



Dear Parents

Friday 15th January 2021

We were really pleased to be able to welcome everyone back to School on Monday for the new term, much as lockdown has meant a return to remote learning for most. It has been impressive to see how well children have risen to this challenge, with teachers also working hard to deliver a full timetable via Zoom, as well as to eligible children who need to attend school in person. We are a school with many more "critical worker" families than most and appreciate how many with children eligible to attend have nonetheless been able to look after them at home, as per government guidance to do so where possible.



Wellbeing and mental health are more important than ever during lockdown and Monday's Prep assembly was about managing pressure and overcoming obstacles. Mrs Harries' led Pre Prep assembly about gratitude, told through the story of a puppy and a heron, while Mrs Laing led all Bird Families in a meeting about hand washing. This morning was our usual Friday Pre Prep celebration assembly, where we also found out about the next activity for the guide dog puppy we are sponsoring. Mr Coulthart, aided by Edward and Sruthi, led Headmaster's Assembly with an animal theme too. We discovered that his favourite animal is a giraffe and explored two of his treasured guidebooks. Emily performed *Solveig's Song* by Grieg, beautifully on her violin. Our regular music performances will continue and Mrs Koczur will ensure that pupils at home can also sign up and perform remotely.



Little Acorns are our only age group who have been able to return normally and have had a lovely first week back getting to know new faces, talking about winter and playing outside. I joined all of the remote learning groups in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 for a brief welcome back, hearing what everyone has been doing at home and seeing some fantastic examples of Lego models. Many of the children also shared their hard work, including number facts to five and some lovely handwritten accounts of the holidays. Reception were working with number blocks, whilst I saw Year 1 children hard at work in computing. Year 2 were exploring putting words to rhythm in their music lesson. Miss Goddard's dance classes have worked brilliantly on Zoom, once again, and she continues to lead us all in fitness!



Prep children have been doing some fantastic online fitness and skills work in games and PE lessons, focusing particularly on movement and hand-eye coordination that forms an important basis of most sports. Toby shared a brilliant image of his keepy uppy skills with a tennis ball. We saw a fine example of how physical and Zoom participants can learn together in drama, with facial and vocal warm-ups being done brilliantly at home and at school.



There were also some impressive set-ups for home learning with Sophie sharing an excellently organised desk, complete with task chart. Jack, meanwhile, shared a picture of his work station at home, which looked almost presidential! Many of our Year 8 children undertook online assessments for future schools last weekend and it was a pleasure to see so many for our holiday practice session, which took place on Zoom. Thank you also to the Year 7&8 children who are at School for taking part in the mass testing, alongside staff, to minimise the risk of inadvertent transmission amongst those who are at School.



After what I know has been a tiring first week back, I hope children enjoy a restful weekend, with plenty of exercise, play and relaxation.

With my best wishes

*Nick Skington*

