

Ickford News

The first newsletter of the New Year and hopefully a brighter one than the last. The birth of a child is always something to celebrate and, I am delighted to announce that Miss Allen gave birth to a son on Boxing Day, a Christmas gift that will be rather difficult to surpass in our staff Secret Santa next year.

It has been business as usual since we returned to school last week and 'the buzz' is palpable. We have welcomed Miss Daly to the team and, though rather exhausted at the end of her first full week, she is still smiling and has promised to return on Monday! It is always nice when someone joins having worked in another setting as we can garner a comparison of sorts. It is not often that we get to see other schools but Miss Daly assures us that Ickford standards in terms of behaviour and quality of learning are extremely high.

Today we were grateful to many of our Trustees who came to the Celebration Assembly and then stayed in school for the morning, touring the classrooms and talking to children and teachers during lessons. They also met with two different groups of children for a more in-depth discussion. One group were those children who, this academic year, have been part of Mrs Ellis's Book Club and another group made up of children who have come to Ickford from other schools.

The feedback from the Trustees was overwhelmingly positive and I think they enjoyed walking around and getting first-hand experience of the children in classrooms. The group discussions were also well received and the Trustees were really impressed with how confident and articulate every child was even when faced with some fairly challenging questions.

The book club is proving to be a really successful initiative and I know that we have a great deal to thank Mrs Ellis for. The current members have really enjoyed their weekly discussions so far and they are becoming discerning readers and reviewers. Mr Laar (one of our Founding Members) was astounded by their confidence and, much to the groups delight, has met one of their chosen authors, Katherine Rundell. He has suggested that the group write to her and invite her in to school and I am hoping he can use some of his influence in literary circles and 'Irish charm' to convince her to come!

The group of children who had, for whatever reason, joined Ickford having been pupils at other schools, were equally impressive and thankfully very positive about being at Ickford. For some it has meant a relief from being bullied elsewhere or the chance to learn without being distracted by adverse behaviour in classrooms whilst, for others it has been a move forced upon them due to relocation and they have appreciated the kindness and easy friendship of the other children who helped them to settle in. One thing that they unanimously agreed on though...they had to work harder at Ickford!

In the immediate future, the focus for me is health and safety and also the mental well being of children and staff. Health and safety in schools is a significant responsibility as well as an area of quite high costs. Nevertheless, my role is made easier in that one of our Trustees is an expert in this field and is extremely generous with his time and his support.

Mental health and well-being are complex and not as straightforward as the physical health and safety of the premises. Unfortunately, since Covid, we have been bombarded with lots of commercially produced resources and a variety of companies 'specialising' in such matters. Not all of this is good or appropriate so, much of the time is spent sifting through material and searching for the best quality in terms of advice, support, training and resources. However, I can assure you, we shall continue to seek the best for your children.

Additional information for this week is to give you notification that we shall be holding workshops about keeping safe 'on-line' for both parents and children in the next month or so. We are in the process of booking experts to come in and I hope to be able to announce dates soon. I have also been in contact with the Fire Service about safety talks for the children and with the Police who are hopefully going to come in and cover other aspects of keeping safe with the children.

Finally, Miss Holmes in the office is proving to be invaluable at the moment. Although we are, as they say, a man/woman down at present, it is not (in my opinion anyway) noticeable and we are rolling along nicely. It really helps when parents keep in mind how busy we are and, prioritise things like, reading ParentMail, being clear about picking up arrangements, club registrations, prompt payments and labels in uniform. Mind you, Miss Holmes did tell me that she is committed to 'dry January', come to think of it, maybe that's what has made the difference!

Have a good weekend,

Mr Ronane

Awards this week...

French Awards:

Caleb Mortimer, William Barber, Asees Samrai, Teddy Barber, Hakan Konak, Luke Dungey, Xavier Flood, George Jones, James Kendall,

PE Awards:

Stella Anzarouth, Amelia Hargreaves, Stella Stanfield, Jacob Issitt, Dylan O'Mahoney, Beatrice Beckett

Music Awards:

Max Smith, Harry Weeden, Amelia Vorotyntsova, Stella Anzarouth, Elsie Thomas

German Awards:

Jago Miller, Sophie Winspear

Headteachers Awards:

Drew Wyse, Zeynep Konak, Annabel Neal, Emily Aspen, Harley Hudson,

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