

## Mr Bates' Blog - April 2017

Despite April containing two weeks of Easter holiday, we still managed to pack in a pile of activities, events and visits including a 'Flash Mob' dance in the local Sainsbury's!! This week has seen Welsh Government testing, which has all been very serious, but the coming weeks will hopefully be less stressful all around for staff and pupils with some more engaging (and dare I say fun!) activities planned.

### Flash Mob

...was a crazy mad idea (Mr Lowe!) which was thoroughly enjoyed by the Year 3 pupils. Thanks to Sainsbury's Cwmbran (and Pema!) for staging the event and being so generous with time and gifts for the children - much appreciated!



### Daily Mile

We have started to roll out a new initiative whereby all the children do some running every day - we haven't quite yet nailed down all the logistics but will do so over the coming weeks and as part of next year's School Improvement Plan. The idea is fairly straightforward - a healthy body helps a healthy mind and, clearly, links in with local and national initiatives around childhood obesity and general health and wellbeing. We will certainly involve and inform parents as part of this initiative as clearly we need support generally with the proposal, but also specifically in terms of footwear, clothing etc. Any thoughts on this, drop me a line on the webpage or at my email address [simon.bates@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:simon.bates@torfaen.gov.uk).



Safety banner



Which links quite nicely to the new safety banners designed by Louis in Year 6 (winner of the banner competition) - I'm not quite sure I could have got away with being quite so pointed about the positive aspects of parking further away, but entirely support his observation! The serious part of this is that we have had some close calls out front due to some pretty ignorant and irresponsible behaviour by a minority of parents - please, for the sake of all the pupils and parents here, take it easy when driving past the school at the beginning and end of the day, keep your car on the road (we have had complaints of cars on the pavement!) and, if at all possible, as Louis says, park a distance away or, better still, walk! On a related matter, I have had several more complaints from local residents who can't get in and out of their drives due to cars parked in front of their drives - as a school, we try to be a good neighbour and this certainly doesn't reflect well on our school community.

### **Wings to Fly**

The Year 6s went to The Congress Theatre last week to watch 'Wings to Fly' performed by pupils from West Mon Comprehensive. Two of our former pupils (Jake and Jack) were stars of the show and performed brilliantly! The theme of the play is around the dangers associated with drug abuse and will be followed up shortly by our community police liaison officer, P.C Haywood. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed it and were, as ever impeccably well behaved and a credit to the school.

### **Testing**

As I mentioned earlier, this week the pupils from Year 2 - 6 have been undertaking reading and maths procedural / reasoning tests. This year will almost certainly be the last year of the tests in this form; it is looking increasingly likely that tests next year will be electronic and adaptive i.e. they will become increasingly easy or hard according to how well the pupil is actually performing during the test. Also, equally importantly, the focus looks like it will be a diagnostic of the child with an aim of highlighting areas that need addressing rather than a summative assessment of the pupils and, thereby, the school. I personally think this is a step in the right direction and would fall in line with the more wide ranging changes to the curriculum and assessment that are being triggered by the 'Donaldson Review'. Let's hope that the politics around education doesn't get in the way of some long overdue reform! More at:

<http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/wcee/successful-futures.pdf>

### **On a personal note...**

I was chatting with someone at the front of the school the other day and it appears that I was spotted in St David's in my 'festival' hat and flip flops over the Easter break soaking up the fantastic sunshine. It was a welcome break in a beautiful part of the world and we did some coastal walking from Porth Clais towards St Justinian's (to keep the dogs and my wife happy) and went 'go-karting' with my son in Haverfordwest (to keep my son happy). The 'go-karting' was actually quite hard work but I managed, through some fairly aggressive and uncompromising manoeuvres (that certainly wouldn't

be appropriate at 3.15 on North Road), to come out on top (Ethan was full of excuses). Over Whitsun we will go again (in our old caravan) but we will have my 80+ year old parents with us (in a B&B!) so will have to dream up something to entertain them. Tomb-stoning at Abereiddy (a personal favourite) has already been ruled out by my good wife, so any suggestions more than welcome!

Keep an eye out for pictures on our Twitter feed, news on the webpage, Croesy Newsflash (a bargain at 50p) and the May Blog!

All the best.

SB (05/05/2017)