

**HEREN (Feb. 2011)**

## **All about International Schools**

### **‘Foreign’ vs. ‘International’ Schools**

Unlike in many other countries, foreign vs. international schools in Korea will mean a huge difference. Whereas admissions to foreign schools are restricted to foreign nationals, international schools are created as part of the infrastructure to accommodate further foreign investment in the country and its doors are also open to locals (including those without overseas experience) within 30% of the total students enrolled. Songdo’s ‘Chadwick International’ and ‘Daegu International School’ fall into the aforementioned category while ‘KIS(Korea International School, Jeju)’ and ‘NLCS-Jeju(North London Collegiate School-Jeju)’ doesn’t have such restrictions on the admissions quota.

### **Check out for the school’s education philosophy and history**

With many newly opening international schools being operated by overseas schools, it is critical that the prospective parents check out on the school’s educational philosophy first and foremost.

Songdo’s ‘Chadwick School’ was first opened in California 75 years ago by Mrs. Margaret Lee Chadwick. ‘Chadwick School’ bases its educational philosophy in liberalism and creativity while having academic excellence and development of exemplary character as its goal. 83% of its graduates last year were admitted to top 10% of US universities and 54% of its faculty possess masters’ degree or above.

‘NLCS-Jeju’ is first overseas branch of ‘NLCS-UK’ at London who possesses 160 years history. ‘NLCS’ was ranked no. 3 among UK private schools in 2009, no.1 in their A-levels test record in 2007 and was ranked no.1 IB School by the <Financial Times> for the four consecutive years. 40% of its graduates get admitted to top universities including Oxford, Cambridge and the IVY league schools in the US.

‘Dulwich College’ at Banpo is operating international schools in Shanghai and Beijing in China. ‘BIS Canada’ at Bundang (unauthorized in the local system) is offering BC curriculum for the first time in Korea.

There are also local operators to these schools and they include ‘KIS,Jeju’ and ‘Cheongna Dalton’.

In summary, consecutive opening of international schools is a result of the government’s intention to propose an alternative to the side effects from families being separated due to overseas education and at the same time to create a more favorable environment in drawing foreign investment. However, parents should exercise caution in reviewing the operational aspects of “branch” schools or those adopting only parts of the curriculum from the main schools in making decisions.

## **Op-Ed. -- Chadwick International experience**

### **“Joys of being the central part in my child’s education”**

**Chadwick International opened at Songdo Incheon on September last year, amidst heated attention from the education circle. A term went by since the opening and we now wonder how much the school is being run up to expectations. Mrs. Kim Jung-hyun, working mom and parent of Hwang Ji-hyun (G5) shares her experience of being part of Chadwick after 100 days in the school.**

Kim Jung-hyun (Mother of Hwang Ji-hyun G5 and a member of CIPA)

When we came across a news report that international schools will be allowing admissions of locals, my husband and I like many other parents in Korea became very keen. Having worked as a HR professional at a MNC for over 20 years, I realized more than anyone else that providing the right environment and education was critical to Ji-hyun’s development. I wanted to offer diverse options for my daughter with which she could continue to develop creative thinking abilities when her future goal was to work for her country in a global environment.

When we finally came across the news that Chadwick International at Songdo was at last opening, after long waiting, we had to hesitate for a while due to short period for the preparations and since nothing was proven at this stage. However Ji-Hyun was very keen on trying out and through preparation and test, it has been 100 days already since we became student and parent stakeholders at Chadwick International.

On the testing day, it was the elderly School’s President himself who greeted the nervous parents. Introduced as an school’s alumni himself, Mr. Dick Warmington first impressed the crowd with his remarkable portfolio (former AP President at HP, Stanford graduate and Harvard MBA) however puzzled the parents by making a remark that such indices for success are only by-products of Chadwick’s core values: academic excellence and development of exemplary character which to an extent remained somewhat intangible with a Korean mindset. When Mr. Warmington asked us parents to entrust the students’ education to Chadwick, there was a voice deep inside of my heart.. honestly... “I agree with you theoretically but do you think that will really work in Korea?” To be fair, I was confused because this old gentleman’s eyes were so sincere.

While I was there still remaining in doubt and anxious about the test result, Ji-hyun came out of the testing room full of excitement. When Ji-hyun said, “Mom, I really want to make it to Chadwick,” I was certain she was captivated by the excellent facilities. “Chadwick teachers had so many questions about my ideas. I think they’re interested in my thoughts,” said Ji-hyun. Is this beginning of a personalized learning? My doubts began to shift to the positive.

While few doubted Chadwick’s name in the US, some friends expressed concern about its actual operations and quality of its faculty. However I was lucky enough to know about the inside developments of the school from its set-up and the school’s management who stayed to all the principles and up to its name gave me another confidence in Chadwick. Certainly school is no paradise on earth but if they are willing to listen to the parents and discuss with all the stakeholders on the issues, I felt we should be on the right paths.

This very good chemistry with Chadwick began on the very first day of school opening when the Vice President of the Student Body at Chadwick School California visited Songdo with the school mascot, Dolphin beanie babies to be presented to all new students hand in hand as part of the school’s tradition. The pleasant experience continued when the Parents’ Association representative members visited Songdo to support the set up of our own parent body. Such talks we were able to share on the importance of ongoing exchanges between the two campuses finally gave me confidence on Chadwick’s policy of a ‘one school, two campus’ and how it differed from the concern cases that I had. The school has been actively inviting its parents to ‘actively engage in school matters not only for the sake of one’s own child but for the school’s development as a whole.’ I was most happy to see this ambiance of transparency and open discussion in school affairs and I also rendered my role as stakeholder with great pleasure.

During the past 100 days, Chadwick International has successfully managed to captivate both Ji-hyun and me with the inquiry based learning program in classes. It was indeed an amazing experience to see Ji-hyun gain ownership of her 24-hours filled with joys of learning both academic and extra-curricular.

Ji-hyun gets up at six and catches the school bus at 6.45 with joy. Many parents including working moms like myself gladly volunteer and visit the school and talks to the teachers. “My teacher pays attention to what I’m saying.. my class works as a team in studying.. I’m so curious to know more about what we’re studying... etc.,” are among some remarks by Ji-hyun on her school experiences. In spite of my initial concerns that academic rigor would be somewhat less compared with the local

system, it is amazing to see how Chadwick students maintain that academic rigor but out of self initiative and with sheer joy of learning.

Being overseas physically wasn't critical for our family as long as the children had exposure to positive surroundings. We're quite satisfied to see Ji-hyun adjusting to her new school life in her familiar surroundings. At the same time, it is also back-to school for me and my husband in our new role as stakeholders in education to trust the school as professional educators but at the same time to support the inquiry based learning at home.

Many cannot forget the heart touching scene at the Opening Ceremony where the parents were greeted with song by the students and faculty hand in hand. These days, it isn't difficult to see excellent teamwork happening amongst students, faculty and parents in every corners of the campus every day. Ji-hyun looks forward to morning every day to return to school and experience the joy of learning. It is my dear wish that Ji-hyun continues to enjoy her intellectual challenges she gets during her remaining eight years at Chadwick with confidence and joy. Perhaps this should be a small start at a truly global education in Korea.

Parent Interview – “Sharing International School experience”

Grace Moon (Mother of Daniel Koo at G7, Chadwick International)

**1. Why did you apply to Chadwick International?**

I think school’s educational philosophy is the most important. Chadwick’s five core values of Honesty; Respect; Responsibility; Fairness and Compassion fitted well into our family values.

**2. What schools/ educational options have you considered prior to applying for Chadwick? (Including studying abroad)**

Daniel had a chance to stay in the US when he was little and we did consider his education there however we realized it wasn’t the best solution for him especially emotionally. Most of all, Daniel wished to be with family and that is why we began studying international schools in Korea.

**3. Can you share with us your education philosophy?**

We often quote the words of Sima Qian, China’s ancient philosopher to our children. It says “don’t let talent come before virtue but let virtue become your primary goal.” As such, we have been focusing on character development of our children.

**4. How is Daniel adjust to Chadwick life? (How does he speak about the learning experience and school life?) Is there any changes to Daniel before and after Chadwick?**

I think the biggest merit lies in his sense of stability coming from being with his family. We have been concerned while he was attending an international school in Shanghai since he stayed quite shy and passive although he had good grades. But now Daniel has become very outgoing and showing various leadership skills which remained hidden before.

**5. I’ve been informed that the parent association is very active. What are your discussion agendas? What do you gain from these meetings?**

Parents have official meetings at least once a month and discussion agenda primarily concerns difference in the educational systems. In addition, we talk about how to best communicate with the faculty concerning education.

**6. What are you most happy/ unhappy about Chadwick?**

Low faculty: student ratio allows the teaching staff to know about each student in-depths and offer more individualized learning. Teacher report I received at the end of the term gave me confidence that the teachers really have a thorough understanding of Daniel and such feeling is shared by most

parents.

**7. Do you have any advises to share with parents considering international school?**

Many Korean parents have a misperception that learning at international schools will be (academically) less rigorous than that of the local system. Although the inquiry based learning program has fewer number of subjects, the details are covered much more in-depth and especially in higher grades. I understand the course will run in a much more rigourous way than that of the Korean system.