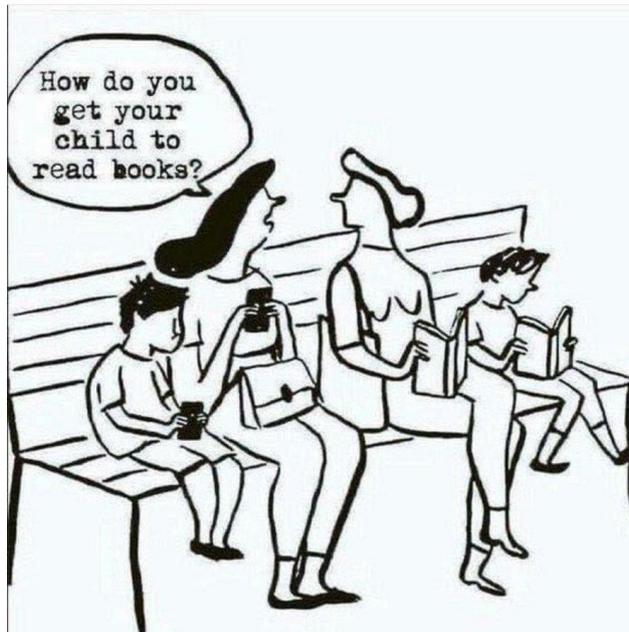


Ickford News



Thank you to the person who sent me this last week, how well you know me!

Ofsted chose to comment on our Reading during the last inspection and made a great deal about the alignment of the letter sound (phoneme) being taught in Class 1 during a week with the letter sounds in the children's reading books. In short, the inspector wanted the children to have one book per week that focused on a separate letter sound. I still have the bruise on my forehead from where it hit the table.

After a period of silence, I questioned the inspector on whether he might consider

the idea that our record of teaching children to read and indeed our results might just be proof that we are getting something right? Or that perhaps one book per week might just stifle the engagement of those children who were just discovering the magic of unlocking the code to meaning that letters of the alphabet represent?

The report was (only my opinion) full of contradiction and whilst the inspector concluded that, "pupils' reading progress sometimes slows because they come across words in books that are too hard." He also wrote, "The reading culture in the school is first rate. Books are everywhere. Pupils are avid readers and will happily spend their time immersed in a book sat on one of the 'reading' bean bags." Well, I can only imagine that the 'Reading Fairy' must be intervening at some point to rectify the mistakes!

I want to introduce our new 'Reading Fairy', Mrs Ellis who joined us more than a year ago as a teaching assistant and has agreed to take on the challenge of the school library. As with most things, an unsuspecting member of staff shows and interest and, before they can attempt to extricate themselves, they are bombarded with my 'vision' that has usually been written on the back of a match box or occurred during a dream! Nonetheless, Mrs Ellis is made of stern stuff, she is a 'doer' and a 'finisher' so I have great confidence that she will make changes where necessary (based on her own ideas) and revitalise our library so that it retains its position as one of the most effective resources for our children.

The priority is to work with our Infant teachers to implement a new reading scheme in September and then to strengthen our supply of 'free readers' so that children of all abilities are can find books that engage them and enable them to make progress (including reading hard words). If possible, we want to support our local independent bookseller in Thame although, the price of books is such that, sometimes we have to put sentiment aside and search for the best deal.

The next priority is to get the best out of our cloud-based library system and to ensure that it is an integral part of children's reading experience. We are yet to get children reading books that their peers have recommended and reviewed and I believe that we are missing an opportunity. Looking back at the cartoon above, we have to accept that the temptations of technology and its ease of use have pushed reading books into the margins of most people's 'down' and 'leisure' time. However, they can co-exist and we need to look at ways in which children can use both not just for learning but also for pleasure and for developing lifelong reading habits. The challenge for the 'Reading Fairy' is to establish a platform where we see our children interacting with each other, with books, with teachers, with publishers and even with authors using the media we have available to us.

I am not sure what a 'Senior Fairy' is called or whether there is a ranking system for mythical folk who possess superior talents to the normal human being but, if there is (answers on a post card please) then Mrs Shackleton must be deferred to and titled accordingly. After an enforced three-year break, she has cast her magic again and on Friday evening managed to reduce most of us to tears during the Summer Concert. To those parents whose children are in KS1, I suggest that you grab a parent whose child took part and ask them for an account because, I shall certainly not be able to do it justice here.



The concert was, without doubt, a team effort and I am indebted to the, PTA led by Jackie, who seemed to have enrolled every family member to help on the night; young, former pupils who served canapes; all of the teachers and teaching assistants who supported and organised the children during rehearsal and on the night; Cary Grant our resident piano teacher and renowned composer; Mr Shackleton, piano player, conductor, rock, strength and stay to Mrs Shackleton who is, quite simply, the best.

Mrs Shackleton is another of those poor, unsuspecting members of the team who has had to decipher my ramblings and matchbox planning and yet manages to ensure that every child at Ickford is immersed in the appreciation of music. Every child learns to read music, every child has the opportunity to play an instrument and every child sings!

Canapes, Prosecco and Aiden Barnes on drums preceded the main event, a concert that highlighted the inclusivity of our curriculum as well as how those children who have talent or those who want to explore other instruments also have the opportunity to avail of advice or teaching. In short slots, soloists took to the stage and gave a taste of what might just be in the future, whilst on the stage, Beatrix Holliday demonstrated her beautiful voice alongside her peers who, as a collective, raised the roof and had members of the audience scrambling for tissues. Mrs Shackleton, we salute you.



Finally, we said goodbye to another Ickford Fairy this week as Elisabeth Basnett left to begin her new job and degree course. Elisabeth and her sister (staying until the end of the term) have been part of an attempt to get young, educated, enthusiastic, positive role models in the classrooms supporting children and teachers. Elisabeth has been a popular member of our team and I am sure many of the children have benefitted from her presence in school. In addition, she has helped out covering the administration role on a Wednesday in the absence of Mrs Rhodes. Having known her as a pupil and watched her grow into an impressive young lady, I am very proud and hope that she will be successful in her new venture but also keep in touch.

Have a good weekend.

Mr Ronane

News from the Office

Dates for your diary...

24 th June	Key Stage 2 Summer Concert
4 th July	District Athletics
5 th July	Recorder Assembly
8 th July	Summer Fayre Cricket County Championship
14 th July	Sports Day - Horspath
18 th July	School Play Class 4 and 5 2pm
19 th July	School Play Class 4 and 5 7pm
20 th July	Final Celebration Assembly
21 st July	Leavers' Assembly
21 st July	Last Day of Term

This Week's Celebration Assembly

Hall of Fame:

Music Award:

Zeynep Konak
Beatrix Walters
Mia Makris
Isabella Cooke
Matilda Stow

PE Award:

Willa Goode
Melek Younis
Beatrice Johnson
Faye Kitchen
Beatrix Holliday
Harry Middleton

Ella Cooke

Percy Jenkins

Keira Murphy

Chloe Makris

French Award:

Molly Parry

Freya Weeden

Melek Younis

Oisin Harrell

Thomas Ansell-Hawes

Philippa Hunting

Stella Stanfield

Sophie Crafts

Deutsch Award:

Harry Johnston

Latin Award:

Matthieu Wolff

Headteachers Award:

Benjamin Herratt

Edward Nicholls

Stanley Johnson

Phoebe Boardman

Daisy Coke

Outdoor Learning

Teddy Merritt

Jacob Shannon

Xavier Flood

William Harris

Faye Kitchen

Rose Dighton

Sponsors



TIDDINGTON
GARAGE



Huge thanks to DAF Trucks and Nigel Beckett who sponsored the refreshments at the Summer Concert.