

Headteacher's Reflection on our year 2022-2023

I am not quite sure where the year has gone! It seems like only a few weeks ago I was introducing myself as the new headteacher. But what a year it has been. Only this week, taking time to sit back and reflect, have I realised quite how much has happened and the wonderful learning experiences we have all been involved in.

When I started in the role as headteacher last September I quickly realised that I hadn't just joined any old school...I had joined a community, a family and I was warmly welcomed and very quickly realised how lucky I was to be able to lead these amazing schools.

The year didn't start quite as any of us would have imagined with the passing of Queen Elizabeth II early in September. However, celebrating her life and the dedication and love she had shown throughout her service highlighted the Christian values at the heart of our schools.

As the year got into full swing our school Christian values of Generosity, Optimism, Determination, Curiosity and Courage became embedded in all we do.

Our children have shown generosity particularly through the work of our school council in raising funds and awareness for charities including 'The Quantock Food Bank' and 'Shelter'. As well as Children in Need, Red Nose Day, Mary's Meals and raising awareness of anti-bullying through odd socks day and our pupil led anti-bullying policy and lessons.

Our children have shown optimism and curiosity when provided with opportunities to explore the beautiful world around them through forest school and learning outside the classroom. With many visits to the Quantocks to carry out fieldwork studies and learn about our local environment, as well as Stogumber's recent visits to Matthew's copse where they have discovered and named 'The Forest of doom'; 'The gully of lost bottles'; and 'The meadow of dreams'. Their curiosity has been ignited further by the many external visit opportunities they have been provided with including visits to sports festivals, East Quay, Dunster Castle, The Roman Baths, Louise's woods and the London residential.

Our children have shown determination and courage when performing in music and sports events such as the nativity; Crowcombe's Christmas concert; the performing arts cafe; Wellington School's Come and Sing, choir and orchestra performances and most recently Robin Hood and the Sherwood Hoodies. They have represented our schools in cross country, football, netball, cricket, sportshall athletics and mountain biking.

But this is not all.... Working alongside governors, staff, collective worship ambassadors and representatives from the local communities this year, we have developed and embedded our new school vision 'Together, let us Love, Encourage, Achieve and Flourish.'

Although not always easy, we have shared many moments of 'togetherness' throughout the year. This has been seen through whole school learning days including Combe Sydenham in October; visiting the Brewhouse theatre to see 'The Little Princes' at Christmas; Quantock day in March and house based learning days celebrating Easter, Sports day and most recently our summer fun day.

Although not always actually together, our shared experiences extend to shared opportunities. These include events such as the west end dance school visit for World Book day and our work developing our school trees to represent our school vision with artist James Lake.

This 'togetherness' has strengthened our links with the local communities and churches through celebrations of key Christian events such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter; as well as Remembrance day, my commissioning service and the celebration of 150 years of Crowcombe School. We have also now begun our half termly family services, where once again we join together in reflection and have celebrated the coronation of King Woody and considered how God gives us all second chances through an intense 'Wimbledon' tennis match! We have enjoyed joining together for Celebrate and Praise collective worships, enabled due to the wonderful technology of google-meet!

Our children have shown love and encouragement in all that they do. A few examples are through the work of our young leaders, running activities and games for others; and our collective worship ambassadors planning and leading times of reflection and prayer.

Our children have shown what they can achieve through dedication and hard work. Making links and connections within learning opportunities and showcasing their talents, skills and knowledge. I must pause now to quickly congratulate the children in Kingfisher's who we have recently heard have each individually been awarded with the Explore Arts Award.

But all of this does not just happen. Thanks must be given to the tremendous efforts of the PTA to raise funds to support the school. In particular I would like to thank Paul Kenny as the chair of the PTA. Not only does Paul co-ordinate and lead the PTA but he is always on hand to help out. In the last week alone I have called on him to help with sound systems and microphones for Sports day and the Kingfisher play. Just a quick phone call for help and he is always there – thank you Paul.

I must also thank the amazing staff team I have around me. Their dedication to go above and beyond to provide the best for your children and our schools is commendable. So now we have reached the end of the academic year. An amazing year. And although the staff are all looking forward to a well earned break, they also look forward to the return in September!

There are many exciting times ahead...not least the excitement as Mr Flynn and his wife welcome their first baby later in the Autumn Term and Mrs Carter and her husband welcome their second child early in the spring term.

But for now I hope this moment of reflection that I have shared with you all brings a smile to your face as we continue in this end of year celebration by singing together 'He's got the whole world in his hands'