

# Going Public

## Microbiology in Schools Advisory Committee (MISAC)

### Schools Competition 2000: *Vaccination: Just a Shot in the Arm?*

RIGHT (UPPER):  
GCSE winner Kate Riley (back and front pages).

RIGHT (LOWER):  
GCSE winner Natalie Gillam (front page).

BELOW (UPPER):  
11–14 winner Laura Feaver (front page).

BELOW (LOWER):  
11–14 winner Sam Piper (inside pages).

The aim of this year's competition was to encourage pupils' understanding that immunization enhances the body's natural defences. They were asked to create a public information leaflet, aimed at parents, which explained how immunization provides children with protection against disease. The leaflet had to describe vaccination and how it works, and to cover the vaccines that are available for children and the pros and cons of vaccination. Many of the pupils also included a brief history of vaccination and new developments in vaccines.

Over 170 schools took part in the competition, which was judged in two age groups, 11–14 and GCSE, and in excess of 2000 leaflets were submitted. For the first time two of the schools were from overseas, one in India and the other in Bangkok. There were also more entries from Scotland, Wales and both Northern and Southern Ireland than in previous years, which was pleasing. The large number of entries was probably due to the fact that the competition was linked closely to the UK National Curriculum and provided an excellent assessment opportunity for both Keystage 3 and GCSE pupils. This is highlighted by some of the comments sent in by teachers from participating schools:

- *Entering was a stimulating addition to recent KS3 work on Health and Disease.*
- *We've had OFSTED in and had the pamphlets on display for the inspectors...*
- *We have really enjoyed working towards this and thank you for giving us the opportunity.*
- *They were very keen to research the topic in the local library and doctors and all enjoyed the experience.*
- *All the pupils found this exercise to be both entertaining and educational. Please could you forward any other details of other such competitions that your committee is involved in.*
- *The chance to do the leaflets helped to enhance the theory taught in class.*
- *The competition has been a most valuable motivator...*

The quality of the entries was very high and it proved an extremely difficult process for MISAC members, under the chairmanship of John Grainger, to select the winners.

The prize leaflets were selected because they displayed accurate knowledge which was attractively presented in a format suitable for the target audience of parents.

The first-prize winners in the 11–14 group were Sam Piper of Woodbridge School and Laura Feaver of St Margaret's School, Exeter, and in the GCSE range were Kate Riley of Stafford Grammar School and Natalie Gillam of the Royal High School, Bath.



Presentations of cash prizes and certificates have taken place at the winning schools. In addition, a pack of microbiology teaching materials has been sent to every entering school and each student has received a certificate of participation in the competition. Further details of the winners are available on the SGM website.

A selection of the leaflets will be displayed at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Science Education at the University of Guildford in January 2001 as part of an international celebration of pupils' science work. It is also hoped that the Health Education Authority will be able to use the leaflets to promote vaccination.

MISAC wishes to express its sincere thanks to the sponsors of the competition: British Society for Immunology, Federation of European Microbiological Societies and Don Whitley Scientific.

● **Daniel Burdass, SGM**

