Flagging up the New Year
Memories from pioneering days

Deborah Fischer

I started with LIS in the summer of 2003. I was drifting in Europe and was trying to find something to hold me down. I heard about an English school in the area and decided to give it a go. The school at the time was very small with a tiny staff and only about 100 or so students. The building and the classrooms were old and desperate for renovation. Everything about the school said "I’m a fixer-upper!" I saw this as a great opportunity – to be a part of something that had so much potential. I was young, in need of a challenge and needed a place to call home. Once I started teaching, meeting the kids, families and staff, I fell in love with my job. I was hooked. I’ve been home ever since.

It was the last week of school, and the first week of summer...I believe it was in 2005 or 2006. The Primary School was just about to start its End of Year Drama Show. The Aula was packed. Then out of the blue (literally) a tremendous hail storm took over the city. Hail stones the size of golf balls began to not only beat against the Aula windows, but also to crash through them, sending ice and shards of glass across the room. Everyone was running for cover every which way. Thank goodness no one was hurt! But the most memorable moment was when our headmaster, Mr. Webster, got on stage and said, "Leaving now or later to check your auto's damage won't make a difference – but staying to watch your child perform will. Enjoy the show!"...

And the parents did.

Justin Sands

I’ve been working here since January 2004. I started as a substitute teacher and then I was asked to take over as a History teacher and also taught a little bit of English in a fulltime position. LIS was a very different school. My smallest class was 2 students only, in Grade 12, therefore we didn’t even have a classroom, so we taught the higher level classes in the library. There were 4 students in total joining the higher level classes in those days.

When I arrived here, we were sharing the building with a German school, a Gymnasium; we taught in one half of the building and they taught in the other half. And they waited for the last class to graduate which happened 3 years, I think, after I arrived and after that we were to take over the whole building. The staff room was a tiny little room on the 2nd floor, roughly where the Science lab is today. I remember teachers sitting there with an ashtray between ‘em, drinking coffee, marking exams and smoking, which they were still allowed to do, indoors.

Back then, the gym was a very old building, maybe from the 19th century. It was roughly where the Modern Languages containers are today and it looked pretty much like a torture room. All in all, the school has changed tremendously. I remember the old banana-shaped steps in the stairways, lower in the middle due to the wear and tear of a thousand feet, and also remember the basement of the school which is now a big open space with the cafeteria and work rooms, still being old dark passage ways. The school today is unrecognisable from the school of then but I feel it has changed for the better and many of the great things of then – the relationship to the students – are still visible today.
Welcome

Editorial

to our Winter Edition – and at the time of writing it is accompanied by truly wintry weather: all the more reason to enjoy, among other reports (Politics Club excursion to the Sächsischer Landtag, Primary learning experiences, and more), a look back to the heart-warming music making at the Christmas concerts (back page of the magazine) as well as another rich dose of reminiscence from another two long serving colleagues, Deborah Fischer and Justin Sands, who have seen many a Winter turn to Spring here at LIS.

We say goodbye next month to another veteran, who has been one of the architects of our school’s growth and success in recent years. Commercial Director Kirk Peiffer has decided that this is the moment to turn a well-written page and embark on a new chapter, having worked with and for us since 2010.

During Kirk’s time here, the school has more than doubled in size, and its complexity as an operation has probably quadrupled. Kirk has offered astute and effective responses to many of the challenges and opportunities this busy time has thrown at us, and he was especially instrumental in ensuring that the Kindergarten building in Plagwitz is the attractive and efficient environment that we enjoy today. As a former teacher of Mathematics, he has been ideally placed to understand and support teaching staff, and to deal carefully with the statistics, spreadsheets and savings that keep the school financially sound. The Commercial Director is the one who must occasionally look up from those spreadsheets and say, “no”, or “not in quite that way” or, “not at that price” to staff, principals and the head of school. This he has always managed to do not just with sympathetic charm, but also with shrewd, helpful suggestions for alternatives and solutions. Very far from being a steely eyed number cruncher, Kirk has relished the fact that his is also very much a ‘people’ job, and his warm gregarious personality has forged him strong relationships right across, and beyond, the LIS community.

We are grateful for all his hard work, we will miss his passion for school life, his sharp analysis and his infectious laughter, and we wish him happiness, success and many a return visit to both of our school sites.

David Smith, Head of School
For many different reasons, our parents choose to make the financial sacrifice to send their children to our school. For some it is the immersion in the English language, for others it is the quality of the educational experience, and yet again others value the international environment. That’s only to name a few of the reasons, all of which are valid. We, the members of your Board, devote a sizeable proportion of our spare time without financial compensation to guiding the fortunes of your school because we believe in what the school stands for and in the education it provides for your children. When asked by prospective parents why they should send their children to our school, we put at the top of our list that we offer an international education – that is an international curriculum taught by teachers from all over the world to students of different nationalities – in an international environment which enables your children to see the world from different perspectives. This is closely followed by our ethos of respect, respect for ourselves and respect for others, for other creeds and ethnicities and social backgrounds. The bronze medal goes to the principle we instil in our children that they bear a responsibility to contribute to civil society, not least because you, their parents, have made it possible for them to enjoy such a quality school education. Looking at the state of the world and the country as we find it at the moment, we think that there are a number of its leaders who would have profited greatly from attending our school!

After a long gestation period, our Foundation (“Stiftung”) has now been formed. DHL and BMW have generously contributed to its initial endowment. You, the parents, will be invited to contribute to the endowment. Its proceeds will be used to fund school projects and scholarships which would not otherwise be possible. We would be grateful for contributions commensurate with your means.

It remains for us to wish all of you – students, teachers and parents – a happy and prosperous New Year. There are great challenges out there, all the way from the purely local to the world political stages. We think, and we trust that you will agree with us, that the education which we are offering our students, your children, gives them the best possible preparation for dealing with those challenges in the future and playing their full part in helping to make the world a better place.

Board of Governors – Jana Näther, Dr. Nikolaus Petersen, Christopher Smith, Dr. Skadi Beblo
Welcome on board!
Let's give our new colleagues a warm welcome.

Cristopher Gentry  Nursery educator
Juliane Branitz  Nursery educator
Lucy Burke  Hort educator assistant
Jennifer Riedel  Hort educator assistant
Daniel Köibel  Housecleaner team

Kjersti Nichols  Hort leader. Kjersti comes back from one year maternity leave and is looking forward to an exciting school year together with children, colleagues and parents.

Marianne Lange – after a sabbatical year in Africa, Marianne is now back at our Secondary school office.

Marius Zell will be leaving LIS. He replaced Kjersti Nichols as Hort leader during the time of her parental leave. Marius has decided to embark on new adventures. We're wishing him all the best for his personal future.

Thanks for everything, Marius!

Welcome back!

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DOK Spotters 2016
A youth journalism group at the DOK Leipzig documentary film festival 2016 was called the DOK Spotters. In the group were 14 teenagers and 5 supervisors who led the sessions for the whole week. Our tasks included writing interview questions, recording and editing interviews, making short video clips and publishing the week’s work online. The highlights of the week were creating video blogs, interviewing, and watching films and then talking to the film’s director. What made me nervous was an interview with Leena Pasanen, the artistic director of the DOK Leipzig festival, but it was worth it. I strongly recommend taking part in the DOK Spotters next year because it is a very cool experience and will give you an insight into the film world, great for anyone interested in making films. To check out some videos that I helped create (and also appear in), including the interview with Leena Pasanen and a short documentary about “Lonesome Holograms”, visit the DOK Spotters YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/DOKSpotters/videos.

Anton Schweitzer, 9ML

WWW.LIS.SCHOOL
I am very pleased to stand here and wish to share with you a few words regarding my journey through the IGCSE, which is the certificate our grade 11 students will proudly hold in their hands today and Grade 9 and 10 are striving towards. I have the feeling that my learning for the Cambridge IGCSE over the last two years has equipped me with a solid foundation of knowledge for a broad range of subjects on which to build in the next two years throughout the International Baccalaureate programme.

We have all been told before that we have the future in our hands, in one way implying that academic attainment is the sole determinant for success. But the understanding of success is highly subjective and unique for every individual, however I believe it is valid to consider education as the key to personal and intellectual growth, which enables us to think with more awareness, exhibit originality and creativity to produce great ideas that make a change.

From my own experience, I can state that fortunately the IGCSE leaves plentiful leisure time, meaning I was able to pursue a variety of sports disciplines including mountain biking, cross country and athletics, as well as major interests of mine like photography and filmmaking, to name only a few. I strongly advocate a varied life outside of school, since recurring breaks from studying can work wonders.

Some of the special moments from the last few years I was able to recall, were the film production of "Wilhelm Tell" in German and "To Kill a Mockingbird" in English, the Art exhibitions and field trips and really mind-blowing realizations in Physics. In fact, it is impossible for me to mention all of these memories now. However, we should not forget the countless occasions on which Maths classes with Mr. Hampton transformed into vivid debates, which surely were like a breath of fresh air and a first taste of TOK.

I thank Mr. Öktem for managing to compress almost two years’ of subject material into one, thus putting the ICT students into a hopeful position to tackle the exams. I thank Mr. Dindorf, Mr. Osthof and Mr. Cajigal for the two year-highly-inspiring introduction into the world and application of experimental sciences, Mrs. Brunet for taking my passion for processes on planet Earth to the next level and of course the languages department for raising my linguistic proficiency in so many aspects. Last but most definitely not least, I would like to express gratitude for Frau Dr. Schleif’s efforts to ensure a well-organized exam schedule and supporting us during the exam weeks.

So let us, as year 11 IB students embrace the new challenge we have embarked on, join forces with the engaged staff and strive to make the last two years of our school life forever memorable as an unmatched experience of effective collaboration and intellectual development.

Thank you very much.

Peter Breuer
were some 20 LIS students, also known as the Politics Club, embarking on a dangerous journey on 28 September. In Dresden they hoped to gather first hand experience of how the state of Saxony is governed. All the seats on the visitors’ stand in the Landtag above the plenum were occupied. The plenum itself was like a wheel of Swiss cheese, insignificant and noticeable empty seats. Our visit was so perfectly timed that we witnessed the transition from one point of the day’s agenda to the next. Perhaps the most noteworthy development was the subsequent change of politicians. AfD-leader Petry (first seat, first row from the right) received a suspicious phone call just in time to get her out of the upcoming debate concerning the recent excesses of violence against refugees in Bautzen.

A very suspicious phone call – was the general consensus of the politics club. Time to put on those tinfoil hats.

Every party is allowed to add an item on the agenda and to start a debate. Representatives receive a fixed amount of time, which they can use to give speeches or ask questions. The amount of time available is determined by the party’s representation in the Landtag, the larger the party the longer the time. We were warned that politicians would interrupt each other with counterstatements but there was a surprising amount of rude gestures as well. Judging them against the debate standards at the LIS, their behaviour was highly unprofessional: gesturing someone to have a screw loose while pulling faces (DIE LINKE), interrupting a speech claiming to be falsely accused (CDU) or evading and denying questions (AfD), we saw the whole spectrum of things not to do during a debate. Kudos go to Valentin Lippmann (DIE GRÜNEN) for holding and emotionally captivating and to-the-point-speech against political apathy in the face of politically motivated violence.

Time to talk business. Our supervisor (a university student) led us into a separate room where we were to meet three politicians from the CDU, SPD and GRÜNEN. Until these arrived to answer the questions we prepared, he explained the parliamentary process and, more precisely: how laws were made. Different sources can submit a proposal that forms the basis of a law: these include citizens, at least eight delegates (from one or differing parties), or the Staatsregierung (current state government). Next, the law is broken down into its constituents (traffic, education, etc.) and the politicians in a party, responsible for those areas, meet to draft their own proposals. If the work groups are successful a multiparty commission is formed which eventually submits the bill to the plenum, which then decides whether or not to implement the new law.

**Is there a minimum attendance required for the delegates?** Yes. If they are not attending the plenum, they have to stay within the building. That’s why there are speakers everywhere, even in the restrooms as some of you may have noticed.

**Are there any consequences for politicians who are rude during debates?** Delegates can be fined or excluded from the plenum. While the NPD was still represented in the Landtag, this happened frequently.

**Can delegates insist that the speaker answers their question? No. The speaker can even ignore a question once it has been asked.**

**How do delegates get along with one another outside the plenum?** Most of us are good friends because we respect each other’s political views. It’s pretty common for delegates that were shouting at one another in the plenum to have a coffee together in the cafeteria.

Happy and generally satisfied with these answers, the LIS Politics club loosened their stranglehold on the Saxonian capital for the time being. They boarded the train. But they would be back. Following a discussion, we concluded that politicians could easily boost their popularity by allowing the public more access to law- and decision-making. This would increase transparency and reduce the mistrust towards politics in general.

_Alik Luda, 12 RB_
How would you define learning?

What does learning look like to you? Last year, the primary school at LIS asked themselves this very question and decided to come up with a common ground about learning, as learning is and should be the centre of all schools. As a result, we came up with the LIS primary learning definition.

Understanding – knowing – doing. Learning is a constant journey of discovery. Together, we make connections and learn from our experiences.

This learning definition is now at the centre of the primary school and is the core of our decisions about curriculum, what happens in our classes, playground, school wide activities and even afternoon care. It not only provides a shared awareness between the teachers and educators but also among the students, parents, school leaders, board members and other stakeholders about what the school means when we say “learning”.

Check out below the top ten things you can say to your child from the IPC to help you and your child develop a conversation about learning.

- **Say to your child** the word ‘yet’ as often as you can.
- **Say to your child** ‘you’re getting better’ whenever the opportunity allows.
- **Say to your child** ‘what have you learnt today?’
- **Say encouraging things** as often as you can when your child is beginning to learn something new and encourage them when something still isn’t perfect.
- **Say things to your child** to show you can see that there’s improvement, however small. Compare ‘then’ and ‘now’ and praise the difference.
- **Say to your child** ‘of course you’ve made a mistake, but keep going, you’re learning.’
- **Say to your child** ‘your brain is wired in lots of different ways; some ways are better than others. Let’s try to make each part work as well as it can.’
- **Say to your child** ‘take a break, do some exercise, then start learning again.’
- **Say to your child** ‘if you find facts difficult to remember then it’s ok to use a ‘hook’ to help you remember.’
- **Say to your child** ‘I found x easy to learn, but I had to work harder at y.’

Kathryn Horn, IPC Co-ordinator
Go with the Flow. The unit mainly covered geography, science, society and incorporated ICT, art and music for certain activities. Literacy was also integrated into our unit as the students wrote recounts of floods from different perspectives, wrote explanation texts about the water cycle and prepared a debate about the advantages and disadvantages of dams.

At the end of the unit, students chose one area of learning from this unit and decided how to showcase what they have learnt. It was wonderful to see how varied their interests and knowledge were. Some students chose to present their learning in a skit, quiz, presentation; others made posters or little films. This was also a chance for the teachers to observe how well the students worked together and how focused they were in completing their project.

Uli Metzler, Grade 4 Teacher

For the majority of term 1, Grade 4’s International Primary Curriculum unit was

Moving People

Rebecca Buckingham, Grade 5 teacher

simulated an evacuation as part of the entry point to our new IPC unit Moving People. The children had packed bags at home under a strict time limit of five minutes and then, when they came to school were told an emergency had happened so we had to leave Leipzig and would be walking for 6 days. We took them to the park and gave them approximately an hour to build a shelter and a ‘fire’. Afterwards we reflected how they felt and how useful their supplies had been. This is a photo of the whole of Grade 5 just before we returned to school.
Autumn Hort
Sensational Senses

The last Holidays in 2016 we spent focusing on individual skills and interests of the children. They had the chance to try out a lot of different activities in the following workshops: Christmas crafting, woodwork, hand knitting, making candle lights, Christmas improvisation and wood whittling. Each day we had the chance to relax with a lovely story after lunch and bake some yummy treats in the afternoon. Now we are looking forward to a wonderful Winter Holiday Hort together with many excited children.

Christmas Holiday Hort
Getting prepared for Christmas

The "sensational" weeks began by exploring the five different senses in interactive workshops. We learned lots of new facts about our body parts which play such an important part in our everyday lives. Blindfolded, our senses of taste, touch and sight were challenged to identify familiar and not so familiar objects and sweet, sour, salty and bitter tastes. Our ears and noses were tested to recognise many different sounds and smells. Our “sensational” weeks ended with a challenge to use all of our senses in a scavenger hunt. Our hands assisted us in identifying hidden objects in “feely bags”. Our noses helped us with the smelling challenge which revealed garlic, lemon, cinnamon and coffee and our taste buds helped us describe different flavours.

At our visit to the Museum of Fine Arts our sense of sight was treated to a variety of statues, paintings and other artistic impressions. Using our imagination and creativity, with our hands, we projected shapes of animals onto a screen which were traced around before transforming them into our own creative paintings. By the end of Autumn Holiday Hort our students had developed a wide knowledge about human senses.

Jayne Käthner & Marie-Luise Hofmann
Early Childhood Centre is now:

Leipzig International Kindergarten is the new name of our Early Childhood Centre, since the beginning of the New Year 2017. The aim is to use a term which is recognised in both German and English.

Those who enter the Leipzig International Kindergarten will be greeted by a variety of children’s voices. If you listen carefully, you notice that in addition to English, many other languages are present. 225 students from more than 50 nations enliven the building in Karl-Heine-Straße. The kindergarten is important to companies and institutions who bring international workers and specialists to Leipzig. German children also attend the kindergarten and benefit from the intercultural learning environment.

We are continually listening to feedback from parents and evaluating what we do. One aspect that has come to our attention is that an earlier and a later opening time would be appreciated by some families who are juggling their work and child care responsibilities. Extending the opening hours is a decision that is not made lightly and we would only offer it when we know that the service can be provided without a negative impact on the groups. Having said that we are pleased to announce that from January 2017 we are offering a high quality programme and opening at 7:00 in the morning and closing at 18:00.

Interested parents can find further details regarding our pedagogical concept at our Open Days, where guided tours in English and German will be offered.

Next Open Day at the Leipzig International Kindergarten is on 9 February, 9:00 to 11:00.

Please also check out our new kindergarten pages on our website: www.international-kindergarten.de (German)
www.international-kindergarten.com
Wish tree 2016
Thanks for your support!

Christmas

Christmas is the time to give and to celebrate for many of us. So students of Leipzig International School as well as children of the Leipzig International Kindergarten, helped collect presents for children living in children’s homes here in Leipzig.

Thanks to the support of our room parents, we prepared little notes with children's wishes such as puzzles, memory games, little cars, CDs and many more. We used them to decorate a tree in the entrance lobbies of the school and the kindergarten.

Everyone had time through mid-December to take one or more notes off our trees, buy the desired item, and place the wrapped gifts in the big boxes underneath the trees.

And, before the Christmas holidays, we visited the children’s homes and gave all the presents to the children who were really happy with the wonderful presents they got.

The Wish Tree project again was a great success. Thank you very much for your kind support and great help which made this Christmas time once again a special moment for these children.

A big thank you goes out to Blumenland Engler who kindly donated the Christmas trees for the school and the kindergarten.

Primary students donated their presents to: Wohnheim für behinderte Kinder Dahlienstraße 30, Leipzig.

Our kindergarten children donated their presents to: Käthe-Kollwitz-Haus (heilpädagogische KiTa mit integriertem Wohnheim), Friedrich-Dittes-Straße 9, Leipzig. Once again, thank you for your great support!

Liane Lindenlaub, Marketing Manager