



# Governors' News

Ashton Vale Primary School

Autumn/Winter 2015/2016

Term 3 Edition 7

Welcome to our Term 3 Newsletter from the Governing Body of Ashton Vale Primary School.

## Happy New Year!

Christmas is over and it only remains for me to wish you all a very happy, healthy and successful new year from all the Governors here at Ashton Vale School.

## New Staff

September was a time of change; we had several new members of staff, all of whom have settled in smoothly. As a group of Governors, we discuss any staffing issues that may arise, when employing new staff, with the senior management team and we have been so pleased by the positive enthusiasm and energy our new staff have shown.

## Our Committees

The Governing Body delegate specific responsibilities to three main committees:

- Buildings, Health, Safety & Welfare
- Curriculum, Development & Standards
- Finance, Resources & Staffing

You can view our committees' structure on our Governors' Page on the school website.

Committee members regularly report back to the Governing Body at termly meetings.

Our Finance Committee ensures all Governors are aware of how the school's money is spent. Mrs Carpenter, our Bursar, keeps a tight ship with the school's budget, so we are fully aware of every penny that goes towards keeping the school running.

## Auditors

We had an audit inspection recently and were called in to discuss our financial set-up. The auditor tried very hard to find a little discrepancy in our figures, but after two days got bored trying, so well done Mrs Carpenter!

## PTA

On the subject of finance, it would be a good time to thank the PTA for all their hard work. Of course, thanks also go to the school community, who donate time and goods to the cause, but to get the Christmas Fair up and

running and making it the most successful ever is such hard work. Thanks to everyone involved.

## Shakespeare's: A Midsummer Night's Dream By Lin Hunt, Co-opted Governor

...

I was very lucky to be asked to the dress rehearsal of Year 6's performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

What I saw was a performance Mrs Tonkin should be very proud of.

The children were brilliant and I thoroughly enjoyed their retelling of this well-known story.

Well done to Mrs Tonkin for working so hard, helping the children to achieve such a high standard and to all the other staff who helped..... and, of course, congratulations and well done to all the children in Year 6 who gave such a professional performance.





## Reception Children

In September our new Penguin Class children started school. It is normal procedure to give them time to settle before they come into family assembly on Fridays, but it was worth the wait. They now contribute like old hands and have produced some excellent work in school and at home. Well done for working so hard.

## Children's Performance in Music, Art and Drama

We have had several performances from Key Stage 1 children and the noticeable improvement is how reading and narrating has improved. This is a perfect way to improve the children's confidence

and their ability to work in collaboration with others.

Our music, sport and drama has been outstanding already this year.

Year 6 performed the most exceptional Shakespeare play at the Tobacco Factory. Our Choir has taken part in the Big Sing at Bristol City Football Club. There is so much more, but I'm sure you find out from reading your weekly newsletter.

## Recent Visit from School Improvement Officer

A recent visit from our School Improvement Officer was very encouraging. Their observations



are that our children are making good progress at school..... So, I would like to take this opportunity to say a BIG thank you to all staff for the work they do and to parents and carers for helping and supporting both the children and the school.

## And Finally...

If you would like to learn more about the Governing Body or wish to talk to myself or any other Governors, please don't hesitate to contact us.

*Jenny Smith  
Chair of Governors*

## Handfuls of Harmony Choir By Suzanne Hayes, Parent Governor



Handfuls of Harmony Choir were very busy last term with two fantastic performances.

First we had the opportunity to sing at Ashton Gate football ground. It was a very hectic experience, but the children from Ashton Vale were superb and clearly had a great time. We performed before the match to a huge crowd as they started to arrive for the game. It felt a bit like we were a famous group with all the cameras and flashes going off. Then, just before half time, we had to cross quickly to the opposite side of the stadium into one of the new stands, where we got to sing again. It was incredible to look across the pitch and listen to all the voices joined in harmony.

Our second performance was at St Paul's Church, where we have sung before, so it was nice to be back on familiar territory. As always the singing was superb and to hear voices all singing together, from the youngest to the oldest, everyone had a great time.

If you ever wanted to sing in a choir, I would highly recommend this one. No prior talent is needed. It's a real community choir and everyone is welcome. Have a look at the choir's website: <http://www.handfulsofharmony.org/> to find out more and see some photos.





## *Residential Trip to Abbey Home Farm, Cirencester*

### *By Jenny Staples, Co-opted Governor*



In 2015 Ashton Vale Primary was proud to receive the Food for Life Partnership Gold Award and, following this success, were awarded a residential trip to Abbey Home Farm, Cirencester.

On a cold, but sunny November day, suitcases bulging with warm clothing and wellies, ten excited Year 6 children (and adults!) arrived at Home Farm for a week of hands on organic farming. We were welcomed by Maya Hilary and Will and were quickly put to work.

Wow, what a fantastic week we all had! We had to get up early every day and worked very hard whatever the weather. Split into groups, we would be out working on the farm by 7.30 am each day or preparing breakfast.

At 9.00 am we would all meet for breakfast and chat about the first job of the day. Back to work after breakfast and then later we would all get together to prepare lunch. After enjoying lunch, we would be back out on the farm until it was time to meet and prepare tea. There was no time to be bored as we were even kept entertained in the evenings!

Just an idea of some of the activities that kept us busy:

Opened the chicken houses and collected the eggs, graded and boxed the eggs, feeding milk to the calves, forking silage to the cows, pulling crops of beetroot and carrots, milking the cows, feeding the chickens, sausage making, field walking and Will's treasure trove, truck ride and exploring the woods, building a fire, getting muddy with the pigs, tractor and trailer ride to visit the sheep and organic fields, night time walk (no torches!), crops grown under the polytunnels, grooming the horses and not forgetting a visit to the farm shop!

Also we made breakfast, lunch and tea every day using organic food from the farm. This included pizza, cheese and leek tart, meatballs and lots of different vegetable; healthy and organic food that was delicious!

It was a priceless experience for everyone, being part of a team, joining in activities and learning new skills. We saw the organic food journey from farm to fork; growing, harvesting, cooking and, of course, eating! I can safely say everyone had an amazing time and I feel very privileged to have been part of such a fantastic week. Take a look at the farm website and Facebook page "The organic farm shop" and there are some great pictures of our week on the school's Facebook page.





## **Ashton Vale School Christmas Dinner By Brian Jones, Co-opted Governor**



The Christmas Dinner was held on 10<sup>th</sup> December, when the hall was laid out with a cracker for each child, supplied by the PTA.

As the younger children came in to the hall, sat at their tables and pulled their crackers, they were served with their food by members of staff, volunteers and governors.

Each child had turkey, sausage roast potatoes, parsnips carrots, stuffing and gravy.

Helpers were on hand to help the children cutting their food or pour water.

When it was the turn of the older children, they lined up to be served at the serving hatch.

All the children and adults enjoyed their dinner.

A big thank you must go to all the kitchen staff and all who made this meal a success!

## **Lantern Making for the Bedminster Lantern Parade by Richard Higgs, Parent Governor**

A light recipe for success: take some simple ingredients such as bamboo or willow sticks, masking tape, coloured paper, and a large pot of waterproof glue.

Method: invite gifted local artist, Alan May, to visit five local primary schools.

Encourage children, teachers and parents to get involved over two days using the above materials. Create magnificent lanterns.

Serving suggestions: Pick a dark Saturday just before Christmas, close the streets from traffic, and invite The Ambling Band, Bristol Samba and hundreds of local residents to watch.

This was the perfect recipe for the fifth Bedminster Lantern Parade which, despite strong winds, provided a fantastic community entertainment.

Two weeks before the event, Alan arrived at Ashton Vale Primary with a car full of willow withies and coloured papers. He coaxed and



encouraged children in Years 2 and 3 to create an enormous winged dragon lantern with the help of teachers and parents. The children also made a number of colourful shields and dragon eggs which were also fitted with internal lights.

On the dry, but windy night, all the lanterns were assembled, and the procession set off with the Samba band drumming at the front. Hundreds of local people lined the streets of Bedminster to cheer and encourage the schools and community groups who had made a magnificent array of lanterns.

As well as the Ashton Vale dragon there was a colourful parrot, a winged Pegasus, a flying saucer and a rocket.

The procession did a circular route from North Street to East Street, finishing at Compass Point with a colourful firework display and live music. The children and families from Ashton Vale walked proudly with the shields and colourful eggs, and were a credit to the school.

A big thank you to Alan and the staff who made the event possible. (Please look at the photos on our school website, Flamingo Class blog)

