



Dear Parents

Friday 29th January 2021

As we complete our third week of term in lockdown, we discovered this week that schools will remain closed to all pupils for a further two weeks after half term, though with the hope that the remainder of the term from March 8<sup>th</sup> may see pupils returning. All our staff are continuing to give everything to providing the best possible education in these challenging circumstances and to bringing as much togetherness as possible, despite our physical separation. We hope that those who follow us on social media have found this week's mindfulness cards, as part of *National Children's Mental Health Week*, inspiring.



Town Close families have also been contributing magnificently to the community. This morning, Jane Austen's Head of IT collected the laptops, tablets and other devices so kindly donated by many families for use by some disadvantaged children in our City, having been wiped and prepared by our IT team. Head elect, Mrs Turner, described countless examples of pupils not able to engage in learning due to sharing devices or only accessing lessons via one family phone. She will share case studies soon of how our donations have made a difference and a big thank you to everyone who has been so kind. On Monday, Mr Woods shared pictures with Prep pupils from Laurel Lodge, our local care home. A large number responded to our call to write letters to the residents last term, in the absence of their usual visitors, and the joy this correspondence brought on Christmas Day was huge. Many are now planning to write back to us.



Headmaster's assembly this morning was about the future: "I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future." We shared the story of Nathan Evans' viral [TikTok sea shanty](#) and also enjoyed a wonderful live performance by Harriet playing *Papageno* from Mozart's *Magic Flute* and a joyful recorded performance of *ABC* by Martha on her violin. We also shared the results of the House Dinosaur Competition, and some of the many impressive entries. Meanwhile the School Council held its meeting yesterday and Prep tutor groups have enjoyed being able to meet again thanks to Zoom. Pre Prep enjoyed their celebration assembly as usual this morning with Kingfishers this week's token winners. We also saw Miss Linsmith demonstrating juggling ahead of next week's challenge. Mrs Harries told everyone about the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch this weekend before reading the story *The Crow's Tale* about bravery and looking on the inside.



Little Acorns came to visit me outside my study window again this week after their exciting woodland walk and hugging the hugging tree. I also saw lovely collaborative play when I visited them. Reception were talking about the importance of eating healthily, a theme also explored in Bird Families, while Year 1 undertook some celery science! Year 3's science involved eggs, similar to enamel on our teeth, to compare the effects of different foods on teeth, while Year 2 had a jelly tot building challenge. Year 7 pupils used coffee in their art lessons to paint bear pictures. We enjoyed Year 1 dance and I saw Year 8 stretching thoroughly after their exercises. Phoebe the dog enjoyed helping Jacob with the exercise in his PE lesson! Reception learnt about the kookaburra call in music, while Year 2 were exploring rhythm in music. 5H had an enjoyable torchlight reading session, while we continued to hear lots of individuals reading in our library lessons.



Next week is Storytelling Week and we have planned a range of stories for all ages, accessible to all of our children. We welcome authors James Carter and James Campbell who will be leading sessions on Zoom for all pupils, with more details in the bulletin. We also look forward to meeting Reception parents via Zoom for parents' evening.



I wish you all an enjoyable weekend

With best wishes

*Nick Skington*

