

CEO Newsletter Feb 2018

Well, didn't this month take a turn for the unexpected! Snow days are rare – a treat for the children but a challenge for those having to make the decision about whether to close. Critically, the most important factor is that everyone stays safe. I know many staff went the extra mile when the snow arrived, putting the children's needs before their own and making sure everyone got home even if it meant a very slow, long journey getting home themselves. Particular thanks to Parc Eglos staff for ensuring the children on the London visit had a safe, although unexpected, overnight stay in Tiverton before return safely home albeit day late. Thank you to parents for your patience and support and to staff for your care.

Much has been going on across the Trust as always. Crowan School took up an opportunity that was shared at the Heads' meeting last term. 26 Year 5 & 6 pupils took part in the Writers' Block provided by the KEAP facility at Cornwall College, Pool. Their teacher explains: It was been a fantastic experience from start to finish. To begin, the children are invited in to a small room with a desk and asked to hang their coats on pegs labelled with various types of writers. Whilst in the room, the children are offered a torch and they are then invited to pass through the wall (disguised as a bookcase) to explore a plethora of stimuli for writing. In this next room, 'The Imaginarium', the lights are low and there is a huge wardrobe consisting of many small doors. Over the weeks, the children are invited to explore the scenes behind each door by torchlight, using the contents for ideas for setting, character and plot. The children learnt many tools for description, hooking the reader, making their writing more interesting and much more.

After 'The imaginarium' there are further rooms with further wardrobes containing interesting scenes, props and ideas for writing weird and wonderful stories. Finally, after passing through the 'Narnia wardrobe', there is 'The Writing Room' where the children get to sit on cosy rugs and beanbags to create their masterpieces. It is here that the published authors offer their expertise and encouragement whilst helping the students develop their own creations. Each and every child has their own story to tell. 'The Writers' Block' has helped the class to realise their individual stories. They are all delighted with their efforts and are clearly more confident in their own abilities as writers, enjoying writing for pleasure.

One of the parents said: 'It was lovely to see the children enjoying their creative writing in such an interesting setting. It was interesting how they could all look at the same thing but then come up with such different stories.

Hearing them read out what they had written was brilliant. Their writing was amazing, I was so impressed.'

Staff across the Trust are continuing to work together for the benefit of all of our children. By working together, we are becoming more adept at the process of writing successful Education, Health and Care Plans. Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) from different schools work together to draft the application and to ensure it is as robust as possible. Some heads have attended panel meetings to try to gain a better understanding of the process and have shared their learning with the SENCO team

in the Trust. A great example of how expertise in schools has worked together for successful outcomes!

Helston Community College has continued its series of dyslexia awareness workshops. Parents of Year 6 students due to join the College from Trust schools and their parents met with 7 dyslexic students from Helston for an information afternoon. Students helping at the afternoon gave their own insight into dyslexia and how support at College works for them. Parents were able to learn reading and memory aids to help support their young people with homework and revision at home. Students were on hand to demonstrate our intervention programmes such as Lexia and Read Write Inc.

Using the Trust bulletin to advertise the College workshops has also proved successful with a 10 week parenting programme which began earlier this term. The programme supports parents who may be dealing with worrying or difficult times with their child. The programme is run in conjunction with the Early Help Hub. If you would like more details, please contact Caroline Bloor. cbloor@helston.cornwall.sch.uk

It has been a pleasure to visit more schools this term. The learning environments I have seen are supportive and work is purposeful. I have been wowed by the evident progress of some of the youngest children in the Trust and by the enthusiasm of older children sharing their work and explaining their learning journey to visitors. It is so good to see how dedicated our staff are in ensuring excellent learning opportunities for our children. It is also good to see the improvement journey in settings where staff have been supported by other colleagues in the Trust. The difference this has had is tangible. In one school, where a colleague decided to enhance the learning environment, she visited other settings to gather ideas and, with the support of an SLE, the teacher and teaching assistant have transformed the classroom. We have great expertise in our schools and every school has good practice to share that others can learn from. Thank you to everyone for their generosity in sharing in order to ensure that our schools are exceptional.

As I write, March is already upon us. This month the Trust Finance and Resources Committee meet on the 8th and the Full Board on 15th. The agendas and minutes of these meetings are published on the website if you wish to read them. (www.southerlypoint.co)

The other major news is that the work on Helston's new build commenced this week. There is no going back now. The build will be documented online for those who wish to follow the developments. www.helston@cornwall.sch.uk.

Whilst rejoicing in this development, we are mindful of the ongoing situation with Mullion School's roof and hope that this will be finalised shortly. If things go according to plan, the first stage of the work should be completed by the end of Easter but until we have confirmation from County we cannot guarantee this. In the meantime we keep the pressure on the contractors. I hope to provide you with a positive update on this work in my next newsletter.

Whilst many of us have enjoyed the snow despite the disruption, let's hope the warmer days and longer evenings of the Spring will soon be here.

With all best wishes

Donna

