

GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT – 2015



Introduction

We have been producing the annual report for several years and I hope this latest issue gives you a useful insight into Foxton School. Originally they were a statutory requirement but they actually provide an excellent record of achievement for Foxton School too. This is why we continue with the production of the annual report. It provides an additional way for parents, guardians and other stakeholders in the school to read about some of the key highlights in the past school year. It also illustrates the work that the governors do, often behind the scenes and always on a voluntary basis, to ensure that Foxton School continues to thrive and be successful.

As you all know, this year saw the start of change that followed a long period of stability within Foxton School and the governors and community all played a key role in deciding on this future. After more than 25 years as the head teacher at Foxton School, Jenny Jones decided that the time had come to retire. It was an emotional good bye for all of us as Jenny had a huge impact on the current success of the school and the many children that came through the school and went on to achieve great success. The governors, staff and community were all part of a robust process to make sure that we appointed a good successor to Jenny and I am very pleased that we succeeded with the unanimous agreement and subsequent appointment of Carole Davies.

In addition to the appointment of Carole Davies, we have also had to make some changes in the administration team with retirement of Ann Jones, who had done an excellent job over several years. Fortunately, we were able to reallocate roles within the remaining team of Helen Durant and Anita Armitage. Finally, there were some important governor changes with Mark Collins retiring after many years of chairmanship and Linda Shankland also deciding to retire, both after many years of excellent contributions.

So, in many ways, this last year has started the process of change. However, I would like to re-assure parents that the vast majority of staff and governors are the same as before and strongly hold to the values that make Foxton School special. We also know that Carole holds the same values closely while also bringing a fresh perspective that will ensure that Foxton continues to improve and strive to deliver the best educational start to your child's school life!

We will be available to answer any questions you may have at the Celebration Evening on Thursday 9th July. We look forward to seeing you there so please come and talk to us then or at any other point if you have any issues you would like to discuss.

Carole Davies – Our New Head



It is a surprisingly long process after deciding to move schools to actually starting at a new school. Firstly, if you have been happy in a school for a long time and know that you have moved the school forward as the headteacher, why would you want to start again somewhere else?

I suppose I felt ready for a new challenge. The demands of working within education have changed over time and will continue to do so: according to political whim sometimes; or due to sound educational research; or as one's experience changes through professional development opportunities. Change offers opportunities to do things differently and hopefully better. In my previous 14 years of headship I have learnt a great deal, some of which I hope that Foxton will benefit from over time.

So having decided to change schools my husband and I spent many short holidays exploring the countryside to decide where

we wanted to be, we only knew that we wanted to be north of the M25. In our early sorties, we found parts of England that we were unfamiliar with and which were quite beautiful – areas around the Cambridge borders with Essex, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

So the locality was fixed and it was then time to select the school. The post at Foxton was advertised in October 2014 and so we visited at the October half term to have a brief first look. The community looked cared for and it was interesting to see the school building linked with the village hall and to the parish council. The building was modern and attractive.

On the second visit, before applying for the position, we were welcomed by school staff and pupils. No time was spared to make us feel at home, questions were freely answered, staff and pupils were enthusiastic about their school and the love that I felt for Lydden (my then professional home) was clearly felt by those I met at Foxton. Why wouldn't I want to start again here?

The interview was a two day, thoroughly exhausting process and I am glad that I won through. After nearly 2 months in post, I am still finding my way through the Cambridge/Foxton systems but first impressions remain valid – the school community is welcoming, children are delightful and staff work very hard. I know that there are some anxieties still amongst staff who worked with Mrs Jones for such a long time and will find adapting to someone new, a challenge. I have to say that in many ways I can do very little to alleviate those anxieties, as change can be difficult. My job is clearly to try to manage that change – changes will occur but will not be instantly dramatic, they will though be thought through with the best interests of our children as the basis for any change. With the continued support of our collective and collaborative teams, teachers, governors, parents, and community we will be able to move the school forward. I am delighted with the progress that we have already made and the willingness of all to look forward.

Modern Foreign Languages at Foxton

Key Stage 2 parents and care-givers will probably have already heard about the French language tuition their children have been receiving once a week since October from our visiting language teacher Véronique Sanders, and may have witnessed their young charges coming out with the kind of Gallic titbits that they themselves probably only learned when they reached secondary school.

Times are, of course, changing, and because of the requirements of the national curriculum, we have attended to the matter of modern languages, via a scheme operated via Melbourn Village College.



Veronique explains: “My role is to forge a link between primary and secondary school, and ensure a smooth transition in language learning. MVC's idea to create this post was a fantastic one. Foxton Primary School responded quickly to the new concept, and since then other primary schools have joined us. I currently work at Fowlmere, Harston and Newton, and Barrington Primary

Schools. I also teach at Elsworth Primary School, feeder school to Swavesey Village College. I do hope other schools will join us soon and see the benefit of having a language specialist in primary schools.”

French teaching takes place every Wednesday, and, as Mrs Sanders says, “the children are very receptive and have shown real enthusiasm for languages”. Explaining her approach, she continues: “I teach classes 3 and 4 once a week for thirty minutes each. I started the term with teaching the basics to both classes. We very rapidly moved on to the topic of 'animals' in class 3 and 'all about myself' in class 4. My aim is to teach the lessons using as much French as possible with occasional English to aid understanding.”

Three governors visited the school one Wednesday to observe the French sessions and we were struck by just how much French was used, and yet how few English words were needed; Madame Sanders put a great deal of energy into miming, acting out situations, and repeating words until the children were in no doubt as to what they meant, only occasionally resorting to the use of English during these lively discussions.

We also witnessed just how much fun the lessons are, and just how well Veronique's teaching style engaged the children and made them eager to participate. Class 4 got pretty giggly as a

ticking plastic bomb made its way around the room, timing their efforts to declare their names and ages correctly, and again, later, when they all ended up taking their turn standing at the front of the class in an array of silly clothes, as they learned how to use colours to describe their appearance.

And of course, things also took a musical turn. "Being a French national, I use authentic materials and songs." Mrs Sanders says. "Singing is a very important part of language learning and we always endeavour to sing in both classes at some point in the lesson. This is in fact how I learnt English!"

We visiting governors felt that both sessions offered periods of high intensity learning, were very impressed with the quality of the teaching, and expect these lessons to provide an excellent basis for further study at secondary level.

We hope that we will be able to continue indefinitely to take part in the scheme, and it's good to know that Mrs Sanders likes us as much as we like her. "I feel very privileged to be part of the school", she says, "and I do hope the pupils enjoy the lessons as much as I do!".

If you have any questions, you can contact her by emailing vsanders@mvc.org.uk.

Veronique Sanders, David Griffiths, Jane Kohler, Caro Moses.

25 years at Foxton



My teaching career has spanned forty years with the last twenty five at Foxton as headteacher. This experience has been gained in four varied geographical and socio-economic areas of the south and east of England. I consider that I have held two headships at Foxton one at the

Station Road site for twelve years and the other for the remainder of the time at Hardman Road.

As a deputy at a new school in Essex I witnessed first-hand some of the benefits that a purpose built spacious learning environment could bring. I was excited by the advertisement for the post of headteacher for a school in South Cambridgeshire that was relocating to a new site the following year (1991!). Although I was living in Cambridge, I had never heard of Foxton. At that time all job applications were submitted to the Local Authority to draw up a shortlist of suitable candidates and not as is currently the case - by the governors of the school. This meant that as an 'Essex Girl' those people at Shire Hall involved in succession planning knew nothing about me and I believe had it not been for the then chair of governors asking to see all applications my appointment would never have happened. Another stroke of luck at the time of my interview was being told by a relative that there was a book written about Foxton, *The Common Stream* by Rowland Parker, so of course I just had to mention it during the interview process!

I was fortunate during my time to have contact with the two previous headteachers, Mr Doug Barton and Phil Bowen who both kept in contact with the school and encouraged me from afar.

In the beginning the staff comprised four teachers, one secretary, kitchen and cleaning staff and one General assistant and me. Initially, the position was a teaching headship and I taught Class Four for two days a week with Mrs. Julie Bamborough who job shared with me. This continued for several years until the budget could sustain a full time teacher in Class 4. From

that time onwards I taught mathematics for several sessions a week, an aspect of the job I have always thoroughly enjoyed.

As the leader of Foxton School for a quarter of a century, the team have always tried to ensure we valued every aspect of a child's development and aimed to combine high academic standards with a broad, well balanced curriculum. At times, due to political interference and constant change, this has been difficult to hang onto but with determination by everyone involved I think we succeeded. The job of headteacher, as for anybody employed in a small school, is multi-faceted and I'm proud to say I have been seen to do aspects of most people's job at Foxton, unblocked lavatories and cleaned them, hoovered, washed the plates and cutlery after lunch, cleared snow and gritted, amongst others. I took great pleasure from hearing children and adults laughing during the day, often in the case of the adults it was at my expense! I miss the frequent visits from happy, smiling children coming to show me work they are proud of or wanting to discuss an idea they have.

The extended team of parents, Friends, Governors and the community of Foxton have all contributed to the success of the school and for their unstinting support I am extremely grateful.

Foxton School has a wonderful archive of artefacts that has been treasured for the past 132 years and I tried very hard to contribute to maintaining this tradition as my predecessors had done. I hope that Carole Davies and future leaders of Foxton School will be as happy and fulfilled in their role as I have been, it has been a privilege.

Jenny Jones

Grafham Water – learning all about team work.

As a governor and more recently as chair of governors, I already knew that Foxton School is a great place for young people to grow up and start their educational journey. Key skills such as reading, writing and maths are clearly of vital importance but education is much broader, covering aspects such as the values of different religions, looking after one another and team work. I had the honour recently of joining the year 5 and 6 children during their Grafham Water trip and I have to say, it was a really enjoyable and insightful three days.



Although I was not able to join the coach trip, on my arrival soon after, I found the children were being briefed on their afternoon activities by the instructors at Grafham Water Centre (GWC). The children were all listening intently and were super excited about the various activities they were about to embark on. There were three mixed teams that were going to build rafts, play archery and cycle round Grafham Water. I have to admit, as a Dutchman, that I was surprised to hear that cycling was a team building activity, but I was soon to be

proven wrong!

The GWC instructors set some clear safety rules for the cycling and the team went off on their 10 mile around the lake. One of the team aspects was that they assigned a leader for different sections of the journey and all other cyclists had to stay behind the leader. We should also stay together and encourage each other while having the occasional competitive race. During my second round of Grafham Water I witnessed first-hand the wonderful team spirit that is so strong at Foxton School. There is one particularly large hill and the GWC instructor set the team a challenge to all get to the top without walking. As soon as the first children arrived at the top, they parked their bikes, to run back down the hill to shout encouragement to their team mates so all of them made it to the top without walking. Now that's what I call teamwork!

Of course for many of the children some of the activities were new and on occasion pushing their comfort zone a little too. It is important to express that no child would ever have to do something they did not want to do. However, it was equally fantastic to see how all children gave new activities a try and often positively surprised themselves with their achievements. One of the children managed to get a triple top score in archery so a hidden talent was unearthed while in the Jacobs Ladder task, three children had to try to get to the top of the ladder but you could only get there if you helped each other up the next rung.

Outside of the formal activities, The Grafham Water Centre provided three hearty, and very tasty meals each day and the children all ate plenty of food after all those strenuous activities. The accommodation was simple but clean and the boys and girls stayed on different floors in bunk bed rooms with 2-6 children per room. They all looked after their rooms well and worked together to make sure things were kept tidy. In the evening, the whole group would play football rounders and other games on the big field followed by a cup of hot chocolate and a great night time story read by Mr Atkinson (I still need to borrow the book to make sure I get to hear the ending).

I have to say that the trip was a welcome break from my normal busy work schedule and it was a delight to see so many young people having a great time while learning so much. It also reinforced my belief that the staff at Foxton School do a hugely important and rewarding job. Deana, Donna and Stephen all worked very hard in organising and running this trip and it was a great privilege to be able to participate. I have learnt some important lessons about encouraging people 'up the hill' and making sure we 'all get there together' which I will try to implement in the governing body of Foxton School.

Arend Jan van Bochoven

Noye's Fludde

In September, children from Class 4 were invited to audition to take part in an exciting musical and cultural exchange project - singing in an opera written by Benjamin Britten. It was to be performed in France in January and the children were to have all expenses paid! A number of children bravely auditioned and initially seven were offered the opportunity to take part in this amazing production.

The project was organised by staff at Melbourn Village College in conjunction with other organisations including the Royal Opera House. The Foxton children were amongst 60 children from MVC and its feeder Primary Schools, and a further 50 French children, performing Noyes Fludde (Noah's Flood) with the Orchestre de Picardie.

The project is funded by ACT (A Common Territory), which is an innovative cross-border collaboration between leading arts and education partners from France and England. The ACT project aims to make the region a better place to live and visit through cultural collaboration, community and educational engagement, with access to internationally renowned organisations, their artists and performances.

The children attended weekly rehearsals with Paul Belbin, head of music at MVC, during the Autumn Term. They also participated in a Production Day at Comberton Village College where they met the Stage Director Amy Lane, who works for the Royal Opera House, and worked with the lighting artist Tine Bech. Lucy Griffiths from the costumes department at the Royal Opera House also came into school to run a workshop to design and make the headdresses that the children were to wear.

In January the children left for their seven day trip to France, accompanied by myself and Mrs Ann Jones. It was an amazing experience for all of us. The children discovered what hard work it is to be involved in a professional performance; there were long days of rehearsals and a lot of waiting around backstage, which they all took in their stride. They also had the opportunity to practice their French and make new friends with children from both sides of the channel. Quite a few came home with a French penpal.

The performances were amazing. One was held in the Cirque de Joules Verne in Amiens, a beautiful period theatre in the style of a circus top; the other in the Opera House in Compiègne. With a professional orchestra and two professional opera singers, taking the lead roles of Mr and Mrs Noah, the quality of the music was fantastic. The children sang beautifully, looked great in their costumes and performed a stunning light display during the show.

A month or so after returning, two further performances were held at Comberton Village College and two more Foxton children were invited to participate.

As a teacher accompanying the trip I enjoyed this unique experience and having the opportunity to get to know and work alongside colleagues from other schools. I was also very impressed at the behaviour of all the children on the trip and of how well the Melbourn Village College children looked out for and supported the younger ones. I felt very proud of all of the children from Foxton (for some it was their first time abroad) and I am sure that the memories of the trip will last forever.

Anna Elliott



Rehearsal in Amiens



Performance in Compiègne

Noye's Fludde – The Children's perspective

At 8am we arrived at Melbourn and we gathered around the double-decker coach. Then we all handed in our passports and went into the hall to hear a speech from Mr. Belbin, the music teacher from Melbourn who accompanied us on our trip. Next we all got on the coach. We got out a book, a game or a phone to keep us entertained throughout the journey. By the time we had arrived at the hotel at 6pm I had already finished my Mars bars and a bottle of water, and was getting REALLY bored. But when we walked inside I suddenly felt like I was going to enjoy myself even though I was feeling a bit scared about being in France, especially when it had been on the news that there had been a terrorist attack near where we were staying. Then we went into a small cramped room and got told who we were sharing a room with. I was in a room with Angus, Jake and Thomas. Next we went to our rooms, chose our beds and were forced to go to a late night rehearsal with Mr. Belbin until 10pm!

In France we had some lovely food, the puddings were especially delicious. Every morning we walked over to the hostel's dining hall for breakfast. We had some cereal and bread but no croissants. The hostel packed us a pack lunch for rehearsals. The suppers were nice: we had really tasty sausage pasta and the chips were delicious. One day we went out shopping. We visited a chocolate shop and we bought some chocolates and macaroons for our parents, we also went to an amazing toy shop where we bought some things for our friends. We also looked at some pretty French buildings and we went into the beautiful cathedral where a woman talked to us about its history. It was quite hard to be away from our parents for so long. Quite a lot of people got home sick but the teachers were very kind. Every morning we had to get up at 6am and we had a lot of late nights to so we were very tired. We got to meet with children who lived in France or who were from other schools. All of the children made new friends and everyone got on very well. A few children made French pen pals or they made pen pals with children in the orchestra. It was fun finding out about other people and what they liked doing. We learnt a lot from the French people and children from other schools. We also had to do a lot of waiting backstage so we learned to be patient. The soloists had to do a lot of rehearsing and they were amazing.

The rehearsals were very intense but the director, Amy, was very nice. In our rehearsals we did lots of singing and our throats were always sore. One boy lost his voice! We performed with the Orchestra de Picardie and it was really fun rehearsing with them because there were lots of children and we got to practise our French. When we got to the Cirque in Amiens for the first performance we were very nervous but excited at the same time. We were dressed in black with fantastic animal head dresses made of foam and split pins. Then we got into our lines in order of when we were to go on stage. We had to wait in our lines for a long time while the soloists performed the beginning of the opera, but finally we came on stage in front of hundreds of people doing our animal impressions. We did lots of singing and movements with LED lights to make rain, stars and lightning. We also used hula hoops that lit up for the sun

and moon. The sun was covered in yellow cellophane and the moon and sun both had hold up coloured lights in appropriate colours for each one. For planets we used multi-coloured dome lights which changed colour each time we turned them on. It was quite tiring because we were moving the LED lights in reasonably vigorous actions for a long time. It was very similar on our second performance in Compiègne and, like in the first performance, a big, bright pop up rainbow unfolded at the end. Since this was our last performance in France, we had an after party where we could ask the soloists, and other people who were involved in the project, to sign the booklets we had picked up. By the time we got back to the hotel it was 20'clock in the morning. It was a very tiring but fantastic experience.

After seven days in France we sadly had to leave. Our bags were packed and we'd already had breakfast so we were ready to go. Mr Sunderland and Bruce had packed our bags into the coach and we piled into it. A little while later we learned that there had been a fire in the tunnel so we came home on the ferry. When we finally got to England we got on the coach for the last time. Eventually we started seeing familiar buildings and when we saw signs for Melbourne Village College we all cheered. It was lovely seeing our family and friends and we drove home with our parents.

It was very exciting when we first heard that we would also be part of the Comberton Village Collage performance for Noye's Fludde. On our first day we came to school earlier than normal and hopped on a double decker coach which took us to Comberton Village Collage where we would spend our day rehearsing. Then we met Amy, who was the director, and Remi who helped us to go on stage on time. After that we stood in a circle and got to know everyone's names. Next we learnt a song from the performance *In Reason's Ear* which Amy taught us. After that we went back outside the room while they practiced the start of the opera then all the animals started coming in. Next we got to have lunch so everyone lined up and got a packed up lunch, then we had a run through and finally went home.

We did rehearsals all week and did two performances, one at night and the other one in the day (3:00). The only difference was the lighting sequence. In England Comberton Village College we had LED lights during the storm for flood itself.

All in all the experience was amazing and we learnt so much – it will be remembered for a very long time.

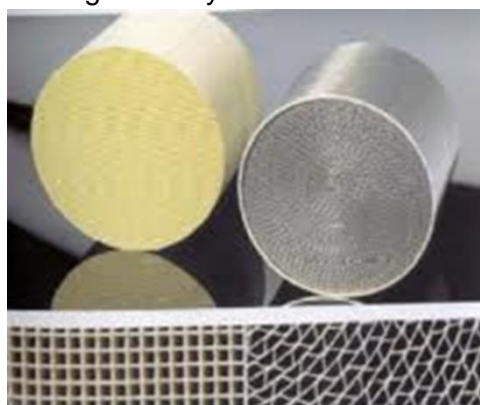
Alex, Alice, Charlotte, Hannah, Isabel, Libby, Maddie, Rosie & Zoe

A successful recipe for engaging primary students with industry!

The Centre for Industry Education Collaboration (CIEC) engages children with real life industrial problems to enthuse them about science and the prospect of becoming a scientist in the future. The CBI (2015) has identified that a growing STEM shortage across the UK is a real concern and has recognised the importance of addressing this early with primary children. As a primary teacher I am becoming increasingly aware that I have a role in ensuring that children know about opportunities for rewarding careers in science and engineering.

In September 2013 I became a Primary Science Advisory Teacher with CIEC and was given the opportunity to link science at the manufacturing company Johnson Matthey, with the upper key stage 2 primary science curriculum. In the spring term of 2015 I had the honour of working with the staff and year 5/6 pupils at Foxton Primary School.

In Royston, Hertfordshire Johnson Matthey manufactures catalysts for the exhaust systems of cars and other vehicles. The first stage in the process is to take a substrate (see fig 1) which will later be fitted to the exhaust system of a vehicle where the exhaust gases will pass through the tiny central channels. These all need to be coated with a substance called a wash



coat. Unique wash coat recipes are developed and tested for every different car. The wash coat is applied; it is baked and the catalyst is ready to be fitted to a car.

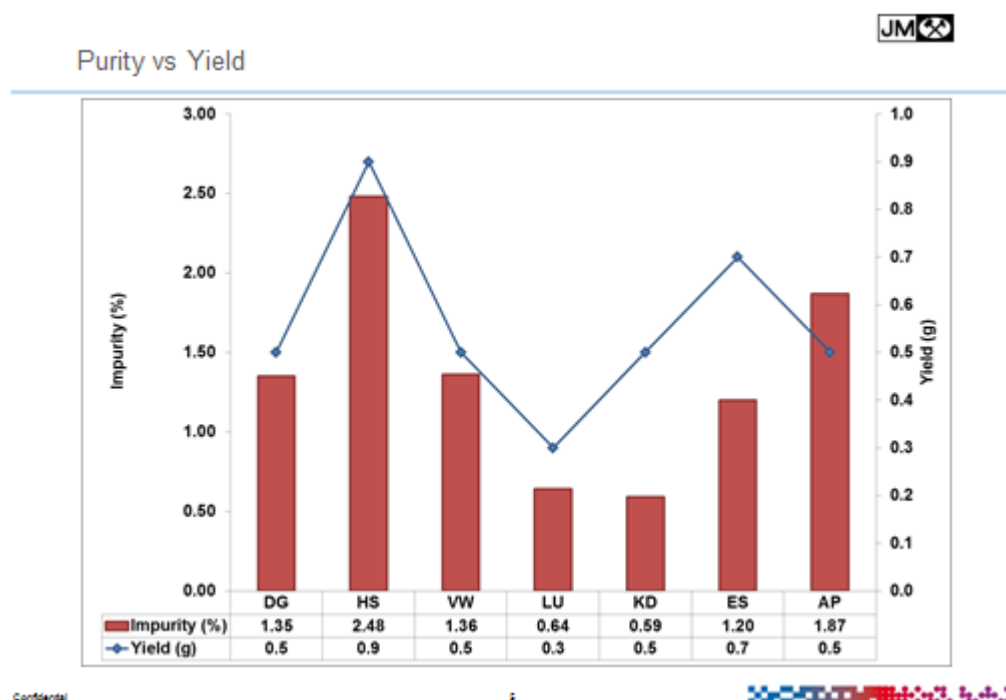
Fig. 1.

Scientists at Johnson Matthey therefore need to know how to follow a recipe to create wash coats and most importantly they need to develop and test new recipes. So the children were set to work in groups of 4 or 5 to create their own bar of soap. The children choose the colour and fragrance and their competence at following

recipes soon became apparent as most groups presented an attractive soap bar. In the same lesson the children encountered their next challenge which was to develop their own recipe for bubbles. They were given the three basic ingredients; washing up liquid (an expensive one works better than economy versions), water and glycerine. I also informed them that water is very cheap and glycerine is very expensive with washing up liquid somewhere in the middle. Through a process of whole class negotiation we agree the criterion for deciding which group has the best recipe. The pupils were very quick to demonstrate a good understanding of fair testing when they commented if their competitors were not testing their bubbles in a way which is consistent with our agreed testing methodology. The table of results which I collected led to a wealth of very rich discussion when the children start to bear in mind the cost as well as the relative success of their bubbles.

I left the resources for the second lesson with Mr Atkinson to deliver in my absence. The children's challenge was to work in their same groups to purify rock salt. The most important ingredients in a wash coat are the precious metals which act as the catalyst to convert the toxic gases to less unpleasant ones. Most precious metals are mined and then need to be refined. The process of refining precious metals has parallels to the way that the children purified the rock salt.

On my return I asked the children to evaluate their success at purifying rock salt and the children demonstrated a good understanding of the process. Chemists at Johnson Matthey analysed the purity of the salt produced and a summary of their results are shown below. All groups managed to gain levels of purity of more than 97% which is an impressive achievement with the equipment they were given. With the two dimensions of yield and the level of impurities this can lead to a very interesting debate about which group had the best process!



During the third and final lesson the children devised their own test for viscosity (or runniness).



They were given 100ml measuring cylinders, funnels, plastic beakers, hexagonal nuts and a collection of common liquids including water, shampoo, shower gel and bubble bath. Each group innovated and came up with their own method to measure viscosity and in discussion compared their methods with those of other groups to try to devise the most effective method. They all managed to create and evaluate their own methods for measuring viscosity. Their sequence of three lessons was then complete.

When I took on the role of Primary Science Advisory teacher for CIEC I thought it would be a really interesting role that would give me room to develop my skills as a teacher but I had not appreciated just how powerful the links to industry can be for children. I am very privileged in that I have had the opportunity to open children's eyes to the possibilities of becoming a scientist in an industrial setting and I do like to think that for a few children I am changing minds. I would like to thank the staff and pupils at Foxton to welcoming me to their school and taking such an active interest in the lessons I presented. The project will be continuing in the 2015/16 academic year and I hope that I will have the opportunity to work once again with the pupils and staff at Foxton.

References:

The CBI (2015) Tomorrow's World Inspiring Primary Scientists available at <http://www.cbi.org.uk/tomorrows-world/home.html> accessed 14.4.15

Clare Warren works as a Primary Science Advisory Teacher for the Centre for Industry Education Collaboration, teaches at Southill Lower School in Bedfordshire, presents primary science courses for the Science Learning Centre Network and works as an ESERO Space Ambassador.

Privilege, poppies and a paper bag: life at Foxton School

I am just about to complete my tenth year back at **Foxton School** (some of you with good memories will recall my job-sharing with Julie B nearly 20 years ago!) and I remain privileged to work with children, parents and colleagues in this happy establishment. My role in school is primarily to cover the time that class teachers spend outside the classroom in order to plan, prepare and assess children's work. This is how I come to teach **music** to every class, **art** to class 1, **physical education** (PE) to class 2 and **religious education** (RE) whenever I can, particularly seeking to support teachers with new RE courses.

Teaching music means **rehearsals and performances** and so I work with all the children in key stage one as they learn the songs and dances for their **nativity play**; with all the children as we prepare for the **Christmas service**; with class 2 as they perform at **Lunch Club**; with the whole of key stage two as they learn songs, dances and drama for their summer musical (see you all at **Aladdin!**) and their part for our summer **celebration evening**. This is always very hard work and great fun, especially when we see some children for whom participation in the performing arts demonstrates a real vocation. Teaching art with class one is wonderful (one child asked me whether I am going to be 'a arter' when I grow up!) and we see their skills developing through both simple practice and exciting creative opportunities. PE lessons with class 2 are never boring, and the children have an enviable level of energy. The greatest gap between children in PE is between **the child who can and the child who cannot throw and catch a ball**, so we spend lots of time in developing these skills, using fun games and lots of encouragement.

Religious Education is different. Learning about and from different religious and cultural practices and various belief systems is crucial in our world, where we will all meet people whose way of life and values may be very different from our own. It requires, for example,



careful **thought** ("How might a Jew or a Muslim answer this question differently?")



new **experiences** (a meal to show Sikh beliefs about equality);



opportunities for **reflection** as we make poppies to help our studies ("What might we learn from our studies of World War One and Remembrance Day?")



some **understanding** of Humanism as a non-religious belief system.

Some of the RE has been part of education (MEd) and that has involved teaching children how to **argue a case** and, critically, to disagree in a constructive way. It is a real privilege to hear these young people seeking to articulate beliefs and develop understanding.

Hinduism
Class 4





I also teach RE to **trainee teachers** at the University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education. This is another huge privilege and a great learning opportunity for me. We welcome trainees come from a wide range of backgrounds, and aim for procedurally neutral teaching of RE that is “taught for the deepening of understanding and not for the deepening of faith”: we are not encouraging trainees or children to become anything except ‘**religiously literate**’.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

(SMSC) is one of those aspects of school life that it can be difficult to see and to define, but which is valued by the whole school community and required by Ofsted. It is critically modelled by the adults and mostly illustrated by our “**4Cs**” (**caring, courtesy, consideration and co-operation**) which are values required of everyone in the school at all times. **Spiritual development** requires reflection and is supported by activities like the poppy one above (encouraging children to discern and develop their own values) although it is by no means confined to RE. **Moral education** (sorting out right from wrong) is often a daily task in the playground and illustrates a nice balance between what is best and what compromises have to be made so that we can all live in a community. It is surprising how often matters can be resolved just by explaining to children their own behaviour and its consequences, and giving the opportunity to say sorry and repair the damage where appropriate. **Social education** is built upon the relationships that we all form in school, and starts with visits to preschool. Reading partners, Buddy groups, teams, lunch-table mates, Lunch-Club visits and class-pairings all help to build our school community. **Cultural education** may seem rather new, but is really just an extension of our work in the community and a reflection of the realities of life. As we welcome families from all over the world into our Foxton community and as we visit other places, it is clear that even within apparently single groupings, practices may vary widely and we all need to go on learning about others.



In February of this year, I was so privileged to travel to **Vellore** in south India and visit many Christian projects. From schools to churches, from weddings to new-home blessings, from shopping to eating – everything was interesting and everything was different! Inevitably, I brought back some souvenirs that are beautiful (an embroidered elephant, a pretty scarf) some practical (a tea-towel and some tea!) but my most precious souvenir is a **paper bag**. It was hand-made by a



young girl at a Christian project for children whose parents have AIDs. Anna is earning money to feed her family, one bag at a time. I asked her what I could do for her (although we were not supposed to do that as it can cause more problems than it solves) and she simply said, “Pray for me.” I knelt in the dust and did just that, but it made me realise how much we need to learn and understand about children like Anna.

The children are involved currently in a huge project with Ely Cathedral using art, religion and values to explore the concept of a journey, based upon the ‘Way of life’ sculpture in the



Cathedral. The project started there in September, as teachers from many primary schools came together to work with three professional artists. It has involved our writing poetry, making banners and sculptures in school as we explore our own life journey from darkness to light. The exhibition in the Cathedral is open to all from 24 June to 1 July and is a wonderful demonstration of the children’s own thoughts, work and ideas. I do hope that many of you will be able to go and see the work in context, where the exhibition is to be professionally displayed.

We continue to discuss **values** at school and to consider the ‘**British values**’ that are a focus for Ofsted. Last Thursday the children learnt about Elizabeth Fry in assembly and heard how she was concerned about prison reform in the light of her Christian beliefs. Elizabeth was brave enough to speak out about injustice and we thought about what we should do when something seems to us to be wrong.

Working at Foxton School, I appreciate so much that is right about our community, our school and our children and am so grateful for the opportunities that we enjoy.

Penny Kite

The SENCo at Foxton

Although I have only just taken on the SENCO role at Foxton, I have been working with the staff at the school for some time, carrying out diagnostic assessments with children and advising staff on how best to help them to learn, and I was happy to agree to take on the SENCo role when I was asked. The SENCo can sometimes be a hidden role in schools with parents not fully understanding what we do – or even realising that a school has one. However every school does have a SENCo, it is a legal requirement that they have one, so what on earth does a SENCo do?

My role is essentially to support class teachers in ensure that the diverse needs of all the children in their class are being met. There is an enormous range of special educational needs that can impact on a child's progress in school and my role is to give class teachers advice and practical support in meeting those needs. This involves working closely with class teacher to support not only those children who have a clearly identified and diagnosed special need, but also any child who's progress is causing the class teacher some concern. The progress of every child in every primary school is monitored at least termly by the class teacher, the head and the SENCo, if a child is not making the progress we would hope, we look for explanations as to why that might be and discuss what we can do to support them. First of all we would look at modification to the teacher's classroom practice to support that child and this could be anything from where the child sits to supportive resources that could be used. In addition to this we may consider some extra support work in a small group to give the child some carefully targeted specific support, and we measure and monitor the impact of anything we do. A central part of my role is to ensure that I have up to date training on how to support a wide range of specific needs and then to pass this onto school staff by running training sessions to develop their knowledge.

Another important part of the SENCo role is to meet with a wide range of different professionals who support the children at school. These can include speech and language therapists, occupational and physio therapists and educational psychologists. I then support the class teachers with implementing the recommendations these professional have made for a particular child. As well as meeting with other professionals I also regularly meet with parents to support them in understanding their child's needs, explain how we plan to help their child in school and what they can do in turn at home .

However being SENCo at Foxton is not my only job – I have several; during the first half of the week I am a class teacher and SENCo at Barrington Primary. I job share the Reception/Year One class and I love being a class teacher. I also think that still being in the classroom myself really helps with my work as a SENCo – at the beginning of the week I am still faced with the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of a whole class of children, which I hope makes the advice I offer other teachers when working as a SENCo practical, relevant and possible to implement when juggling the needs of a whole class.

When I finish my work on a Wednesday lunchtime I divide the rest of my week between being SENCo at Foxton and Hauxton Primary schools, doing diagnostic assessments in other local primary schools and working as a tutor for other teachers who are studying for a qualification in teaching children with specific learning difficulties. I have a special interest in working memory and have just published a book to help teachers support children with this difficulty. I love the variety that my different jobs give my working week and the different areas of my work are interlinked and benefit each other.

While I enjoy teaching all children, there are some children who are lucky enough to learn almost in spite of what you do as a teacher, and while their progress is fascinating, in my mind, nothing beats the satisfaction of helping a child who is not one of those lucky ones. Carrying out diagnostic assessment work is like a bit like playing detectives; piecing together the evidence to work out why a child is having difficulties and the satisfaction of helping them to make progress cannot be matched.

What do I do when I am not working? Although there are periods each term when it feels like all I do is work, I do have a life outside! I have a husband and three teenage children who still need a lot of looking after (even though they may not like to think they do!!). To relax I enjoy baking – much to the amusement of my family and friends, as due to food allergies I cannot eat any of the cakes and biscuits I bake myself – they just have not realised it is part of my master plan to make them all put on weight while I do not! So if you think the staff at Foxton start to look as if they are gaining weight over the next few months you will know why!

Gill Davies

Finance

Foxton is again in a healthy financial position. Historically we have always had a balance carried forward that enables the Governors to carefully set a budget for the current year as well as keep reserves in place in the event of unexpected expenditure. The carry forward is always a concern but the finance committee endeavours to maintain the balance of the current climate. With Jenny and Ann Jones both leaving us, the responsibility has passed to new hands but we have excellent replacements. Historically, Cambridgeshire has been one of the most poorly funded local authorities in the country, however we have something to look forward to as we will be allocated more funding in 2015/2016.

Neil Brown

Personnel Changes

You will know of course that I replaced Mrs Jones after Easter but you may not know that the administration staff also changed at the same time!

Mrs Durant who managed much of the day to day contact in the office decided to alter her role. Clearly her experience within the school helps her support us, but her new role is entirely different as she has taken on the Finance Officer's role (previously Mrs A Jones). She has had an incredibly steep learning curve as much of the systems and language associated with the role is completely new to her! Mrs Durant has done very well and is just beginning to feel comfortable with new understanding.

Mrs Armitage who worked with Mrs Durant has now expanded her role. She is now the main daily contact in the office and is busy modernising systems in readiness for the autumn term, to include an online payment system for school meals and trips. The school uniform sale next week is thanks to her organisation – quite an immense task, given the quantity of uniform in corridors. Mrs Armitage has been the prime mover in developing and updating the website adding twitter feeds, photos and documents - policies and newsletters will be added as soon as they become available. She maintains her links with premises management and is learning about personnel related issues. Both Mrs Armitage and Mrs Durant support the work of the governing body.

Mrs Shorten now works in the breakfast club with Mrs Waltenberg.

To keep on top of all the changes, complete with a new Chair of Governors has been a challenge for all of us and we've done pretty well!

WEBSITE

The new website holds a wealth of useful information for parents. Here you can find out everything about the school.

Please use the website for the following information:

- **Term Dates**
- **Calendar of key events**
- **News updates**
- **Photo gallery**
- **Twitter feeds**
- **Class pages/newsletters**
- **Parent information**
- **School Prospectus**

- **School uniform expectations**
- **School meals**
- **Policies**
- **Governors**
- **Friends**

Carole Davies

Conclusion

I really hope you enjoyed reading this year's annual report and found the information interesting. The work of the staff, together with the governors and Friends of Foxton School is what makes our school so special. We ran a parents questionnaire for the first time this year and it confirmed many of the great things that the school is continuing to achieve to make sure that your children have the best possible educational start in life and we will continue to work hard to maintain the values that Foxton school holds dearly while adapting to the ever changing educational environment. I would like to conclude this annual report by saying a special thanks to two longstanding but recently retired governors who have given so much to our school's success over a long period of time, Mark Collins and Linda Shankland. Their longstanding contribution to the school should be an inspiration to all existing and future governors as it is vital to the future of the school that we have a strong and committed team of governors. I am very pleased that the existing governors have the same passion to make sure that Foxton School continues to be successful for the primary education of many more young people!

Arend Jan van Bochoven – Chair of Governors

Your Governing Body

NAME		AFFILIATION	END OF TERM
Geoff Barnes		Co-opted	Sept 2015
AJ van Bochhoven	CHAIR	Co-opted	Oct 2018
Neil Brown	Chair of Finance	Parent	Nov 2017
David Chilton	Chair of Premises	Co-opted	Sept 2018
Carole Davies		Headteacher	
David Griffiths	VICE CHAIR	Co-opted	Jan 2018
Caro Hollway		Teacher/Staff	Aug 2016
Jane Kohler		Local Authority	Apr 2017
Laura Moran		Parent	Sept 2018
Caro Moses		Parent	Jun 2016
Anna Storer	Chair of Curriculum	Parent	May 2017
Deana Vaughan		Co-opted	Oct 2018
Jane Warwick	DESIGNATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILD PROTECTION	Co-opted	Aug 2015

Any governor may be contacted via the school.

Address: 11 Hardman Road, Foxton, Cambridge
CB22 6RN

Telephone: 01223 712447

Email: office@foxton.cambs.sch.uk

Chairman: Arend Jan van Bochhoven

Clerk to the Governors: Helen Durant

SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2015/2016

Autumn term 2015

Staff Training Day – Wednesday 2nd September (school closed)

Thursday 3rd September to Friday 18th December 2015

Staff Training Day – Thursday 22nd & Friday 23rd October

Half term - Monday 26th October to Friday 30th October 2015

Christmas Break – Monday 21st December 2015 to Monday 4th January 2016

Spring term 2016

Staff Training Day – Monday 4th January 2016

Tuesday 5th January to Thursday 24th March 2016

Staff Training Day – Friday 12th February 2016

Half term - Monday 15 February to Friday 19 February 2016

Easter Break – Friday 25th March 2016 to Friday 8th April 2016

Summer term 2016

Monday 11th April to Thursday 21st July 2016

May Day Holiday - Monday 2nd May 2016

Half term – Monday 30th May to Friday 3rd June 2016

Summer Break – Friday 22nd July 2016 to tbc