

Mr Bates' Blog - June / July 2017

The end of the year is fast approaching and the stress levels are rising along with the levels of rubbish in the bins! There never seems to be enough hours in the day (or room in the bins!) during these last weeks but the frenzy of activity will no doubt, as ever, be in stark contrast to the upcoming holidays; I think that we are all (children and staff) looking forward to a break.

Gardening club



I think a special mention is warranted for the Gardening Club this year - a stalwart group of 6 children (Lenny, Arwen, Cerys, Madison, Bradley and Seb), ably led by our very own Mrs Fennell, produced a bumper crop of vegetables this year!

Particular successes were in the potato and green bean department! The area is a credit to all those involved - keep up the great work!

Staff news

We extend our thanks to Mr Evans after completing a year with us in Year 5 covering Ms Talemi's maternity leave; he is moving on to a post in Cwmbran Library and we wish him all the best in this role and beyond. Otherwise, other than a bit of in-house manoeuvring, the only other significant change is that Mrs Davis is becoming a non-teaching deputy. Whilst she will undoubtedly miss having her own class and the close relationships that you develop through this, I think that we are both looking forward to having a bit more time to deal with leadership and management issues. This is a brave new world for both of us - let's hope we don't fall out!!

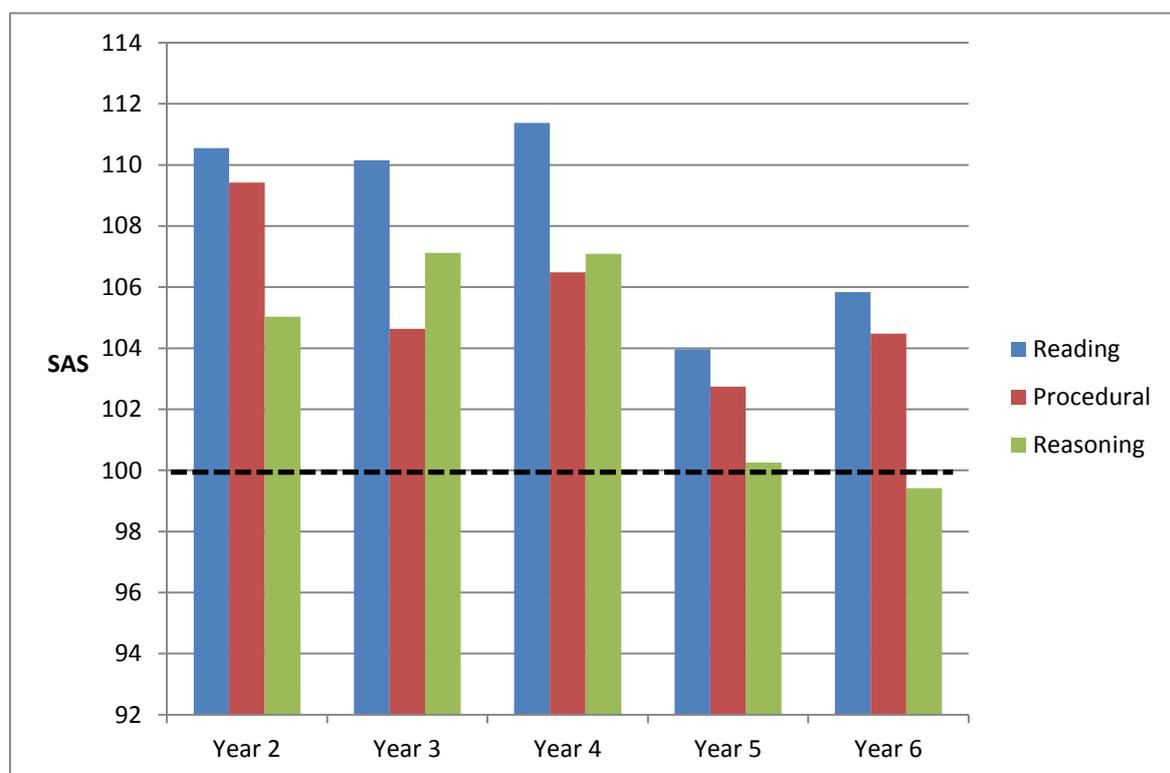
I should also let you know that Miss Brown got married at Whitsun and, as of September, will be known as Mrs Corten! Congratulations to both! We wish them all the best.

School Improvement Plan / Self Evaluation

Thank you for your survey responses and suggestions - two particularly helpful communications were shared with governors around the daily mile / health agenda and linked to IT development, both of which we will be pursuing over the coming year. The pupils also did questionnaires and the positivity from parents and pupils alike is encouraging and can only help to improve things further. A draft of the improvement plan has been circulated to governors and I will copy you in once it is finalised in September.

Test results

I'm pleased to report that we have had our best set of results ever! Well done the staff and pupils! The expectation would be that we obtained an average standardised score of 100 but, as below, we were above this mark in 14 of the 15 tests and



significantly above in 13 of the 15. Both procedural and reasoning are tests of mathematical understanding. Our reading results remain the strongest set of data but, despite this, we will still be rolling out the 'Accelerated Reader' programme across Year 2 - 6 (and more able R and 1) as you can't have too much of a good thing! Thanks for your support with reading at home - we are trying to instil in the pupils a love of reading so your help in finding and sharing books that they enjoy is invaluable.

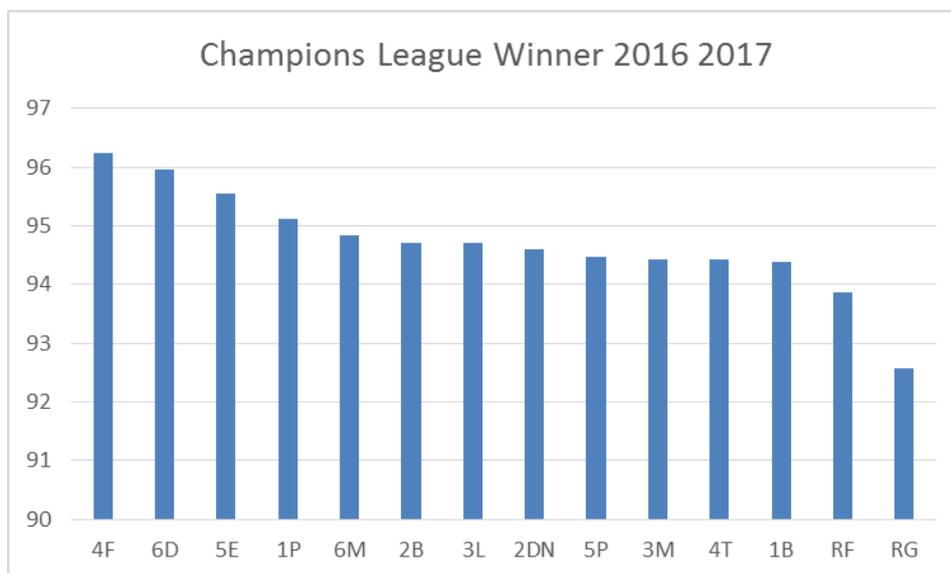
Estyn

Roughly once a year I undertake work on behalf of the Welsh Government's inspectorate Estyn, and I recently went on my annual update training. There appears to have been some fairly radical thinking undertaken in Cardiff as many of the long-

standing flaws in the system have been replaced with what to me seems to be some solid common-sense! Things, as ever, in education are in an almost perpetual state of flux (in line with the latest whims of politicians) but this change, along with the thinking around the Donaldson review, does bode well for the future. Let's hope that the politicians can deliver on the rhetoric and allow schools and educational professionals the freedom to shape the curriculum - time will tell!

Attendance

Clear winners of the whole year 16/17 attendance class competition were 4F! Well done to the Manager of the Year 16 17 season (Mr Freebury) and, of course, the pupils of 4F. They have just returned from the local Vue to see 'Despicable Me 3' as their reward.



On a personal note...

My time for the Velothon was 5 hours 7 minutes in total. About 30 minutes after finishing I heard a cry of 'Mr Bates!' from afar and saw the smiling face of Rhys in Year 5 approaching along with his dad who, on enquiring, had completed the course in 4 hours and 58 mins! Crushed!! Also saw two former parents and had a brief catch up and chat - a great social and sporting occasion in the sunshine - well done Wales for supporting and hosting this event!

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

All the best. Have a great Summer!

SB (20/07/2017)