

A FOUNDATION SCHOOL

Headteacher:
Mrs A PEARCE
Chair of Governors:
Mrs J NISBET, OBE



WOODEATON MANOR SCHOOL
WOODEATON
OXFORD
OX3 9TS

Telephone: (01865) 558722

E-mail: office.7002@woodeaton.oxon.sch.uk

18th October 2016

Dear Julie

On behalf of the staff but especially the pupils of Woodeaton Manor School, I would like to express my sincere and grateful thanks to all of the Trustees at The Island Trust. You all give of your time, connections and finance to support some of the most vulnerable children in our community. The community that I refer to is very often not your local community but that in a completely different part of the country. For me this makes your commitment to the welfare, emotional well-being and personal development of young people even more admirable.

You may well ask how I know about the work of The Island Trust. Well as the Headteacher of Woodeaton Manor School, a tiny special school for pupils with profound autism, attachment difficulties and anxiety in Oxfordshire, the pupils in my school have been able to enjoy and benefit from annual voyages on one of your vessels.

Our most recent experience was just last week, when ten pupils and two staff (including me) had just the best time sailing on the south coast of Devon. Until last week I had only ever sailed on Pegasus and so the offer of sailing on Tectona was just too good to miss. She is certainly very different to Pegasus and resulted in a very different trip. More space, more sails and more washing-up all contributed to a stunning week. What I have observed over time is that the 'Trust' have a wonderful knack of employing just fabulous crew to oversee the whole experience. Ben, Hannah and Andrew worked so hard – it was round the clock – never any request too much trouble for the crew. Their combined knowledge of sailing, health and safety and pupil engagement was just awesome.

We had a lovely mix of pupils, a few had some sailing experience and some had none. Some pupils had spent a night away from home in the past, some had not. Some had experienced washing up before and some had not. Interestingly none had peeled a potato before. Some had been to the seaside before and some had not. For some of the pupils it was their first ever holiday. We enjoyed long days together in the wind rain and sunshine; working together as a team to sail, care for the boat and for each other. We even learnt some theory about wind, tides and currents.

Above all else, we have learned more about ourselves. To treat every challenge as an opportunity and never think that just because we have a diagnosis doesn't mean that we can't be successful and have fun. The week passed in a flash – the memories will last forever.

My absolute thanks to the crew and Trust, you have changed lives forever.

With all good wishes

Anne .

Anne Pearce

Headteacher

