

REPORT OF THE VISIT TO EASTLEIGH HIGH SCHOOL NAIROBI **3rd March 2012 to 18th March 2012**

As you may know already, we donated 31 desktop computers and 2 laptops to EHS, Nairobi. On behalf of ESS Alumni, Nisar Butt, our Treasurer and I went to Nairobi to make a formal presentation. We had a very busy, exciting and rewarding experience which I outline below.



Computers for EHS

All 31 computers we sent from London arrived at EHS in good shape except for 3 monitors and a couple of keyboards. Computer Aid International, the company we used, has agreed to replace them. Unfortunately, Kenya Customs Department charged the school 25% Excise Duty for these second hand computers! The school organised a presentation of the computers on Friday 9th March 2012, which was very impressive. Apart from the late start, the afternoon was very successful. We had Pritpal Thethy, Harjinder Juttley, Yashpall Wadhwa, Nisar Butt and I representing the old boys. The Board of Governors, the PTA, the teachers and pupil representatives all attended to make it a memorable occasion. I was invited to address the meeting as the Chairman of ESS Alumni. I outlined the process by which we had arrived at the decision to donate the computers. I thanked the school for their

warm hospitality and for their confidence in allowing me to visit lessons and speak to teachers and pupils. All the old boys, Nisar Butt and I, on behalf of ESS Alumni, then made the presentation of the 31 computers and 2 laptops to the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Dr Nelson M Karagu.

The pupils were really thrilled to get the 'new' computers and so were the staff. The Principal, the Chairman of the Board of Governors, the Chairman of the Parent Teacher Association and the Head Boy were all truly grateful for the generous support from ESS Alumni and thanked us most profusely during their speeches. They all, however, hoped for our continued support for more computers and facilities! We were later interviewed by a journalist from the Standard and are waiting to see the write-up.

The IT Room, network and Internet access

The school has a large computer room on the first floor in the 'newer' block above the current staff room. Some computers will be added to the current provision of about 25 to 30 computers. Other computers will be in subject area rooms in order to give different subject teachers an opportunity to enhance their teaching using new technology. Pupils studying IT as an examination subject in Form 3 and 4 have ready access to the computers as a part of their school IT curriculum programme. Others use the facilities after school classes and at weekends. Therefore all pupils have the opportunity of access to 'hand-on' IT now! The access to the internet is often slow and intermittent. This is because the signals are weaker in the area as there are no tall buildings in the vicinity to put up the equipment, I was told.

The buildings

We visited the school, toured the buildings and all the classrooms. We saw the Cricket pavilion and changing room facilities built by Kanbis Cricket Club. Kanbis use the facilities every weekend and the school uses them during the week. Kanbis have built the concrete perimeter wall, the kitchen and dining hall for the school. They have also put in a bore well which supplies water for the school. They have 'built up' the school library and donated the school a 50-seater bus. They have partially repainted the outside of the school.

However, we were disappointed by the lack of maintenance and the poor state of repair of the buildings, particularly inside classrooms and workshops, labs and the school hall. They badly need a coat of paint. The toilets need to be demolished and rebuilt. The windows all have a layer of dust which is a constant cleaning problem arising from the dusty and dirty environment the school is surrounded by. All classroom doors are of solid metal with an imperfect 'square' cut out to look in. This was done as timber is less secure and is very expensive to buy and maintain. Several roof tiles and ridges needed repairing/replacing as rain has seeped through ceiling boards causing them to drop off and others having a huge number of holes. The wall cupboards in classrooms that teachers used to stock exercise and textbooks were bare spaces with doors either missing or damaged. The school has had only a limited budget for repairs and maintenance and cannot afford to refurbish the buildings and classroom in one go. It will take several years. In the mean time, the poor learning environment for pupils can hardly be an incentive to raising standards! We therefore hope that in partnership with the old boys in Nairobi, ESS Alumni and the Board of



Governors, we can play a positive role in providing the school with a facelift. We have received donations for the school repainting and refurbishing but we need a lot more. I would like to make another plea to all of you. Please donate generously to make our school regain its old glorious look! Please send me your cheques as soon as possible.

Meetings and seminars for teachers



I had meetings with the Principal Mr Fred Awuor and members of staff. As a retired School Improvement Adviser, I supported the Principal with aspects of Leadership and Management, monitoring teaching, learning, pupil progress and attainment, staff appraisal and development planning. I conducted seminars for Maths/Science staff and for English/Arts staff. I spoke about Education in the UK to all pupils in four separate Year groups. I showed DVDs of different subject lessons in U.K. schools to teachers and pupils. Both were fascinated by the resources and teaching methods. They asked a whole range of interesting questions about fees, examinations, discipline, homework, uniform, class size, teacher pay, and teacher training. We learned quite a lot from each other.

Lesson visits and video sessions

As a part of my agreed programme, I visited lessons of some members of staff and gave them feedback on what I saw.

Teachers were very appreciative of comments on their strengths and areas for development. In the training sessions later, I highlighted features of a good lesson including the beginning, the middle and the plenary. The videos of the UK lessons exemplified vividly the main points I was making. I was really pleased by the excellent attitude and behaviour displayed by the pupils in all the lessons I observed. They were all totally focussed, keen to learn and kept on task.

Economic aspects

The school has already increased its numbers from 747 boys in 2007 to nearly 950 in 2012. So the school now is not under-subscribed or less popular than others. The school feels that the arrival of the new school bus (from Kanbis) and the computer facilities (from ESS Alumni) have helped raise the intake. For example, the numbers of pupils in Form 1 is nearly 250! It is fully subscribed. They have 5 classes of 50 pupils in each! The situation is the same in Form 2. They filled the Lecture Theatre and were having to sit on the steps when I did a session for them! The school has done well in spite of its poor neighbourhood. However the school has about 60 orphans. These orphans have nowhere to go and at present they live and sleep in classrooms in the school. The school fees are KSh 19,500 per year. The fees and upkeep of some of them are paid partially through donations from well-wishers like Ashwin Patel, an old boy of the school and a member of the Board of Governors of EHS. We need sponsors to pay the fees of these pupils over the four years of schooling at EHS. The amount comes to roughly £150 per student per year - £600 over the four years. Their upkeep would be £100 per year or £400 over the 4 years. The sponsors will receive regular feedback and communication from the child they sponsor throughout that period of sponsorship. Please support these children generously. Remember supporting these children's fees now will enable them to support not only themselves but their families as well. I will be very grateful to receive your pledges of support and the number of children you would like to sponsor @ £150 per child per year or £250 per child per year including their fees, meals, clothing and upkeep.



Dinner Meeting with Nairobi Ex-ESS colleagues

And to close, we managed to get 36 ex-ESS colleagues to come to a Dinner Reunion meeting on Wednesday 7th March 2012 at Angithi Restaurant in Westlands. I am grateful to Pritpal Singh Thethy and Teja Singh Kalsi for contacting everyone and co-ordinating this function so successfully! Nisar Butt and I spoke briefly about our activities and what we planned to do. They all seemed very happy to help and unanimously agreed to form a local Nairobi ex-ESS Group to work closely with us, to support our school and also help in the successful organisation of future programmes and reunions. An interim committee was selected and a draft set of 'Rules' was adopted. It was agreed that they would make arrangements to get the organisation registered with the authorities and open a bank account for the Group. The name agreed was ESS Alumni Kenya. The interim committee has Satpal Singh Jowhal as Chairman, Pritpal Thethy as

Secretary, Ashwin Patel as Treasurer and 5 other committee members. These were Alaudin Qureshi, Teja Singh Kalsi, Pankaj Jani, Jaswant Singh Babra and Gurdial Singh Panesar. They would arrange to get registration and a bank account, collect subscriptions and donations for the school and make arrangements for a General Meeting and Elections within 6 months. We will work very closely with the new group particularly on getting the school buildings repaired and repainted. We would also like to support the orphan children with their fees etc. We await more news of the progress and development of ESS Alumni Kenya. .



Visits to studios of East FM

One of our colleagues, Alaudin Qureshi kindly arranged for Nisar and me to be interviewed about our visit to EHS by Parvin Adam in her morning programme of old songs 'Bemisaal Andaa'z' on East FM. It was an excellent hour of chat with Parvin, listening to her music, discussing with listeners (including old boys of ESS) and talking about our plans for the school. We are most thankful to them for giving us this opportunity.

Visits to other schools

In order to give us a better idea of what other schools were like, the school arranged for us to visit facilities at Jamhuri and Upper Hill schools. Mr Kilonzi, the Principal at Jamhuri High (previously at EHS!) kindly invited us to their presentation assembly by their old students from 1979. Jamhuri are refurbishing the boarding facilities for a large number of pupils. Upper Hill is now a boarding school. Their dormitories had closely packed bunk beds for the 800 boarders. Upper Hill seems to have irrefutable evidence that their standards have gone up since going 'boarding!' EHS are therefore also keen on the same idea. However, the IT facilities at Eastleigh High School are now at least as good as those at Ofafa, Upper Hill, Highway and Moi Girls schools, if not better! The challenge now is to maximise the use of these facilities and raise the standard of education at Eastleigh High School to a new high!

Meeting with the Director of Education, Nairobi

We managed to get an appointment to see the Director of Education, Nairobi, Mrs Mary Omondi. We explained the nature of our visit to EHS and our continued support for our alma mater. Mrs Omondi was impressed and asked us to continue with our work as well as support other schools and teachers' professional development. Mrs Omondi also taught at Eastleigh (in the years 1987-1990?) before getting promoted to other posts. Mrs Omondi agreed to support our efforts to improve EHS. Her colleague in the Quality Assurance team, Helen Boruette, was also a teacher of English at EHS until 2008 before getting promoted to her current post. So EHS has managed to develop their staff to enable them to take up the demands of more challenging positions!



I hope I have covered all the main points. Please have a look at the photographs as well which will soon be on our website. www.essalumni.org.uk I would welcome your questions, queries and suggestions. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me at jntanna@aol.com

Jayant Tanna
Chairman
ESS Alumni
25th April 2012