**The State of BISB with Mr. Gilhooly**

Mr. Andrew Gilhooly has been the new Deputy Head of School for BISB. He has thoroughly enjoyed his time here so far. For him, adjusting to BISB has been a steep learning curve as the practices are very different from those that he was used to at BISC, even though both schools operate under Nord Anglia. He has been working very closely with Mr. Thornhill. Together, they have already begun to take initiatives and create significant change at BISB, something they will continue to do more of to improve the school as they become more familiar with it. We sat down with Mr. Gilhooly to learn more about how his time here has been so far and what his plans are for the school.

*What are some of the biggest initiatives or changes that you have been able to make so far that you are proud of?*

We have gone through a thorough review of the leadership structure and the lines of communication in the school. We have made significant changes in reorganizing the leadership structure that we feel will improve the lives of members of the school by enhancing the student experience and the communication with parents. *(Click here to learn more about the leadership changes at BISB:* [*https://www.bulldoginquirer.com/post/brand-new-big-changes-at-bisb*](https://www.bulldoginquirer.com/post/brand-new-big-changes-at-bisb)*)*

We also now have two extremely important roles that we are recruiting for. We are conducting interviews for the Head of the Middle and High School and the Head of Lower School. Those two positions are going to be the key to bringing the school forward into the future by significantly enhancing the teaching and learning through greater oversight and addressing some of the other things that we can do better as a school.

*Do you think you can translate the success in growing the school in BISC, to BISB?*

I would say maybe. The limited physical space of the school places a limit on the amount that we can grow the school. For example, in the high school, the only section of our school that is not up to capacity and one with the most growth potential, each classroom can only fit a certain number of students, so the maximum that we could probably have in a grade, according to that, is around 35 or 40 students. However, I am very confident that in the next few years, we will be able to reach this maximum capacity in the high school. If we can do that and continue showing sustained growth potential, conversations about expanding the physical space to accommodate more students will likely start.

In growing the school, we want to refrain from making the high school too big. We don’t want to have 20 students in one class because it takes away all the benefits that our students currently get with small classes, especially the direct engagement with teachers. Our small size is also an important part of our unique selling point, so we would not want to lose that.

*How do you feel the COVID-19 situation has been managed so far this year?*

We are very grateful for Ms. Northey who has continued working as the COVID Coordinator for the school. She has been a huge help, taking on a lot of the COVID-related work to help keep the school open and functioning on a day-to-day basis. She’s also played a major role in being very objective on a divisive topic. People are on both sides of the coin in terms of what they think the school should be doing, but she has been able to manage this by objectively navigating through and making the best compromises of all opinions while keeping everything running in the school.

*What are some changes and improvements that you are looking to help make?*

Having a new leadership team will be transformational for the school. An experienced leader is going to come into their part of the school and identify the different areas that can be worked on and improved. This will make things at school feel very different, for all the right reasons: communication will be much better, the progression through the years will be better, and scheduling and timetabling will be a lot easier. You will see a lot of small incremental changes and improvements that will take place as the year progresses.

There are plenty of aspects on the academic and extracurricular front that we want to work on as well as things we want to do to improve the way that the physical space of the school is used. We have done that in a big way with the creation of the new turf field, which will be of large use this spring when the weather warms up. We hope to significantly improve facilities at BISB like this in the future. There are some additional major changes that we have planned and are coming shortly, which I can not discuss much yet.

Technology-wise, we also need to become more advanced. Nord Anglia is developing a digitalized curriculum and for us as a school to adopt that curriculum is going to require major technological improvements. That, in turn, will cost us a lot of money but will be necessary, as we need to be able to sufficiently operate new 21st-century classroom technology.

*What unique identity do you think the school can create in the future?*

I would love to create a STEM identity for the school. Other schools have an identity that makes them very unique, Dexter with sports, for example, and I really feel that STEM can really be ours. I think we have so much untapped potential with a partnership with MIT. Geographically speaking, we have a very unique advantage within Nord Anglia, of being the closest to MIT, as we are right on their doorstep. We are currently actively working with them to be able to use their resources properly to benefit from the partnership and make it feel like much more of a collaboration. Some exciting things are on the horizon, from the partnership. We were looking to start implementing these new ideas this year, but due to the COVID-19 situation, we are probably not going to be able to until next year.

*How do you think sports can be improved at BISB?*

Greater growth in the high school student body will only contribute to greater sports opportunities. We would have more students that are interested in playing more sports. The athletics department is currently actively looking to bring a wide variety of sport extracurricular opportunities this spring. These will take place after school in the form of many different clubs. The team in the athletics department that we have now is heavily invested in trying to expose our students to all kinds of sports, helping to build a brighter future for athletics at BISB.

*What does a typical day look like for you?*

Every day is completely different. The only real commonality between each day is the start, where I greet students at the upper and lower entrance. That is a really nice part of the day as everyone seems so happy to be in school: students excitedly coming off the bus, or running into the building from the lower lot. From then on, my schedule varies. I am typically in a lot of meetings with other faculty and some parents for a lot of the day, as there is very little downtime. Other parts of my day can include teaching: I was teaching a Year 13 IB math class and am currently teaching a Year 7 computer science class. In the next few weeks, I am going to look to walk around the school more, to see what's happening in classrooms and how students and teachers are doing.

*Do you look to continue teaching alongside your new role?*

Yes, for sure! As you move up in the leadership ranks in the school, you lose time with students, as you go from the classroom to managing other faculty. The latter is the case with my current role as it consists of interacting with other teachers a lot more than students. So teaching in a classroom enables me to engage directly with students in ways that I am not able to do otherwise. It also provides a real change of environment to my day, amid all the meetings with staff and parents that I am involved in. Being with students in the classroom is really fun and I hope to continue and do even more of it.

We thank Mr. Gilhooly for taking the time to sit down with us and for the work that he has done so far to help BISB. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors for the school.

