

(Photo slide 1 – Title) (Text slide 1- Title) Graduation & Award Ceremony and Concert June 2009

Introduction

Mums and dads, students, friends of Sotogrande International School, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our 2009 Graduation & Award Ceremony and Concert. ***(Photo slide 2 – Opening minds etc)*** My themes for today are: opening minds, creating magic, learning together and making the difference.

Now please welcome the most important people for today: the IB Graduating Class of 2009

Introduction

This is always a very emotional day when we recognise the outstanding achievements of our students over the last 12 months and when we celebrate the graduation of the class of 2009.

The occasion takes on special significance as it is the 30th Anniversary of our school and we have been celebrating the achievements and remembering the people who have assisted the school along its journey to where it is now.

(Photo slide 3 – Old school) (Text slide 2- New School) Our story is one of continuous development and improvement. The connections between past and present are very important in order to understand the nature of our unique school. Over the years many students, staff and parents have contributed to the development of SIS. The 30th Anniversary has been an innovative year with new staff, new curricula, new facilities and a multitude of successful events. These are all founded on our roots as a British, Spanish and international school dating back to September 1978.

From the humble beginnings of 12 students, we are now the leading international school in Spain and recognised as one of the best international schools in the world. This year has been an appropriate time to look back on the many successes of our school and to look forward to the future years of achievement.

(Photo slide 4 – anniversary dinner) Our 30th anniversary celebrations culminated in a gathering of 130 alumni, parents, staff and previous and current Board members at a lovely Gala Dinner in *San Roque Club*. There were moving tributes to those who were prime movers in establishing SIS and this event was a fitting climax to 30 years of achievement at SIS.

I would like to make special mention of two people who have contributed massively to the school as the longest serving members of staff. They have done much to shape our school and lead it to the position we are in now: ***(Photo slide 5 – Kini & Sue)*** they are Kini de Vargas and Sue Jenkins who both started working with the school in 1982 – that's 54 years of outstanding service between them!

Nurturing Excellence - Exam results

I would now like to focus on the more recent past and mention some excellent achievements in examination results.

IB (Photo slide 6 – graduating class of 2008) (Text slide 3- IB results)

The IB class of 2008 achieved superb results with 96% passing the diploma, obtaining an average score of 29 points. That is equivalent to 3As at A-Level! ***(Photo slide 7 – Phoebe and Isabella)*** There were some outstanding individual results, with Phoebe Cobb and Isabella Noble both achieving a total of 40 points (equivalent to 5As at A-level).

(Text slide 4 – university places) (Photo slide 8 – university logos)

Perhaps the greatest measure of our success is that more than 90% of our IB graduates obtain places in their first-choice, top class universities across the world.

IGCSE (Text slide 5 – IGCSE results)

The I/GCSE students of 2008 also gained very good examination results. 81% of our students achieved A*-C grades; most impressive was the fact that nearly one third of the results were A or A* grades! Special recognition goes to the 10 students who achieved five or more A* or A grades. ***(Photo slide 9 – Alex)*** This

demonstrates a very high level of individual achievement, with Alexandra Charleson achieving our best-ever individual IGCSE results with 8A* and 2As!

Continuous improvement

(Text slide 6 – continuous improvement) (Photo slide 10 – inspection logos)

These great results are confirmation of the continually improving programmes we offer students and the professional development for staff. Indeed in the last six years we have had **nine** external inspections from IB, CIS, NEASC and NABSS. In addition to that we have recently been approved by the University of Bath as a study centre to offer a Masters Degree in International Education and the IB Teacher Award – perhaps the two most prestigious development opportunities for teachers. All in all we are probably the most inspected school in the world with people having stuck their noses into every aspect of our school - this is really about giving confidence and assurance to parents.

In this last year alone we have had three IB inspections. In October our PYP programme was very positively evaluated and in November we had our MYP pre-authorisation visit. Only one month ago, we had a further visit from IB and we hope to receive positive news about full authorisation for the MYP in about one month. *(Text slide 7 – MYP commendations)* The MYP visiting team made a number of very pleasing commendations for the most important aspects of the school.

We look forward to having a fully authorised MYP that will link with the PYP and Diploma to make us an all-through International Baccalaureate school, giving a coherent and consistent programme across the entire school. Special thanks go to the many staff who enabled us to satisfy the demanding IB standards and who have helped us achieve a huge amount in a short period of time.

I would now like to focus now on student achievement across many different areas

Global Citizenship *(Text slide 8 – Global Citizenship opportunities) (Photo slide 11 – Global Citizenship)*

SIS is committed to developing students as global citizens, through student involvement in a wide range of experiences. I would like to focus on two of our projects that exemplify learning together and making the difference.

The experiences our students have had with people in India and Morocco have created long-lasting friendships. Our aim is to develop sustainable relationships that demonstrate our solidarity with people across the world.

(Text slide 9 – Global Citizenship – Asni) (Photo slide 12 – Asni) In spring our students had an amazing trip to Asni, Morocco, *(Photo slide 13 – Asni)* where joint sporting and musical activities enabled visitors and hosts to transcend cultural differences *(Photo slide 14 – Asni)* and come together in a spirit of friendship.

(Text slide 10 – Global Citizenship – Seva Trust) (Photo slide 15 – Seva trust) Last summer 23 students, staff and parents participated in a life-changing experience in India, *(Photo slide 16 – Seva trust)* the SIS community renovated a building and provided funds for staffing and accommodation for the Seva Trust community. *(Photo slide 17 – Seva trust)* Because of that 25 girls now have a clean, safe and caring home in which to live.

In this respect I must mention a very special person. *(Text slide 11 – Seva Trust quote from Judy) (Photo slide 18 – Judy Harris)* Judy Harris dedicated a year out from SIS to support the children in the orphanage. Through her amazing dedication and love, Judy has helped to change the lives of the children in Goa and establish great relations between SIS and the Seva Trust.

Why do we devote so much time and effort to these global citizenship activities? The answer is best demonstrated by images and writing from the students involved.

Please look at all our global citizenship activities this year. *(Global Citizenship video & text slides 12-22)*

A special mention goes to four students for their contributions and commitment to making the difference to the lives of others. *(Text slide 23 – special students) (Photo slide 19 – Matt, Albi, José & Yas)* They are: Yasmine Benjelloun, for amazing fundraising and contributions to the Asni project; Matthew Duckworth for exceptional

support for children during the Goa trip and contributions to all CAS events; and Alberto García and José Marín for their commitment to the Casa Abril project, especially installing and helping the kids to use computers.

Our students have really made the difference and enriched the lives of their fellow students in the wider global community! I would like to thank everyone for supporting these projects, showing solidarity with, and helping us to make friends with so many people across the world.

Sporting Highlights

(Text slide 24 – PE, Sports & Activities) (Photo slide 20 – Sports & activities) Physical Education, sports and activities play a key role in the life of our school and we give opportunities to everyone to participate and to excel at sport. Our students have many opportunities to represent SIS in a variety of competitive situations and our diverse activities help to make sport an enjoyable, intercultural and rewarding experience for all.

Please look at the sporting highlights and our outstanding sportspeople of this year.

(Sports & activities video & text slides 25-32)

A special mention goes to six students for their contributions and commitment to sports teams and events in SIS and for attaining high external standards outside school.

(Text slide 33 – all-round top sports – Pernille etc) (Photo slide 21 – Pernille et.) They are: Bryony Charleson, Koi Hogg, Thomas Isola, Pernille Johannsen Pedersen, Frankie Langan and Izzy Tom.

Expressive Arts Highlights

(Text slide 34 – Expressive Arts) (Photo slide 22 – Expressive Arts) The expressive arts are central to developing important communication and interpersonal skills and in nurturing self-esteem and confidence. Through the arts we also develop attitudes and attributes of global citizenship and intercultural understanding by opening the minds of our students; and giving them the opportunity to create magical moments for us all to savour. It is one of the most impressive features of our school.

Highlights in the arts this year have been many: outstanding performances of *Fugee, Guys & Dolls, Metamorphosis, the four primary musical shows*: the awesome *Sotorox* concert: our amazing IB art exhibition – and many more.

Please look at the arts highlights and our outstanding artists throughout this year. *(Arts video & text slides 35-42)*

A special mention goes to five students for their contributions and commitment to the arts. *(Text slide 43 – all round exceptional artistic talent) (Photo slide 23 – Ben, Geneva, Jack, James, Emma and Becky)* They are: Emma Collingbine, Geneva Lane, Jack Noble, Becky Tate, James Weal and Ben Worsley.

Other activities that reflect the diversity of achievement at SIS

(Text slide 44 – other highlights) (Photo slide 24 – other highlights) We are committed to offering a diversity of opportunities to student at SIS: they demonstrate our commitment to opening minds, creating magic, learning together and making the difference. Through this huge range of activities and events students are able to find their own unique talent - whether it is academic, sporting, artistic or service. Please look at the many other highlights from throughout this year. *(Other highlights video & text slides 45-54)*

Staff

Just for a moment I would like to shift the focus from students to some other people. They are the ones who make the difference to our students. They are passionate, dedicated and, most of all, caring. They have a very special gift of bringing out the best in our students. *(Photo slide 25 – Staff) (Text slide 55 – the best laid plans)*. Following nine years of inspections, and writing endless documents for those inspections, they are the ones who still never lose sight of the most important thing – inspiring your children in the classroom!

IB Graduation

Before the graduation of the class of 2009, I would like to make special mention of some long-serving students. Usually I mention one or two students in this section but our graduating class of 2009 are very special. *(Text slide 56 – Kristina 2006) (Photo slide 26 – Kristina)* For example we have one student who has spent longer in the boarding house than anyone. Kristina has spent 9 years in boarding and through her experience and caring nature; she has helped to make it a home for others. She will be greatly missed from the boarding house.

We also have 7 students who have been here for 12 years or more. *(Text slide 57 – Reception class 1995) (Photo slide 27 – 102 years at SIS)* Ignacio Crespo, Shakira Marsh, Miguel Soto, Josh Tromans-Jones, Luis de Pedro, David Blanco and Constanza Gutierrez who between them have been at SIS for 102 years! Two of them deserve special mention, David and Constanza joined us in 1993: Constanza was not even two years old on her first day at school! Together they have contributed a huge amount to SIS. They graduate today and set off on the next part of their journey, as great ambassadors for SIS.

At the recent IB graduation dinner, from which the photos are taken, I was very moved by being in the company of such accomplished young adults, who truly exemplify our SIS Values, and by thinking that in our own special way we have helped nurture these impressive young adults – and I realised that we must be doing something right! I give very special heartfelt, warmest congratulations to the class of 2009 - a successful future awaits you all.

ECIS Student Award for International Understanding

This goes to a student who has, “a positive attitude toward the life and culture of others, is a contributing force in the life of the school, and has the ability to bring differing people together into a sense of community and international understanding.”

I am very proud to present the ECIS Student Award for International Understanding to a very worthy winner: Matthew Duckworth

(Photo slide - 28 Matthew)

ECIS Adult Award for the Promotion of International Education

The ECIS adult award is in recognition of exemplary contributions to the promotion of international education and an understanding of world cultures. The award recipient is someone who exhibits a positive attitude towards others; seeks to promote an understanding and appreciation of other cultures; and demonstrates the ability to inspire others.

I am very proud to present the ECIS Adult Award for the Promotion of International Education to a very worthy winner: Judy Harris

(Photo slide - 29 Judy)

I would like to thank the many parents and friends of Sotogrande International School who have supported us throughout the year and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very enjoyable summer holiday. I look forward to seeing you in September ready for another exciting year at SIS.

(Video – Move your feet)