

# Ickford News

I hope that you and the children have enjoyed the summer holiday and are making the most of the remaining few days. As usual, we have been quite busy here preparing for the new year.

I am delighted that during the holiday, Mrs Ellis and Mrs Snell have taken delivery of a completely new reading scheme for the children in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 and spent ages incorporating this into our on-line library system. These new books (several hundred) will, I hope, inspire the children on the start of their reading journeys and make learning to read exciting.

One of our intentions this year, is to ensure that books and reading are ensured the prominence they warrant as a fundamental part of our curriculum. We have been liaising with the Book Shop in Thame and fostering a relationship of mutual benefit with them which I think will not only assist the school in managing the increasing costs of resources but also help engage the children and parents in our library.

In the very near future, you will be able to order and purchase books for yourselves at a discounted rate or donate a book to the school complete with a note of dedication inside the front cover. Look out for the new page on the school website to be published shortly which will have book lists and recommendations aligned to children's age groups.

We also hope to revitalise the Reading Challenges and to ensure that they are, 'challenging' as well as starting some book review sessions and a regular 'book club'.

Something that we will not continue this year is the School Council because it has been difficult to maintain its relevance and impact. We shall continue to have class representatives as a vehicle for our 'pupil voice' but the Council format is 'tired' and in need of refreshing. Instead, we will be giving children the opportunity to take part in more environment and ecology focussed groups looking outside of the school and engaging with the wider issues affecting society.

I am looking forward to the new year but have no doubt that it will be difficult not least due to the exponential increase in energy costs and the challenges of maintaining the buildings and grounds. One of my aims beyond ensuring excellent standards of teaching, is to ensure that the school is completely compliant in all aspects of Health and Safety. That is not to say we are deficient but demands are constantly changing and the role of the Headteacher is increasingly akin to running a business.

I have no doubt that Ickford is an outstanding school and I am quite prepared to argue this on any platform. I know because I have been here long enough now to have seen the fruition of goals and the fulfilment of intentions. I know the strength of the teaching team and I know the integrity of our assessments and results. During the past week, I have spoken to several parents of ex-pupils who have received GCSE results and A-level results and each one has credited Ickford with having played a huge part in their children's success regardless of what Secondary School they attended.

I am acutely aware of the need for a partnership with parents and, although some may disagree, I enjoy a positive relationship with the great majority for which I am grateful. Nevertheless, I am not in a popularity contest and I shall continue to make decisions based on my belief that they are in the best interests of the children. My door will always be open to anyone who wants to discuss anything and I would actually encourage the discussion especially in the world we have where the 'key board warrior' appears to be king.

So, to the practicalities: We start back on Monday the 5th and the gates open at 8:45 am (Breakfast Club at 7.45 am) please be on time. Children should be in Winter Uniform and wearing school shoes and they will need to have a PE kit in school. If they have had adornments put in hair, patterns cut into it, nails painted, tattoos applied, piercings or a mobile phone permanently fixed to their fingers, these must all be removed before coming through the gates. Nothing changes, it is still easy, be punctual and don't take holidays during term time. We shall get on fine.

I am really looking forward to welcoming the children back and meeting those new to the school.

Mr Ronane

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