

Head Teachers Report West Felton Parish Council



Spring 2023
Helen Hughes

Thank you very much, as always, for the opportunity to report to the Parish Council; one of our core values is **Community** and it is something we hold in the highest regard. We are exceptionally fortunate to be part of such a beautiful rural parish.

- **82%** of our pupils live in our parish (one third of those who don't, have since moved but have chosen to stay at the school).
- We are one of the largest employers in the village, with 30 members of staff, **64%** of whom live in our parish.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Hughes', is centered on the page.

Mrs. Helen Hughes
Headteacher

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Class	Number on role
Acorn	34 (17 Nursery, 17 Reception)
Oak	28
Beech	28
Willow	24
Sycamore	30
Pupil Total	144 (including Nursery) 127 (excluding Nursery)
Staff Total	30

Top five hits since our last meeting

1. End of Key Stage National Assessments

At the end of Year 6, before our 11-year-olds leave us, they complete Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Our Year 6 pupils exceeded the national averages and demonstrated excellent attainment in each of these key areas:

	Reading	Writing	Maths
West Felton	88%	72%	82%
National	74%	69%	71%

2. Successful grant application to the Parish Council to help fund Rock Steady

The English National Curriculum dictates that we must teach 11 subjects, some get lost in the demands of assessment and scores and Ofsted. However, we strive to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum at West Felton and Music is central to that. Music is a language which is universal; it is full of history, rich language and multiculturalism. It provides opportunities for choice, preference and exploration. Music is a creative outlet which can enhance social and emotional wellbeing, collective enjoyment and shared experiences. It is often a talking point, a moment of relaxation and emersion. Through Music, we can make friends and broaden our horizons.

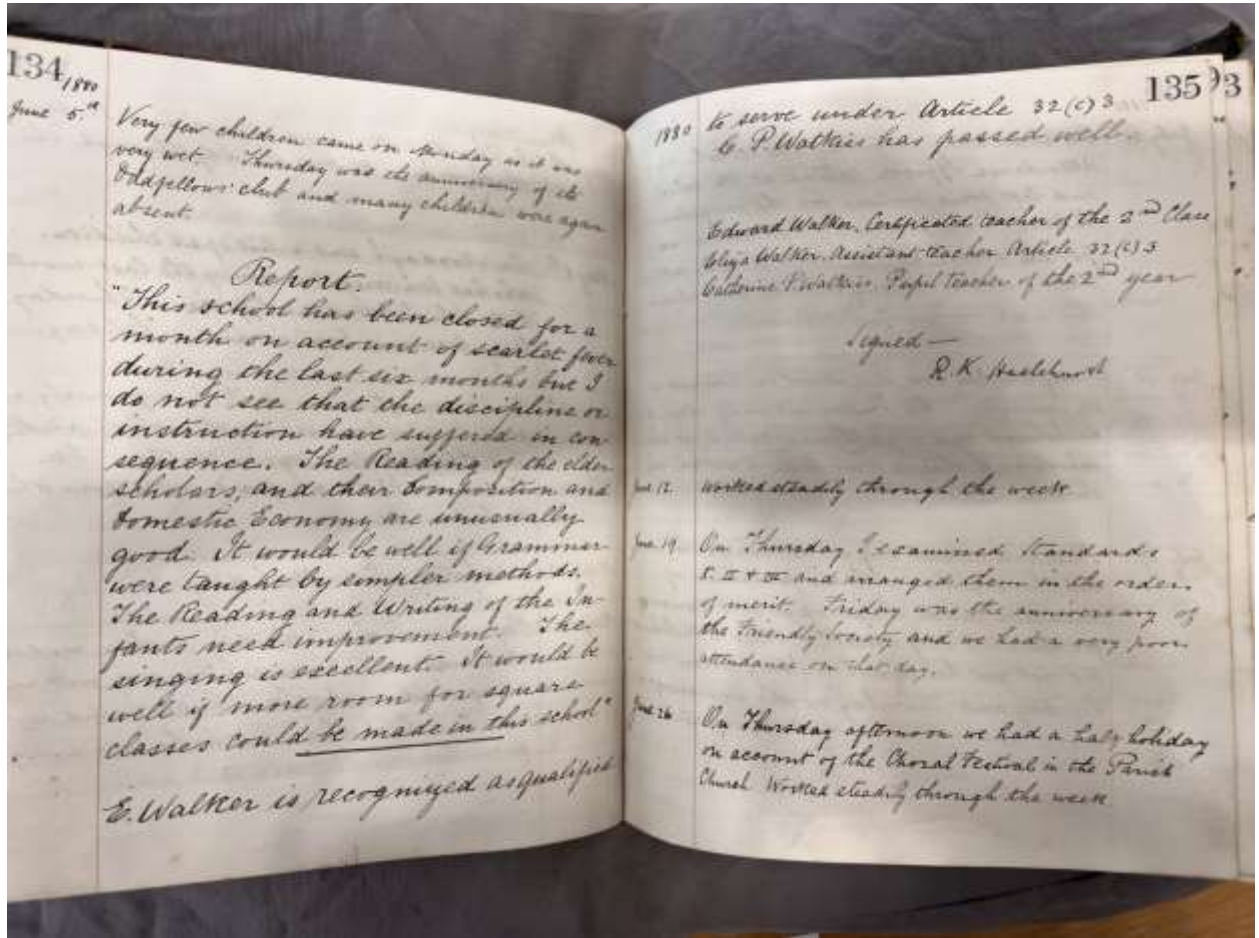
We bought into the Shropshire Music Service last year, which provides the children with a weekly expert and this year we have supplemented this with the introduction of Rock Steady which has been kindly funded by a successful grant from the Parish Council which has enabled *all* of our Pupil Premium children to participate.

Rock Steady provide inclusive, progressive and fun rock and pop band lessons. A professional musician comes into school on a weekly basis and teaches groups of children in a 'band' scenario, this culminates in a termly performance for parents, friends and family.



3. Our new local history unit of work

We have developed a superb local history unit of work with the help of the village community and Shropshire Archives. Willow class have recently visited the archives in Shrewsbury and had the opportunity to read the school's log book from 1880, to view maps of the parish throughout the centuries and to enjoy photographs from our village history.



4. Employment of new caretaker

We have recently been able to employ a new caretaker, who lives in the village, he has been a huge asset to the school. He ensures that the site is open, safe and ready to welcome our staff and children every day. He also keeps the site well maintained and finds cost effective, resourceful solutions to our aging building.

5. Church competitions

Since our return from Covid, we have strengthened our links with St. Michael's Church and the children have visited regularly and participated in church/school competitions. Our first was to celebrate the Jubilee and the children created a piece of art or a poem to commemorate the occasion. Our second was in the lead up to Christmas and the children designed Christmas cards along the theme of 'Christmas in West Felton' and we are now preparing for our Coronation competition which will see the children design a new £5 note and write a letter to King Charles, expressing their hopes for his reign. We have had a selection of judges from various sectors of the village and each competition has been followed by an exhibition in the church for the whole community and an award service which the children have thoroughly enjoyed.

Challenges

1. Negative perceptions surrounding the new build

The Advertiser recently published a report about our new build which highlighted the opposition to the project, raising concerns around the growth of the school and the associated parking issues.

We were shocked and deeply saddened by the report particularly due to the undertones which suggested that the school were being underhand in some way:

"No one we have spoken to believes that this new structure is purely for the existing students' benefit and, in spite of reassurances to the contrary."

"...we believe the school will attempt to expand its number of pupils in the future."

What we attempt to do is to provide an outstanding education and safe haven for our young people. What we attempt to do is enable a thriving village school to stay where it belongs and has stood for almost 200 years. Because the stark reality is *not* that we will receive a new build in West Felton with ample parking but that we will be closed down and our children bused at the age of 4 to larger, potentially less successful town schools.

In terms of parking, we will step up our endeavours to improve the situation. We regularly remind parents to park considerately and The Punch Bowl has kindly re-issued its invitation for parents to park there. We will speak to local farmers, who always used to avoid the 30-minute pinch point at either end of the school day, to see if this is still a possibility. We'd hoped to establish a walking bus but struggled to staff this; we will look into this again to review its feasibility. I also have a meeting with our Safer School Advisor to discuss strategies we can use to reduce the issues.



The hall at the exterior of the site



The improvements at the front of the site

I'd like to re-issue my invitation to any residents who would like a tour of West Felton CofE Primary School so that they can further their understanding of our site, our needs and our actual hopes for the future.

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