

Dr Colin Glendinning, Head of the medical committee visits Katoke

Jocelyn and I recently spent a hectic but delightful week at KLSS.

I spent most of the week working in the school clinic with the school nurse Emilitha. This was a great way of connecting with the students and assessing the range of illnesses that they get. Communication was often a challenge because Emilitha's English isn't strong and my Swahili virtually non-existent. I observed a great fear of illness amongst the students as many of them have had relatives die from infectious diseases. Unfortunately it is commonplace for patients to be prescribed a minimum of 3-4 medications. This is partially due to the difficulties of accurate diagnosis and so a mixture of medicine is given to cover all possibilities.

I diagnosed and treated my first case of malaria which is still common in Katoke. We can now reasonably diagnose malaria at the school with a finger prick test.

We met one of the students called Nelson who is in form 6. Several weeks previously he had suddenly lost vision in one of his eyes. He visited the local government run eye clinic and was told that he had a retinal haemorrhage. He was also told that he needed to visit Dar es Salaam for a more accurate diagnosis and treatment. He was reluctant to do this because he didn't have the funds and didn't want to spend the time away from his studies. His sponsor generously offered to pay for his further treatment and after considerable persuasion he set off on his 2 day bus trip to Dar. We are yet to hear of the outcome.

