

Governor News July 2018

Staff changes

The governors are very grateful for the work and dedication to the school of a number of people who are leaving at the end of term. We would especially like to mention the work of our special needs Assistant head Julia Duggan whose tremendous work and workload has supported so many of our children who have needed extra help in one way or another. A tremendous loss is Helen Tonkin who has been a driving force behind many initiatives, supporting staff and children over many years; a person who always seems to know just what needs to be done and then does it! We know they will miss Pennoweth as much as it will miss them. We are also losing our very nurturing and knowledgeable nursery teacher Heather Thomas who has a long association with the school and Lara Scott who has done so much with the School Council and with the Green Schools work- we wish them success and happiness in the future. I would like to add a personal thanks to Heather who has made my grandson's first year in Pennoweth such a happy one.

As a result of those leaving the governors have been involved in interviews to appoint some new members of staff and we are very excited about those we have appointed as we feel that they will really help to write the next chapter in the story of Pennoweth success.

Health and Safety / Safeguarding

This is a key feature of the work of the governors as we carry out visits regularly to check on different aspects of this work. The school must be a place that is safe, welcoming and responsive to the needs of all who enter the school gate.

Since joining the Crofty MAT there have been several inspections from people not connected with the school to assess our policies, procedures and practice and the school has been very highly rated which has been very pleasing. There are always things to work at and to tweak- nothing stands still, and to that end there are actions plans that the governors will be checking to see progress in the next school year.

Singing and Story telling

During June, as every year, I have been story-telling and singing with each class which is a *wonderful* opportunity each year to see how the children have changed and see the results of the tremendous work put into the children by the staff and by 'the staff' I mean the whole staff not just the teachers!

The older children were the most responsive, most mature and the most fun of any of the older classes in my time at Pennoweth- a real tribute to the school and the support of parents and carers showing year on year progress. That is very much a result of the culture across the whole school as the children are slowly shaped, coaxed, encouraged and supported by all the adults who work with them from the gate greeters and meal time assistants to the teaching assistants and teachers.

The story telling sessions have been tremendous fun this year and I can say from first-hand experience that the attitude of the children and the atmosphere in the school has been the best it has ever been! Being in school on so many afternoons meant that I have also seen a number of playtimes and was impressed by how the children are supervised. High spots were watching as one staff member organised and joined in with basketball, another with the football and another creeping through the jungle area. Staff do not just watch the children at playtime, they are teaching and leading then too.

Pennoweth School is a very special place with a wonderful community of people making it arguably the most sought after school in the area. I hear time and time again from people not connected with school just how well behaved, friendly and polite our children are when they are out of school and just how wonderful the staff is in enabling the children to take part in community events!

As chair of governors and as a grandad of two lads in the school I am hugely proud to be connected to the school and to be able to support it.

Joining the Crofty Trust has been hard work for everyone with different stems of finance and assessment, and audits for safeguarding and health and safety. The results of these audits was very positive though we will not be complacent and will continue to work to make these things even better.

Teachers, children and the End of the School Year

When I was still teaching the end of the year was a strange time; I always felt that I was running on empty, kept going by adrenaline as I faced deadlines for writing reports (about 15-30 hours at home of work for the average class), school camps, sports days, a production and other events and evenings not to mention the end of term disco. (I think the videos of the dances for the Time Warp and YMCA are permanently etched on the back of my eyeballs!)

At this time of year my classes were always at their best after a year of work and yet I was looking forward (sometimes with slight trepidation) to the next year's bunch of bright eyed children who might be wary or worried about having me too!

Sometimes, very kindly, I would be given a gift at the end of term to say thank you and I had quite a collection of mugs, cuddly toys and books of jokes about teachers. I was not sure what to make of the gift of aftershave- I have nearly always had a beard! What I loved most was when parents and children had taken the time to write a personal note or card telling me something they had loved during the year, something they were proud of or something they would treasure as a memory. Gifts are nice but memories are very special!

As I have spent time in all the classes and around the school I recognise that 'empty-tank running in adrenaline' look in the staff and know just how much of themselves they have poured out this year. The children too, especially in nursery, have that 'end of year' feeling when the heat can make them 'teasy!'

So I speak from the heart and from personal experience of many years when I thank staff for their work and ask those of us they have worked for to pass on a word of encouragement- it makes all the difference!

IMPACT of the Governing Board

A constant job of the governors is to monitor academic progress and there have been numerous meeting across the year where the data from assessments, tests and tracking software have been explained and quizzed. The information we gleaned from them informs the School Development Plan which we then use for the year ahead to check that the school remains on an upward trajectory. Parents will have noticed the big emphasis on reading at home for example and there are plans in the pipeline to make that more useful and helpful.

This year has been a tricky one with staff having to master new assessments and new tracking software but we can confidently say that there is still an upward trend across the board in achievement and progress. We have heard from the maths coordinator about the progress as well as the initiatives to improve the effectiveness of maths teaching and spoken to groups of children from all levels about maths which supported what we had been told.

The decision to joining the Crofty Academy Trust was a bold one which was not taken lightly and the transition to academy status has not been without its challenges! As a business, even a non profit concern, we have to keep money in reserve for emergencies, pay a lump of money to the trust for administering the finances and a long list of other tasks and that has meant the budget has had to be very carefully managed. With some very astute decisions and changes from our headteacher, supported by the governors the school is financially in a better state than many many others though year on year government cuts do mean life will be tricky for all schools.

There will be further detail on impact in the new term once we have analysed the results of all the tests from this term.

Singing with your children.... 😊

The songs as promised..... see the next page!



Rare bog Rattlin' bog,

(Chorus): with guitar chords

G C
Oh Rare bog rattlin' bog,
G C D
A bog down in the valley-oh,
G C
Rare bog rattlin' bog,
G C D G
A bog down in the valley-oh.

G C G
Now in the bog there was a tree,
G C D
Rare tree, rattlin' tree;
C G (or D.. alternate verses)
The tree in the bog,
G C D G
And the bog down in the valley-oh.

(Chorus)
Now on that tree there was a branch...

A rare branch, a rattlin' branch;

*The branch on the tree,
And the tree in the bog,
And the bog down in the valley-oh.*

(Chorus)
(Verses continue in a like manner):

Now on that branch there was a twig...
Now on that twig there was a leaf...
Now on that leaf there was a nest...
Now in that nest there was an egg...
Now in that egg there was a bird
Now on the bird there was a beak..
And in that beak there was a worm

Donkey Riding

CHORUS:
A E B7
Hey! Ho! Away we go!
A B7
Donkey riding, donkey riding.
A E B7
Hey! Ho! Away we go!
A B7 E
Riding on a donkey!

E A E
Were you ever in London Town
B7
Where the girls all come down?
E A
To see the King with his golden crown,
B7
riding on a donkey.

CHORUS:
Were you ever off the Horn
Where it's always fine and warm?
To see the Lion and the Unicorn
Riding on a Donkey.

CHORUS:
Were you ever in Quebec,
Stowing timber on the deck?
Where you'll break your blooming neck
Riding on a donkey.

Were you ever in Cardiff Bay,
Where the folks all shout, "Hooray!"
Here comes John with his three years' pay
Riding on a donkey.

CHORUS: