

Ickford News

Thank you to those of you who had the chance to visit the school on Wednesday evening and will, I hope, have recognised that we are doing our best to provide a good education for the children. I have no doubt that we are not perfect and fully aware of areas that we may be able to improve in but, trust me, it is not easy. Nevertheless, we do our best and the team here works incredibly hard on a daily basis to care for, guide, support and teach the children and, in my opinion, they do a really good job.

Wednesday evening also gave me the opportunity to walk around and to take a quiet look at some of the 'evidence' we can produce to show that learning is taking place. I can see 'teaching' on a daily basis but 'learning' is an invisible process and, furthermore, not always evident at the point of instruction but something that develops over time.

We are a maintained school not, as a visitor unfamiliar with the school might imagine, an independent or private school catering for a paying customer. State Primary schools only differ in terms of size, context and personnel as we are all tasked to follow a National Curriculum, given similar funding per pupil, assessed to a national standard and inspected by the same organisation and, for several years, I assumed that what we were trying to do here at Ickford was the same as everyone else. However, as time passed and as teachers and teaching assistants occasionally changed, the phrase, 'the Ickford way' became something that would be brought up in conversations outside of the school grounds at meetings, visits to other schools or when I have happened to meet past members of staff. Initially, I was confused and to be honest, unhappy because I perceived the 'Ickford way' to be 'my way or the highway' but as people have expanded on this notion, it became apparent that it derives from the fact that to be part of the team at Ickford you need to try and remain faithful to a set of agreed principles when working with the children and that the standards we set are tangible and resolute.

I have just looked at our Teaching and Learning Policy and under the heading, *Outstanding Teachers at Ickford Believe*, it lists the following:

- Intelligence is multi-faceted.
- All children can be successful.
- Every child needs a worthwhile relationship with at least one adult in school.
- A child's failure to learn is a challenge to be overcome.
- A child demonstrating a great effort in learning is a positive sign of character not a lack of ability.
- We can always improve.
- We are accountable.
- Teaching is a co-operative activity.
- Teaching is a collaborative activity.
- Teaching is unpredictable.
- We have high expectations of ourselves and the children.

A great deal of time is spent in schools (as in other institutions) writing policies most of which are too long (we have an agreement that most policies should be kept to two sides of A4 as a maximum) and therefore rarely read. Nonetheless, there are golden nuggets to be found and the list above is

one of them. My walk around on Wednesday evening reinforced my belief that the teachers understand the policy and recognise that they are the embodiment of the 'Ickford way'.

Last week, we had our transition morning for the new children joining us in September at the start of the new academic year and, as usual, Mme Basnett and I spoke to the parents and outlined what they should expect when they join our community. It was a very positive meeting with plenty of nodding heads and some relevant questions and Mme and I were both confident afterwards that these parents had 'chosen' the school and chosen it because of its achievements and philosophy. This bodes well for the future and indeed the continuation of the school in its current format. However, I should add a cautionary note because we do have some problems arising with individuals who seem to think that there are some 'optional' areas and I want to remind them that there are not. I like to meet with every potential parent and carry out 'tours' personally because I think it is best to be honest and unambiguous and I am sorry if perhaps you joined us late and may have missed on out a tour or transition meeting. I make it clear that, we have clear policy on attendance, uniform and behaviour and that these are for everyone. You can't dip in and out of our school and you can't dip in and take the bits you want in the belief that other bits are for other people.

The next big event is the Summer BBQ and I hope to see you all there. Larry the Chef is confirmed and Jackie, Tank and the PTA team are working hard behind the scenes to ensure there is plenty to keep everyone happy. The only thing we need collective prayer for is the weather on Friday evening and, before you say it, yes, I shall control most things, but I can't control that! 😊

Have a good weekend.

Mr Ronane

Awards this week

French Award

Finlay Bennett, Kirk O'Malley, Beatrice Beckett, Sam Anzarouth, Abigail Hird

Latin Award

Brayden O'Malley

German Award

Sophie Winspear

Music Award

William Jones, Ella Mbofana, Barnaby Potter, Emily Jay – Friday, Amelia Hargraves

P.E. Award

Jacob Issitt, Molly Parry, Ethan Crispin, Anabel Stevens, Jacob Shannon, James Harris, Iyla Hitchcock, Abigail Hird, Gwilym Walters

Head Teacher's Award

Freya Weeden, Ethan Crispin, Barnaby Potter, Jacob Dungey, Ella Cooke

News from the Office

Please ensure that you put your child's names in every piece of uniform.

Please apply sun cream to your child before they come to school if necessary.

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