

School Report - 2010

Trottiscliffe CEP School has had another very eventful year.

The year began with children exploring the exciting new play area at the back of the school, with tunnels and slides, a sand pit, raised beds and a 'king of the castle' type array of rocks for children to scramble over and make believe on. Many of the children's ideas have been incorporated although, sadly the fairy tale castle with minarets and enchanted windows was not an option with our funding restrictions.

During the first week Ofsted came to inspect the school. The experience proved to be a very supportive and positive one with the inspectors acknowledging the innovative approach to teaching and learning at Trottiscliffe. Discussion with the inspectors helped us to focus more clearly on the areas for school development but we were encouraged to know that our assessment of the strengths of the school had been accurate. One of the inspectors said that we would look back on the visit and be thankful that Ofsted had called so early on in the term. Looking back we now acknowledge this to be true.

The next milestone for Trottiscliffe was when Ann, the Chairman of Governors, stepped down after serving the school for so many years. Ann's support for me began at my interview for the leadership role at the school in October 2002, when it was my good fortune to be invited to become the headteacher.

Following Ann's resignation, Paul Drayson stepped into the role of Chairman of Governors with Anita Parkins, a new governor, voted on as the Vice Chair.

Shortly after this I announced my intention to retire at the end of the school academic year, July 2010. This steered the governors to put into action some planning already done to look for ways to ensure Trottiscliffe had a secure future. It seemed like a good time to seek out a suitable school and nurture a more collaborative approach that would lead to a Federation of two strong, similar schools. The school is now on the brink of consulting with parents to make some fundamental changes to the leadership of the school. These are very exciting times for the school. I am sure this new pathway will mean stability and the opportunity for Trottiscliffe to become an outstanding school. It is within our sights.

New books to support reading throughout the school are now in place together with new software packages to support this vital skill for our children. Extra titles have been purchased with your generous support this year. All our children see themselves as readers and our weekly book groups have played a big part in this viewpoint. Children enjoy discussing characters plots and information, sometimes coming dressed as a character to emphasise a point and encouraging one another to read more deeply and at length. The new laptops have proved a great success this year as indeed the mini suite of desktop computers installed in the KS1 classroom during the Easter break. The extra ICT will support the growing need for our children to gain ICT skills early on in their school career in this technological revolution. With new resources there comes a problem of storage, but in a small school this worry will be ever present.

Finally the refurbishment of the school continues to create a better environment for the well-being of our community. All the classrooms now have upgraded lighting with white, suspended ceilings and this month the old windows at the back of the school will be replaced.

As you can see the year has been eventful but I sense the year to come will be as exciting and challenging as ever, if not more so. The children have always been at the centre of everything we do in school and I know that this is the one constant in a sea of changes to come.