

In our first article of this academic year we are pleased to share some of our experiences and activities as governors at the school. We were delighted to accept an invitation to tour the school premises in September to see the additions and refurbishments that had been completed since our last visit. The new woodland themed flooring in the Early Years Learning corridor and extensive interactive play areas and equipment were impressive as was the addition of a dedicated music room. A selection of classrooms was also visited where we were able to observe the early progress made in curriculum subjects. Venturing outside, we inspected the newly resurfaced Multi Use Games Area and heard about proposals for further enhancements in this outdoor space.

An enjoyable aspect of our role is meeting members of the teaching staff and children during our visits to the school or on accompanied trips. Among those so far this year were the Year 1 visits to the nearby church where children were able to learn about the nativity story as part of their RE studies. They were attentive and eager to participate in the session lead by the local vicar who explored the meaning of Christmas with them using a variety of festive props. There was no shortage of volunteers, keen to place each nativity character in the stable setting.

A governor braved sub-zero conditions in December to join Year 6 in their WWII History visit to Bletchley Park. After a tour of the draughty huts that housed hundreds of vital code breakers at the time, a hasty retreat was made to the new interactive facility which provided a wealth of information in a modern setting. The D Day Landing workshop with the opportunity to learn about Morse code and examine an original Enigma Machine was of particular interest.

Among the cultural capital experiences that have taken place were trips to a theatre and museum. Children in Foundation were in awe during their visit to watch the Snow White pantomime. They behaved impeccably, absorbed in what was a new experience for some and expectation for the remainder. One of the leading characters, Lesley Joseph, commented on the importance of introducing young children to the theatre and specifically on how well behaved Middleton had been.

Year 4's visit to Silverstone Motor Museum was met with great excitement; in particular the virtual reality grid and cinematic track race experiences which encompassed many famous racing celebrities and their vehicles throughout the ages. As the children progressed through the museum they were taken on an interactive history tour of the facility from a monastery site in the Middle Ages to a WWII RAF aerodrome arriving at a state of the art F1 racing circuit we have today. The workshop provided insight into the complexity and cost involved in the motor sport industry and ended with a partial track walk where children could view a section of the circuit, spectator and pit areas and have the opportunity to ask questions.

Whilst continuing an interest in the progress of our Linked Year Groups, individual governors have this year each been assigned to a Faculty Group. Initial meetings have taken place between governors and members of Senior Staff who are leading each of the Faculties in order to ascertain the aims and rationale behind decisions made relating to the curriculum for this year. We were able to share this information with the Governing Board and look forward to our next meetings in the summer term when we will hear about the challenges faced and progress made in each of the curriculum subjects.

One of the most informative aspects of any school visit is being able to observe and participate alongside the children and we were pleased to be invited to attend Pupil Voice sessions to hear what views representatives from year groups had on their curriculum subjects. We found that children were respectful and communicated positively with one another, eager to share their opinions and discuss aspects of the subject in question in a frank and confident manner.

During the sessions on Reading and Writing, the Language Faculty Governor was informed about the breadth of reading material available, the children's tastes in literature, how ability is monitored and the importance English plays in their overall education. There were also positive comments about the new Writing scheme which had just been introduced whereby children found it extended their vocabulary and encouraged creative writing.

With regard to Humanities, the Faculty Governor was impressed by the way in which children were able to recount how they remembered subject content and its links to other areas of the curriculum during a History session she attended. It was evident that children were quite rightly proud of their work and keen to share this within the school community with specific questions providing evidence that the curriculum motto of: "Embed, Enrich and Excite" was being achieved.

Barbara Bushell

Autumn/Spring 2022/23