

Well we have made it to the end of term and thank goodness for the extraordinarily good weather we have had this week. This week temperatures reached 26'-28' and all young people have had lots of planned opportunities to be outside learning numeracy, literacy and health and well-being through experiential learning – measuring, predicting, counting, observing, talking and listening. Our young people have also been advised on how to self-regulate in the heat as many do not recognise when they are over-heating and we have had to be quite insistent on removing heavy black jumpers and sweatshirts, encouraging pupils to play, read, and cool down under the shelter and ensuring that they are all drinking plenty of fluids. Sometimes it's the small things that most of us take for granted that can be detrimental to young people on the autism spectrum for example heat stroke and dehydration, but because we plan to the needs of the individual we are able to take account of this and remind and reassure young people on their own personal safety.

There is a fascinating video that I often make reference to called: Autism and Me by Rory Hoy <https://www.roryhoy.com/autism-me>. He made the film with the help of close friends and family when he was 18yrs old, and explains so well how, even as he has learned to navigate many of the challenges of life, there are some things he needs to be reminded of on a daily basis such as brushing his teeth, waving good-bye, and waiting in turn to speak.

We have had much to celebrate this week – all our young people were nominated for a Knox Academy Personal Achievement Award for perseverance, determination, progress and participation in class, assemblies, kayaking, swimming, gardening, cooking, Boccia and fund raising. I was so proud that five of our young people were able to attend the awards ceremony on Wednesday to collect their awards, and equally proud to hand over awards to pupils unable to attend.

Yesterday we all attended the Meadowpark talent show, arranged and hosted by Daniel Murray and were suitably impressed by the wealth of talent from a small number of pupils. Lewis was the outstanding winner, having created his own puppet, Leo, with whom he shared a few jokes with the audience. Daniel and Sammy regaled us with their singing talent, Mr Morrison juggled and Ms Prime pressed 'Play' and had everyone dancing to Happy by Pharrell Williams.

As we plan to move into our fourth year of being Meadowpark, we continue to look at best practice in order to strike the right balance for all our young people. This can include some immersion in mainstream, outdoor learning and a wide range of qualifications from SQA Personal Achievement Level 1 Awards, Nat 1 and Nat 2 through to Higher. We follow the East Lothian Council Curriculum Frameworks for Broad General Education and will be collaborating with colleagues across the authority to use the language of Milestones:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/MilestonesLiteracyEnglish.pdf> and <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/MilestonesNumeracyMaths.pdf> as we build curricular pathways from BGE into senior phase and beyond.

I am the first to recognise that we cannot provide the support or create a safe and stimulating environment without the support of parents and carers. We have all faced many challenges this year, which has increased our resilience, encouraged us to reflect on and implement appropriate

approaches and strategies. Even as parents we don't always get it right for every child all the time, but staff and pupils and families at Meadowpark work together, collegiately to ensure that we consider options that lead to success for each individual.

Thank you to everyone for the hard work and support that has made the Meadowpark team what it is and we will continue to improve and progress as we work together.

Have a peaceful, relaxing and happy summer, and remember to dance:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6Sxv-sUYtM>

C Prime 29.06.18.