

Ickford News

Welcome to the second instalment of the week's newsletter (the first is still available on the website) on the eve of the most difficult week of the academic year, the last.

It is difficult for several reasons. Firstly, I must motivate the teachers and the children to maintain a learning environment. All of the staff know and understand the expectation to keep learning going right up until the very last afternoon and to make the time valuable. When the sun is shining, thoughts can soon turn to the break but, as I have said before, if the week before every holiday becomes a 'wind down week' it soon adds up. Three per year over seven years and that is twenty-one weeks of a child's time in school spent 'winding down'.

I watched a news report last week about a school that had suffered due to the collapse of Carillion the building company. Though I sympathised with their plight, I could not see the value in the children spending two weeks painting the hoarding around the delayed building works. It was fun and it went some way to drawing attention to the fact that the school and others were victims of the Carillion collapse but, as a parent, I would have questioned how my child's final weeks of term were being spent.

The final week is also emotionally difficult because, as anyone who was at Friday's celebration assembly can testify, the teachers have invested so much in the children that when they move on, albeit for some, only to the next class but for others to new schools, it is a time of anguish. I always remind teachers that children do not care what you know, unless they know that you care and I can

promise you that the teachers and teaching assistants here really do care.

This is one reason why I find it very difficult to accept those who take advantage of them and why I do not apologise for insisting that attendance is paramount. If your child is genuinely sick then please believe me, I do not want them in school, I want them resting and getting better. However, encouraging them to hide the truth and feigning sickness to have a day off or a long weekend, is a very poor message to give your children. I call this group the M and Fs (Mondays and Fridays) as these are the days most are 'sick' although of late, it seems other days are creeping in. Thank you to everyone who ensures full attendance and respects what we do but I am happy to keep challenging those who do not.

The final week is also difficult simply because there is so much going on and I hope everyone is aware that Treasure Island will be on stage on Tuesday evening performed by the children from classes 4 and 5 and on Wednesday it is our annual Sports Day. Old hands will know that all family members are invited to come and watch as well as friends and this includes the morning 'team' events as well as the afternoon's athletics.

Although everyone takes part and earns points, all events are competitive in that all points go towards the coveted House Sports Cup which will be presented at the end of the day. The other event that takes place during the morning session is the House Tug Of War, the last House competition of the year. This is hotly contested and well worth coming to see.

Just a reminder that children need to be wearing a plain tee-shirt in the colour of

their House and need to have sun cream on.

Those who do come to Sports Day will have the opportunity to watch some of our medal winners in action. The final inter-school sport event of the year took place on Friday evening when we competed in the Oxfordshire District Games at Horspath Athletics track and brought the trophy home for the third year in a row!

This is a great event and there are always some hard fought battles in track and field. Once again, the 'Flying Wootens' were in action and both Albert and Florence struck Gold at least four times. Though a Key Stage 2 event, we had children from year 3 and even from year 2 in some races and every one of them performed in true 'Ickford' style. My thanks to everyone who competed and to all those who came to cheer us on.



The Winning Team



Winning Relay Teams