

Ickford News

My biggest regret this week was not being present at the infant recorder assembly which, according to all accounts was absolutely superb. Now I know that it may not be everyone's favourite instrument but we should not underestimate the expediency of the recorder in engaging young children in music and offering a way in to learning to read notation, developing rhythm and enjoying playing together with friends. Once again, the wonderful Mrs Shackleton exceeded all expectations and the children performed, to a packed hall, with a confidence that belied their age...simply wonderful.

If advocating the recorder is viewed by those outside our community as 'old fashioned' then, I have no doubt, that Friday's performance in Latin by Year 6, would have the naysayers flocking to Mumsnet bemoaning our antiquated curriculum. I hope that everyone who saw the children bring Odysseus and the Cyclops to life prior to the Celebration Assembly will agree with me that, the children's ability to perform and bring such emotion to the stage showed that they had not only memorised the Latin but really understood it. We have a great deal to thank Mr Calcutt for not least for giving his time voluntarily but also for the patience he has and his unwavering support of the children and the school. I hope that some will continue with Latin and Classical Studies when they leave Ickford and I am sure they will always have a place in their hearts for Homer and not just the Simpsons!



The reason I missed the recorder assembly was because of accompanying the boys Cricket team to the County finals which, this year, were held only a short drive away at Cheersley Cricket Club. Having got through the Area competition, the boys were under no illusions as to how difficult this competition would be with all teams being winners of their own area competitions and covering the whole county and Milton Keynes. The first match proved the point and we lost narrowly to Two Mile Ash School a very large school in Milton Keynes.

The boys were disappointed but they were beaten by a very good team who could all bowl accurately with pace and were quick in the field. Fortunately, a win in our second match raised the spirits and heads were back up by the time it was announced that we had got through to the semi-finals on runs scored.

Our semi-final match against Olney School brought out the best cricket from the boys with Sam Anzarouth taking an important wicket and Brayden O'Malley picking up plenty of runs. A good win secured our place in the Final and gave us a second chance against Two Mile Ash whose vociferous and confident playing style had left all the other teams in their wake. We knew we had a chance but also that we would have to change our strategy and our fielding set up if we were to make the most of the opportunity afforded to us.

The match was very tense and very exciting but our bowling was precise and we took some fine catches which kept their score reasonably low. We knew that if we could bat sensibly we could overturn the earlier defeat and win the title. And so, it proved... the batting was solid and all of the boys concentrated on the job in hand, keeping the run rate going without giving away unnecessary wickets. When



Max Smith opened his shoulders to hit some fine sixes, the opposition became rattled and we could sense that we had them on the back foot. It was a great win and having lost by 5 runs in last year's final this triumph is one to savour.

Hardly had the excitement of the Cricket subsided before the tension increased again when we took the Athletics Team to Stoke Mandeville Stadium on Wednesday evening for the District Sports. Having won this event 6 times out of the past 7 (second in 2018 and Covid stopped it in 2020 and 2021) it has been staged, the children are always keen to continue the success but know that it is a tough challenge. We agree beforehand that we shall practise and we agree that we will do our best whether we win or lose and there will be no tears, no tantrums and no excuses. The most difficult part for me is having to select the team from all of the children that come out and practise and knowing that I will be leaving some good athletes at home.

Nevertheless, that is the nature of competition and the children understand this so, when the team got to the stadium on Wednesday evening, every one of them knew that they were representing their school and their friends. Furthermore, the presence of every teacher and some of the teaching assistants willing to give up their personal time and help, made this a special evening and I was humbled by the support.

This success was, as always, a real team effort. There are no individual medals on the night just an accumulation of the points scored from each event and a trophy for the school with the most points overall. All of the children performed brilliantly and we began by winning 3 of the four long jump events and 2 of the four shot put events adding a second, third and fourth place which gave us a significant number of points going into the track events.

The crowd were loud as each school was cheered on by their respective support and the tension on the track was palpable. Outstanding performances in sprints and long distance ensured that we would be there or thereabouts when the points were added but it was probably the relay teams that made victory conclusive with 3 wins and a second place. A great performance and a great night!

I imagine that some athletic ability must be a result of genetics but the children in Year 6 are the ones to ask as they had the privilege of spending an afternoon with former parent and leading geneticist at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Carolyn Campbell. Both Mme Basnett and I are indebted to Carolyn who, for several years now, has come in to deliver a fascinating workshop on genetics to the children. I am immediately surrounded by children looking to see whether I have ear lobes or asking if I can loop my tongue after these sessions so I know it must be interesting to them. I can only hope some will be so fascinated as to want to find out more and eventually follow medical careers which, should Latin still be a requirement, they will have a head start in.

Is there perhaps some genetic explanation for great teachers? I am not sure but I have left the greatest success to celebrate until the end and, although I know that I often afford her celebrity status on these pages, I am compelled to pay homage once again to phenomenon that is Madam Basnett.

The children received their SATs results this week and, in a year that has seen so much publicity focussed on how difficult the tests were and how low the National pass rates will be, I am delighted to tell you that our results are fantastic and the children have been rewarded for the hard work and diligence. I know that there are several teachers to thank for the education the children have received and that each year builds upon the next but, the progress that this group of Year 6 children have made under the wings and guidance of Madame is superb and we are once again indebted to her for her skill, knowledge, enthusiasm and love that she has for each child. Without doubt, ...magnus est.

	Reading	Maths	Spelling and grammar	Writing
Expected	100%	100%	100%	95%
Greater Depth	72%	56%	67%	33%

We are about to enter the final week of the year and I look forward to seeing plenty of you at Sports Day on Monday. Please don't forget that the children need to be at Horspath Athletics Track wearing their school PE kit by 9.00am for the register. The morning will be House Team events and the Tug of War on a rotation basis and in the afternoon, we will have the races on the track and the throwing.

Enjoy the weekend.

Mr Ronane

Awards this Week

French Award

Caleb Mortimer, Finlay Bennett

Latin Award

Brayden O'Malley

German Award

Harvey Chapman

Music Award

Freddie Williams, Babs Smith, Beatrice Beckett, George Jones, Abigail Hird

P.E. Award

Alex Nicholls, Alfie Peck, Phoebe Gapper, Vika Hardy, Asiya Hassine, Edward Pentecost, Faye Kitchen, Pippa Hunting, Sophie Winspear, Amelia Hargreaves

Head Teacher's Award

Benjamin Herratt, Stella Anzarouth, William Harris, Zak Flood, Max Smith

News from the Office

Please ensure that you have read the Sports Day and returned the permission slips.

Please search for and return any library books that you may have at home before Friday.

Wednesday July 19th 9.00 am Celebration Assembly – 2.00pm School Play first performance- 7.00pm School Play adults only performance.

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