



Wednesday 29th April 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope this finds you safe and well. To say the last five weeks has been a time of unprecedented happenings would be an understatement. Everyday life as we know it has changed enormously and everyone has been affected during this time of change, sacrifice and in the worst case, loss. While this is a time of real uncertainty, I am hoping that there are positives to draw upon. Firstly, as a staff team we have felt a real sense of community with some lovely messages from parents and the children's contributions on Google Classroom and Tapestry have been fantastic. We have seen some lovely photos of the children looking happy and enjoying the sunshine and we know that the children are working really hard.

I know that it is far from easy to 'home school' children and while we have heard many success stories about how it's going for some families, we have also had some parents reach out to us for further support and guidance. And so, the first thing to say is to emphasise what was included in my letter of 23rd March:

You as parents have always been and will always be your child's prime educator. We can only encourage you to engage with the learning set, but understand and respect that you may choose to spend this time with your child on alternative activities.

We are filling the Google Classrooms and Tapestry with all kinds of activities and opportunities for learning. We have chosen our jobs as educators and so that's what we want to do. But equally we absolutely appreciate that for some of you there's too much, for others it isn't quite as you might have expected or what you have wanted. I guess we have all seen the chat and memes on social media about distance learning! Please know that there's no rule book for us on this.

So now that we are into our third week of home schooling, I thought it might be helpful to provide a few updates, responding to a few questions we have been asked:

Children working independently on Google Classroom

Our teachers have been working hard to plan work which consolidates previous learning, while still developing skills that the children will definitely benefit from when they do return to school. Currently the following work will be set each week for Years 1 to 6:

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**Pupil Premium Awards 2016
Local Winner**

Primary schools with published KS2 results



- 2 x Spelling lessons (spelling test on Friday)
- 3 x Guided Reading lessons
- 5 x English lessons
- 5 x Maths lessons (arithmetic test on Friday)
- 1 x Science lesson – if appropriate to the Year Group's topic
- 1 x set of optional topic activities per half term
- In addition there will be a selection of other foundation subject activities such as PE, music and art, as well as some activities to support the children's mental health.

While we recognise that for some families this may be too ambitious, if your child is able to complete at least *some* of this work they will be much more prepared when they start back to school. Alternatively you may feel that work that you have sourced from elsewhere is working well and is more beneficial for your child. In any case please don't feel that you have to spend hours each day home schooling. You may even be able to cover more learning in a shorter space of time than we can at school as there isn't a whole class! Children's emotional wellbeing is of priority and they will enjoy other activities such as playing board games, baking, colouring and doing puzzles, for example. Whatever resources you choose, we would recommend that some kind of expectation of your child as a learner is important – even though for some children it may feel like it's the school holidays! Ensuring they keep exercising their 'learning muscle' will ensure they are in the best possible position to approach their return to school positively and well prepared.

Live video teaching

It is important that school leaders keep fully updated on what we should expect of teachers at this time and liaise with colleagues about what schools are providing for children. We have to also bear in mind that many teachers are also trying to home school their own children! With this in mind there are no plans to do Zoom/Skype classes with the children. The guidance for schools is very clear that teachers should not live-stream lessons from their home nor engage in any video calling unless in exceptional circumstances. Online lessons are not desirable for primary children as the teacher-pupil interaction is not easily replicated. Furthermore, Zoom or other such teaching conflicts with safeguarding.

Government resources with online lessons

The other reason we are not providing Zoom/Skype lessons is that the government have organised home learning resources which went live from last Monday (20th April). These are BBC Bitesize (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>) and Oak National Academy (<https://www.thenational.academy/online-classroom>). Furthermore, more and more companies that we use during ordinary term time are beginning to make video lessons so we have begun to evaluate these and make these available on Google Classroom where they are appropriate for our learners.

We do understand that the children will no doubt be missing the social interaction of school; seeing their teacher and of course their friends. We would therefore encourage you to reach out to classmates and organise phonecalls or online interactions. In response to some parents feedback, we are now exploring ways for teachers to create simple video messages for the children in their class – not online teaching or lessons, but just a way to reach out to the children to say hello and perhaps provide some simple guidance and reminders for learning. This is working well for EYFS.

Tapestry for Nursery and Reception

Learning on Tapestry is designed to support our youngest children. Some teaching videos have been used to share expectations or to explain activities. Some videos are also available to help with early writing and reading skills. Teaching videos in this instance best show how we support the children to develop their literacy at school and are made to support parents scaffolding their child's learning as much as to engage your child.

Children are very much enjoying receiving feedback from their key workers. Parents have shared with us that the adults' comments on Tapestry are encouraging their child to persevere at tasks, to promote concentration and support increased levels of motivation.

Whilst BBC Bitesize lessons are for Years 1 to 6, the Oak National Academy videos are excellent for consolidating learning for Reception children.

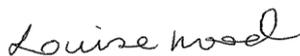
We are all in the same boat

We know that some parents will naturally be anxious about the forthcoming school year. Of course, there will be parts of the curriculum that children will not cover this academic year – that will be the same for everyone. Please be assured that schools will ensure that they address any gaps the children will have in their learning while still developing all the necessary skills and knowledge that should be covered in their next academic year.

As always, do not hesitate to contact us for any support and guidance you may need.

Finally please do pass on a 'hello and well done' from me to your child(ren) – they are missed.

Kind regards,



Mrs Louise Wood

Headteacher.