



# Llangattock School Governors' Christmas Newsletter



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*December 2016*

## *An end of term newsletter from the Governors*

Another term at Llangattock has passed and the main news of which I am sure you are all aware is that Kathryn Marshall was appointed Headteacher in November. As Governors we are delighted to have been able to maintain our fantastic existing team, which we are sure, under the leadership of Mrs Kathryn Marshall, will continue to move the school from strength to strength.

We have also been lucky enough to have Mr Stephen Flynn to join us as a Foundation Governor. Stephen has been helping with reading at the school for some time as one of our Rotary Club helpers. He knows the school well and is popular with staff and children.

After many years of devoted service Clair Jones has been put out to pasture! I would like to thank Clair on behalf of everyone involved with the school for her work as a Governor and a leading member of Eco Club. She really has been a committed, supportive parent of the school. We have vacancies elsewhere on the Governing Body, so if you are interested in becoming a Foundation Governor please let the school know and we will pass on your details to the Diocese.

As Governors we continue to work to strategically and practically develop the school. This year some of the School Development Plan priorities are: To further develop pupil voice, implement the digital competence framework and develop the new curriculum. The Governors will be analysing the parent questionnaires to reflect and incorporate parent ideas in the future priorities for the school.

Thank you to the staff, children, volunteers, parents and families of Llangattock School who have, as always worked so hard this term. As always the Christmas plays were a huge success, followed by our lovely Christingle Service, which celebrates the true Christian message of Christmas. Earlier in the term the school held its annual Remembrance Day event, which, as always was well attended by members of the school and local community. We have also been very fortunate this term to have continued working with the High School to offer the children Mandarin and French lessons, which will continue in the new year. The Governing Body are proud to work with and support the school in its efforts to help our children develop as well-rounded, confident and happy individuals. On that note, I have written a short piece; which in true Christmas Spirit may send a shiver down your spine. No characters, school or plot are intended to bear any relation to any person living, or dead.

Enjoy the Christmas break and do lots of exercise!

George Smith (Chair of Governors)



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## A Christmas Lesson

The old teacher was retired: to begin with. There was no doubt about that. The register of his retirement was signed by the Vicar, the clerk, the undertaker and the chairman. The Headteacher had signed it. If the Headteacher had signed it there was no doubt.

People talked about the old teacher fondly and he was missed. Children, now parents, talked and reminisced about his creative investigative approach.

It was one day before the end of term and the staff had left the school with arms full of gifts of wine, chocolates and cards. They had been out the night before and some felt a little jaded, a combination of end of term and the excesses of the previous evening.

The new head had been there, but not there. She had to get back and finish off analysing the latest performance figures. She was finishing them now; some of the children in two year groups weren't quite achieving what they should. Given their socio-economic status and previous assessments they really should be doing better ... who exactly were they, these irritating children?

She was feeling tired but she just had to formulate a strategy to enable them to perform as they should. Don't they realise the whole school would suffer? She would suffer! County would be on her back...

The computer seized, crashed. She restarted it. While it warmed up, she leant her head in her hands and closed her eyes. She must have dropped off briefly, the caretaker had closed the school up and turned off the lights without realising she was there. The heating was turned off too, an icy chill had crept into the office. But wait! There was a noise. Thank heavens the caretaker was still there.

"Colin, Colin I'm still here I just need to ....." Before she could finish, a voice interrupted her. A voice she did not recognise,

"Colin couldn't come tonight Mrs F.... I offered to fill in for him. I'll be with you in a moment I need to reset the trip switches Miss, don't panic! I won't be a moment. Just bide 'ee there, Miss."

Her initial surge of irritation was quickly replaced by an overwhelming drowsiness, what harm could another little doze do until the lights came back on?

Picture now please, dear reader, that classic filmic technique; regrettably little used these days, of the screen going wavy as the protagonist enters a dream. The dream solidified into an enthusiastic young teacher sitting on the floor with equally enthusiastic children listening agog to 'The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig'. The children then acted out their own version in an assembly, made puppets of the characters and a whole load of other imaginative and creative activities. She remembered how teaching could be fun, stimulating and rewarding for all. She wanted to be there, to get stuck in. Something about the whole scene seemed familiar. She thought she knew the teacher. She felt the chill of reality penetrating her thin cardigan and she regained consciousness with a jolt of neck ache and loss.

"I'll be with you any moment, Miss. I've just knocked over the blessed tree in the dark, shan't be long now...." called the supply caretaker distantly. With a resigned sigh, she sat back, stretched, yawned and momentarily closed her aching eyes. The wave of fatigue once again enveloped her senses and the wavy dream sequence started again.

She perceived a tense domestic setting. Two children sitting down at a kitchen table, a lone twig of holly in a jam jar and snow collected in the corners of the windows. The children there were working grimly through a pile of workbooks. Miss F .... regarded the scene with satisfaction, for these were the children whose results she had been pouring over earlier.

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Suddenly one said to another, "I hate school and I hate being at home! There's no fun anymore, I've just got to do this stupid work to catch up... because I'm stupid!" The child then flung her head down upon her arms, in tears. The tears then fell hot and warm and messily smudged the ink. Miss F..... felt a distant sympathy which was quickly replaced by irritation because good presentation can always improve outcomes.

With a jolt, she awoke. "Where on Earth is the caretaker?" she thought with growing, helpless rage. "Where are you?" she shouted, her Head teacher's authority cutting the icy, still air. The whole school was frozen in silence.

Nothing is quite as deathly silent as an empty school, she didn't even really feel herself to be present, a disembodied floating sensation consumed her. The next moment she found herself at a party with lots of harassed looking, grey, lined people. A serious, vaguely familiar woman stood up and started speaking. She was talking about her career. It was a retirement party. It was hardly a party though, it was more like a wake! Some children came into sing, but they weren't really singing, the backing track made most of the noise. They hadn't able to rehearse because it impacted too much on the academic curriculum. With a sick feeling, the dreaming Head realised she was observing her own retirement party. She floated dreamily through a wall and out to the juniors playground; two children were talking: "Now she's gone we might get a new head who is friendly and likes children and does interesting things, ....."

Mrs F.... felt an icy pang stab her heart. This was not why she had become teacher. She had become a teacher because she liked children, and she liked children to like her. She wanted to make them curious and want to learn, she wanted to teach them how to learn. To kindle them like a fire.

"Miss, Miss, Miss! Are you alright Miss? You look like you're sleeping Miss. Were you sleeping Miss? You must have got here early because I'm early. Our mam jus' dropped us off because she's working early!" It was the two children which had occupied her thought so recently.

"Bore da! How lovely two see you two so keen and early," she chirped at them, with a twinkle in her eye. "Would you two like to do something to help me? You know that art shop around the corner with that enormous bucket of Plasticine? If it's still there go and ask for it to be delivered to school this moment. This morning we're doing unplanned and spontaneous Plasticine fun! Then we'll do lots of running around and fun outdoor stuff after lunch."

The two children walked off on their errand in amazement. Had Mrs F.... gone mad? She certainly didn't seem to be her normal self. That evening the children came home from school and told their parents about what a wonderful day they'd had, and how they couldn't wait for the new term.

