

CEO Newsletter January 2018

Happy New Year! We are a month into the New Year and life across our schools has been as busy as ever.

Congratulations to Mullion School who have been rated in the top 20 state schools 2018 (Primary and Secondary) in the UK by Tatler magazine (Jan edition).

Mullion School held a fantastic Year 8 Gothic Horror Day and the English department organised a brilliant day of workshops and activities. The pupils had a great time, really got involved and learnt a lot. All the English staff got dressed up and there was a fancy dress competition for the pupils. A big thank you to the English Team and to Year 8 for making it such a fun and worthwhile day.



On Friday 19th January, Crowan Primary School was pleased to welcome Derek Thomas - Member of Parliament for the St. Ives constituency. He began his visit with a tour of the school to meet the staff and children, and was particularly impressed by the enthusiasm of the children taking part in their morning 'Fun Fit' session in the school hall.

Later, three of the school's teams competing in this year's Rotary Club's 'Youth Speaks' public speaking competition presented their arguments to Derek: 'Should children be paid to come to school?', 'What can we do about litter on our beaches?' and 'How we can help the environment.' The School Council then quizzed Derek over his views on a range of issues, including: school and NHS funding, second home ownership, Brexit, pollution, public sector pay and whether he preferred Hilary Clinton or Donald Trump!

Derek was very impressed with the confidence of the children and the quality of their discussions and questioning.

Derek left with a request that the children write to their local supermarkets to ask them to reduce the amount of packaging on food items - the children and their MP were very much in accord over the need to protect our unique and beautiful environment!

Parc Eglos is one of several schools who have taken part in the WOW Boys Writing Group. Two of the boys from Parc Eglos explained their experiences. At the start, neither of the boys liked writing and they didn't want to be part of the club. After the first session, one said to his mum, "I am not stopping this thing!" The project is really helping him with his writing skills. The speed of his writing has improved and he knows to use better adjectives.



The other said the project, 'has been lots of fun. It's not just writing the whole time, there have been fun activities that help with writing and improving vocabulary.' He likes using the kindles to help find spellings instead of using a dictionary or thesaurus. The visit to Tehidy Woods helped him learn to write more. He said it was because he started looking around and observing the woods in detail. His writing is neater too!

This month, Helston Post 16 hosted its first Apprenticeship event. Employers included Serco, the Army, Royal Navy, Pendennis Shipyard, Dynamo Healthcare and the NHS. Around 60 students, together with their

parents, attended the event. The event was a great success. The Armed Forces Careers Office emailed: "I would just like to take the opportunity to commend the extremely well organised and productive careers evening held at your College yesterday. The work that clearly had been put into making the event such a great success was evident with the smooth running of the careers fair from start to finish. Your students that we saw were all very confident, articulate, with inquisitive minds that asked mature and challenging questions, which kept us on our toes!"

On Friday 26th January, Garras School celebrated an art exhibition inspired by Vincent Van Gogh's 'Starry Night'. Families were asked to create their own 'Starry Night' art work which resulted in some very imaginative and creative ideas being displayed. Pupils and their families used a wide range of resources and techniques including wool, fairy lights, painting, wood burning and the use of collage to create their masterpieces. These were all displayed at Mawgan Recreation Hall for the rest of the school family to view and enjoy. The school thoroughly enjoyed sharing the massively artistic talents of its pupils and their families.



A key piece of work being undertaken on behalf the schools at the moment is the preparation for the launch of the General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR] in April. A working party is undertaking the bulk of the work. There are implications for us all about how we use, process and store information and I know some of you have given this some thought already. We will provide further guidance before Easter so that we are ready to meet the duty. Similarly, there have been a number of groups working through the full range of policies that schools are expected to have in place. Drafts of these will be available for you to review shortly and, as always, we welcome your feedback. Whilst policies need to keep us within our legal obligations, they also have to be workable. If you come across something that is not working effectively, please do raise it with us.

In terms of buildings, it has been a demanding time. The Council's Backlog Maintenance Projects at Mullion and Garras have both been very challenging. The team have been pushing County and the contractors hard in order to progress the projects and get things back on track. I am grateful to everyone at Mullion and Garras for their patience. The wind and rain hasn't helped and has caused other issues across the Trust. Rob, the caretaker from Porthleven, has swollen the ranks of the estates team so that more of the repairs in schools are being achieved in a timely way. It takes a great deal of work from the whole team to keep the buildings as they need to be – often there isn't a lot to show for it as the repairs are to boilers, lights and leaks – but we certainly notice when things aren't working! I am sure you would echo my thanks to the team all for all their work. Well done: Richard and Dan at Mullion; Rob at Porthleven; Martyn at Parc Eglos; Taff, John, Ian, Chris, Phil, Fred and James at Helston; and Dave, Trust Estates Manager.

The finance team have passed all of their external audits with flying colours. This represented a huge amount of work. Ultimately, it means that the Auditor and The Education and Skills Agency are satisfied that we have robust systems in place. Sean, our CFO, says that good finance is when it sits in the background and you don't notice it! Hopefully, our systems will ensure this happens going forward. Certainly, with our new systems we have had fewer issues with payroll, all orders and payments are up to date and the team are currently working to catch up on income received.

Finally, I'd like to thank Leigh Yates for all her organisation of the Christmas Raffle – the final figure raised for the trust was £8,340.40. A fantastic achievement.



Donna