

Mr Bates' Blog - October 2017

The clocks have gone back to Greenwich Mean Time and I heard the first strains of a Reception Christmas concert floating up the stairs earlier today. The choir are fully assembled under the expert direction of Mrs Davis / Ms Miles and practising to me what sounded like a couple of numbers from the Jungle Book, and the Christmas carols will soon be dusted off for our annual concerts at Pontyhydun Baptist. Music is in the air!

Newport Gwent Dragons Rugby



Well done to Callie, who was recently chosen to be the mascot for the Dragons versus the Southern Kings. After Callie touched his jersey for good luck, Hallam Amos went on to score 2 tries and the Dragons won 29-13.

Mike Sage (Newport Dragons Community Manager), Allison Werner (Coleg Gwent) and Rodney the Dragon came into school to present Callie with a signed / framed photo of her and Dragons Captain Corey Hill from the match day.



Parking issue

I am not sure whether it is simply my imagination, but it does seem to me (whilst on gate duty - in the increasingly cold and wet conditions!) that the parking on the pavements and zig-zags has improved. A combination of some peer pressure, some nagging and our Gwent Police cones seem to be doing the trick, but this is still a work in progress; I was chatting to Jan (lollipop lady) a police 'special' and a couple of the parents a few weeks ago and we were debating whether the old bus-stop should be changed into an official drop-off bay? I thought that the idea may have some merit, but, as ever, open to people's thoughts on this one. If we think this is a good idea we will explore it further with the council. It is difficult as we are trying to manage individuals who clearly don't wish to be managed, but the more we can all work on

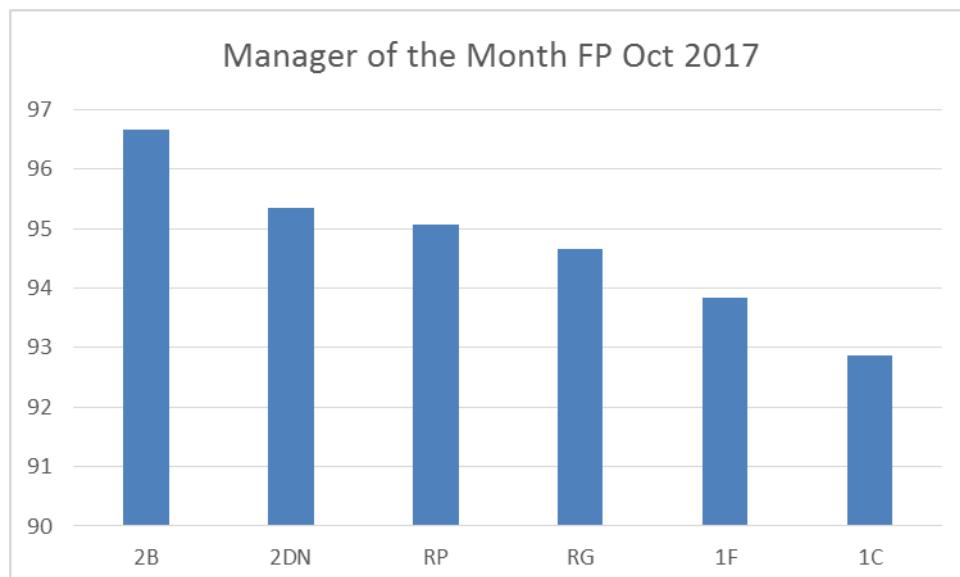
'hearts and minds' as well as physical measures, the better it will be as, overall, we simply need everyone to buy into the concept of driving slowly and parking responsibly to help keep everyone safe.

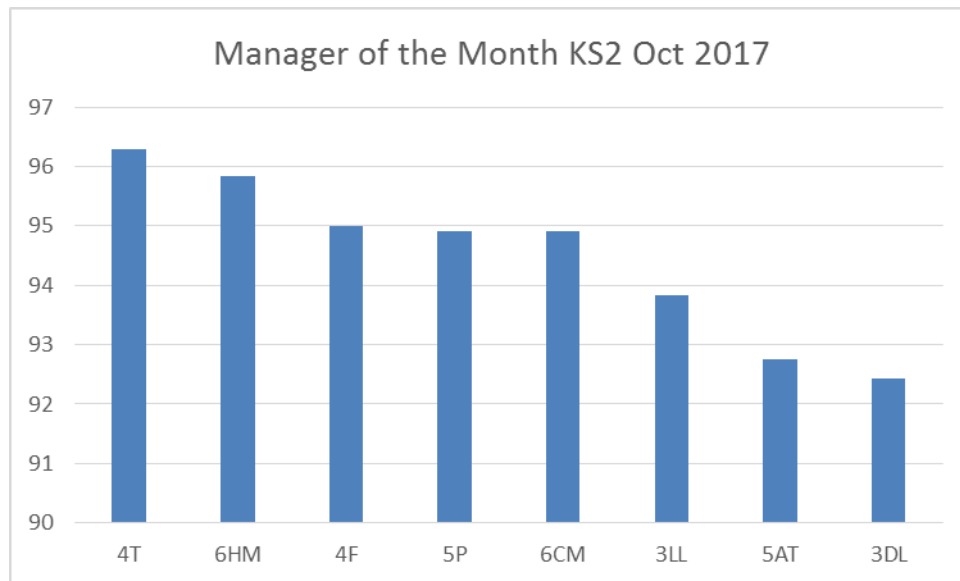
Welsh Government Update

I recently attended an event aimed at keeping head teachers informed as to the progress of the Welsh Governments reforms, and you may well have picked up some of this though the Welsh news. A new curriculum, aimed at freeing up schools from overly subject specific teaching and rather focussing on some key skills and core purposes, has been delayed and will now not be statutory until a gradual roll out in 2022. This certainly gives us plenty of time to prepare, but I am little concerned that a lot can happen in politics in 5 years and that 2022 could easily metaphorically be the 'long grass'! Let's hope not as reform is long overdue. What also appears to still be something of a blank piece of paper are the assessment and accountability models (testing children and grading schools) - these are key drivers to the ways schools organise themselves and the keynote speaker that delivered our training (Professor Mick Waters) certainly was radical in his thoughts, suggesting that, for example, categorisation wasn't beneficial to school improvement and that all Estyn Inspectors should do at least a half-term's teaching every year in order to maintain their credibility!! In the spirit of Prof Waters' suggestion, I am teaching Year 6 tomorrow!

Attendance

October's numbers as follows:





Well done to Mrs Buchanan's and Mrs Thomas' /Mrs Davis' classes! Own clothes day to follow!

On the subject of pupil attendance, I was intrigued to see the report in the news about the East Sussex 'Get a Grip' initiative. On reading it, it does sound a little heavy handed, but it goes to show that local authorities are getting serious about non-attendance. I believe that a Torfaen resident has received a substantial fine (over £1500) for allowing their child to truant and we do have some fairly persistent offenders within our own school community. Perhaps take this as a gentle reminder that if this is you, you might want to reform your ways as this would be quite a hit to anyone's finances, especially pre-Christmas.

On a personal note...

I have started to think about next Summer (as the night's draw in!) and booked 'Early Bird' tickets recently for the Green Man Festival which we have been going to every year since our children were quite young - the reason for booking early was so that we can go in relative luxury in our caravan rather than having to lug all the camping kit from the carpark into the festival site. The festival started 15 years ago as a folk festival with about 1500 people in attendance and has now evolved into a 17 stage 20,000 event with a range of different music and arts - from humble beginnings!! Let's see if our own budding musical talent can develop equally impressively!

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

All the best.

SB (07/11/2017)