



Governing Body Newsletter Summer 2010

Notes from the Chair



This year has seen significant changes in school with the appointments of Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, Building supervisor and Admin Officer amongst others. This has proved a challenging time for the school and I am grateful to the staff, pupils and parents for their patience and understanding during this time. I am also grateful to the Governing Body, who assisted with all the processes

we have been through; it certainly has been a steep learning curve. I am sure you will agree that the appointment of Mrs Bentley has already been beneficial for the school and I am confident that the new leadership team will take the school from strength to strength, continuing to develop the outstanding education our children receive.

This year has also seen the disruption caused by the children's centre building works and again, we are grateful for everyone's patience throughout these works. The new building

has transformed the look of the school and over the coming months the school will, in liaison with the local authority, develop the services offered, placing the school at the heart of the community.

Tim Robinson and Chris Brown unfortunately have resigned from the Governing Body having served for 6 years on behalf of the school. I would like to thank them for all their hard work and wish them well. This does, however, mean that there will be a vacancy for a parent Governor from September and I would encourage you all to consider applying.

Whose who in your Governing Body:

Lea Representatives:

Chris Brown
Patricia Barnsley
Roger Linstead

Parent Representatives:

Kevin Corke—chair
Tim Robinson
David Curtis
Sarah Patterson
Debbie Ireland
Guy Willatt

Community Governors:

Scott Green—Vice chair
Nicola Didlock

Staff representatives:

Emma Bentley
Helena Burman
Helen Cartwright

The role of a school Governor—could it be for you?

The role of a governing body is far reaching and vital for school improvement; we deal with issues raised by pupils, parents and staff and are responsible for the setting and upkeep of policy documentation. The budget is also set and monitored by the Governors. A major part of our role is as a "critical friend" to the Head teacher and management of the school and are encouraged to ask "searching questions" and challenge the school in order to get the best possible education for the pupils.

All decisions are taken collectively and no single Governor is responsible for any decision.

A full governing body meeting is held about once a term and the 2 sub committees (premises & finance and curriculum) also meet once each term.

A Governor serves for a period of four Years.

Although the size of the governing body is set vacancies do become available; please do get in touch with the school or the Chair of Governors (Kevin Corke) if you are interested in becoming a school governor.

Finally, we are your school's Governing Body, how are we doing, in order to improve we welcome your feedback.

New Logo & Website:

The school have recently re-launched the website, with the inclusion of lots more information, newsletters and many photographs; do take a look at: www.ecclesall-infants.co.uk

Along with a new website comes a new school logo, formed from an amalgamation of five different children's designs incorporating the motto "Happy Children, Happy School"



The easy answer to the above question is YES, we are an outstanding school, but how do we know? It is nearly three years since our last OFSTED inspection and much has changed since then. Many people do not realise that a school is looked at closely once a year by an independent professional and this year she considers Ecclesall Infant School to be outstanding in all areas. This judgement is made following a rigorous process looking at all aspects of the school. The key groups of people responsible for this are the staff, parents and pupils who all work tirelessly to make EIS such a great school, thank you all for the contributions that you all make.



Above: detail from The Sea (Y2)
Below: self portraits (FS)



ICT: Mrs Lindop leads on ICT in the curriculum, and as in the world outside school, ICT is becoming a part of every aspect of school life. This reflects that there is no dedicated ICT curriculum; instead it is used to enhance other areas of the syllabus. Examples with which parents may be familiar include the Sensory Room in school, and Study Wiz, the website that is being used by teachers to put tailored activities and information for each class or year group. More widely, the school is looking at how ICT can be used to enhance communication with parents, for example by texting school closure information over the winter.

Each subject area within school is "paired" with a "link governor". Link governors go into school to observe and talk through issues related to specific subject areas with the teacher responsible for that area of the curriculum. Governors do not inspect, they are there to offer support to try to ensure the best possible education for the children. Below are the reports from subject link governors.

Art:

Teaching of art and design is based on the Curriculum for the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum's Programme of Study.

The Foundation Stage focuses on recognising shape, colour and exploring texture and form in a wide variety of media. In Key Stage 1, ICT is among many tools used to support the creation of images. Stimuli for artwork include the environment, a famous artist or

painting, a natural or man-made object or art from other cultures.

Art projects are flexible and are integrated into the six terms of the school year; three half terms of Art and three of Design and Technology.

For example:

In Year Two the autumn term covered the artist, Henri Matisse and 'The Sea'.

In the spring term African art was studied and was integrated into cross-

curricular subjects of African Dance and geography.

The final term's study is van Gogh's 'Sunflowers'. This is part of a wider science based investigation on plants and animals, part of which includes growing a variety of seeds. These themes are broadly followed each year though previous art subjects have covered Aboriginal art, sculpture, tie dye, Bandhani Patterns and many more.

Music:

For whole class music teaching, Y1 and Y2 staff use a book and CD supported scheme called Music Express. Non music specialists find it very useful. Last year a set of 'sing-along' CDs were used for the Foundation Stage to support them in their music lessons and has proved very successful. This has now been extended to include Y1 and Y2.

In the Autumn term the Y2 classes took part in the Infant Singing Initiative which involved a professional singing teacher coming into each Y2 class

over a period of 12 weeks. It was very useful for Y2 staff to work with a specialist singing teacher and develop new skills themselves. The children learned a variety of singing techniques and produced a varied repertoire of songs, which they performed in a whole school concert to show off their newly acquired skills.

The school provides violin, keyboard and guitar lessons via the Schools Music Service.

The Recorder Club continues to thrive. Some percussion players have been integrated into the 'Ecclesall

Infant School Band', which has already performed at Celebration Assemblies.



Martin Simpson working during "arts Week May 2010."

Maths:

Mrs Brooks leads on Maths in the curriculum. Although SATS are weighted towards 'number manipulation' (+, -, ×, ÷), the national framework for maths also emphasises key life skills via shape & space, measuring and data handling. From next September, Key Stage One teachers (Y2) will be using Assessing Pupil

Special Educational Needs:

Again this year all the staff at Ecclesall Infant school continue to aim to identify children with special educational needs as early as possible. As soon as a need has been identified appropriate action, as relevant to the particular child, is then taken. All staff are involved in providing appropriate activities for children of all abilities in class overseen by our Senco (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator), Miss Broadhead. Children may also receive support from a teaching assistant and, in some cases, from external agencies such as learning support, speech therapy, etc. At all times parents are involved and kept fully informed of the support being provided and action taken. This year various staff members have attended further training on different aspects of special educational needs ensuring that as a school we continue to help children with special educational needs achieve their potential by providing appropriate learning activities and high quality support.

Progress, a tool that helps ensure full coverage of the national curriculum as well as efficient moderation between classes. We expect very good results this year, but Maths will still be a priority next year, which means more training for staff and more information for parents on the way Maths is being taught in school.

Early Years:

There are 6 areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. These are Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication, Language and Literacy, Mathematical Development, Knowledge and Understanding of the

Literacy:

This year, as always, there has been a lot going on in this area. Miss Broadhead took over the role of Literacy co-ordinator and has been on training relating to this and has met with other Literacy co-ordinators in our family of schools to discuss approaches to Literacy.

At Ecclesall Infants Reception classes follow the Foundation Stage curriculum with assessment against the 4 areas of the Foundation Stage Profile: Language for Communication, Linking Sounds and Letters, Reading, Writing. Y1 and Y2 follow the National Curriculum/Primary Framework for Literacy.

All children have a daily phonics lesson following the stages set out in Linking Sounds and Letters.

We are fortunate that we have many parents who can help in school and each week all classes have parent helpers in to enable children to select books to take home from the school library.

This year there has been a whole school focus on writing with staff developing how they

World, Physical Development and Creative Development.

Foundation stage provision is based on 20% direct teaching and 80% continuous provision. Activities are set up within the classroom each having a different focus (writing, creative, construction, PC's etc), the children are then free to move around the activities as they wish. The Teaching staff monitor the children making detailed observations and taking photographs to use as evidence of an individual's progression though the foundation stage.

Phonics is taught daily and a weekly focus on Numeracy & literacy.

Use of the outdoor area and 'jungle' provide extra space for teaching and small group activities.

Physical Education:

Participation and variety was the key to a successful Sports week, including the annual "mini Olympics". Having the opportunity to participate in so many activities, from cricket to cheerleading and hockey to hula hooping there really was something for everyone, all helped by the tireless enthusiasm shown by coaches and willing volunteers invited in to school., brilliantly organised by Miss Burman



assess and moderate this.

This year has also seen some special Literacy events:

In October the Y2's were invited to visit the Junior School when they were visited by the poet Tony Mitton. This was enjoyed by all and it was great for the children to be able to meet a published poet.

On World Book Day each class had a Book Swap. This was a great way to share around books that have been enjoyed but are no longer needed.

- The Y2's recently took part in the Weetwood Gardens storytelling project. Each class went down for half a day and the session involved storytelling based on the house and gardens when it was a boys school (1861), made peg doll puppets relating to the story, planted a seed to take away and played some games to finish. A fantastic time was had by all.

Recently Ecclesall Infants have signed up to the ESCAL accredited school award (Every Sheffield Child Articulate and Literate by the age of 11). This underlines our continued commitment to the development

Extras!

It is often those areas of schools that go beyond the curriculum that make a school stand out; it is a credit to Mrs Bentley and all the staff, that such importance is given to enhancing the curriculum for the children wherever possible, and making the most of the wonderful facilities that are enjoyed at school. The sensory room, under the guidance of Mrs Lindop, has become many "places" over the last year, from an under water world to a venue suitable for world cup football. This valuable resources has inspired many children and brought to life places that are just beyond the possibilities for school visits!

A special folder, including many photographs, specifically for parents to look through is kept in the entrance area.

Many of the extras that are available to our school are paid for by the amazing fundraising efforts of the EPA and the Governors would like to thank all members of the committee for their tireless work once again this year.

Science:

Under the leadership of Mr Calcutt, Science continues to be a subject that excites and engages the children. The highlight of the year for Science was participation in National Science and Engineering week, where a theme of "Earth" interpreted as "Jungles"; activities ranged from computer based research on the habitat and feeding of pandas to discussions about the layers and animals of the jungle. First hand experience was passed on to the children from Mr Calcutt, who willingly shared anecdotes from his own Jungle adventures!



Religious Education:

The children's RE lessons reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, and at the same time take account of the teachings and practices of the other main religions. Lessons are based, as required, on the Agreed Syllabus of the local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education. Lessons begin to develop children's understanding of four world faiths: Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. These lessons play an important part in the children's spiritual, moral, social, cultural and citizenship education. Work in RE develops children's awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives; understanding of religious traditions; and ability to describe and reflect on their own experiences. Lessons therefore help the children to learn both about and from religions. Visits planned for next year include Y1 to Ecclesall Parish church and Y2 going to a local mosque as well as a vicar coming in to school to work with Foundation Stage, these will enrich the children's understanding in RE. Teachers link RE work effectively to other subjects such as English, Art and ICT. Though not part of the RE syllabus, at times, assemblies make a valuable contribution to children's RE.

History & Geography:

The subjects of History and Geography are lead by Mrs Marshall. The children learn about their local area and their immediate surroundings of the school itself as well as places further afield such as Africa. The topics are linked closely with other curriculum areas in order to develop a more cross curricular approach, helping the children to make links in their learning. The History holds a strong link to areas relevant to today's children; learning about how people in the past used to holiday, what toys were played with and the houses that they lived in. The curriculum is brought to life through visits and guests coming into school. There are plans to

liaise closer with the subject Leaders in the Junior School to ensure progression and continuity in both these exciting subjects.



Year 2 Children visited Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet where they took part in a Victorian Day! Children dressed up in Victorian style clothing and had a living history lesson where they visited a classroom, washed laundry and learnt how to cut hay using traditional tools!

Children's centre:

Ecclesall Children's Centre aims to liaise with stakeholders and Multi professional agencies to provide quality provision to meet the changing needs of our community. We will provide early support in order to enable the children within the community to maximise their full potential in line with the Every Child Matters agenda. Our Children's Centre will be an integral part of our Infants School and will also provide outreach support to the wider community of Ecclesall, Greystones, Bents Green and Hunters Bar.

There will be an open morning for parents and the local community to explain more about the Children's centre on Friday 17th September from 9-11am.