Bewl 2023 – Day 1: Monday 25th September 2023

I am very sorry to have to report that there has been an escape attempt, which is incredibly embarrassing, especially on our first day. The Senior Leadership Team have put me under quite a bit of pressure to try and hush it up, just like they did with my expenses last year (it was a simple administrative error, the money was only 'resting' in my account). However, I have decided to provide a full and frank account; not because honesty is the best policy – I used to believe that until Boris somehow got to be PM – rather that somebody will have heard the sirens, the helicopters and the landmines; and will dob us in anyway.

We were first alerted to the escape when one of the perimeter trip wires was triggered this morning. The security alert was in the 'Floater Zone', which is where South East Water dispatch raw sewage into the river as soon as it's dark and the prevailing wind stops blowing towards Greg Clark's mansion, in their own upscaled version of Pooh Sticks. Mrs Le Page rushed up the ladder to the watchtower, but the escapee disappeared into the undergrowth before she could get a shot off. So, following school policy, we went to Defcon 3 which meant the immediate dispatch of the Bewl Security Team in the form of 'Jim', whose CV includes being the bouncer at Claremont KS1 discos, and his fearsome sidekick, Fang, the miniature Yorkshire Terrier.

Clearly local knowledge is a boon, although the pungent scent trail also helped, and it wasn't long before the escaped girl was being escorted back through the gap in the barbed wire field, with Fang hanging on grimly to her backside.
'I can't stand it any longer, I have to leave!' she shrieked.
'Come on, it's not that bad,' said I, in my best reassuring voice. It didn't work. 'At least if you're here, you're missing the children's singing practice,' I added.
She paused, and sensing an opportunity, I foolishly added that it was pizza for lunch at school, or ceiling tiles with ketchup as they're known in the staff room. That just set off more hysterics: 'I don't care! Why do I have to stay here?' she wailed.
'Because you're the Deputy Headteacher, and it's your turn.'
----------Later on, in contrast, the children behaved with great dignity and calm when they arrived, unlike their parents who shot off with a variety of feeble excuses like 'urgent conference call' (Wetherspoons), 'working from home' (crate of Stella + packet of tortillas) and 'Zoom call with the board' (trip to Camber with 3 litre box of Liebfraumilch). The whole class were very happy with who I'd selected for their roommates and were pleasingly quick to make their beds, before they came back to the main room for the introduction talk. They listened politely to the rules, such as no

running in the corridors, and then when the meeting ended all ran at top speed back to their rooms.

Lunch went down very well, before we headed out for our first activity – canoeing. There was just the minor hurdle to overcome, of getting the children kitted up in waterproofs and lifejackets. I know that sounds simple, but even the first stage - of the children getting themselves lined up in height order - took so long that a couple of children had actually grown taller and we had to start the whole process again. Canoeing itself was absolutely brilliant, and we were truly blessed with the weather, as we splashed and shrieked our way across the lake in a journey that bore zero resemblance to a straight line. We played a variety of games before heading back, seemingly via Belgium, to the relative sanctuary of the shore with only 23 of the children having 'accidentally fallen in', or so they tried to convince me.
The kit was put away with the usual snail's pace and shambolic organisation that is such a trademark of Year 6 children, but the pace shifted up several gears when I reminded them that dinner would be served once we'd tidied away and cleaned up, including their smelly selves.

We've ended our evening with games, followed by a very happy chat about our favourite parts of the day. I read them a story, they went to bed very happy and as I write they are all fast asleep. We're all really tired and hoping for a quiet night, ready for tomorrow's fun and games.
Goodnight from all here.