

The North wind has already delivered its first chilly bite this morning, but the school was warm and cosy for us coming in. Temperatures are set to plummet over the weekend and into next week and therefore will be a shock to us all so can I ask that all parents and carers bear this in mind. Many young people with autism are unable to self-regulate body temperatures and have to be told to put on a coat or a jumper. Some genuinely don't feel the cold but this doesn't mean that they shouldn't be suitably attired. Our kayaking programme will be continuing and staff, parents and pupils have all been reminded to wrap up warm, whether going on the water or watching from the side-lines, substance over style is the order of the day.

I attended the Parent School Partnership on Tuesday evening and was invited to share an update on Meadowpark achievements which I am always proud to do, and this was warmly received by those in attendance, including one of our Meadowpark parents. It was noted by Councillor Akhtar that the Special Needs Playscheme Star Youth Club use Meadowpark facilities on Thursdays. The building is also let for LAS Basecamp on Wednesdays and alternate Saturdays. We host a soup group from HETRA on Thursdays in the life skills flat and it is wonderful to see a variety of people accessing the building.

We had our final Loose Parts Play session on Tuesday with the ever-effervescent Kelly and Max team stimulating play, chat, conversation and FUN! Kelly and Max will ask for feedback from Meadowpark staff and pupils and we will continue to build our resources and play opportunities. I mentioned at the PSP that I am passionate about play for all – and this should not be restricted to the early stages of education or those with a disability but to every pupil in every school across the country. Evidence is clear that young people who are given opportunities to play are able to act out many of the scenarios with which they can struggle in life. Play builds resilience, determination, creativity, collaboration, cooperation, opportunity and enquiry but fundamentally it is fun. During In Service on Monday we were reminded of Knox Academy values by participating in a task that encouraged us to think of an event in our lives between the ages of 1-10 yrs. old and how this helped to shape our values. This was tricky initially but then I remembered the occasion when I learned to ride my older sister's new bicycle. She was and still is a good 2 inches taller than me and it was assumed the bike would be too big. However, I was, and still am, quite determined to give something a try, and that is one of the values that I have developed over the years and would rather not succeed than not to try at all.

This morning at Assembly I reinforced the values of Responsible and Respected from the SHANARRI indicators: <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/wellbeing> and spoke to pupils and staff when I described how essential it is that we try things for ourselves and that support is there to enable us to do more, but not to have things done to or for us. We also need to have the confidence to approach development in a positive proactive and meaningful way, regardless of age and ability. I have watched this short video of Austin's Butterfly <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqh1MRWZjms> a number of times and it still inspires me. By giving specific, thoughtful and helpful advice, Austin is able to see exactly where and how he can improve his drawing. I think this is a lesson for us all: we should not be settling for 2<sup>nd</sup> best just because a pupil has produced a piece of work. Instead we need to be encouraging pupils to see that

their work as in draft form and then ask what needs to change to develop learning and understanding in order to encourage personal ambition.

Meadowpark pupils experienced a change to their weekly routine this week with the introduction of Masterclasses. Each teacher will lead on a Masterclass – Community Art and Craft with Mrs. Davis, German Language and Culture with Mr Gilmour and Outdoor Learning with Mr. Morrison. All classes will be delivered on a rota basis and will run until June 2019. Pupils have made 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices and it was great to see how well pupils were able to transition to another class with another teacher and a different set of pupils to embark on a new learning initiative. Huge thanks go to the teaching staff for making this happen as I know that a lot of thought and consideration has gone into planning a stimulating and rewarding experience for a diverse group of young people and I look forward to sharing the results of their learning, with the expectation that every individual will be encouraged to give their very best in their learning environment.

It is important that we develop our own interest away from the classroom, and while I've been writing this I noticed a Tweet from Integrity Coaching <https://twitter.com/Vivgrant> saying the very same quoting 'You can't do a good job if your job is all you do' (Artefact Uprising)

We could all do with being more playful in our work and home environments and this year I have embarked on rediscovering my latent creativity. Tomorrow I am attending a creative tuition session to get the most out of my laptop and especially in regard to photography.

Have a peaceful, creative weekend.

C. Prime 26.10.18