



LISA.KENT.MEMORIAL.NURSERY SCHOOL

Latest Update

Registered
Charity
No:
1111569

Issue 6

The Headmaster, Aljuma Camara has now given up his paid employment, thanks to the very generous support of a local sponsor, who is paying his monthly salary.

He will be starting a six month management course in July.

CLASS 1

When the really young children 3-4 years old start nursery 1, all their lessons are carried out orally. They learn lots of songs and rhymes and are particularly keen on action songs, the alphabet, days of the week etc. Three and a half hours is a long time for a child of this age to be expected to sit at a desk. There are no toys to play with and the children have a break for 20 minutes during the morning.

After a visit from music teacher Emma Newman, last year, and tapes provided by her, the children have a music lesson every Friday morning. This is one lesson they really look forward to. We were very impressed to see that children in nursery 1 can spell all the words one to ten. How many 4 year olds in the UK could do this?



KEY FACTS

Primary School enrollment 1997-99
61%

Secondary School enrollment Female 20%,
Male 27%

Access to safe water and sanitation urban
41%, rural 35%

Number of children orphaned by aids
since 2001, 5,300.

Life expectancy Female 45.5 years, Male
45.7 years

HOW A CHILD IS CHOSEN FOR SPONSORSHIP

1. Age
2. Family status—would they receive an education without a sponsor.
3. Number of children in family.
4. Headmasters judgement/discretion; knowledge of the family.

All children attending school are expected to attend daily unless ill. Any child who misses a lot of school for no valid reason is given a warning. If truancy persists his/her place is offered to another child, who is eager to attend school.

The school is currently full with 154 children and has a waiting list, as the reputation of the school continues to grow.

Picture of wall

As you will see from the photograph, the outside wall has been sign written, which is common in The Gambia.



At the present time we are looking into the possibility of utilising the school at other times of day. We are currently looking into using the school in the afternoons for another nursery class. Also with the high levels of illiteracy, we are hoping to run adult classes in the evening. Some areas have levels of 32% literacy. It is very hard for children to receive extra help from home, as many of the parents can't read or write.

LAND PURCHASE

Negotiations are currently going on to purchase a piece of land to build a primary school. During my latest visit a large plot of land with a building on was viewed. We hope very much that we are able to purchase this land as it would be ideal to build a primary school on in the future.



WHAT TO EXPECT

Liz had invited me to The Gambia to meet my sponsored child. I had never been to Africa before and so it was to be a new experience.

My very first impression at the airport was total chaos—but, then so are a lot of Greek airports.

We arrived at our accommodation, which was very clean and much bigger than I had imagined.

The next day was a rest day and I couldn't believe how friendly the Gambians were. The staff all came up and introduced themselves and once they knew my name, that was it, I was greeted personally each and every time they saw me.

Sunday was the big day when I met my child, Samba Ceesay. We walked to the school along roads of sand with family compounds each side. Being the weekend there were a lot of people around and all were calling "Hello. How are you?"

We reached the school and the Headmaster brought Samba in. (Samba has moved on from nursery school to primary school). He was dressed in his very best and almost certainly new clothes, but his sandals were pink with flowers on them—how many English boys would have worn them! Far more importantly than the way he was dressed, the poor little boy was absolutely terrified! As much as the Headmaster tried to get him to speak, he was too overwhelmed to say anything. After a while he went back into the playground but sat on the bench for a while recovering before he was able to play with the other children. After a while, Liz and I took some photographs of the children and before long they were queuing up to have their picture taken, and they loved to see themselves on the camera screen—just like children anywhere in the world.

When it was time to leave, the children walked back with us, holding our hands and talking to us all the way.

Our next visit was on Tuesday when the children were at school. It was so sweet to see. There were three classes, grouped according to age, with the children sitting four to a bench. Which would take only two children in the UK. As soon as they saw us they were distracted and started to wave to us and shake our hands. After they had settled down we had a tour of the classrooms and each classroom showed us what they had learned, with one classroom giving a rousing rendition of head, shoulders, knees and toes.

Now a confession! I do not consider myself to be good or at ease with children I don't know. These children were so lovable and happy that it is impossible not to be totally uplifted in their presence. One little girl seemed totally taken with me, that I heard myself saying I want to sponsor Sainabou Joof.

Sponsoring these children is probably one of the best things I have ever done, and I can assure you, your sponsorship money is much appreciated and valued.

Written by Julie Paine

Every year all schools celebrate Commonwealth Day. This is celebrated on the 2nd Monday in March. Each class represents a country, in this case the UK and the Netherlands were represented. Flags are made and the children play games and sing songs. Each child dresses up and is provided with a drink.

PLEASE NOTE

School fees due on 1 July 2006 will be increased to £35 pa for nursery children and £60 pa for primary schools. This is due to devaluation of the dalasis.

GIFT AID

PLEASE, PLEASE, return your Gift Aid forms, as every penny helps!!

NEXT EASTER—2007

We would like to organize a trip to The Gambia for 7/14 days. This would involve running a holiday club for the children in the mornings, and the rest of the time would be available for site seeing or relaxing. We feel both visitors and children would benefit enormously from running a holiday club. This would be based on a craft group, sports group and music group, all dependent on the skills of the visitors. We would expect that most of the children would wish to participate in such fun activities. The trip will be limited to 10 people. If you might be interested please let us know.

MALARIA

Is a disease that kills more than any other disease in the world. Children under 5 are more vulnerable. It is caused by a parasite that is passed from one person to another through a bite of a mosquito. Mosquitoes usually breed in unpolluted still water. The rainy season (June—September) is a particularly dangerous time, especially between dusk and dawn and in areas of densest population. Many people, particularly children die each year in The Gambia with malaria. Over 1 million people, in Africa die each year, from the disease.



BUSINESS BEFORE PLEASURE

Thank you for everyone for their support. Without this the Trust would not be able to operate.

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