

## Committees

The school has different committees/forums that offer the children lots of opportunities to get involved in the life of the school. The committees might change depending on what different working parties we have at any one time. However, we always have two specific committees: The Community and Charities Committee; the Pupil Forums.

The aim of the School Committees is to encourage independent learning by involving the children in aspects of decision making with regard to their lives at school. They choose the charities we support, the initiatives in which we get involved and the activities through which they achieve their aims as well as raising issues for development in the school. We feel that it is extremely important that the children have the opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility towards both the school community and the community beyond the school. Having such responsibilities empowers the children and gives them a sense of ownership. It gives them a voice and a sense of achievement, knowing that they have made a contribution to school life and that their ideas and decisions have had a positive impact on the school and the wider community. Through their work in the committees, the children are educating the whole school about a wide variety of charities, issues affecting the environment and the lives of people in our local community and the international community.

### **Membership of the Committees**

The committees cover Byron House and Senior House. The geography of the school makes it difficult for the committees from both sites to meet all of the time, but they do come together whenever possible.

At Senior House, each committee consists of children from Forms 3-6 and at Byron House children from Forms T2 – Form 2. All the committees are assisted by a member of staff. The committees meet at least twice every half term to consider relevant issues. They decide on their own agendas, influenced by the input and ideas of the rest of the children and staff at school. These come to the attention of the committees through the Forum members who talk to the classes regularly to gather ideas, or whom the other children can approach with suggestions. Outcomes are recorded and passed to the committee for consideration. The committees may decide to recommend a course of action or a project and this recommendation will go to the Senior Management and ultimately the Headmaster for approval.

### **The Community and Charities Committee**

It is really positive, worthwhile and fulfilling to encourage links with the local community. The aim of the Community and Charities Committee is to strengthen these relationships and to forge strong bonds with various different groups in our area. The children are involved in deciding what projects to develop, which may mean hosting an event, supporting people in the community or supporting worthwhile charities.

Each year the school raises a large amount of money for different charities. The children take great delight in this and they are enthusiastic when fundraising. We aim to give the children more responsibility with regard to what charity/ies the school raises money for and what form that fundraising takes. A child may have a particular charity that they have an association with and it is good if they can be given the opportunity to help in some way. Some charitable events are fixed within the school calendar (e.g. the Victorian Fayre, created and run by the 4<sup>th</sup> form, the Byron House Fair in the Summer Term, again created and run largely by the children, or the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Leavers' Fair at the end of the year). The Chapel has a termly charity to which funds raised through Chapel services are donated and the Services in Preparation for Christmas, in particular, raise large sums of money for charity. Examples of a small number of the charities the children have chosen to support are: East Anglian Children's Hospice, SOS Children's Villages, British Legion Poppy appeal, Bridges to Belarus, Teenage Cancer

Trust, Help for Haiti, The Blue Peter Appeal Operation Smile, Dogs for the Disabled, Blue Smile and the Royal National Children's Foundation.

We also run the 'Charity Tree': St John's Growing Money Programme. The idea is that each child in the school is given £1 which they needed to 'grow' over the Easter holidays for our chosen charity. For example, the £1 could be used to buy a sponge and the children charge to wash cars, thus growing the money. This is a way to make the children think about how money works and how we have to work to earn it!

Two parties are held for the elderly from 12 local homes, one at Christmas and one in the Summer. These events are hugely popular attracting over 120 guests. The children learn so much from spending time with older generations.

### **The Pupil Forums**

Pupil Forums run weekly at Byron and Senior House. Issues discussed may be raised by the children or staff may ask for feedback / ideas on specific areas. Children will discuss and develop proposals before presenting them to the appropriate staff member and helping to follow through with implementation. Matters discussed may be related to curriculum, pastoral care or the school environment. Some areas that have changed as a result of Pupil Forum's work include: salad provision in Byron House, resources for playtimes in Senior House, starting an annual Talent Show in Senior House, 'Pets at School' at Byron House and discussion on gender equality and reward systems to feed into the working parties.