism, Adventure, Leadership and Service.
Members of Round Square have access to:
• A world-class educational approach;
• A vibrant and connected network; and
• A platform for future leaders.

They ensure that pupils have every opportunity to achieve in ways and to levels beyond their perceived limits, creating a blueprint for succeeding in all life’s challenges.

Benefits
Students benefit from a holistic education experience in which the IDEALS of Round Square are embedded.
As a member school we will:
• Gain access to our global network of like-minded, high calibre schools;
• Gain access to our custom designed collaborative, best practice intranet site and resource library; and
• Participate in and host activities including service projects, exchanges and conferences on a local, regional and international level.

We have successfully submitted our application form to RS and we have received a response indicating RS representatives would like to visit the school to decide on our membership status. If granted Straits International School would be the first RS school in Malaysia. This visit will take place in June/July 2016.
School Development

By Mr. Stephen Willoughby

**Council of International Schools (CIS)**
Schools around the world join CIS for guidance, support and access to like-minded peers as they develop challenging international programmes for their students. As a global organisation, CIS helps schools access new international educational practices, gain recognition for accomplishments, attract qualified staff, facilitate student connections with leading universities around the world, and provide a quality international education experience to students and parents.

This is a long process and we are currently about to submit stage 1 of our application. CIS deals with the academic side of the school whereas RS primarily deal with the pastoral side of student education. We estimate that full membership of CIS could take as long as 2 years.

**Cambridge International Examinations Professional Development Qualifications (CIS PDQ)**
Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (Cambridge PDQs) provide a strong framework to support the effective continuing professional development of teachers and leaders. They help teachers and leaders to:

- engage critically with relevant concepts, principles, theories and international best practices
- apply new ideas and approaches in reflective practice
- evaluate experiences and outcomes to plan further development
- improve the quality of their teaching and leadership to enhance the quality of their learners’ learning.

We have successfully submitted our application and have been cleared to deliver the PDQ courses. We are now waiting on the staff members training to finish before starting the Teaching and Learning courses for our staff.
Straits International School Development Plan (SIS SDP)
This strategic 2-year development plan has been created collaboratively by groups of teachers, senior leaders and board members. Teachers and senior leaders devised strategic aims through SWOT analysis and discussion on broad aims, informed by feedback given by the whole school community. This feedback was then incorporated into our school planning. This shorter two year plan, rather than the more common three or five year plan, was created because of the distinct need for rapid progress found within the new school context. It is not a business plan but gives focus to the operation of SIS Penang Island. Senior leaders within the school have taken the aims derived from the SWOT process and drafted objectives, with relevant performance indicators, timeframes and required resources outlined. It is the spirit of this document that it is subject to change and continual review.

The Arts
At SIS the Arts subjects play a vital role in offering a varied curriculum. Despite the packed curriculum (3 languages for example) the students still receive up to 3 1/2 hours of Arts lessons per week (EYFS to KS3). Strong links are made between subjects especially music and drama as they are taught by only two practitioners, often with the same practitioner teaching both lessons to the same year group. Students actively engage with the lessons, often opting to use their performing arts skills in other settings such as assembly performances for example (the Chinese language department do this often).

We aim to introduce the Music, Art, Dance and Drama Student Leaders (MADD) who will initially be identified by their subject teachers as having showed a wide range of performance and artistic skills within lessons and clubs.
This first newsletter of the academic year provides me with a welcome opportunity to write about the changes to the student council and the latest activities it has been involved in.

The first task for the students was to hold elections for several important positions within the council. The enthusiasm expressed by many of the students to take responsibility was impressive and it was evident amongst students representing the lower school in particular. The following students were successful:

**President:** Chloe, Year 10

**Vice-President:** Aaron, Year 10

**Secretary:** Misha, Year 6

**Treasurer:** Firdaus, Year 8

**Notice-board Officer:** Ioan, Year 5

All students have the additional responsibility of representing their tutor/home-room groups and are accompanied by the following elected representatives:

- Year 9 – Hannah and Brandon
- Year 8 – Charlie
- Year 7 – Ayush and Jayan
- Year 6 – Danish
- Year 5 – Teresa
- Year 4 – Alyssa and Nicholas
- Year 3 – Alyssa and Sheng Yang

The councillors share a desire to work for the benefit of their fellow students and to make life at school even better. With this in mind, their first task has been to focus on how the canteen service can be improved and this is currently an ongoing investigation. The representatives began with conducting a survey of provision in the canteen; one of the main suggestions from students was that more choice of meals be provided and thus a current exercise is for the students to come up with realistic alternatives to be considered for future menus.

Currently, the student council meets on a weekly basis at the beginning of the school day. While attendance has been good it is noted that it can be difficult for some students to arrive by 7.45 and the short amount of time means that so far business has been restricted. In order to address these issues and to provide the students with the quality time they need and deserve to make it an effective body within the school, it will become part of the planned activity time after the Winter break.
Dear Parents, students and staff,

This Autumn term has been an exciting time at Straits! We have seen new staff members and new children welcomed into our school community. We’ve hosted many exciting events, such as the project based learning morning while some excellent pieces of work from lessons have been shared with me on a weekly basis! Children have received stars of the week certificates for their improved learning behaviours or attitudes as we foster our children setting high goals for their achievement.

We continue to further develop communication with parents to ensure that learning is reinforced at home. Some examples of this have been our successful parent workshop in Maths, reading and e-safety.

As always, Straits is known for going the extra mile and creating a caring learning environment and this has been obvious to me from when I first arrived. I wish to assure you that I am available to listen to your comments or concerns, so please do not hesitate to contact me should you need to. It has been a privilege to be welcomed as the Vice Principal in this vibrant and creative school.

By Ms. Karlie Walsh
On 15th September 2015, at Straits International School, we celebrated the Mooncake festival. The teachers who organized this remarkable occasion at Straits were Miss Soon, Miss Serene, Miss Pavithra and Mr. Hasfis. One of the aspects of the festival was making lanterns and sharing mooncakes in our own class.

In a special assembly there was performances made by the First language class in Year 5. They sang Yue Liang Yuan, a Chinese song: The moon is round. The second language class in year 2 sang Chao Peng You: finding good friends. There was also a certificate ceremony based on the judgements of the lantern festival. Farahin and Oliver also talked and explained the story of the mooncake festival and why it is celebrated. During the assembly we discovered more about the origins of the Mooncake festival. For example, we discovered that it is celebrated to worship the moon and to celebrate the harvest. We also celebrated the festival in our classes by bringing in and sharing different types of mooncakes.

Eating Mooncakes
During the mooncake festival the most popular thing to celebrate is eating mooncakes. There are different types of mooncakes like Five Kernel and Roast Pork, Red bean Paste, Lotus Seed Paste, Snow- Skin, Fruit, Chocolate, Green Tea, Ice cream and Cream cheese. The festival is a special gathering that brings your family together happily as one.

Making Chinese Mid-Autumn Lanterns
Chinese people create colourful and amusing lanterns for decoration for the night time when they light up candles and place them in the lanterns for a walk with their family. The original and early lanterns were made of wires and lantern paper or translucent colored paper which is like glass. The wires are made into circles (5 of them) and taped together into a cube-like shape. Nowadays, people make lanterns out of paper. Some people make Kong Ming (much bigger than normal lanterns) which float up into the sky. The candle is below the lantern; it rises up with the heated air.

Taking walks with lanterns
We make this a special celebration by taking a walk with our family members with lanterns that we light up. During this very special occasion we try to spend as much time as we can with our family members. We carry our lanterns and walk around our housing area. While we walk we talk about memorable moments that we can never forget, very precious moments, where we sit down later on to talk about our lives. Some people sing rhymes and songs as they gather around a camp-fire.
Our SIS Deepavali celebration took place on the 6th of November, 2015. Prior to our day of celebration the whole school took part in a Rangoli competition, which was organised by the Celebration Committee. Rangoli, also known as Kolam, is a folk art from India in which patterns are created on the floor in living rooms or courtyards using materials such as colored rice, dry flour, coloured sand or flower petals. The students came up with their own design of Rangoli in their houses in Secondary School while the primary houses were given their patterns. Congratulations to Rusa who were the overall winners earning 90 house points!

This year Deepavali celebration was different from all the years before as we had some outstanding performances by the students from KS2 to KS4 and it was hosted by the Year 10 students. We had a dance performed to a Hindi song, a table performance as well as Indian classical violin performance. The Deepavali celebration assembly took place on Friday the 6th November. The morning started with most of the SIS staff dressed in the beautiful and colourful Indian traditional attire, Sarees and Kurtas.

To complete our celebrations, Indian food on banana leaves were served for lunch. Until next year’s celebration, a big thank you to all who helped to make this joyous day a success.

By Ms. Pavitra, Celebration Committee
Mastery planning and assessment
Pedagogical research reports conclusively on the value of formative assessment – the need to provide students with precise, regular feedback about how to improve. Last year at SIS, mastery planning was introduced at SIS to ensure a precise focus upon learning objectives and success criteria. This year, we have further strengthened our assessment framework so assessment tasks increase in complexity to more formal and more substantial assessment activities later in the unit. After each short assessment task, students are given guidance about how to perform better in the next task. Using Assessment for Learning (AfL) routines, we are seeking to establish a culture where students habitually reflect upon their own work and consider how to improve.

Year 6 Checkpoint Preparation lessons
Our Cambridge Checkpoint Primary lessons started in September of this academic year for Year 6 students to give them the best opportunity to achieve their potential in their exams. The students are split into two small groups which comprise of approximately nine students each. The benefit of having a small number of students in each group is that more individual attention can be given especially to all students so they are all challenged. The duration of the lesson is one hour and it is conducted twice a week. During the lessons, the students practise past years’ examination questions and revisit topics taught in lessons. They have just completed their third assessment and the results are very encouraging. We look forward to celebrating their achievements at the end of the academic year!
Our first project based learning unit (PBL) for Nursery to Year 6 students was held last month which culminated in an open morning for parents to come and share in their child’s creations. Over two weeks students participated in investigative learning to answer questions around our chosen theme of ‘Healthy Living’.

Project Based Learning is a teaching approach that engages students in sustained, collaborative real-world investigations. Projects are organised around a driving question, and students participate in a variety of tasks that seek to meaningfully address this question. In addition to building the skills required in our curriculum, Project Based Learning encourages the acquisition of life skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, reasoning and resilience.

We received many positive comments from parents, students and staff about the high quality of the learning by the students and the confidence displayed when sharing their knowledge.

We look forward to hosting our next PBL topic in the Summer term!
With the slight change in structure to the co-curricular Activities programme at Straits, football training had to be moved this year to every Tuesday after school 3:45-4:45pm. Unfortunately, due to the haze and wet weather, the team has not managed to train as much as expected or as much as they would like. The academic year has brought in a few changes with previous Year 6 students moving up into Secondary School and some Year 4 students having an opportunity to gain experience in competitive football.

In their first fixture of the new season, the Dragons visited SCIPS for two competitive five a-side games and earned their very first ever win (3-1) at SCIPS. The following game saw SCIPS gain the advantage with a hard fought 1-0 victory, meaning that the Dragons came away with one win and one loss.

During November, four very competitive and close games were played against Tenby. Overall, the Dragons lost 1-0 and 5-0, drew 0-0 and won 1-0.

The Dragons team also travelled to Uplands to participate in a tournament where teams from Uplands, SCIPS, Tenby and KLASS were represented. Straits Dragons finished in 6th place after close loses to Uplands A (2-0) and KLASS B (1-0), and a draw against SCIPS B (0-0) in the group stages. The Dragons beat Uplands B (2-0) and then lost to KLASS (3-0) in the final game.

It has been a difficult start for the team with limited time to practise and new players trying to find their place within the team. However, everyone is still committed to improving and are looking forward to competing with other schools in term two.
Year 3 have had a brilliant first term. The children are lively and interested in learning which has meant we can dive into lots of hard work.

In the first half of term we were looking at mapping. We looked at lots of different types of maps to get us started, including globes, world maps, local maps and google maps (which everyone really enjoyed!). We agreed on the key features of maps and then had a go at them ourselves. We drew classroom objects in aerial view, used scaling to work out distances, practised using grid references for direction and drew our own map symbols. We also experimented with magnets and are all now able to explain how they work thanks to our science project on magnets.

At the end of our topic we looked at maps of our school. We all agreed that they were really out of date so Year 3 created our own undated versions of these which were really successful.

This second half term, our new topic has been Adventurers and Explorers which has been really exciting. We realised that we too can be adventurers and wrote about our own adventures which we had during half term and other school holidays – what exciting lives you all lead! We also learnt about famous explorers and practised our research skills. The children created presentations collaboratively to teach other people about their explorer and the finished results were amazing.

Year 3 especially enjoyed project based learning this term where we designed our own healthy drink. This included everything from conducting research, to creating instructions, to designing a logo and posters, to actually making and trying the drink. It was great to see the children taking control of their own learning.

It’s been a wonderful term in year 3 and I’m looking forward to the next.
The SIS approach to Mathematics includes making lessons as fun and practical as possible, similar to the Singapore approach, to ensure that learning is at its optimum. We use real life examples, when relevant, while linking students’ prior learning to increase understanding. There is a strong emphasis on number facts and calculation as these are the skills that we use most in real life as adults. We are quick to recognise and intervene in a focused way when pupils encounter difficulties and move at a pace that caters for solid foundations for all students. This ensures misconceptions do not impede the next steps in learning.

A variety of mathematical methods are taught to ensure that each student’s learning style is catered for. These can be found in our new calculations policy that has been introduced in Primary. Maths parent workshops have been held to share methods with parents and suggest how help can be given at home. We are now beginning to further develop our students’ mental maths skills to ensure that students can solve maths problems with the maximum of ease. Above all, we want to ignite our students’ love for Mathematics and ensure they understand the importance of Maths as a life-long skill!

By Ms. Karlie Walsh
At Straits, we feel that it is important to celebrate excellence from our students! In EYFS this term we covered two main themes which were ‘My friends’ and ‘My Community’. The highlight for the term was our Project Based Learning which many parents were part of. To coincide with our second theme, students in EYFS were taken around in the school van to discover and observe the community around Bayan Baru.

Year Ones really took to Science and Art this term! The practical elements of these subjects have meant that some truly excellent work has been produced. Analysing and replicating animal prints with paint was extremely fun for all. Likewise, our study into how plants grow provided the class with many enjoyable tasks including observing bean sprouts grow and how stems can 'suck up' coloured water.

This term Year Two’s should be praised in Maths for improving their pro-active skills as they have used number lines, blocks or written mathematical methods in their books. Year Two have also been trying their very best to improve their level of written English by including interesting vocabulary, openers, connectives and proper punctuation in their sentences. They should be commended for their progress and achievements in this area.

Year 3 have worked exceptionally well on improving the quality of their writing and reading in all subjects. Ms Karlie has enjoyed celebrating these achievements with the students. They also really enjoyed and worked hard on the Project Based Learning unit and were confident to show off their work when parents came in. They made a variety of smoothies for parents and visitors to taste based on their knowledge of healthy foods.

In Year 4, the students are particularly proud of improving their writing, mental multiplication and division. They have enjoyed learning about the human body, the environment and living things. They feel that they "have achieved working together better and working hard. We have improved our learning through using the Straits Seven."
The Year 5 class worked very hard and collaboratively to create group presentations for this term's Project Based Learning topic 'Healthy Living'. Their driving question was "How can we encourage students in our school to live healthier lifestyles?" and they used different forms of persuasive writing to help solve the problem. They also took part in a lively and entertaining debate about whether or not a supermarket should be opened in a country area. Each team, for and against the supermarket, gave well justified opinions and were able to contest other opinions too.

Year 6 enjoyed an engaging debate about vending machines which was seen by some of the parents, as part of their Project Based Learning unit. The students have also worked consistently on their learning in all subject areas and have shown excellent progress.

All students are to be commended on their efforts, they have made all their teachers very proud!
What are your first impressions of Penang?
This is not my first trip to Penang as I used to visit Penang in the holidays as a child. I have always enjoyed Penang because of the stunning views and delicious food.

How does SIS compare to where you have taught before?
I really enjoy working in Key Stage One with such a variety of cultures and children.

What are you enjoying most about teaching at SIS?
It is different in many ways but I mostly enjoy how I know all of the children in the Key Stage and not just the children in my class.

Has anything surprised you about Penang?
Many things have surprised me but the biggest aspect has been how kind and friendly the parents of the children are.

What do you do in your spare time?
I like to read while I am sunbathing, scuba dive and explore areas of Malaysia.

What are you most looking forward to?
I am most looking forward to World Book Day and International Day at SIS because it will be excellent to see a range of book characters and to see various different cultures and clothing.

What kind of animal are you most like?
I think I am most like an elephant because I like to work collaboratively like a herd and I enjoy being in a warm climate.
What are your first impressions of Penang?
- It is an exciting place to be – it’s hot, with great food, but it’s hard to play sport outside with the humidity!

How does SIS compare to where you have taught before?
- There is a bigger mix of nationalities, a nicer atmosphere and children are happy to learn.

Has anything surprised you about Penang?
- Driving on the road can be difficult as it’s so busy.

What do you do in your spare time?
- I play lots of different sports (football, cricket, golf, swimming) and read.

What are you most looking forward to?
- Checkpoint tests with Year 6.

What kind of animal are you most like?
- A tiger - fierce!
It seems that in the merest flicker of time we have reached the end of term. Since my first address to parents on the first day of term, and my first words to students in our assembly on the same day, time has passed with dizzying speed. In those first meetings, I spoke of my commitment to approaching my work at Straits with heart and with energy. I exhorted students and staff to share that commitment: to take positive energy into the classroom, to focus upon learning; to support each other. I think we have succeeded; I have been impressed by what I have seen.

I have been impressed by the way in which students reflect the caring ethos of the school. I have seen this countless times this term – older students patiently encouraging younger students in House activities, students supporting their peers in difficult tasks in the classroom, students showing enthusiastic appreciation of the contributions of their fellow students in assemblies. The thoughtful and dynamic contributions of students have been a regular feature of our assemblies. Students have engaged us with their dramatic pieces and their musical performances. They have contributed thought-provoking comments and suggestions. They have delivered powerful presentations. In two public speaking competitions, students have delivered fluent, well-structured speeches. It has been an absolute pleasure to listen to and observe our students engage wholeheartedly in these experiences.

I have been impressed by the way in which parents have supported the school – by their affirmations of the work of teachers, by the many ways in which parents support our efforts to guide students, by their patience when we try really hard to get things right, by their attendance at school events. It was wonderful, for example, to receive a high level of support on our Creativity Day.
I have been impressed by the positivity and team-spirit of staff at the school. We have reviewed curriculum provision and teachers have worked hard to ensure fluent, progressive challenge. In our CPD sessions and our subsequent action research in our classrooms, we have refined our approaches to pedagogy. In our CPD sharing sessions, colleagues have reported upon the positive impact of a variety of new approaches to teaching and learning.

Above all, I have been impressed by the purposeful approaches to learning in the classroom and in our after-school activities. Clearly, students are keen to perform well. They are ambitious. They respond to challenging tasks with tenacity and with good humour. This attitude has been evident, for example in students’ enthusiastic responses to the weekly challenges set in the Maths and Science departments. It was evident too in our Creativity Day, a dazzling fiesta of innovative thinking, collaboration and creative exuberance.

It has been impressive and it has been uplifting. I am looking forward to the holiday and, beyond, to what we can all achieve next term.

Have a very happy holiday and a well-earned rest.
So far this year there have been two House Public Speaking competitions. In our Public Speaking activity, with Mr Andy, we have prepared for each competition in houses discussing and writing ideas down.

To prepare for the first Public Speaking competition, in October, we worked in groups and the theme given to us was Stereotyping. Each group focused on the issue of racism. In our Secondary assembly, the four speakers took turns to deliver speeches that were very touching and moving; these speeches later inspired me to write and deliver my own speech in the second competition. Eventually, the judges – Mr Charlie and Mr Stephen - decided that Matthew, representing the house Burung Kenyalang, was the winner.

The following month, there was another round of the Public Speaking competition. Again, we prepared in groups. This time the theme was ‘things that I am thankful for.’ I was keen to get involved and was delighted when I was chosen to represent the house Naga.

Miss Jan introduced the assembly with an interesting explanation of the festival of Thanksgiving, and with quotations from students about things they are thankful for. After that, the four public speakers, representing each of the houses, delivered their 5-minute speeches. In my perspective, in order to be a good public speaker, you need inspiration and determination. A public speaker doesn’t need a good voice; you just need to make a connection between the audience and yourself. For me volunteering for this wasn’t so hard, it’s better to try than do nothing.
House Competition
-Public Speaking

At the end of the competition, the judges declared that I was the winner. Winning this competition made a big difference to my life; it unlocked a new talent that I never knew was in me. Hearing the audience clapping and cheering made me smile. At the start though, I was very nervous. The entire school was waiting for a response, staring at me like baby chicks waiting for dinner. Writing the script wasn’t that hard either, I’d just follow my heart. As a public speaker, I think the recipe for success is eye contact with the audience and confidence. I couldn’t function without support and friends; it pushes me in daily life at school. When I spoke in front of 200 students I tended to hesitate and pause then I got along. When the judges spoke my name I was relieved and happy to have won, my friends congratulated me and that really gave me more confidence in life.

Participating in the competition also had a positive effect on the other competitors: I could see them working very hard for that day; I could see passion in them.

By Ayush Patel, Year 7
Secondary CPD and Academics

By Mr. Andrew Crompton, Head of Secondary

The main focus for CPD this term, at Primary level and Secondary level, has been to provide training that allows the provision of fluent, progressive challenge through mastery planning. This focus upon specific criteria – and upon strategies for revisiting prior learning at judicious points - has been augmented by training in creative thinking skills. In order to ensure that students can respond to challenges within and beyond an academic environment, we have devoted time to providing structures for developing students’ abilities to think critically and innovatively.

In a training session in September, I suggested the following key principles for planning the development of thinking skills: investigative lessons with a series of challenges will help to engage students; socially constructed learning is an essential element of thinking skills; lessons planning should encourage structured thinking and learning. During the remainder of the session, we moved through activities in an accelerated learning cycle to investigate a Physics problem, as a way of demonstrating how to structure conceptual awareness in the classroom.

As colleagues collaborated in the activities, they developed an awareness of how to move through the process in the classroom to structure learning. In addition, literacy materials – such as the use of tagxedo word-clouds and meta-cognition scripts were used to show the ways in which students can be helped to enrich their language for articulating learning. During my visits to classrooms this term, I have observed students constructively engaged in activities that have allowed them to think critically and creatively; I have been impressed by the quality of their responses.
Subsequent CPD, in October, provided training in structured routines and rational systems that can be used to promote creativity. We often associate creativity with flashes of inspiration, with heightened emotions, with a spark of genius. However, the pioneer of lateral thinking, Robert De Bono, believes that the conscious, practised use of certain routines and systems can enable anybody to be creative.

During training, I demonstrated ways in which we can apply De Bono’s methods to promote creativity across the curriculum. One of De Bono’s methods is the allocation of ‘thinking hats’. In this strategy, students are assigned (metaphorical) hats that represent different ways of thinking during an activity. The use of such an approach in a problem-solving activity - such as planning a location for a chemical waste disposal site, and anticipating associated issues, in a Geography lesson - can stimulate diverse and innovative ideas.

Following the session, colleagues worked in teams to plan activities for Creativity Day. The ideas and activities generated were highly engaging and immersive; the creative outcomes were very impressive at all levels. Moving forward, in our CPD sessions we will focus on the productive inter-relationship between creative thinking strategies, Assessment for Learning and literacy.
With the slight change in structure to the co-curricular Activities programme at Straits, football and netball training had to be moved this year to after school (3:45-4:45pm). The academic year has brought in a few changes with new students and staff arriving and also with some leaving Straits.

The Dragons are proud to be represented by numerous teams in this year’s PSAC league, including the newly formed U13 girls Football team that are being coached by Mr. Kam. Though numbers are low in the current squad, hopefully more students will be interested by term two when student numbers increase.

The U14 and U16 girls Netball teams have also been entered into the newly formed Netball league and will be coached by Ms. Dev. The U14s won their first match against Uplands B 3-0 but then suffered a big defeat (15-0) by an experienced Tenby team. The U16s lost against Uplands B and Tenby, 18-1 and 16-1, respectively.

A focus on improving basic skills in training has been identified as this will help them to become more competitive against their more experienced opposition in future games.

The U13 and U15 boys Football team have only played a friendly against POWIIS, where both teams came away with solid 2-2 and 1-1 draws, respectively. Mr. Joe is the new coach for the U13s team, while Mr. Herlisman takes over for the U15s. They will have one more friendly before the Winter break against POWIIS before their league games commence in term two.

By Mr. Kam Yin Boey, PE / Co-curricular Activities Co-ordinator
English is a multi-disciplinary subject which includes the study of language, speaking and listening, writing, reading and media.

We aim to teach a wide range of skills as part of the Cambridge Curriculum, whilst offering a stimulating framework which captures the imagination, enthusiasm and pleasure of English for students. Our key goal is to support all students in achieving their potential. It is a core subject at the heart of many other academic disciplines; we recognise the importance of literacy skills which allow students to communicate with others, both at school and in their everyday lives. In addition, English is the most commonly used language amongst foreign language speakers so we want to ensure that our students can develop and refine their English skills, ultimately allowing them to prosper in a multi-cultural environment.

Within English Literature we encourage students to debate and wrestle with ideas presented within texts as well as challenge the assumptions portrayed. Our curriculum covers a wide range of genres from Victorian Literature to modern day dystopian prose.
What the teachers said about our students:

Mr. Shahrul Hasfis, Art
"In year 9 this term, students have produced some exceptional propaganda posters in a cross-curricular project with history. Students have shown an excellent understanding of the topic and the purpose of those poster. They able to synthesise the colours, figure drawing and typography to produce arresting artwork. They also able to criticise and reflect upon their work."

Ms Rabiahtul Bazariah, Bahasa Malaysia
Yen Nee from Year 7 is a very capable student who can excel in this subject. She produces beautiful handwriting and neat work. She always helps those in need and it has been a pleasure to have her in my lessons. Yen Nee is serious about her work and she is a co-operative and cheerful member of my class. She has made excellent progress.

Ms Elena Kathiraven, Business Studies
"Carmen from Year 10 has made rapid progress in Business Studies in the past few weeks. She has worked hard in class and at home which is reflected in her very good quality written work."

Miss Emily Cosnett, English Language
"In Year 11, Heng Zeh Yee produced a compelling and convincing counter-argument to Nick Freeman's article on Corporal Punishment, as part of his IGCSE English Language coursework. Yee produced a sophisticated and detailed piece of writing which used ambitious vocabulary, punctuation and sentence structures. He worked hard to ensure that he met the assessment criteria and this is reflected in his writing."

Mr Charlie Grayhurst, Geography
"In Year 9, Jack has produced a consistently high standard of work. His commitment ensured that he achieved an impressive 91% in his Unit assessment."
Celebrating Excellence: Secondary

What the teachers said about our students:

**Miss Harriet Glover, French Language**
“Term 1 has seen much progress and hard work; however, one student who has particularly impressed me is a new student in Year 8, Lina. Despite having limited English, she has committed herself to learning French as well and is not shying away from the challenge. She has never learnt French before and yet is trying her best to keep up with the others, I have been really impressed with her positive attitude.”

**Mr Andy Crompton, Global Perspectives**
“In Year 10, Thievya has consistently produced focused and purposeful responses which have demonstrated her astute understanding of global issues. She wrote a detailed, carefully researched report into the ways in which cultural and moral values of different countries are reflected through their engagement with sporting pursuits.”

**Ms Jan Crompton, History**
“I would like to commend Derrick, of Year 11, for excellence in History. He has delivered some excellent lessons to me through mind-mapping; he extends his knowledge through wider research beyond the classroom; he takes responsibility for his own learning by focusing on targets set.”

**Mr Charlie Grayhurst, Humanities**
“In Year 8, Jia Wei has worked exceptionally hard. She exhibits a serious-minded approach to her work. She put in a fantastic performance in the Humanities assessment and achieved 100%.”

**Miss Soon Saw Imm, Mandarin Language**
“In Mandarin, Brian from Year 11 is keen to apply idioms and newly learnt vocabulary in sentence-building. Apart from this, he is able to use different techniques to enhance his writing. He also evaluates how authors achieve their effects.”
Celebrating Excellence: Secondary

What the teachers said about our students:

Miss Pang Sook Yee, Mandarin
“Students in Year 10 have focused upon describing a landscape. All students produced responses which used varied and effective vocabulary to sketch the scenery of summer, autumn and winter. Students used a range of descriptive techniques, such as similes, metaphors, parallelism and hyperbole to develop engaging images for the reader. The whole class achieved grade C to grade A in this unit!”

Mr Uvarajan Ganesbaran, Information, Communication and Technology (ICT)
“Both Brandon and Daphne have shown a remarkable continuous growth with consistent achievement in ICT especially when it involves practical tasks. Both have made many fine contributions to the class and stand as an inspiration to their classmates. Andrew, on the other hand, has showed very positive improvement in his studies and he has become more matured and responsible. At most times, they are the first ones to offer assistance to any of their fellow peers found struggling in their tasks. For these reasons, they are highly valued members of my Year 9 class.”

Miss Yogeswari Boghan, Mathematics
“Zhi Yun from Year 7 is an extremely gifted, talented and determined mathematician. I have found her to be very inquisitive with a real thirst for mathematical knowledge. Independently, she regularly goes above and beyond the syllabus to further her knowledge.”

Ms Ellie Saunders, Performing Arts
“In Year 9, Brandon and Sarah worked together on variations on a theme by Mozart in their music lessons. They produced contrasting themes editing harmony, orchestration and ornamentation. I was particularly impressed by their collaborative skills as they brought their two individual compositions together for a performance to the class.”
Celebrating Excellence:
Secondary

What the teachers said about our students:

Mr Andy Crompton.
In Year 9, Hannah has produced some fluent, highly engaging reflective writing. She has an intelligent understanding of how to use ambitious vocabulary to achieve effects. In addition, she has collaborated well with Fariheen to create an absorbing role-play that dramatised conflict: both performances were compelling and realistic.

Miss Gurdeep Kaur, Science
Daphne of Year 9 is a remarkable student. She is diligent and proactive in class. She is always ready to lend a helping hand to her classmates when tasks are given during lessons. She speaks well and has a quiet confidence that comes from within.
What are your first impressions of Penang?
My first impression of Penang is “All in one”. An island which is saturated with a variety of good food, places to visit and for recreation and a strong eastern culture.

How does SIS compare to where you have taught before?
SIS has better management, better facilities and has an environment that is more conducive for students to study and for teachers to excel in their profession.

What are you enjoying most about teaching at SIS?
I enjoy the smaller class sizes which makes them easier to teach and manage.

Has anything surprised you about Penang?
Penang car drivers are a bit careless; they hardly use indicators when they are turning left or right.

What do you do in your spare time?
Go jogging and to the movies.

What are you most looking forward to?
I am most looking forward to seeing how students apply what they have learnt at school, to find their meaning path in life and to build a better tomorrow.

What kind of animal are you most like?
Dog
Ms. Emily Cosnett
Head of Languages

What are your first impressions of Penang?
That it is hot and beautiful.

How does SIS compare to where you have taught before?
The attitude and enthusiasm of the students.

What are you enjoying most about teaching at SIS?
There is a friendlier atmosphere amongst the students.

Has anything surprised you about Penang?
The lack of pavements!

What do you do in your spare time?
I like to travel, exercise and read.

What are you most looking forward to?
Seeing the progress in the pupils for the next year.

What kind of animal are you most like?
Tiger!
The International Award has continued strongly this year with 21 new members signing up for the Bronze Award. We have been training students for their adventurous journey with team-building sessions and we have been outlining the expectations and challenges of their expedition. In the coming weeks, students will be continuing to focus on their three sections of service, physical recreation and skills, completing one hour of activity per week in each of the three areas.

Their dedication to the award is commendable. The students were fortunate to take part in Survival Training on the 9th December where they learned many valuable skills from a certified outdoors expert. Amongst many other things, they focused on navigation and how to set up a camp site. This will fully prepare them for their practice Adventurous Journey to Taman Negara on the 29th January. Six students will also be doing their qualifying journey at the same time so I look forward to them completing their award.

I would finally like to congratulate Yee Heng Zeh, Yap Yi Tong and Daniel Lim from Year 11 for having completed their Bronze Award. This takes perseverance and a great amount of effort. Well done to them!