

In our second article we are delighted to report that the 2021/22 academic year was able to proceed with little interruption as members of staff and pupils experienced a cautious but welcome return to normality. It was wonderful to see parents/carers welcomed back into school again to participate in the Stay and Share sessions; albeit in a socially distanced hall. Pupils were quite rightly proud of their work and eager to show them what they had produced in work books and on their iPads.

Our Governing Board meetings and some of those held with our linked Curriculum Year Groups took place virtually at the start of the year. It was a welcome change to meet in person again and see the progress pupils had made during the course of the year. It was evident that the amount of additional support the school had provided by way of catch up sessions and well-being activities were of great benefit to pupils who had found the previous 12 months more challenging. We are now looking forward to hearing about the school's end of year achievements in the core curriculum subjects.

The new non-core curriculum has been in operation for a year and received positive feedback from teaching staff and pupils. Examples of the pupils' work and school inspection assessments show that their understanding and knowledge from prior learning is embedding and threading through into the new curriculum. The introduction of a new reading scheme in line with educational requirements has been a success with pupils in Foundation making good progress.

During the course of the year, we were invited to accompany Year Groups on a number of their cultural capital and educational visits. The Year 3 Group linked governor said it was a privilege to accompany pupils to MK Gallery in November and was very impressed by the experience. She commented on the fact that they were engaged, knowledgeable and responded enthusiastically when presented with the challenge of producing a piece of abstract art during the visit.

Foundation's trip to the Jack and the Beanstalk pantomime was an introduction to the theatre for many of the young pupils and one that they would remember, myself included. The production was excellent and the entire experience prompted much discussion amongst the young audience; the stage setting, acoustics and the appearance of Diversity on stage being the main topics of conversation.

There were other governor accompanied visits to Stratford upon Avon with the Year 5 Group to experience a taste of Tudor history and complement their studies and another to a working farm at Stoke Bruerne with Foundation where pupils were able to meet and learn about the animals in amongst the various barns and enclosures that housed them. The close proximity and equally inquisitive nature of some of the animals led to stimulating conversation and gasps of awe when a group of pupils witnessed a lamb being born.

Two of the Year 2 classes were also able to learn about nature, on a walking trip to the local woods, hosted by the Parks Trust. The governor accompanying the visit commented that the children remained interested and focussed on learning, despite the very cold weather which caused the remaining class's visit to be postponed.

It has been a credit to the school and parents that during these visits governors have observed excellent behaviour and received congratulatory comments from members of the public. Throughout, pupils showed an eagerness to learn, share knowledge and participate in activities where appropriate; demonstrating good manners and respect as they did so.

Finally, I would like to thank the Friends of Middleton for organising such a spectacular Jubilee event on the last day before half term. The crown and flag making, fairground games and not least the disco dancing throughout the decades was great fun for the whole school, staff included! The pupils looked wonderful in their red, white and blue or party outfits and enjoyed the afternoon immensely. It was a fitting finale when Mrs Trail led the whole school in a chorus of the national anthem and a toast to the queen.

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