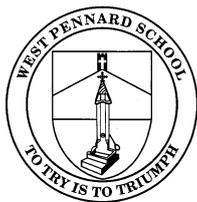


WEST PENNARD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

HEADTEACHER

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Dear Members of North Wootton Parish Council

Report from West Pennard CE Primary School April 16-April 17

Summer Term

As always the summer term was extremely busy as classes worked hard, teachers embarked on the marathon and stress of the new SATs, report writing and the numerous events that characterise the summer term. It was also notable as the term we said farewell to Miss Naomi Hammerton who, in the ten years she has been at West Pennard School, has blossomed as a teacher and made such an impact on the ethos and life of the school. I know that Wells Cathedral School has appointed an amazing teacher and I know that Naomi will make a real difference to their provision. I also know there will always be a place in her heart for West Pennard and we will all miss her dearly.

There were many other highlights, however, and as always, the key stage 2 end of term performance was fantastic. 'Robin and the Sherwood Hoodies' showcased the very talented year 6! The play was hilarious and the actors showed such comic timing, confidence and enjoyment. They epitomised what can be achieved with effort and application. Miss Hammerton directed the play superbly to ensure we were all left with a lasting memory of a great group of pupils and teacher. At the end of term we said farewell to our Year 6 in a Leavers' service in St Nicholas Church and in our final Leavers' assembly. The group of pupils made super progress during their time at West Pennard and achieved a creditable set of SATs results after a year of change and uncertainty. When I look back I am always amazed by how much the children mature in their final year and, for some, their journey was incredibly moving. We will miss them and I know with every confidence they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

My favourite moment of the summer term however, was the celebrations for the Queen's 90th Birthday. The children dressed in red, white and blue, made hats or crowns to parade, took part in whole school country dancing, munched special cupcakes and then ate ice lollies (but only after singing the National Anthem with great gusto!). The children then took home a commemorative coin as a gift from the FWPS. It was a lovely whole school celebration.

Our summer events went ahead despite a couple of weather related glitches. The year 6 residential enjoyed sunshine but sports day fell foul of the weather and country dancing on the Cathedral Green was brought to a soggy abrupt end! After all that action the children and staff were ready for their holidays after another successful year.



Autumn Term

The new academic year began well as we welcomed our new year 6 teacher and our new reception class. Our youngest children settled well and our year 6 children also stepped up to the mark very competently indeed. They were excellent hosts at our open morning and led the Harvest Festival and Carol Service superbly. We have also increased the number of responsibilities and roles for our oldest children and this has had the impact of raising the self-esteem of the class as a whole and decreasing the number of social and behavioural concerns in a cohort that has never gelled on their journey through the school.

Our focus this term has been on improving pupils' reading comprehension skills and on developing maths reasoning. We also used an INSET day at the beginning of the year to focus on the new RE syllabus and to review our approach to collective worship as we have had a number of staff changes since our SIAMS inspection. We spent a productive day at the Old Deanery in the shadow of Wells Cathedral and it was a perfect start to the new academic year. One highlight of the term was our enrichment week which focused on one of the history units on the 'Mayan Civilisation.' The masks the children made were, quite simply, amazing. We also celebrated Roald Dahl's 100th birthday by focusing on many of his amazing stories and rhymes and also by dressing up as one of his characters. We even had a visit by a real-life 'Esio trot' although he couldn't stay!

My personal highlight was taking six of our pupil premium children to the Bishops Palace in Wells to meet the Duchess of Cornwall. The children are participating in the Beanstalk reading programme where volunteers come into school to support reading and play reading games with pupils twice a week for thirty minutes a time. The scheme is new to Somerset and I was keen to use some of the pupil premium funding to support those children who do not read at home or who are not enthused by reading. The pupils had a fantastic time, appeared on television and were delighted with their gift of a new Winnie the Pooh collection of stories. I also got to chat with Duchess of Cornwall who, as patron of the charity, was interested to hear about the impact of the scheme.

The term ended with the infant nativity 'It's a Baby!'; this was well directed by Mrs Helen Morley who was ably assisted by Mrs Dorothy Robinson who led the singing. Mrs Robinson taught the children actions to all the songs and this contributed to a vibrant performance and one of the best nativity plays we have performed. The key stage 2 traditional Carol Service was also well received and I was so proud of all the children. It was also wonderful to enjoy the last day of term with our traditional whole school Christmas lunch. Year 6 had their lunch separately in their classroom where they were waited on by staff members. They then acted as waiters and waitresses for the rest of the school which meant service and clearing up was slick. The term ended happily with staff and pupils looking forward to their Christmas holidays and thoroughly deserving of the festive break.

Spring Term

The spring term, as usual, was very busy with fewer distractions than the other terms. The children worked extremely hard and continue to make good progress.

One of the highlights of the term was the 'Mindfulness' enrichment week. The children experienced workshops on yoga, drama, story-telling and on ways in which to relax the mind. They also wore their slippers in school on one day so they could work in comfort!

Our annual book week, to coincide with our visiting book fair and World Book Day, was another highlight. The week began with a visit from Anne and Annie from 'Tell Tale' Storytellers. Our KS2 children were captivated by the Somerset Legend of 'The Gurt Wurm of Shervage Woods' whilst KS1 were enchanted by the tale of 'The Dragon who couldn't get Cross.' Successful children's author Steve Voake also visited to share some of his books and run inspirational writing workshops for our older children. There was also a reading café, book swap event and a

competition organised by the librarians. To end the week the children dressed up as book characters and again, the inventiveness was amazing.

The term ended with an Easter service in the school hall planned by Mrs Morley. As always the service was very moving with readings, superb singing and dance to tell the Easter story. An important part of the service was the sharing of food and the children loved the mini-eggs! We all departed ready for our holiday after a busy term ready to recharge our batteries for the summer term ahead.

Numbers on roll

At the time of writing we have 202 pupils on roll and an over-subscribed reception class for September, which is good news, although we can only admit 30! We still have a small number of available spaces across the school but they are never the classes that we receive requests for!!!! We are not alone in facing budgetary pressures and this is our Governing Body's sole concern in the current financial climate. We just managed to set a budget this year without making cuts but the future, unless there is a political will to ensure schools are fairly funded, looks grim.

Numbers on Roll

We have 16 children on roll at the current time who live in North Wootton, with three of our new starters also coming from the village. The children are very proud of their school and would be delighted to show members of the Parish Council around and tell you about the curriculum and what it is like to be a pupil at West Pennard. Please give me a call if you would like to find out more about us. You would be very welcome.

New Headteacher

I will be taking early retirement and leaving West Pennard Primary School at the end of the summer term after twenty-seven years in post, with the most recent eleven years as Headteacher. I have loved my time as both a class teacher and Headteacher and it has been a pleasure to see the children I first taught return with their own children. It will be a real wrench to leave but the time is right both for me and my family. The governors have appointed Miss Jo Hale as the new Headteacher and she will be taking up her post in September. I wish her and the school every success in the future. West Pennard School will always have a special place in my heart.

Yours sincerely

H. Burchell

Helen Burchell
Headteacher