



QIFA PRIMARY SCHOOL

50 WEST COAST AVENUE SINGAPORE 128104

TEL: 67783085

FAX: 67761485

Principal's Letter – Term 2, March 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian

Welcome to Term 2 at QPS

We are glad to have the pupils back in school and it is abuzz with the children's voices and laughter after a week's break.

***Every Student, an Engaged Learner**

Strategic Thrust 1 - Providing a Holistic and Value-added Education

Accolades for the School's Green Efforts

Qifa Primary received the ***Water Efficiency Awards*** in November 2017, and I am pleased to share that we have also been shortlisted for the ***Watermark Awards 2018*** presented by the Public Utilities Board (PUB). Do look out for the news next week on the prize winners. The Watermark Awards is the highest accolade for individuals and organisations in the public, private and people sectors for excellent achievements in water efficiency and conservation of water resources in Singapore. Given annually, the awards are presented to recognise and celebrate outstanding and invaluable contributions by individuals or organisations towards water resource sustainability in Singapore.

This is an affirmation of the efforts of all the Qifa stakeholders as we play our part towards water conservation and sustainability efforts in Singapore. One of the outcomes in Qifa's mission statement is to develop "socially responsible citizens" such as by encouraging the pupils and staff to play their part in caring for the environment. Besides raising the school's awareness on the 3Rs and newspaper recycling efforts, we also advocate and practise conservation of water and electricity.

We are heartened that over the years, the school's environmental efforts have been recognised by various government agencies. For example, we received the ***Green Schools @South West Sustained Achievement Award*** in 2017 following four consecutive years of gold awards presented by the South West Community Development Council and the National Environment Agency (NEA). We also received the ***Sustaining Toilets as Restrooms (S.T.A.R.) Platinum Star Award*** in 2017 following three consecutive years of gold awards presented by the Restroom Association of Singapore.



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Authentic Learning Experiences

In Qifa we believe in a holistic and whole-school approach to environmental efforts involving different student groups, stakeholders and community partners. For example, we collaborated with the West Coast Community Centre in March last year on the Earth Hour Campaign within and outside the school. Different groups of pupils participated in the West Coast Earth Hour Community Event on 25 March 2017 to raise the awareness of members of the public (see link: <https://tinyurl.com/West-Coast-Earth-Hour>).

For example, the pupils from our English Language Drama and Debate Society (ELDDS) wrote and performed a skit titled *'Darkness of Light'* on the importance of energy saving in the school and community earth hour events. Some of the VIA Monitors set up and manned exhibition booths and panels to highlight food wastage issues as well as the importance of water and electricity conservation. After the community event, the participants shared their learning experiences and reflections with the rest of the school during morning assembly to encourage everyone to play their part towards creating and maintaining a green environment.

Due to the positive responses to our pupils' involvement and contributions to last year's West Coast Earth Hour event, the West Coast Community Centre has invited us to participate in this year's event on Saturday, 24 March. Do bring your child/ren to join in the activities and support their schoolmates, the Values-in-Action (VIA) Ambassadors. They will be manning the game booths on the 3Rs, setting up an exhibition booth to raise the public's awareness on energy conservation, and sharing what the pupils are doing in school to conserve energy. The pupils from ELDDS will also be performing a skit titled *'Connect2Earth'*.

In addition, the school also held its own Earth Hour event last year which included a range of activities to reinforce conservation messages. Our VIA Monitors gave talks on conservation matters during morning assembly and distributed handmade bookmarks to raise the school's awareness on the 3Rs, as well as on water and electricity conservation. Pupils from the school's Qifa News Network (QNN) journalist team reported the school's environmental efforts in a video broadcast to the school (see link: <https://tinyurl.com/QifaNewsNetwork>).

Exhibitions and game booths were also set up during the three recesses by pupils and parent volunteers to educate and reinforce messages on food wastage issues, 3Rs and water and electricity conservation on 24 March 2017. This year, our in-house Earth Hour event will take place on Friday, 6 April. It will be helmed by our Primary Five pupils as part of their Values-in-Action (VIA) level-based programme. The activities will focus on green messages such as deforestation, air and water pollution, the 3Rs as well as energy and water conservation.

Water conservation and sustainability has been the focus of our Primary Five Inter-disciplinary Project Work which incorporates English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Information Communication Technology (ICT). In 2017, before embarking on their Project



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Work titled '*Water is Precious!*', all the Primary Five pupils went on a learning journey to NEWater Visitor Centre to gain insights on the rationale for NEWater and how it is produced. After the experiential learning, the teachers and pupils held more in-depth discussions on how NEWater contributes to the nation's water sustainability. Pupils in every Primary Five class were then tasked to track their own family's water bills for three months for comparison and to raise their family's awareness of their home water consumption. This idea arose from a March 2017 Straits Times (ST) article which highlighted that 75 per cent of Singaporeans had no idea what their water bills were in a poll conducted by ST.

As part of the final product of their Project Work, the pupils had to present their group's ideas and suggestions on how to raise the school's awareness and educate our stakeholders on the uses of water and how to conserve water in the school. For example, by encouraging everyone to report leaky taps and pipes promptly as one of the ways to reduce water wastage and assigning school staff to check the water meter reading regularly so as to detect a sudden surge in water consumption. These would ultimately translate to cost savings for the school in terms of its utility bills.

Primary Six Camp 2018

During the March holidays, our Primary Six pupils participated in a three-days-two-nights camp at the MOE Dairy Farm Outdoor Adventure Learning Centre. This is the first time that we have used this campsite. This was a rather big-scale programme which was led by the PE department members and the Primary 5 and 6 teachers, supported by the MOE Outdoor Adventure Educators (OAEs). The pupils were starting their campfires on the second day when I visited the campsite, and they were clearly enjoying themselves. The camp consisted of a number of activities to challenge our pupils, build their confidence and develop resilience. They included the tackling of the low elements and team building games at the campsite, dragon boating at Kallang, a Gardens by the Bay trail, a 4-km city hike and a night walk around the Dairy Farm estate.

The pupils were placed in groups of 15 from the same 2013 Primary 1 class. After Primary Two, many of the pupils were placed in different classes. Therefore, we thought that it would be meaningful to group the pupils regardless of the stream they are now in, and for them to interact with their former classmates and hopefully rekindle their friendships from the lower primary years.

There were many good stories of the pupils looking out for one another and lending a helping hand to others during the camp. For example, Nicole Chua Wei Ting from 6 Diligence reached out to a girl from another class who was anxious about having to lead her team for the city hike. All the pupils were given a chance to lead their team mates in this camp. However, when it came to the girl's turn, she appeared to be overwhelmed by the seemingly daunting task



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and broke down in tears. Nicole calmed the girl down, assured and encouraged her to believe in herself. Nicole did not tell her what to do or took over her leadership role. Instead, she guided the girl to carry out her leadership responsibilities. This boosted the girl's self-confidence, and she wrote a note of appreciation to express her gratitude to Nicole for believing in her and supporting her.

Overseas Immersion Programmes

As in previous years, our school believes in creating opportunities for experiential learning for our pupils and in the value of internationalisation in developing in our pupils the 21st century competencies of global awareness and cross-cultural skills and sensitivities. The first group of Primary 4 pupils left for Melaka yesterday, and from the photographs taken they had quite an eventful day visiting the Baba Nyonya Heritage Museum, doing a city tour including visiting the famous Jonker Street as well as doing clog painting. Today, the pupils are visiting a kampong and trying their hands at batik painting. The second group will leave on next Wednesday, 28 March.

For the Primary 5 pupils, two overseas trips have been planned for the month of May. There will be an overseas trip led by HOD/Mathematics, Mrs Loh Kah Yen and Senior Teacher/English Language, Mrs Doreen Chan to Dabu, China from 22 to 27 May 2018. The trip is organised for the pupils who are taking Higher Chinese or Chinese Language to better acquaint themselves with Qifa's Hakka heritage. We hope that they will gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and history as well as interact with the pupils from the local schools. We are also planning a trip from 22 to 26 May 2018, led by Level Head/English Language, Mrs Thoo May Ling and Lead Teacher/Science, Mrs Sia Song Ling. This trip is open to all Primary 5 pupils to Bangkok, Thailand to interact with the staff and pupils from our partner school and visit other famous sites in Thailand.

More details on the Primary Five overseas trips will be provided at a later date. I hope that you will encourage your child to participate in one of the trips which seek to inculcate important lifeskills, and develop social and emotional competencies such as self-discipline, self and social awareness as well as self and relationship management in the children.

Qifa's Academic and Non-Academic Achievements

Jiang Xindi from 4 Exemplary and Fu Junhao from 4 Diligence came in **Third** in the **Global Village Children and Youths Bilingual Speech Competition**. Pothakamuri Srivayas from 6 Exemplary was conferred the **Division 1 Good Speaker Award** in the **Wits and Words Inter-School Debate Championship 2018**. Our team emerged as one of the **Top 5** teams in the West Zone, qualifying for the Quarter Finals.



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Guo Jiayi, Andie from 5 Caring received the **2018 Abbott Young Scientist Award** which is offered to deserving youths to increase their interest and knowledge in a variety of science and mathematical topics.

All four of the school's Boys and Girls Junior and Senior Volleyball school teams are currently competing in the *National Inter-Primary Schools Volleyball Championships 2018*. They were victorious in the *West Zone Inter-Primary Schools Volleyball Championships 2018*. The **Senior and Junior Boys** teams emerged as the **Champions** while the **Senior and Junior Girls** teams took the **Second** position. In the *National Inter-Primary Schools Basketball Championships 2018*, the Junior Girls' team were the **Second Runners-Up**.

In the **70th National Schools Individual Chess Championships 2018**, the school received the news that Ding Simeng from 3 Exemplary won the **Third Prize** in the **West Zone**, and came in **Fourth** in the **National Junior Girls Category**. Suryavarman Chandrasekar, from 1 Fortitude, also received the **Third Prize** in the **West Zone** for the **Lower Junior Boys Category**. A total of 1,250 students from various schools in Singapore participated in this event which was held over 2 days (13th & 14th March) of the March holidays.

***Every Teacher, a Caring Educator**

Strategic Thrust 2 – Providing Care and Support for Staff

New Staff

I would like to welcome a newly trained English and Science teacher, Ms Amelia Goh, to Qifa. Amelia did her teaching practice in the school and successfully completed her Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). She is a positive and reflective officer who is committed to honing her craft as an educator. She has good rapport with her pupils and we are glad that she has joined the Qifa family.

Communication with the Staff

I would like to appeal to parents to refrain from sending text messages to teachers after 6.30 p.m. and no earlier than 7 a.m. (unless it is an emergency). I have communicated this to all parents who were present during the Networking Sessions in Term One, and explained the rationale as the teachers need their personal time and space, to spend time with their family/loved ones and rest before the next working day. In addition, please allow at least three working days (MOE standard) for the teachers to respond to your emails during term time.



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***Every Parent, a Supportive Partner**

Strategic Thrust 3 – Building Effective and Sustained Partnerships

Home-School Partnership

On behalf of the teachers, I would like to thank the parents who took the time to attend the Networking Sessions on 27th January and 2nd February. For the parents of Primary 6 pupils, do note that there will be a sharing session on PSLE Preparations by all the English, Mathematics, Science and Mother Tongue Heads of Departments on Saturday, 21st April from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. We have received positive feedback from past participants on the usefulness of the sharing session in helping them to better support their child for PSLE.

Do note that the school's Semestral Assessment (SA) 1 this year will begin with Oral Examinations on 23rd April while the written papers will take place between 30th April and 10th May. The examinations schedule will be distributed to your child next week. We seek your help to support and monitor your child/ward's preparations for SA1. I would like to appeal to all parents to ensure that your child is present in school for all their assessments whether it is Oral, Listening Comprehension, Science Practical or the written papers. As indicated on page 7 of the Pupils' Handbook, pupils who are absent on the day of an examination must submit a medical certificate for that day. Absentees without a medical certificate will not be awarded any marks for that examination.

After SA1, there will be a Meet-the-Parents Session on Monday, 21st May. The teachers will issue your child's report book to you and provide you with some updates on your child's learning, and their observations on other aspects of their development.

In closing

On behalf of my staff, I would like to thank all the parents for partnering us as we seek to realise our school vision of 'An Achieving School with a Caring Environment'.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

May Wong-Tan (Mrs)
Principal