

Ickford News

Having not had water at home since Tuesday, I was reminded just how much we take this 'luxury' for granted. I know that schools in the area were closed and that we appear to have been very lucky. I have no idea how we escaped but maybe our water comes from a magical spring, hidden in leafy glade surrounded by water nymphs and sprites. My village Facebook group has been particularly vociferous in condemning Thames Water and sharing avenues to compensation but I can't help thinking about the people in the Ukraine, cut off from water supplies for weeks and months and the fact that 1 in 3 people in the world don't have access to safe drinking water. We are indeed very fortunate.

I imagine that many of you will have read or listened to news last week about the verdict that the Senior Coroner for North London, made in the case of Molly Russell, the 14-year-old girl. Andrew Walker is an ex-parent and Chair of our School Members so I always read any statements made in the press with great interest and, in this case, with some sadness. Andrew concluded that Molly lost her life during "an act of self-harm while suffering from depression and the negative effects of online content".

This should serve as a warning to every parent about the potential harm in letting children access the internet unsupervised and without parental controls in place. We make a conscious effort at Ickford to teach children about safe use of technology but there is a limit to what we can do. As I said a couple of years ago, when more children in Year 3 own a tablet or mobile phone than can tie their shoelaces, it is time to be concerned.

Clearly, the Molly Russell case focussed on content depicting self harming rather than the reasons why some young people find themselves unable to cope. However, research shows that children who are bullied are six times more likely to self-harm than children who are not and there is clearly a strong link between the two. In the same newspaper in which I read about the Coroner's verdict, there was another article about a Headteacher who had sent home 50 children from a Secondary School for not wearing the correct uniform. The Headline of the article was on the lines of, "Head sends home 50 for not wearing the correct socks," which, in my opinion, deliberately tries to infer a pettiness about the Head and attempts to make the action ridiculous. The truth, in fact, was that the Headteacher, who had been assigned to a failing school to improve it, had simply decided to enforce its uniform policy along with other policies and met with great resistance. As a result, he had acted and followed up warnings with sanctions.

Insisting that children wear the correct uniform is neither petty nor pedantic, rather it prevents some children being able to empower themselves through their appearance and using this to exert 'power' over their peers. I remember the 'lads' from various schools I would encounter on the bus in my own school days who could wear Dr Martin boots to school, shave their heads and swap the regulation blazer for a bomber jacket. They threatened, thumped and generally made everyone else's life miserable simply because they could get away with it and did not get challenged. Social media was not around then but, had it been, I probably could have found evidence of their bullying on social media having been filmed on a thousand mobile phones! Bullying has its roots in poor behaviour and a lack of respect both self and otherwise. Research into self harm concludes that, "high levels of parental support and school well-being may buffer the harmful relationship

between bullying behaviour and self-harm. Addressing these factors may be important in reducing the risk of self-harm among those experiencing bullying". The Press would do well to start supporting a Headteacher rather than ridicule and perhaps we can save the lives of other potential 'Mollys'.

On a much happier note, Class 4 enjoyed a fantastic day out at Hampton Court Palace on Thursday where they immersed themselves in Tudor history and were able to tread in the very footsteps of King Henry VIII and his courtiers. The children accompanied by Mrs Hagues, Mrs Honey, Miss Howe and the continually vivacious Mrs Snell, had a wonderful time learning about life in the Tudor Court and were fascinated by the wonders of one of England's greatest heritage sites. So much of their time was spent looking up, Mrs Snell did suggest that lying down on a trolley and being pushed around the palace may be something to think about but, as we all know, she is quite convincingly, 'off her trolley' and her suggestions will be taken with a pinch of Tudor salt! One of the facts that caught their imagination (whilst looking skyward) was the origin of the word, 'eavesdroppers'. This word derives from the array of carved heads which the children saw in the eaves of the Great Hall and which served as a reminder to anyone within the Palace walls that Henry would hear of anything said because of his loyal staff of servants and courtiers who listened to all conversations. The Palace was no place for a loose tongue and a wrong word may lead to a loose head!

I had been concerned about the children going into the maze at Hampton Court imagining lost children struggling for hours to relocate their friends but, Mrs Honey knew her children far better than I and reported that they had conquered the maze in a matter of minutes! Why did I doubt Ickford children in overcoming a challenge?

Something I did not doubt was the fact that behaviour was absolutely brilliant throughout the day. In fact, it was so good in comparison to other school groups there, that several visitors to the Palace, took the trouble to approach our staff and comment on how well behaved the children were. This makes us all very proud and the exceptional behaviour of the children is one of the reasons we are able to go out on school journeys and visit places of interest. We have put some pictures of the day up on the website so please take some time to have a look.

Whilst on the topic of the website, although I am gradually getting more content on there, some pages are still not complete especially those that show curriculum mapping. I can assure you that we are working on the content and, although it will still take some time, I hope to have curriculum mapping available during the next half term.

This half term is disappearing rapidly and soon there will be Parent Evenings for you to attend. Please ensure that you take up the offer of a parent evening as they are very important and at this stage in the year, you can guarantee that there will be advice about things to address to ensure success in the coming year. The teachers work very hard but the fruits of their labour will be more bountiful if they are working in partnership with parents.

Finally, talking of fruits and labour, I am delighted to announce that Miss Vukomanovic is expecting a baby. Miss V has been with me for 10 years so you can imagine how young she looked when she started! She will be here for some time yet but will, at some point, take

maternity leave. I am sure you will all want me to congratulate her and her partner on your behalf although I know most will do so in person.

Have a good weekend.

Mr Ronane

News from the Office

Dates for your diary...

11th October	Harvest Festival
13 th October	Outdoor Learning
17 th & 19 th October	Parents Evening
1 st November	School Photos

This Week's Celebration Assembly

Hall of Fame:

French Award:

German Award:

Kathryn Hargreaves, Gwilym Walters

PE Award:

Lacey McClurg, Oliver Every, Bella Hawkins, Frank Wilkinson, Beatrice Johnson, Mataio Fatialofa, Harvey Chapman

Music Award:

Millie Snelling, Luna Russell-Dyson, Izzy Parsler, Sam Anzarouth, Ella Cooke

Latin Award:

Sophie Winspear, Max Smith

Headteachers Award:

Stella Stanfield, Molly Parry, Ella-Rose Cantwell-Wilkinson, Sienna Jones, Max Smith

School Lottery

A winner within school every week!

If you would like the chance to win, and support the school, please click on the link below and get signed up!

<https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/lottery/school/ickford-school>



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