

# OIS DYNAMITE

Oulu International School's Newsletter *December 2011*



## Events in December

Week 48

Week 49 **Mon 5.12.-Tue 6.12.** holiday  
(Independence day)

Week 50 **Wed 14.12. and Thu 15.12.** starting  
at 13 Upper secondary schools' open  
days (lukioiden avoimet ovet) for **gr 9.**  
**Sat 17.12. at 9 Christmas Concert**  
"the Magic of Lapland".

Week 51 **Thu 22.12.** Last day of term: Church  
service at **9:00** and report cards at  
school.

## Coming up in January

Week 2 **Mon 9.1.** School starts, normal time-  
table  
**Wed 11.1. at 12:15** PYP students dis-  
missed due to teachers' planning after-  
noon

Week 3 **Wed 18.1. at 18:00** Info evening for  
potential new students and parents

Week 4 **Wed 25.1. at 12:15** MYP students  
dismissed due to teachers' planning  
afternoon



**STEPS** (Sharing tools  
for English public  
schools) **Seminar was  
held in Oulu on 24.-  
25.11.2011. Read mo-  
re about it on pages 2  
and 3!**

## Coffee morning



Welcome all new and old parents  
to have  
a cup of morning coffee  
on **Tuesday 13.12.2011 at 8:15**  
in the **Student Council Room**  
Let's get to know each other and find out ways to  
support our children's learning at OIS

## From the Principal

*Dear Parents and Students,*

The term has gone so quickly that it is hard to believe it is already December! Probably the most exciting, and rewarding, event of the whole year was the **STEPS3 seminar** held here in Oulu on 24-25.11. The first day of the seminar and its workshops was hosted by OIS and the second day was at Scandic. Both of our Programme Coordinators have written their thoughts after the seminar in this edition of Dynamite.

~ \* ~

I am looking forward to meeting many of you on **Saturday 17.12.** in our **Christmas Concert**. This year's theme is "the Magic of Lapland" and we shall send you an invitation to the Concert later on. **The very last school day of this term is Thursday 22.12.** We cannot give report cards earlier, therefore, if you cannot collect your report card on the day, please leave a stamped, self-addressed envelope in our office and we shall send the report card to you.

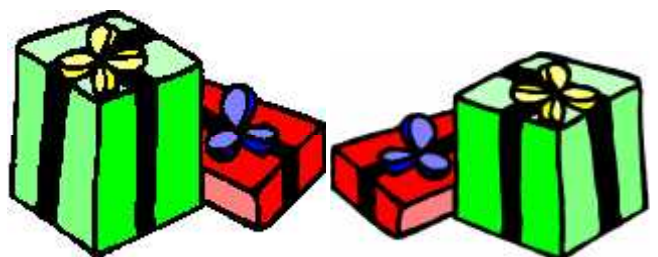
~ \* ~

I would like to thank all the **Parent Reps** and especially the chair **Kirsi Rannikko-Korhonen** for their activeness and commitment during this autumn term. The lines of communication between home and school have always been open, and approaching the school has been made even easier since the opening of the e-mail address [ois-info@eduouka.fi](mailto:ois-info@eduouka.fi). We now get lots of interested contacts every week.

~ \* ~

Wishing you all a good December and a very happy Christmas!

*Raija Perttunen*



## PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

**STEPS Seminar** *by Kelvey Marden*

Over the past number of years our school has been involved in a network of schools who offer teaching in a language other than Finnish in Finland. One of the outcomes of this network is a seminar which has taken place several times. The seminar provides an opportunity for teachers from around Finland to share good practice. Over the last year we have twice had the opportunity to hear from researchers from Finland, Germany and Canada share their findings as a way for us to improve our teaching practice from an increasingly academically informed perspective. In my own participation in the seminar I can share two key areas from which we can be encouraged as a school.

**Roy Lyster**, a researcher from Canada, has looked at how teachers of English and French have worked together more collaboratively to give the students a richer language and conceptual learning experience. Before teacher collaboration took place students were benefitting from learning concepts through the use of two different languages in a rather incidental way. Once the teachers sat down and began to develop their collaboration, the students were able to benefit much more from learning about the world in two different languages. It's great to realize that in our own work our collaborative planning can help the students deepen their learning in English and in Finnish as well as other subjects which they study.

A second encourager came from **Oliver Meyer** from Germany who motivated us to realize the power of teaching children through a foreign language. He has seen how children who have studied for only a few years in a foreign language are able to deal with quite rich, complex text in their learning about the world. He encouraged us to recognize the potential which our students have as learners.

Thanks to all teachers who showed their commitment by taking part in this seminar as a way to improve our teaching in school.



(above) Roy Lyster has a PhD in Applied Linguistics as well as a B.Ed. and M.Ed. from the University of Toronto, and an MA from Université de Paris VII. His research interests also include professional development and teacher collaboration among language teachers for integrated language learning and biliteracy.

*“It’s great to realize that in our own work our collaborative planning can help the students deepen their learning in English and in Finnish as well as other subjects which they study.”*



(left) 100 educators from different parts of Finland, Estonia and Sweden were welcomed to STEPS3 seminar by the Starboys (Niskakangas brothers).

## MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME



Oulu was lucky to get specialists from all over the world to give lectures and workshops to 100 teachers from Finland, Estonia and Sweden. The participants from Finland came from Tampere, Espoo, Vantaa, Kuopio, Kokkola, Vaasa, Turku, Helsinki, Lahti and Seinäjoki.



Originally from Scotland, Sharon Keaveney (left) has lived and worked in Kokkola since 1997. In addition to working at both primary and secondary levels as an English immersion teacher, she is involved in the training of immersion and CLIL teachers throughout Finland. Pictured also Gun Lunberg from Umeå University (middle) and Oliver Meyer from Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt.

## “One size does not fit to all” *by Raija Johnson, text & photos*

### An Educational Designer tailor-makes teaching and learning according to the target’s needs

OIS hosted a Steps3 (Sharing Tools for English Public Schools in Finland) seminar together with the Oulu city Department of Education on 24-25.11. This time the emphasis of the seminar was on CLIL Pedagogy. CLIL means Language and Content Integrated learning, the method used in OIS too.

The keynote speakers of the seminar were **Sharon Keaveney**, an English immersion teacher and teacher trainer from Kokkola; **Oliver Meyer**, a teacher of Geography and EFL with several years of CLIL-teaching experience from Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in Germany; **Roy Lyster**, a Professor of Second Language Education in the Department of Integrated Studies Education at McGill University in Canada; and **Heini-Marja Järvinen**, a senior lecturer in foreign & second language teacher education at the Department of Teacher Education in the University of Turku.

Dr. **Roy Lyster** has experience from Canadian French-speaking area about bilingual read-aloud projects where teachers co-operated and strived to teach children to be bilingual in French and English. He stressed the importance of collaboration between language teachers, which exactly supported the idea that we have had in the language teaching at OIS in our effort to make children bilingual in English and Finnish or other mother tongues. According to Dr. Lyster, language teaching should be structured and similarities and the differences and similarities between languages should be discussed in language lessons. Dr. Lyster also emphasized that Language 1 (students’ mother tongue) can be used while Language 2 (students’ second language) is learnt during the lessons.

“A good CLIL teacher is a language sensitive teacher and familiar with the pedagogy of CLIL where language and content are united. Some of the native speakers are not the best CLIL teachers, although they have the fluency and idiomatic expressions, but teaching is much about pedagogy”, Dr. Lyster stated. He also thought that the amount of lessons through L2 should not be less than 50 % in the upper grades. Half and half would be an ideal CLIL model.

*“He stressed the importance of collaboration between language teachers, which exactly supported the idea that we have had in the language teaching at OIS in our effort to make children bilingual in English and Finnish or other mother tongues.”*

## Friendship and Sustainability

by Karin Parker, text & photos

The first trip of our new Comenius project 'Friendship and Sustainability' took place in Aberystwyth, Wales, in mid-November. **Anne Dullaghan**, **Gary Dullaghan** and myself went over to visit our host, headteacher **Huw Raw Rees** of Cwmpadarn Primary School, and meet the other partners in the project. The other schools are Ysgol Penrhyncoch, also from Aberystwyth; St Martin's National School, County Dublin and Ecole élémentaire Henri Sautet, Brive-la-galliarde, France. In May, Anne will be taking her class to France, so this was an important and exciting opportunity to meet all the staff involved and plan activities for the class trip and also for the project as a whole. The project lasts for three years and in that time we will be doing some mapping work to compare with students in the other schools, and looking at projects on sustainable development such as energy and water conservation.

As part of the trip we visited the world famous Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth. In the picture we were looking at alternative ways of processing waste from toilets (and it didn't really smell bad!). This is a community which is working for a zero carbon output and is helping Britain work towards a carbon neutral status. As a result of this Comenius project and work our school is already doing with its 'Keke' sustainable development plan, we hope to achieve our own Green Flag and also the Finnish National Certificate for Sustainable Development.

Our trip was very busy and we gained a lot of valuable insight into the culture of our host school. It was a delight to meet the students, aged from 4 to 10 – although we were a little bit surprised to see such young children sitting still and silently in assemblies, looking very smart in their school uniforms. They gave us several excellent presentations, for instance from the student councils of both Cwmpadarn and Penrhyncoch which are both very active.

We look forward to meeting up with the staff from the schools again, and in particular to the 6B class trip, which will be partly funded by the Comenius Project, to Brive.



## Off to Oulu! *by Lori J Gustafson*

If someone had told me a year ago that I would spend two weeks observing and teaching in Oulu, I probably would not have believed them. Yet, one day a letter arrived from the National Board of Education stating that in order to have my American teaching credentials recognized in Finland I would need to complete an aptitude test. For me to do this in English, I would need to venture north to Oulu and to Oulu International School.

As I began this adventure I had mixed feelings. I was excited to experience a Finnish national school in action as I have worked at a private international school, the International School of Helsinki (ISH) for over a decade. Now I would finally have a chance to ask questions about education in Finland and see for myself the everyday running of a national school. How would OIS differ from ISH? How does OIS carry out the IB programme within a national curriculum? I was also nervous as I was now asked to teach Grade 6 in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and in subject areas I normally would not teach. In Helsinki I teach in the

*"I found that whether a school is national or private, we are not so different. We actually have more in common; concern for the well-being of our students and how to best deliver the curriculum for them to be successful."*

Primary Years Programme (PYP) in Grade 2, and as a classroom teacher I teach Language Arts, Maths, and the Units of Inquiry, whereas subject areas such as music, physical education, library and information and communication technology (ICT) are instructed by specialist teachers.

Looking back, there was no need to be nervous. The staff and teachers at OIS welcomed both, **Anu-Maija Hakilanoja**, another aptitude test applicant from Vantaa International School (VIS), and me warmly and were more than accommodating for all our questions.

Besides meeting with all of our supervising teachers and observing classes the first week, we were able to participate in the Nature School with Grade 6 and experience first-hand the beautiful Finnish nature surrounding Oulu. The second week brought our teaching of classes, and the students were friendly and respectful.

Reflecting on my experience, I learned a lot from my time at OIS. I was fortunate to meet other educators and exchange ideas with them. I found that whether a school is national or private, we are not so different. We actually have more in common; concern for the well-being of our students and how to best deliver the curriculum for them to be successful. Thank you all once again for the experience!

*The whole Staff of OIS  
wishes  
all Parents  
and Students*



*a Peaceful  
Christmas and  
a Happy New Year!*



*Gr 6 out at the nature school*