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St. Some Times

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GREG LEMOINE
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATOR

TOP 10 FIRST YEAR - AFGHANI BREAD - BIG BAND JAZZ
SCHOOL'S ALMOST OUT - PRANKS -



As the year comes to a close, I look back on my first year in Saudi. “Oh snap!”, a few issues of St.Sometimes were missed. I didn’t even include a Top 10. Here is a list of my Top 10 impressions from year one here, year 16 abroad.

10. SCHOOL WITHIN A CORPORATION

I don’t work for a school. I work for a large corporation that has a global footprint. With that in mind, I work at a school within that environment.

09. FINALLY! APPROPRIATELY PAID FOR WHAT TEACHERS DO

All teachers should be paid this well. We earn it. Teachers spend more time with your kids than you do. Why not pay them for it?

08. TRAVELING “LIGHT”

I live in a compound that is little America. Safe, structured, like a small 1980’s American town.

07. SAFETY IN CAMP

Camp is where I spend 95 percent of my life. It’s safe.

06. NO CAR. NO PROBLEMS.

I get around just fine on my “hog” (125CC Scooter). There are buses. There are drivers.

05. TRADE OFFS

No pork. No alcohol. No problem. That’s what trips are for.

04. QUIET YEAR ONE. BLOSSOM IN YEAR TWO

It’s been a quiet year with my ear to the ground and eyes open. Next year starts “work hard play hard.”

03. ONLY TWO NEW COUNTRIES

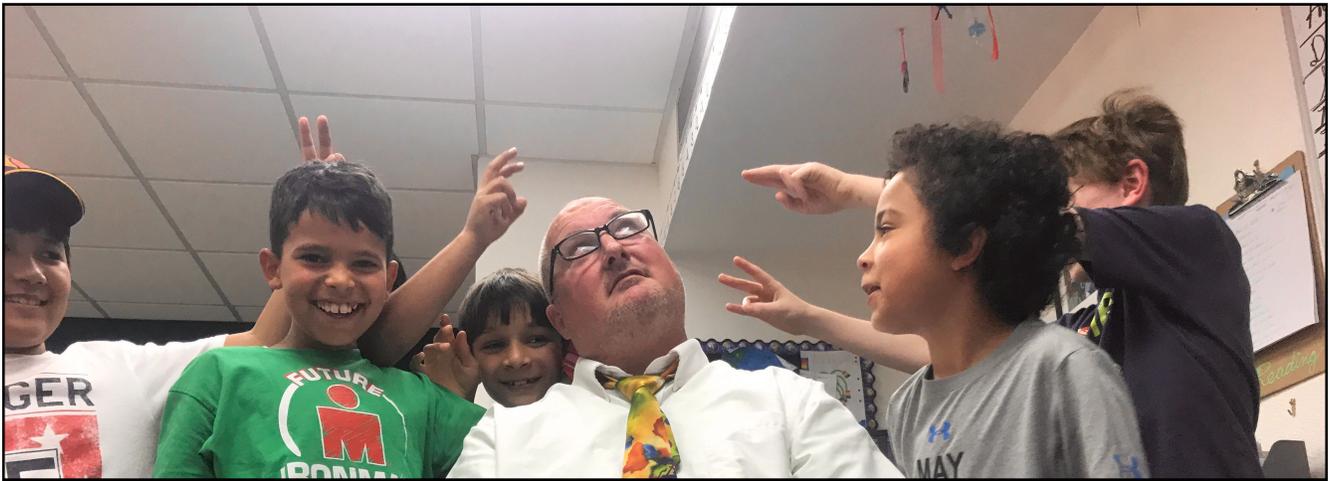
Most years I add five or more countries to my visited list. This year included some re-runs.

02. IT’S HOT, DAMN HOT

01. I LOVE THIS SCHOOL!

The MOST important part of overseas is my career. This is a top tier school with impressive staff, resources, and stability. As of my first full year, this is an opportunity to “settle in”. Plan A is long term. There, I said it. Can I stay in one place for 13 years and retire a millionaire? Looks like it

**I love asking kids what they
want to be when they grow up
because I'm still looking for
ideas 😊**



THE END APPROACHES

Aaah, the school year. It's almost done. We are heading into the final month as June 20th approaches. The kids are restless. The staff is getting restless. Other schools are already out. We are not.

Have I mentioned how much I love this class? These nineteen little cherubs have provided me with a fantastic first year at this school. Don't get me wrong. It's not easy. We are talking about 8 and 9 year olds here. It's a lot of work.

As we come to the end of the year, it's time to reflect a little and share with the one or two people that actually read this. A little more general information is ok.

My students come from all over the globe. Their parents work for my company. Hence, the kids in our school. The elementary school is huge and it only contains the 1st - 4th grades. The middle school is a different campus (within the same compound) that serves 5th - 8th grades.

My class is made up of a total variety. It's similar to a class in the USA, but I don't have more the 30 or more students some US teachers have. The classroom is huge by any standard. I love it. I've never had so much room, but we use every inch of it every day. My classroom library has more than 1,000 books leveled for my students' reading levels. Somehow, I acquired a *second* couch. The Promethean board is a pain compared to the SmartBoards that I love, but I'm not complaining. Lady Luck was

smiling on me around Spring Break time. I asked one of the vice principals - there are four of them - if there was a stand up desk somewhere on campus that wasn't being used. Bingo. I don't sit at a desk anymore. I spend a lot of time roaming between my students or leading small groups around my horseshoe shaped table. Are you groaning yet? I'm totally smiling as I write this.

We've worked hard this year on classroom management. "We" meaning the kids and I. The chime I bought from Responsive Classroom is a lifesaver. The students know the chime of my bell signals a class instruction. If there is more than one instruction, the students wait for a signal word before following the new instructions. The first semester was "Chicken" and the current signal is "Panda". Hey, it works. Go ahead and laugh.

I am really wondering what is up ahead for next year? This was such a great year. My students were fantastic. Where does it go from here? Am I in for six more fat years followed by seven lean years? Hope for the best. Plan for the worst.

My second year at a school is usually busier. My plan is to run the after school robotics program, add some coding, run the Little Bits Program, and possibly introduce video game creation. All of those activities will be wrapped around my second year at the same grade level and same classroom. Of course, I'm knocking on wood. One rule in overseas teaching is: be prepared for change.



DINNER DANCE

Friday 26th
May 2017

7:00 pm
- late

SEE
JUDITH
BRUMMER
FOR TICKETS!

Oasis Gardens Tulip Park Community Room



Enjoy a dinner buffet as you listen to the toe-tapping sounds of the 22-piece Dharahn Big Band playing great jazz hits of yesterday and today!
Also featuring the Dhahran Saxophone Quartet.

Tickets: 200 sar

3-Course Meal

Free Dance Lesson

Formal Western dress only

Tickets sales:

Oasis Gardens: Julia Efon Asua jmdimambro@gmail.com

Aramco: Brett Bouldin brett.bouldin@yahoo.com

Aramco: Frode Hveding frode.hveding@yahoo.com

Lycée Français: Kajia Bears wangkajia@outlook.fr



Once again, I had an experience that I just cannot make up. There is no inventing something like this! There is a Big Band Jazz group that plays for fun. Judith is a second grade teacher from my incoming cohort - we came into the school at the same time. She's certainly inspiring!

Judith is the only teacher, that I know of, that signed up for Arabic lessons. She is the one that got me into that. Now, I'm probably going to bring my saxophone back from the USA so I can join the Jazz band.

All of the new teachers are on a group message board chat app called WhatsApp. Judith announced the Jazz concert and I signed up right away. As you know, music was a big part of my life right up until my Junior year of college.

Ten of us arranged for cars and drivers to get us to the concert. Judith sent us the GoogleMaps pin so we could find the venue, but that turned out to be total FUBAR!

The concert was originally supposed to be in Ras Tanura, where Matt and Stacy live. But, it was changed to a different venue. The Oasis Gardens is located on the compound of the British School in Khobar, just East of our little island. Our driver knew how to get us to the compound, but it turned out to be a warren of dark streets in a residential compound. We tried following the maps app, but we ended up at some kind of entrance to a junk yard and some worn down warehouses. Ugh. After turning around three times, we figured out that one of those warehouses was our destination.

We entered into a simple, low ceilinged room and found our table. The rectangular room was divided in halves by a dance floor and the Big Band set. The buffet tables were set up to ring the outside of the room on both short sides.

A saxophone quartet was playing when we arrived. Sweet! It was followed by a double set of Big Band Jazz and ballroom dancing. Everyone was having fun and everyone was sweating. There were a few air cons working overtime, but the room was filled with over 200 people and a fantastic band.

The band. It sounded excellent. I'm a bit nervous about joining. It's been so long since I played. that was more than half my life ago now. But Judith keeps pushing me. According to her, each and every member of the band has the same story before they join.

I'm hooked. I'm almost 100% in on this one. They sounded so great. This is a chance to add music back into my life. Wish me luck.





Casey, Patty, Ami, and Me



Big Band, Ballroom Dancing, and a huge Buffett!

مخبز المنتزه

مخبز جعفر محمد علي آل عباد للمخبز



“ He’s a difficult 70 year old to keep up with.”

Mike Olsen

Mike’s quote is referring to his climbing-kite-boarding buddy. In turn, Mike is a difficult guy to keep up with too. When Mike isn’t working as a counselor or following up with students and parents, he is always doing something!

Ukulele, climbing, kite surfing, sailing, diving, running stairs, riding a bike, trying to jump rope 1,000 consecutive jumps, or cooking for ten people.

I may not do all of these things, but I enjoy traveling around with this friendly soul. This picture was taken while Mike and I stopped for Afghani bread on the





12:23

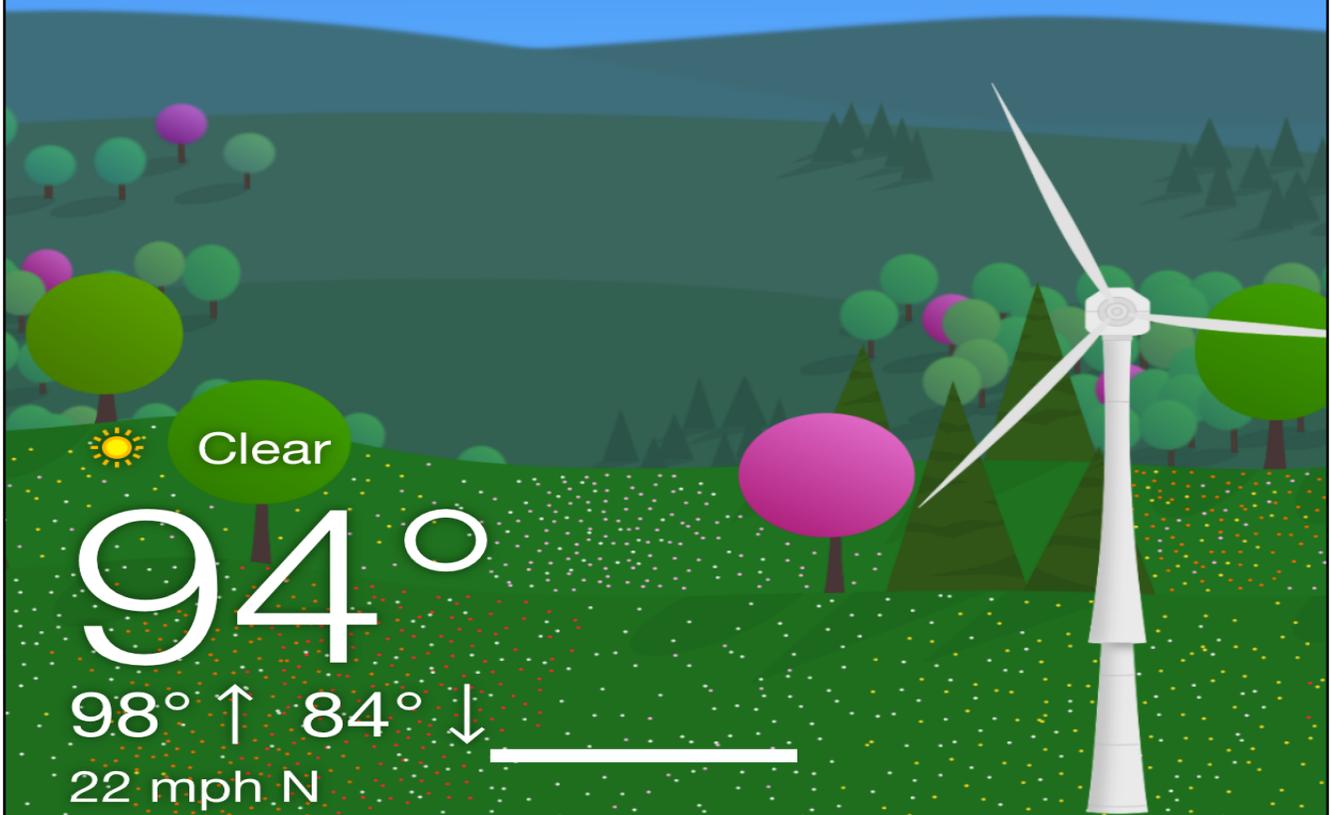
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

Current Location



One of my latest favorite apps is WtForecast. Erin told me about it. There is profanity, but I totally enjoy the humor. This screenshot about sums up the weather in Saudi and (of course) the LOTR reference is way cool!

I'm not saying it's hot outside, but two hobbits just threw a ring into my backyard.





OUR SCHOOL

This is the main elementary campus. Grades 1-4 are here, and many classes of each. Imagine thirteen classes of just third grade!

The third picture above shows the main building viewed from the third grade building. I love all the colorful bricks laid out at the entrances and the overhead awnings, like tents.

The picture below shows one side of the main building, with it's fake covered grassy area and the jungle gym. Imagine these areas filled with students!

of the grass is real. I'm still confused how they can make grass grow all over the place. Sure, it's a plethora of water sprinklers, but what an amazing feat of grass husbandry. (Did I just write that?)

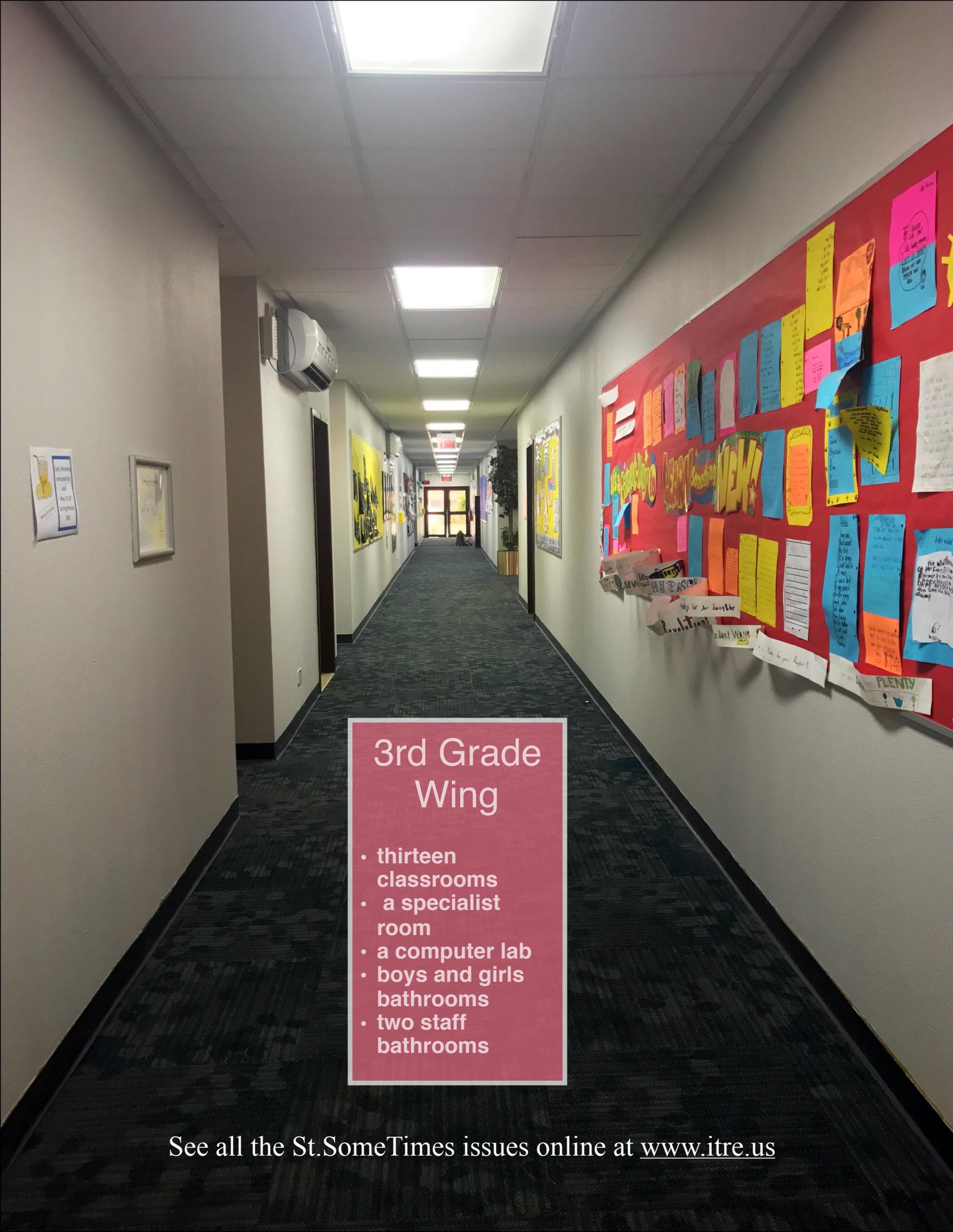
Step onto this campus and you should be amazed like I am. There is an attention to detail. The company doesn't settle for anything second rate. I don't know why the roof is a flat roof though. There are some torrential downpours during the winter.

All in all, it's impressive. Every school is different. This one is awesome.



Most





3rd Grade Wing

- thirteen classrooms
- a specialist room
- a computer lab
- boys and girls bathrooms
- two staff bathrooms

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