

Dear All,

I would like to wish you all a happy new year and welcome you back to school. I hope you have had a restful holiday. December was a very busy month with so many wonderful activities and performances. However, it really does seem a long time ago!

The month of December began with two sporting events, the Year 2 multi-skills tournament and the Year 5 and 6 basketball tournament, both of which were very successful and reports back confirmed that our children had played well and behaved impeccably.

It was good to meet up with Dan Knott, our chair of Governors, on the 11<sup>th</sup> December. Dan and I meet every half term to discuss various issues. This time we were able to discuss progress of priorities within the School Improvement Plan and Safeguarding around the school.

The school governors have been asked to consider joining with other local schools to form a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), this is known as the Rural Excellence Trust. This will include Ansford Academy and a number of feeder primary schools. At this point the governors were keen to investigate a little further and in December instructed me to register an 'Expression of Interest'. This does not commit the school in any way, but does allow us to be very much in the middle of such discussions. (Further information to follow)

The children all thoroughly enjoyed their trip to Strode Theatre on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December, where the Strode students performed, Babe the Sheep Pig. This was a good opportunity for our children to see other children perform on stage before their own performances later in the month.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of December we had the first of our four public performances, the Cherry Nativity. It was a great success and a tribute to our youngest children who are growing in confidence. It was warmly received by a packed hall of family and friends. Thank you to the many staff who worked hard to bring it together.

It was good to welcome some of our governors into school throughout the month. On Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December Becky Nurse and Andrew Nichols came to look at Maths across the school and were involved in some work scrutiny.

Liz Gould and Kate Rowe came to look at Literacy on the next day, Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>. They were delighted to be taken around the school by a number of children who spoke confidently about what's happening in Literacy across the school. They were also able to look in detail at many of the changes we have implemented within the new School Improvement Plan.

On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December Holly and Maple performed their play, 'Are We Nearly There Yet?' The children performed with great enthusiasm and their singing was wonderful. Thank you again to the many staff who worked to make this such a success.

Many of the children enjoyed taking part in the spelling bee on the last week of term. I was very impressed by how hard so many children worked to learn their year group spellings. The standard in the competition was very high and reflected the children's hard work and how well they have been supported by you, the parents.

After so much hard work the term ended with a pantomime paid for by FoDS, an amazing Christmas dinner and finally a surprise visit from Santa.

We look forward to a successful 2018 continuing, as our school ethos says, ***Learning together to achieve our best.***

Richard