

What can I say as we hurtle towards the summer holidays other than, hang onto your hats!

There is literally no let up for us, staff have done an amazing job on report writing, they have proof read one another's reports and then submitted them to me so I can enjoy reading about the individual successes of the children in our school and add my own 'twopennyworth' as my nan would say. This is probably one of the hardest times of the year for me as a Head, it is certainly one of the busiest and most fraught as everyone (children, staff and I would wager some of you!) is tired after a long year of growth, progress, ups and downs. However, as we are busy laying all of the foundations for next year, welcoming new parents and children, setting up databases, records, classrooms, residentials, timetables, staffing, training, INSET days, finances, building improvements, audits and so on, we are also celebrating the successes of this year and simultaneously closing things down, Twitter pages, sports days, general class handovers from one teacher to the next, high school transition, internal transition, passing on SEND information, end of year assessments, including the new Y4 multiplication tests, submitting government statutory information, class assemblies, reward trips... the lists are endless. The greatest joy for me of the whole year is reading your child's report and genuinely seeing the progress they have made – it is what keeps me in this job and energised for the next year (despite the background noise from the government and various 'tsars'!).

I am delighted that our team, grown from the fragments of the school I inherited 4 years ago, have gone from strength to strength. I know this anyway, as I am constantly pestering them and challenging them to be better and do better for our children (and I can tell you, each of them rises to that challenge repeatedly) but when external people come in and validate what I know it makes a huge difference to them all.

We had Key Stage 1 Moderation this year and it was Miss Skillen's first one as a Senior Leader. She had all the support of more experienced leaders, our standard school coaching model, but did it herself in her own style with her little team and my word did they ace it! Feedback from the LA moderators was not just good, it was gleaming and I know that this has boosted the confidence of all members of the team and reinforced their own high expectations.

In addition to this our Reception and Nursery standards were moderated this year, not in the traditional sense as they have been in the past (it is always tricky to compare like-for-like as things change so frequently) but nevertheless they were satisfied that their assessments were accurate. Our phonics scores were checked by Read Write Inc consultants and again, I am satisfied that not only were tests carried out in the strictest way, adhering to the expectations and moreso, but that our own accurate knowledge of children and their learning is spot on.

Our subject leads have also welcomed much support and great challenge from the LA this year (even for 3 days this week) building on our hard work and focussing our thinking on 'next steps' with that 'critical friend' slant on things – we relish driving standards up in a holistic way and have pushed as a whole team across all subjects for the same high expectations that we have in literacy and maths and you have all participated in this with us - so thank you.

We still await our Ofsted inspection, and we sincerely hope that all of our combined hard work (despite changes in Ofsted inspection criteria, Covid, lockdowns, prolonged absences due to Covid, chicken pox etc) is recognised and that we gain our 'good' label which is not only deserved but also long overdue after the years of upheaval prior to me arriving and the Covid hiatus since. We will not let up in terms of our work no matter when they come and have many innovative projects for the children to shape their learning next year. Whenever they arrive, we will welcome Ofsted and show case our children and their learning to the best of our ability.

Meanwhile, we have other things to celebrate – we have children who have been signed for top football clubs (!), children who are champion fund raisers (!!!), children overcoming significant surgery and living

positively with significant and challenging health needs, staff who need support and staff who are smashing it (literally) and we celebrate each of them in the best way we can so they know they are valued and supported.

Sports Days and class assemblies have been a roaring success this past month, as have the trips staff have done: in particular I am grateful to staff for giving up a Friday night and all day Saturday to take Year 2 to Menai. It was just a shame that when we were booking Menai for Year 4 (Mrs D pestered me to be able to do this even though we all knew they were booked a year in advance and had only day trips left!!) we were still under Covid restrictions. We are excited for more trips and opportunities next year but none of these things could happen without staff preparedness to go the extra mile and I am thankful they do it for the children. I had such nice emails from parents in regards to both Menai events that when shared with staff it made all the difference to them – so thank you!

Our children have begun the process of transition in school now in earnest and this means we can use our very own Future Commando resources to support them in reviewing the year and also what is to come. I have met with Hannah, our PTA chair, and she has some VERY exciting things lined up for next year. Mrs Moss and I have been preparing for some classroom and outdoor improvements over the summer – very exciting.

3 weeks to go and so much to do including transition days, more class assemblies, Y6 Leaver events, sporting visits and an author coming into school on Monday 18th July... right up to the last minute!

Victoria Carr.