PRESENTATION BY THE PRINCIPAL, HENK FRENKEN

ON THE ETHOS OF

JENAPALANSCHOOL DE DUKDALF, LEIDEN, THE NETHERLANDS

October 14th – 17th 2019

**Key Points:**

* The social and emotional development of the student is central and critical to the philosophy of this school.
* Each student is encouraged to develop at their own rate and in their own unique way.
* Students do not wear a school uniform.
* One of the strategies in place is that students sit at group tables with a range of age groups.
* There are four to six students at each table with a varying level of ability, skills and ages. The dynamic nature if the group is in order to avoid dominance and by the same virtue a student being overwhelmed.
* Students do not have to work on the same task at the same time. Individual learning is encouraged.
* A key motivator in a teacher’s planning and for the wider school is the involvement and responsibility of each child in their own learning. Students are continually asked leading and reflective questions:

-How do you feel?

-What would you like to learn?

-What are your weaknesses/ strengths in terms of the curriculum?

-And very importantly…What *way* do you like to learn?

* Teachers are on first-name basis with the students
* Henk correlates his role as principal to that of a teacher of a class. He feels his teachers are his class and that it is his duty as principal to understand how he teacher teaches, feels about their job, to know them as individuals and to help them achieve their own professional goals.
* Henk feels that for both himself and his staff it is important to recognise a talent in each student and for that to be acknowledged and encouraged.
* Henk feels as principal that it is vital that he role models with his staff the relationship he would like them to have with their students. He promotes relationships as a key and critical value of his school that benefits the ethos and culture of the school. Relationships are the pivot and centre of the school.
* The atmosphere of the school is very important. Henk encourages a vibrant, caring and energetic atmosphere in the school.
* A policy of the school is to interview the parents and learn the background of each child. Teachers are then expected to mould the curriculum to the child in order to optimise the child’s progression.
* In relation to issues that arise with students Henk has a systematic approach:

-Parents are invited in to discuss the issue. The key word is ‘discussion’ as the parents are then under the understanding that the issue will be discussed but not necessarily ‘solved.’

* In his school Henk believed the social and emotional aspect of both his staff and students is critical and comes before all else.
* In any classroom there are two expectations or goals of the teacher.

1. The teacher decides when a child gets which instruction and for which task.
2. The teacher then observes how co-operative and engaged the student is and how they handle the task.

* The school promotes and communicates regularly with an active student council.
* Henk is not in favour of ranking systems as he believes that if we focus on who is best it means somebody is at the bottom. This is a very narrow view of the students and education and ultimately does not look at them holistically.
* Teachers from all partner schools then had the opportunity to take two different one hour classes. The students in the first lesson aged between 11 years old to 13 years old. Students in the second lesson aged between 7 and 8.
* Students are introduced to our school using “One Day in the Life” video created by our MOJO team. The students were very excited to see our school and were very impressed by our facilities, our subjects on offer and the fact that our students wore uniforms.
* Students got a taste of our culture by trying out some Irish dancing, watching footage of our Gaelic games.
* Worksheets where handed out which involved activates relating to out Irish Flag and other symbols of Ireland. Word searches and cross words helped improve/enhance their grasp of the English language.
* Next we had a meeting to fix down the dates of travel. This took some time as schools had to work around conflicting calendars and events taking place across the six countries.
* We discussed and decided on the activities that would be undertaken by each partner school.
* We finished our meeting with a farewell dinner that night.
* On the final day, we enjoyed sightseeing both in Leiden and Amsterdam before we flew home that night.