

Dear Parents

BEYOND COVID 19

I hope this letter finds you all well as we enter the fourth week of the current lockdown.

This has been an Autumn term like no other. Children, staff and parents have been getting used to a newly merged school while working together in a devastating pandemic. I cannot express enough my gratitude to everybody for embracing new ways of working and respecting measures in place to protect our community. With a ray of hope on the horizon in the form of a vaccine we can now look to the future with more confidence. Having completed our assessments of where our children are in their learning and the impact that lockdown and low attendance has had, I wanted to share our forward plans with you.

Pupil progress

We wanted to let children settle back into school and their new year groups, friendships etc before administering the tests which we use to confirm teacher assessments. These tests are all now completed and formed the basis for the report cards sent home recently. Most children have been able to use lockdown and the return to school to maintain or improve their levels but a significant proportion have forgotten a few skills or lost some key pieces of knowledge. This is common across all schools in the country and recognised by all involved in education. It is something we have to respond to without creating blame and anxiety so please do not worry if this applies to your child.

Please see correspondence from Mrs Greenstone (25/11/20) with further detail on how we are assessing and supporting pupil progress.

Home learning



All children now have log on details for home learning apps like numbots and reading eggs and times table rock stars. These programmes are designed to appeal to children and help them practise and consolidate skills. There are some posters on the way about homework apps and expectations around these and we appreciate your support with this. If these become an issue for you and your family please do talk with the class teacher in the first instance. These are not intended to become onerous.

Independent learning diploma



This is different to home learning (homework). Friday afternoons are providing a time for teachers to meet safely in their year groups to review the week and plan for the coming week, prepare resources and ensure equipment is cleaned. This time is allocated to the children as independent learning time. Some of the independent learning we have seen from the children has been astounding and we have had lots of comments about children really enjoying this part of school work. The current task should be submitted by Friday 11th December.



Learning in school



There are some amazing things happening all around the school. From some mature and insightful poems in Y6, to letter and number formation in YR, all year groups are working hard to engage the children in relevant and inspiring learning. We have seen circus props over classroom doors and teacher elves in classrooms to hook children into new English texts. All children are using a range of high quality resources to support their understanding of maths concepts and we have seen lots of 'lightbulb' moments as result. We will be sending out some literature around maths and English and how you can help at home.

Children also enjoy specialist sport and music and a range of rich curriculum areas. Curriculum overviews are available on our website.

Christmas



Although we have to think carefully about Christmas activities this year, our aim is to enjoy the festive season and offer you a taste of Christmas in school. Children will be having a Christmas party in the last week of term as well as a Christmas lunch, although not on the same day!

All classes will be doing some kind of performance, a song or poem, and these will be recorded and made available on our website.

You may notice some Christmas decorations going up soon, a little early but a good opportunity to spread some light and cheer.

Communication



In the absence of workshops, families into school and face to face parent meetings, we are conscious that communication between home and school is a challenge at the moment. We are exploring the possibility of video calls in February in lieu of parent meetings and have earmarked Wednesday 10th February 2021 to close school at 1:30pm to facilitate this. We will confirm this shortly.

We will be starting a regular newsletter again from next Thursday. This will be an E newsletter with helpful links and will come out via parent pay. Our aim is that this fortnightly email will pull together all the news, events and notices into one place. You can also follow us on twitter @cippenhamschool.

We are considering other ways of connecting with parents, for example running some remote or outdoor small workshops to introduce parents to the ways children are learning basic skills. We will keep you up to date with these developments. You are of course welcome to arrange a phone call with your child's teacher via the school office to discuss any concerns. We also welcome good news and positive feedback.

The coronavirus pandemic has affected us all in so many areas but school life continues in rich and inspirational ways and, with an end to lockdown in sight, we are keen to work with you to secure an aspirational future.

Yours Sincerely

NJ WILLIS

