

# Ickford News

The Queen is dead, long live the King!

Today we held an assembly to remember and celebrate the life of Queen Elizabeth II. It was a time to reflect on her wonderful, long life and the service she has given to this Country and those of the Commonwealth, since she acceded to the throne in 1952 on the death of her father George VI.



You will all hold your own memories and opinions of her Majesty but to me she was a source of inspiration, an example of strength and humility and a woman of great courage and understanding. I was fortunate enough to have been in her presence on two occasions, when she presented prizes to my late Father and discussed their shared passion for horses.



Unfortunately, I am out of shot but these pictures have taken on greater significance today.

We have received a letter from the DfE explaining that schools will continue as normal until further notification about the funeral which will end a period of mourning, although it states that; "any significantly celebratory events are postponed and planned for later in the month."

There is an official period of mourning which, I believe, will end with the funeral. However, it is important to remember that the children are young and need not be enveloped by any overwhelming sense of national grief or sadness. Life goes on and we want them to enjoy it. I shall keep everyone informed of any directives we receive particularly regarding any public holidays should they be announced.

## School News

It has been a very positive start to the new academic year and I am delighted to have the children back and to welcome our new starters. The little ones have settled in very quickly and I can assure everyone that, even those who have shed a few tears, are absolutely fine once the parents have left the building. From Monday onwards, parents must leave the children at the gate to the outdoor learning space and not come into the classroom.

Although, the Parent evening on Wednesday was well attended, it was still a little disappointing to note the number that did not come. I would not ask the teachers to give up their time at the end of a long day if it wasn't important and I shall not expect them to have to keep reiterating information throughout the term to parents who did not come. Hopefully, everyone is confident that they know what the expectations are in each year group and the content of the curriculum. As I said at the meeting, we set out our stall early on because what we accept now, is most likely to be what we will get in the future.

One thing that I did raise and would like to emphasise again, is the need to label every article of clothing clearly and correctly. An inordinate amount of time is spent picking up discarded uniform and trying to reunite it with the correct child. Please make sure the child currently in possession is clearly named particularly if the item of clothing has been passed on from a sibling or another person.

I listened to a discussion on the radio this week that highlighted the demise in school outings and educational visits. Even though it is an issue I am fully cognisant with, listening to the discussion brought home to me that, unless we can find ways to maintain school visits to enhance learning, only the most privileged or economically favoured will be able to access some of the great institutions and activities that we have in this country. In the past we have visited galleries, museums, activity centres, theatres, concerts and sporting events to name but a few and every visit has been a memorable experience for the children. The cost of transport and entrance is crippling not just for schools but for families and we are in danger of having to lose these opportunities unless we can come up with ideas. The PTA already helps subsidise the transport and ticket costs but I know we will be looking at ways to ensure no child is disadvantaged.

Another area of curriculum enrichment that I want to ensure we keep and develop is the outdoor learning initiative led by Mrs Honey. I am planning to inject funds, when I can, into improving the school environment this year but a contribution of £1 per session towards the outdoor learning activities will be a huge help to us. Mrs Honey will be getting in touch to explain more about this in the very near future if she has not already done so (she is very efficient).

We have a new member of staff joining the Administration Team next week and Mrs Rhodes will be leaving us. I'd like to thank Mrs Rhodes for her contribution and know that you will make our new Admin Officer, Mrs Harding very welcome.

Have a good weekend.

Mr Ronane

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