

**BOLNEY C.E.P. SCHOOL**

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**Headteacher Mr. Jon McArthur NPQH**

 Thursday, 13 February 2014

**Governor newsletter**

**View from the Chair**

As this is my first ramblings of this academic year I would like on behalf of the Governing board to welcome all the new families to Bolney in Willow Class and throughout the school. We also welcome Mr Still who joins our staffing team to lead Year 6 after Mrs Knox left us for pastures new. We also welcome Mrs Walsh back from maternity leave. As you are aware we also said farewell to Mrs Atkins before Christmas, both ladies contributed much to the school, not least as members of the Governing board. However we are very glad to welcome Mrs Horan and Mrs James to the board taking up the staff governor vacancies. Lastly we say hello to Mrs Nagendra, who takes over from Mrs Moffatt as our music specialist. Change in staff especially in a small environment can be difficult and unsettling. Yes things will be different, yes some adjustments need to be made, but change offers new and exciting opportunities for all. I am glad to say that all these changes have happened smoothly and in a very "Bolney" positive and welcoming way.

Recently I attended the beautiful service of Candlemas at St. Mary Magdalene. This service marks the occasion when Mary and Joseph take the young Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem. This was to present Jesus and give thanks for his birth by offering sacrifices, as was the custom at the time. An occasion of great celebration. Our service involved candles, listening to beautiful passages from the Bible and prayer book, with time for reflection. It offered a chance to stop and reflect on all forms of celebration throughout our lives, and highlight the things we need to be thankful for.

The governing board are delighted to report excellent results in SATS tests last year, in both key stages. Results this year have exceeded all expectations, with unprecedented high marks in Year 6 papers. As a board we also track trends in overall pupil progress, throughout the school and these levels are consistent and above national standards. Outside the core curriculum, our sports teams announce result after result; in football, cricket, stoolball and a cross country team the envy of the locality. All this culminated in the school being awarded a Silver Medal Kite mark for Sports, one of only a couple of schools in the area to achieve this. The school corridors are a constant show of celebration to the artistic ability of our pupils. We delight at plays and festivals at the acting and singing. Entrepreneurial skills are on show at the fairs and summer garden parties, leading to amazing amounts of money being raised, this highlighted together with the Hope house, Haiti link in an article in the Diocese magazine. Bolney held up as an example to others for learning and considering those in other places less fortunate.

What do all these things have in common? Other than being cause for celebration. Well they are all great opportunities. Opportunities to learn, experience and grow; academically, physically and socially. It would be very easy for a school to blindly concentrate on academic achievement after all this is what we are judged most on, with budgets under pressure and an increasingly stringent national curriculum, the temptation just to play the three "Rs" record is great. But the staff and governors are committed to a far more holistic approach. We are in the business of building well rounded, fulfilled people rather than widgets.

I listened with interest recently to a radio interview of Dan Snow, the presenter and historian. The interviewer was discussing with Dan Snow (who has a first class honours degree from Oxford) his views on the return to facts based history teaching. While he felt having a sound knowledge of events and timings was important. He said in an age when within seconds of typing a subject heading into an internet search engine, you could find all the facts you need to know. He felt maybe it was more important that children were taught how to interpret events, understand why they happened, to be able to relate to them and also how to be good members of society.

We hear a lot of talk of a broken society, people not having consideration for others. Jesus asked us to love our neighbour as we would want to be loved. I wonder how knowing the date when the guns fell silent in the trenches of World War II can help with this. Is it not better to understand how the men in the trenches lived and felt. What does this tell us of the conflicts of today? They say, if you save a child you save a nation. The great teacher Jesus Christ told us all to be more like children. Wide eyed, eager, innocent, keen to learn and overall accepting.

While this may all sound a little dramatic, it is the back drop to why we preserve a holistic curriculum. Forming as many opportunities for our children to grow. Yes academic attainment is important, but I would suggest children who are well rounded, socially aware with a life-long passion for learning are vital, especially if they understand (as should we all) to use their God given talents for the benefit of all and in honour of the heavenly Father.

At a recent governor conference Canon Ann Holt OBE summed this up wonderfully with the acronym "GRACE".

God

 Respecting

 And

 Child

 Enabling

Now I have two reasons for liking this. The first reason, obviously, it’s the name of my daughter. Secondly it wonderfully encapsulates the ethos at Bolney and the holistic education.

GRACE; Empowers not restrains, Encourages not condemns, Understands not imposes, Forgives not judges.

It is with GRACE that we build a school, design a curriculum, consider budgets and look to the future under a collaborative academy landscape. Ultimately it is under God’s grace that we will all be judged.

Best wishes,

Peter Sutton

Chair of Governors.

