

Ickford News

To use modern vernacular, I have to give a 'shout out' to Mrs Kendall, Mrs Anzarouth, Mrs O'Mahoney and Mrs Rhodes for coming in to school last Sunday and spending their morning decorating the hall as a surprise for the children. I also have to thank and 'shout out' to Mr Hawkins who donated a lovely Christmas tree from Haddenham Garden Centre and Mr Sayer who stole in undetected and lit up the trees adjacent to the car park! Not only were the children delighted to see the decorations, Mme Basnett was positively beside herself!

In spite of the fact that we are an Academy and therefore have a great deal of freedom to design our own curriculum, we do use the National Curriculum as a starting point.

The National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and Key Stages 2 has three core subject areas; English, Maths and Science. It has been argued that these were given their 'core' status when the National Curriculum was introduced 1988/99 for the following reasons: English, because it is recognised and agreed to be the foundation of most other subjects and deemed important in everyone's life. Mathematics because, although we have computers and calculators (I will come back to this) and most people get by without having to make many calculations on a daily basis, it is a subject that can be measured, quantified and therefore assessed. Finally, Science because at that time, the Government believed that there was a shortage of Scientists so, our schools needed to produce more for the sake of the nation (I have always expected 'computing' (formerly, Information and Communications Technology ITC to be given core status for the same reason).

The introduction to the National Curriculum includes:

Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which: promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

We teach lots of things that are not in the National Curriculum. The violin, reading music at KS1, a modern foreign language at KS1, German and Latin. Furthermore, we teach the core subjects and the non-core, to a pretty high standard in comparison to similar schools. I daresay that, if I were to announce that we were going to lower our expectations of standards or, that Mme Basnett was no longer going to teach French to year groups other than 5 and 6, there would be some moaning and groaning and most likely, some complaints.

I imagine that the majority of you will know our school values; kindness, respect, honesty and determination. They are not in the National Curriculum but we try to teach them although I would suggest that they are conducive to the requirements contained in its introduction reproduced above. We also try to teach good manners, the need to be polite to each other, care for the natural world and animals. Indeed, so many of the non-National Curriculum things we teach, in my opinion, may be the most important and I would be very surprised and sad if parents felt we shouldn't.

My Dad used to tell me, "Only a cad doesn't tie his bow tie", rather archaic admittedly and something I'd associate more with Oscar Wilde or James Bond but he took great pride in never wearing a pre-tied one and I made sure that, when the occasion calls for one, I can tie mine! Some school children wear a tie as part of their uniform but, certainly at Primary, it is a declining tradition and becoming the preserve of the independent

sector. It is certainly arguable that appearance makes no difference to teaching and learning and I am sure some would support no uniform at all (that is a different debate) but the demise of the tie is, for the most part, due to the fact that children could not tie one or rather, parents did not have the patience to teach them to and even the elasticated version that my Dad would have despised, was deemed too much bother.

I watched a PE lesson be delayed by at least 15 minutes a week ago (PE is a curriculum subject) because some children struggled to undress themselves, some did not have their correct PE kit and several were unable to tie their shoelaces. I have seen and indeed experienced the time wasted at after school football and rugby clubs whilst the person in charge has to tie the laces of those participating both at the start of the session and throughout it. It is one of the reasons that I am not keen to begin a football club again and one reason why we don't have such clubs for the infants.

Any of us who teach or have taught infant children understand that learning to dress and undress is something we have to support the children with including tying their laces for them. I have taught the Early Years and I am very able to help dress 30, 5-year olds. Infant teachers factor the time in to the lessons and see it as part of what they are teaching.

There is a time however when I expect the children, unless they have a particular learning difficulty, to be able to change for PE and change back again in a reasonable time and to tie their laces if necessary. Following the lesson I witnessed disrupted, I set a homework to learn to tie laces and I have been criticised for this. Furthermore, it was pointed out to me that, this was not in the National Curriculum. Of course, the Velcro Fastening shoe is now the shoe of choice (also pointed out to me). I am not arguing against

progress and I am quite happy that I have electric light, a car and the fact that I don't have to hunt for my food but how do we develop resilience or prepare children for later life if, every time something is challenging, we either do it for them or remove the challenge? Year 4 is two years from Secondary school and, I would hazard a guess that there are not many Secondary PE teachers happy to tie laces. In my opinion, for what it is worth, it is a sad fact that more children in Year 4 either own, or have access to, a mobile phone than can tie their shoelaces.

I have been working on our Curriculum Mapping for quite some time and will continue to do so. At times like this, I do reflect on the workload of the teachers and the pressure that some of them may feel. Our school offers a lot and I know that our children get more PE time than some Primary children but considering we have a lesson with a specialist teacher do I need to insist that class teachers plan and deliver another? Is it time to give Mme Basnett the opportunity to focus solely on her own class for the year? I am sure Mrs Shackleton might find it easier if I just asked her to teach the National Curriculum music which, trust me, does not need a concert level violinist!

Perhaps it is time for a change? Maybe the school needs to be more like a normal state funded Primary? The complaints I have had since September have been from established parents not from the new. Mrs Rhodes has I know sent a Parentmail out to reiterate that if you need to speak to a member of staff, you must make an appointment. There was a time when I was happy to have the informal chats by the fence but I have learned that this is compromising myself and my teachers and they have enough to worry about.

Mr Ronane

Ickford News from the office



This Weeks Celebration Assembly

Hall of Fame:

Music Award:

Ethan Crispin
William Barber
Harvey Chapman
Isla Turrell
Harriet Palmer

PE Award:

Melek Younis
Morgan Parkes
Phoebe Merritt
Beau Llewellyn
Molly Sayer

French Award:

Henry Preston
William Barber
Amelia Hargreaves
William Arnold
Jake Fletton

German Award:

Cassie O'Kennedy

Latin Award:

Zara Smith

Headteachers Award:

Jude Barnes
Florence Arnold
Eliza Gapper
Chloe Makris
Abigail Pedder

Dates for your diary...

7 th December	*No Y5/6 Badminton*
14 th December	Class 5 visit to Bletchley Park
18 th December	Inset Day

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>



Breakfast Club

Please remember to book your child's place for breakfast club with the school office by Friday at midday for the following week. Entry to breakfast club will be via Gate A by the Recreation Ground.

Mr Wakelin

A massive thank you to Mr Wakelin of Wakelin's Electrical Services one of our sponsors for installing the new floodlights.

News from the School Council

The School Council met with Mr Ronane for lunch on Friday and discussed learning. All of the Class Representatives explained what they had been learning during the week.

Melek and Jacob explained that Class 1 have been learning about how animals adapt and change and Harry M and Harry W in Class 2 told the group about improving their writing with adjectives and connectives. Katherine and Emily gave an account of how they were learning to solve problems involving time in Class 3 whilst Ella gave a detailed explanation of learning Roman numerals in Class 4.

Matthieu, also in Class 4 was really interested to have been taught about literal descriptions as opposed to figurative language and, though he is a very able writer, found it quite difficult. Ryan, Zara and Jake from Class 5 had learned a great deal and, even though they had come across mean, median, mode and range before, felt that Mme Basnett had raised the level of challenge and got them all really thinking.

A discussion on the importance of manners resulted in the one child, Jake, coming up with the phrase, "It is better to be kind than clever" which everyone agreed upon.

Everyone also agreed that because they are expected in school, good manners become a habit.

There was a request for small football goals for the playground and 3 sets were duly ordered. They should arrive next week.

Another thing for action is to get an internal post box set up so that the children can post their Christmas cards to friends.

Mr Ronane has promised to organise this.

The School Council will meet with Mr Ronane again in January.

Sponsors



**TIDDINGTON
GARAGE**

Wakelin Electrical Services

