

Governors' Newsletter, Summer Term, 2016

Not more tests?

Tests have been in the news a lot recently, so please forgive me for mentioning another one! The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is, considering a new measurement of global skills in the next round of PISA tests in 2018 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-36343602>). The test, we are told, would look at how well pupils can navigate an increasingly diverse world, with an awareness of different cultures and beliefs.

One response to all this of course is "Are they mad, how are they possibly going to measure that?" Another is that Furzedown, with its community ethos and topic based approach, is a step ahead. Here are just a few of the things that have been going on in, around and beyond school recently to help ensure that Furzedown pupils finish Year 6 as well prepared for the future as they possibly can be.

Memorable trips

As well as bedding down the new national curriculum that came into effect last year among other changes, getting on with the day-to-day excitement of learning about the world around us is always a priority. Reading, Writing and Maths are essential of course, but so are understanding and appreciation of the wider world. I asked my Year 3 son what school trips he'd most enjoyed this year. He narrowed it down to three: Learning about Native American Indians at the Horniman Museum; Wandsworth's Western Riverside Recycling, and then a session in school making paper; and a day at Rushall Farm in Berkshire.

Science

As I write, Science Week is drawing to a close. Did lightning really strike the school to illustrate Benjamin Franklin's contribution to our understanding of electricity? Was that a snake and a hamster in 5D?

Creativity and Cricket

Every Year Group puts on a stage show at least once a year. Reception's play this term was the talk of the playground and is well worth a look at <https://youtu.be/0y35QHalvXw>

Just after England finally beat South Africa in an away test series over Christmas last year, Furzedown's cricket team won the Maurice Fulcher Trophy in January this year. I know which sporting achievement makes me proudest. Congratulations to the team, and to coach Derick too.

A few words from Rebecca

Chair of Governors, Rebecca has been out of action for a few months this year, but has kept up with progress at school nonetheless. Rebecca writes:

As always, it is a delight to wander around Furzedown School and see all the excellent displays of work done by so many of you. I am always very impressed by the standard of work. Well done!

The Governors had a great visit to school last term which enabled us to visit some of you in your classes and find out how you are doing. I enjoyed watching the Year 6 pupils doing preparation for a debate. All pupils were encouraged to take part and it was a joy to watch. I was very sad to be called away later in the lesson as I was really getting into it as some of you pupils were too!!

My part of this newsletter is a short one this year as I have not been in school so much over the last year due to health issues. However, I wanted to take this opportunity to say a farewell to all Year 6 pupils and to wish you all great success in your efforts and achievements as you start secondary school in September. It has been a great joy to get to know you all a little better. I hope to be back in school again before the end of term and maybe come to see your Year 6 play.

Thank you also to all parents who give their time and effort to help with fundraising for the PTA. It is always great fun joining in with PTA events so thank you and well done to all involved.

Best wishes to you all and have a great summer!

Democracy

Furzedown's newest Governor, Charley Jarrett spends his working day as Policy and Public Affairs Officer at Electoral Reform Society. So he knows a thing or two about the democratic process. Here Charley reflects on a day in school last year:

A particular highlight was the school's mock election this time last year. Year 6 formed political parties (each with a candidate, a leader, an agent and so on) and produced manifestos, voted on by the whole school. Mrs Kitchlew-Wilson then met with the winning party to discuss how some of their ideas might be implemented. It was a great experience in hands-on democracy, teaching everyone the importance of democracy and how it works. It was one of the best examples of citizenship education I've seen! Try to find the display in the hallway next time you're at the school.

He adds:

It's also been great to see the great variety of extra-curricular activities the school has offered each term. There's something for everyone, helping the children develop into well-rounded young people.

Green Fingers

One activity that just keeps growing has been Furzedown's gardening achievements. As Reverend Sue Clarke, Community Governor and Vicar of St Pauls on Welham Road adds:

This year the children have designed and created a beautiful garden in the Furzedown Community Memorial Garden at St Pauls, building on their winning entry in the garden competition at Wisley. The theme is medicinal herbs and each plant has a notice explaining its historic use. Definitely worth a visit!

Looking Ahead

Some great examples of how Furzedown pupils are building on their experiences in school and beginning to flourish in the wider world, I hope you'll agree. And finally, looking ahead:

Good luck to Year 5 and 6 students who are off to Cumbria on the 20th of June for the School Journey. Have a wonderful and memorable week!

Many of us are looking forward to hearing the school choir singing at St Paul's Church, Welham Road on the evening of 25th June.

See you at the Summer Fair on Saturday 9th July from 12-3pm.

Have a wonderful summer.

Simon Hill