

Court de Wyck Church of England Primary School



Headteacher: Mr N. Riddiough
Email: nick.riddiough@staff.court-de-wyck.n-somerset.sch.uk

Bishops Road
Claverham
Bristol
BS49 4NF

Tel: (01934 833070)
Email: courtdewyck.pri@n-somerset.gov.uk

HEAD'S REPORT – A YEAR OF SUCCESS FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING MONDAY 30 JUNE 2008

Konichiwa!

I write this report at the end of our highly successful Japanese theme week, which began with teachers handing out Japanese Flags to the children as they arrived at school on Monday morning. The school is now awash with Geisha girls, Kimonos and even a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle! I have just watched a display of learning by our Breakfast Club Judo Group who have been working on Friday mornings since the beginning of November. This afternoon, parents have been invited in to celebrate the childrens' learning that has consisted of papermaking, kite making, origami, writing haiku poetry, talking and writing in Japanese and making their own sushi! We have also worked with Backwell School throughout the week and the beautiful Cherry Blossom tree takes pride of place in the hall. It has been so successful that after a tour of the school in action this week, David Amos, our new School Improvement Partner (aligned to the former Adviser roles) stated that **'this is how learning in schools should be'**.

Delightfully, this type of event is no longer a 'one-off' at Court de Wyck. Instead, it is events like this that underpin the child-centred, creative and experiential curriculum which engages our children in their learning and is making learning at Court de Wyck irresistible.

Moreover, we are still not satisfied. Just this week, the staff have been talking about where we want our curriculum to go next and producing a learning and teaching policy which outlines our vision for making learning irresistible for every child.

It is with great pleasure that I write this report, in which I intend to highlight the many achievements of the school in this 'Year of Success'.

Curriculum

WOW! Days:

To gain the children's engagement and enthusiasm in their learning themes we have begun the start of projects with WOW! Days. The activity days could take any form and are designed to spark interest in children; encouraging them to ask questions and seek to find out more. These are often cross-age groups enabling the children to work with peers and teachers they may not normally get the opportunity to. They may be themed-dress days, visits out or visitors in. It may be an activity as simple as handing out flags on arrival at school. Either way, they are becoming a key part of the learning experiences we offer to our children at Court de Wyck. This year, WOW! Days have included Burglar Bill Day, 'Greek Day' to launch KS2s Age of Heroes theme a themed-dress day with activities such as building a Trojan horse, making Greek urns and adorning them with typically Greek designs and even an archaeological dig! This was swiftly followed by FS/KS1s St Georges Day celebrations with jousting, shield making and turnip tossing!

Our caterers supported both events by producing themed school dinners for the day – a Greek Feast and Roast Beef with Yorkshire Pudding or Bangers, Mash and Apple Pie!

Extra Curricular Activities:

For a small school, we continue to offer an impressive range of extra-curricular activities for the children. James provides sports activities supplemented by Netball club run by Heidi Baldwin. We also have art, library and country dancing running in addition to the unlikely name Yu-Gi-Oh! Club – don't ask.

I audited the clubs parents and children wanted us to offer earlier this year after some folded due to lack of interest. Unfortunately, as a small school we need to tread a fine line between age-specific clubs and narrowing the potential uptake.

Far and away our most successful club has been our Gardening Clubs run by Sue Baber and Mrs Anderson. This award-winning green-fingered group have given the school grounds a total facelift with raised beds being built, plants and flowers being grown and our fruit waste now being composted on site. The courtyard area is almost unrecognisable with its colour and scent. In fact I have just enjoyed three particularly delicious strawberries this morning.

Once again, Cook has supported the school following the recent harvest of rhubarb and green beans. Cook took the time to include this produce on the menu, making a very well-received rhubarb crumble.

This year has seen us beginning to offer 'breakfast clubs'. Whilst no breakfast is served (yet!) these before school activities have been some of the most popular – particularly Judo led by Steve Hammond. This type of club has multi-faceted benefits with parents having secure child-care from 8.00am, children engaging in a high energy sport and the school receiving alert, active children who are ready to learn. This type of club will be more regular as we work towards the extended services agenda.

Critical Skills:

All our teachers have now been trained to deliver the Critical Skills Programme. The Critical Skills Programme is one of the most exciting developments in classroom methodology in many years in education. It clearly addresses all our national priorities but by far the most exciting thing is that it actually works in the classroom. The Critical Skills classroom model is based on four educational ideas:

- ü Collaborative learning in a community context
- ü Problem based learning
- ü Experiential Learning
- ü Results driven learning

At the heart of the Critical Skills classroom is the experiential learning cycle which:

- ü engages pupils in collaborative, complex problem-solving activities that link to the real world
- ü promotes assessment for learning by encouraging pupils to reflect on their learning
- ü caters effectively for different learning styles and multiple intelligences
- ü promotes better understanding of subject content by enabling pupils to construct individual meaning from their experiences

We are one of the schools at the leading edge of this teaching and learning style and have been asked by Tim Sully whether some of our teachers would be willing to be filmed to show other practitioners what it can look like in a real-life classroom.

Assessment for Learning:

AfL is based on 10 key principles (http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4336.aspx). Very crudely, if AfL is embedded, pupils will know where they are in their learning and what they need to do next. It is about handing over more responsibility for the learning to the learner. Staff have had a significant amount of input from Tim Sully and this is reflected in classroom practice. Pupils now engage in peer and self-assessment of their work as well as developing their thinking through strategies such as talking partners. Children can see on their feedback in their books when teachers are 'Tickled Pink' or have identified 'Green for Growth'.

A common vocabulary of learning is developing in the classroom with children talking about 'Success Criteria' for their work and WWWs (what went well) and EBIs (even better if...). Again, we are considered to be further along the line than most other schools in the authority with this. Embedding this practice is now our key priority.

Destination Imagination:

In recognition of our work in the Critical Skills Programme we have been invited to take part in the inaugural Destination Imagination: Mission Not So Impossible! The event takes place in the

Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare, on Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25 June, when the children will be taking part in problem-solving challenges. Each school taking part is sending a team or teams of seven children accompanied by an adult 'coach' to take part in one of the two days of events. We are one of the few schools who have been invited to take two teams and have chosen to take a FS/KS1 team and a KS2 team.

Enrichment Activities:

We have been able to take our children outside of school to enrich their learning. Collaborative learning with Backwell School, treasure hunt's on Cadbury Hill, harvesting vegetables at Hunt's Farm, Drug's Misuse Forum, a pantomime visit and a residential trip to Kilve Court are just some of the activities we have offered.

In addition to this we have welcomed people into school to enhance our learning. Science workshops, Japanese experts and a puppet theatre have all graced our school hall.

Performing Arts:

Our FS/KS1 Fairy Tale Character nativity is one of the most creative and impressive performances I have seen in any school. I have never had as many positive comments from parents about a production and must admit to having a very damp eye – filled with pride over the confidence that we have instilled over in our youngest children.

Our older children continue to impress with their acting, singing and dancing as they took part in the MAWS festival of arts at the Colston Hall performing in front of over 2000 people.

Further appearances have seen the children perform at the Claverham Players Pantomime in April.

Our maypole dancers again performed at seasonal events such as the Claverham May Day celebration and Cleeve Field Day.

Our Year 5 and 6 children are preparing for the culmination of their Ancient Greeks: The Age of Heroes learning theme with two performances of the Troy Story.

November saw the hall transformed into an Art Exhibition displaying a framed original of every child's work for the general public to purchase. The School Association even provided visitors with wine and cheese to loosen their wallets. Another successful event celebrating children's work, bringing parents into the school and giving children a purpose for their learning.

Music:

We offer music lessons to all children in KS2 and currently we are providing cello and guitar lessons provided by North Somerset music service. Following a request from a child, next year we will be offering drums lessons as well.

North Somerset music service has also been providing Wider Opportunities for our KS2 children every Monday morning. The Year 5 and 6 children have been learning the pocket trumpet with Year 3 and 4 children learning the recorder.

We recently welcomed the service's Ivory Strings quartet in to entertain the children with a recital.

Year 3 and 4 have also been learning the songs for their upcoming cluster performance called 'Raise the Roof'

As you can see, our curriculum has come a long, long way in a very short space of time. Alison May and Claire Doyle now have the task of developing it further and taking this most crucial aspect of school life from good to outstanding.

Pastoral:

House System and Celebration Assembly:

At the beginning of the year we introduced a new pastoral system to the school, led by Dean Hudd. The key drivers behind this change were a disassociation of the children from the previous 'team-based' system, limited opportunities to celebrate successes in effort and achievement, a lack of community within the children and a need to increase the opportunities for the children to make a 'positive contribution'; an outcome of the ECM agenda.

The children are now randomly split into three houses, each named after local areas: Yeo Moor, Cadbury Hill and Goblin Combe. Year six children fulfil the roles of house captain and vice captain and are responsible for running house assemblies once per term. In the first of these, each house chose a charity to support throughout the year and nominated one week in the year to be their 'Charity Week'. These have been an enormous success with the children planning, organising and running their own fundraising activities with minimal adult direction. Activities

have included Karaoke competitions, cake sales, toy sales, art competitions and Mufti days. The engagement of the children in these activities and the sense of pride and achievement when their activity has raised money for their charity (as little as £1.18 in one activity) has been evident and is an indicator of the success of the scheme. On the last Friday of term, a representative of each of the charities has agreed to come in to receive a presentation cheque from each of the houses. Governors are welcome to attend this celebration assembly (as with all celebration assemblies).

The 'House Point Challenge' has also developed a sense of teamwork as children's individual successes contribute to the corporate success of their house. House points are celebrated at each celebration assembly and the winning house at the end of each even term is awarded £50 towards their chosen charity. Children's individual house point totals are also celebrated with individual certificates on completion of their sticker bookmarks.

Celebration Assembly occurs last thing on Friday afternoon allowing the whole school to celebrate successes and end the week on a positive note. Any member of staff can contribute to the 'Gold Book', with nominated children receiving a Gold Certificate with 5 certificates earning an individualised letter home from myself. Pleasingly, children value Gold Book nominations so highly that they regularly nominate their peers for deserving deeds!

In addition to the Gold Book, Celebration Assembly enables us to celebrate other achievements such as high quality work, Walking Bus awards, certificates from external activities and birthdays. This is a much more inclusive system than the previous 'Star' assembly which celebrated one person from each class and left 29 others out!

Peer Mediation:

In addition to the House system, we have also introduced the Peer Mediator Team '14 Helping Hands'. These Year 5 and 6 children applied for their position and received training on how to resolve conflict amongst peers in the playground from Sue Walker, North Somerset PSHE adviser. They launched the scheme to the school in a special assembly attended by parents, governors and other members of the school community. They take their role incredibly seriously and have had a significant impact on the number of issues there have been at play and lunchtimes. Sue was so impressed with the work that our children do that she nominated them for the Princess Diana Award, which was presented to them earlier this year.

School Council:

This continues to run successfully under Natasha's excellent Chairmanship (which belies her age!) The Council have formed interview panels for recent staffing appointments and once again surprised all concerned with their mature approach and insightfulness. Despite being given a £500 budget this year to improve the school as they see fit, they have again been reluctant to spend it!

They will soon be receiving the proceeds of the fun run to allocate. I am under the impression that they would rather donate this to charity (Stepping Stones has been mentioned) than keep it for their own needs.

Support for Parents:

Parent Support Advisor (PSA) Project:

Our decision to take part in the pilot paid dividends and Ally Cheeseman has proven to be an asset to the school community. I am delighted that North Somerset also saw great value in the project and have committed to funding PSAs for the next three years. One of Ally's biggest successes was the Webster Stratton parenting evening course that she ran at school for about three months. This was fully attended and valued by both our parents and those from other local schools.

ICT open afternoon and CEOP training:

In the autumn term we invited the parents into school to look at the fantastic ICT provision we offer our children. This was well attended by many parents and some governors. Every class was engaged in a different aspect of ICT learning and teaching showcasing the hard- and software resources we have at school.

Once again we offered the parents the opportunity to attend an Internet safety presentation run by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection service. Considering the frequency and scale of incidents involving children where their safety is compromised whilst using the Internet, it was a disappointing turn out. That said however, the success is that we were able to inform a few more people about how to ensure our children are safe when using the internet and social networking

sites in particular.

Settling-In Session:

In the spring we welcomed Penny Boardman, North Somerset's leading literacy teacher into school to provide a workshop to existing and future parents about how their children learn to read and how they can best provide support. We were able to offer a crèche facility for this workshop and this enabled us to reach out to around 30 parents. The feedback was very positive with a few 'light-bulb moments' for parents who now understand why their child is not yet reading War and Peace!

ICT Adult Learning Sessions:

As we work towards the vision of becoming an extended school and centre of learning for the community, I am delighted that we will be offering adult classes in basic ICT skills from September. This free course gives our parents with limited ICT skills the opportunity to develop their learning and thus be in a better position to support their children in their learning. I hope to be able to offer more adult and family learning opportunities in the near future as we respond to the community's needs through our consultations.

Travel Plan:

For the second successive year we have received an award for our travel plan. We are one of a handful of schools to achieve the Silver Award for continued efforts to encourage our children to choose safe and sustainable routes to school. Our Walking Bus has grown in strength and now operates for four days per week from Cleeve. During Walk to School Week in May volunteers operated a bus from Claverham on two of the days.

Walk to School week was a great success again and we recently received a certificate to celebrate 75% of children choosing green routes to school on three or more days.

We are now working towards our Gold travel plan and ongoing campaigns to find a School Crossing patrol and/or get a crossing point installed.

Church and Community:

The academic year started with a service of blessing at the school, which was very well attended by members of the community as well as children and parents of the school. This was followed by our annual Christmas service at Holy Trinity.

We re-launched Carols by Candlelight this year and secured the services of a RAF band who led over 100 people through a selection of carols in the seasonally decorated school hall.

The school has also been well represented at all key community events over the past year with our country dancers performing at both Cleeve and Claverham celebration events.

It has been noticed how visible staff are in supporting community events such as May Day, the Lions' Beer Festival and the community pantomime which has had a positive effect in raising the profile of the school and building links across the community.

Dave Mortimer and myself attended the Head/CoG conference at Wells Cathedral earlier this year and Dean Hudd is taking the Year 6 children to the same venue for the annual leavers' day this week.

There are plans in place to further strengthen links with the church with the possibility of pupils' work being displayed in the church hall at Holy Trinity and a link with a Zambian school in line with the diocesan link.

Buildings:

In the past year we have seen a new hall floor laid, high level windows replaced in the hall and new curtains purchased giving this area a lighter, more airy and welcoming appearance.

In addition to this, several governors came into school to view the Year 5 and 6 children's work on 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' aspects of the school. This was useful exercise to gather the children's perception on which area of the school they wish to see money spent on.

I am delighted that two long overdue building projects will take place this summer. The Y1-4 toilets will receive a total refurbishment, knocking through and making them unisex and freeing up a considerable amount of space in the process.

Additionally, the next two phases of the ongoing window replacement project will take place during the summer. This will see the high and low level windows in the kitchen replaced as well as the windows in the admin block of the school.

Ian Findlay who has managed previous projects in the school effectively and has proven to be an

asset will oversee both these projects.

Sports Pavilion:

By far the biggest achievement of my tenure so far has been seeing through the demolition and removal of the 'Sports Pavilion' as it was fondly referred to! This stubborn structure was sound in all aspects except the external panels that had fallen into a state of disrepair that made it a health and safety concern.

Extended Services

I am delighted that we have recently been assessed as meeting the 'Core Offer' for extended schools and fulfilling several of the 'Enhanced Offer' requirements. We are continuing to focus on developing our extended services to the community.

The family fun day on July 5th is a vehicle to gather together a significant number of community members and stakeholders of the school to take part in consultation to inform our strategic plan for the next few years – extended services will feature heavily in this plan.

The school was asked by the authority to act as the pilot school for the School Improvement Planning Framework, a toolkit of activities to enhance consultation and add more rigour to the process of school improvement planning. I have already used several of these tools with different groups of stakeholders to consult on an informal basis.

ICT:

In addition to the significant curricular achievements in ICT over the year, there have also been successes in the leadership and management of the subject.

As a result of the significant improvement the school has made in ICT, I was asked to join the authority steering group to shape the strategic direction of ICT within the authority both within education and the corporate side.

Furthermore, Dean Hudd has been asked to deliver a seminar at the South West Grid for Learning Conference at University of the West of England. Again, following the rapid and significant improvements he has led, his seminar is based on the use of the self-evaluation tool to plan for improvements.

Local Authority:

Throughout the year we have continued to foster positive relationships with officers from the authority. We are now a well-thought of school in North Somerset and it is widely recognised that we have 'turned the school around'.

Advisers are now encouraging others to come into Court de Wyck to observe the good practice that is happening here. We welcomed a team from St Anne's, Hewish to conduct a learning walk around the school.

David Amos, School Improvement Partner, has paid us his first visit. A 'familiarisation visit' which made both David and myself chuckle!

Staffing and Staff Well-Being:

Performance Review:

During October, all teachers engaged in the new performance review procedures in line with our new policy. This was a successful process and more reviewee centred with more focused targets on children's progress and personal target linked to the professional standards for teachers. Now that we have a line management structure in place, all teachers and support staff will engage in the process during 2008/9.

Professional Development:

All staff have had the opportunity to engage in their own professional development throughout the year. All teachers have or will be trained in Critical Skills, as has some of the support staff. Other members of support staff have been engaged in networks of learning and some have attended course specifically for their role.

Both Dean Hudd and myself have attended leadership coaching sessions as well as being trained as coaches ourselves.

Our NQTs have had 0.1 professional development time throughout the year and have had the opportunity to attend conferences and courses as well as observing best practice in other settings.

All staff and governors were recently offered the opportunity to conduct a learning walk at All

Saints, Clevedon. Those who took up the opportunity found it a useful activity and shared best practice with staff at a recent staff meeting.

Strategic Leadership Team:

Recent appointments have completed the new-look SLT. Dean Hudd, Alison May and Claire Doyle all share a common vision for learning for the school. As we continue to skill up staff, we are able to share leadership and accountability more widely. Roles have been more clearly defined and the team are beginning to provide more respectful challenge to each other. The team all have a good understanding of the school's current reality and an awareness that distributed leadership is essential for the sustainability and continued growth of the school.

Staff Promotion:

Fran Harding left us in April to take up headship in South Gloucestershire. She provided some stability in the leadership of the school during its decline and subsequent revival. Her departure created an opportunity for growth within the leadership team and staff in general.

Staff Recruitment:

In November, we said a fond 'farewell' to Derek Green as he hung up his broom and overalls. In April, we welcomed Mr Green back as he rejoined us after his sabbatical! He still refuses to return his retirement gift though! Seriously, we are delighted to have Derek back with us. In the very near future, Derek's job should be made easier with a 7.30am opening (one hour later) as we finally move to evening cleaning.

We welcomed two NQTs throughout the year. Heidi Baldwin joined us in September and Hannah Kingston covered Leah Bingham's maternity leave from January. Both are developing into outstanding teachers and I was delighted to be able to offer both permanent contracts for next year.

Leah Bingham returns after her maternity leave and we were pleased to be able to offer her flexible working patterns. She will be working Monday and Tuesday covering PPA in Hannah's class and PPA and leadership time in Claire Doyle's class.

Similarly, I am pleased that we were able to secure all of our learning support staff with very few reduced hours. We have also created two new roles to enhance our provision: Assistant to the SENCo to take on a significant part of the administration of the role as well as providing individual support across the school. Also, a Well Being Mentor who will provide additional emotional and social support to children at lunchtimes (Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri).

We have agreed to a request for flexible working from one of our lunchtime supervisors who has requested to work three days per week. We are currently reviewing how best we can recruit to meet the needs of our children.

Staff Well-Being:

As our most expensive resource and being a school which has had a history of long-term sick and illness-related retirements, the well-being of staff has been prioritised this year. We have a therapist who attends school monthly and offers various treatments such as Indian head massages and raiki. Additionally, we have offered staff a car valet to enable them to spend more time with their families at the weekend.

Moral at school is generally good amongst the staff at the moment – although it is report writing season and this is notorious for adding to the workload and stress levels of the staff.

Financial Audit:

The school was subjected to a week-long audit in May, the report from which has just been received. Sylvia Holliman spent a great deal of time preparing for the audit and ensuring all documents were in place, which paid off as only a few minor action points have been noted.

OfSTED and SIAS:

In November the school was re-inspected by OfSTED who removed the notice to improve and graded the school as good overall. This was a significant achievement considering the baseline of the school. There were many positive comments made by the inspector yet the staff were soon talking about moving that good to an outstanding.

In January, we underwent our SIAS. We were graded as good in our provision of Collective Worship and outstanding for our distinctiveness and leadership as management. The overall grading was outstanding.

As you can clearly see, this has certainly been a 'Year of Success' for Court de Wyck Primary School and SATs results have not even been mentioned! This shows that there is so much more to our school than just academic achievement. As we look towards next year, we can be confident that improvements will continue and we will travel ever closer to our ultimate goal of providing an outstanding learning experience for each individual in our school.

Nick Riddiough
20 June 2008