

# Ickford News

The end of the second week back is drawing to a close and we have 96% of our children being taught by their class teacher. I am delighted that everyone is happy and healthy but certainly not complacent or nonchalant about what we may have achieved and I can assure you that school is being 'micro-managed' during the current period. I also recognise that the 'phased' timetable is not ideal for households where all adults need to be able to get back to work but, with the restrictions placed on me, it is the fairest and safest that I can offer at this time.

It is important I remind everyone that, even though we have children skipping in and out of school happily, you still need to be incredibly vigilant and disciplined in your attention to the **Terms and Conditions** that were sent to every family.

You may notice the new hand sanitation units at the entrance gates, these have been partially sponsored by Mrs and Mrs Stevens (Anabel Class 1) to whom I am very grateful as they also organised the delivery. These are good additions to what is already a very strong set up of personal hygiene materials in school and a closely monitored cleaning schedule.

## Home Learning

Quite a few parents have been in touch with me about supplementing the classroom work with activities at home so I thought I would share some ideas that may be useful.

In school the children are having a Literacy and a Numeracy session so areas that parents may want to supplement are: PE, Art and Music.

PE is about getting exercise and raising the heart rate for sustained periods of time. It is possible to add a little Numeracy and Science work into this. For example, using a stop watch to time activities, using a tape measure to record distances. Set personal bests and see if they can then be beaten. Standing long jumps, vertical jumps, overhead football/netball throw, cone jumps and lots of single person challenges are ideal for this. Children can also learn how to take a pulse and record it at the start and finish and then find out about and discuss the respiratory system.

Art is everywhere and I am sure that lots of you have some great, creative ideas. If not, there are lots of on-line ideas for Art and sometimes paper and a few crayons suffice.

"Music is the food of love," as Shakespeare wrote so make sure life is full of it!

Every child in school, in all year groups, will benefit from practising their times table so that they can recall multiplication facts quickly. Start with the 2, 5 and 10 but don't be afraid to add others once those are mastered. The children in Key Stage 2 should be practising all of the tables to 10 at least and recognising the inverse division facts as well.

All of the children in Key Stage 1 need to have quick recall of number bonds to 10 and then beyond. For example, 1 + 9, 2 + 8, 3 + 7, etc 1 + 19, 2 + 18 and so on.

Children in both Key Stages need to be able to double and halve numbers quickly.

Learning about currency is also important for every child (and that money does not grow on trees or simply reside in a magic card!). Knowing each coin and the

equivalent values is something that can be practised and learned.

Teaching children the time is very difficult so, if you have some on your hands, this is an area that can be consolidated at home. I recommend starting with the whole hours and then only focussing on minutes past the hour. Avoid 'minutes to' until a child is really secure in their understanding of minutes past.

If you want to delve into topics such as History and Geography, then the school website has the curriculum maps to access. Unfortunately, these are still a work in progress and the 'lock down' has hindered progress. Nevertheless, I am trying to get them finished and some are there to see.

Reading with and to your children is still fundamental and I would always advocate that, if you really want to help your child at school then, having proper conversations is the best thing you can do. Encouraging children to speak properly and in full sentences gives them a real advantage when it comes to developing as a writer. Expose them to language and help them to use it properly to express their thoughts and feelings and to unlock their imaginations.

### **Year 6**

I have to admit to being rather sad for our children in Year 6 who have been hit hard by the current situation. By now they would have had the chance to demonstrate their knowledge in their SATs tests in which, I have no doubt, they would have excelled and be looking forwards to camping in school, the end of year production (Romeo and Juliet), the Summer Music Concert, final Sports Day and of course, Leavers Assembly as well as the myriad of other activities the Year 6 rite of passage entails.

(I am particularly disappointed because I believe we had the team to win the County Netball Finals again this year!)

They are in my mind and I would like to reassure them that Mme Basnett and I are in constant discussion about how we celebrate their successes and the possibility of getting everyone together just as soon as lock down allows.

### **New Children**

You may have seen a number of new faces amongst the children and parents dropping off. Anyone just joining the school has done so at a strange time but need to be welcomed into our community as we would do normally. If you can have a socially distanced introduction or conversation, I am sure it would be appreciated.

### **Thank You**

I want to continue to thank everyone without it sounding simply tokenistic. The support for the school has been immense in recent weeks and this has helped to maintain the positive morale of the staff team who are working for the children whilst organising their own families.

The fact that everyone is dropping off and collecting children with such punctuality has enabled more time in the classroom and ensured a 'stress free' start to each session. The questions sent to me have been relevant and useful and I have been able to give timely advice and guidance as a result and the attention to social distancing and parking outside of school has, I'm sure, reduced anxiety amongst the Ickford residents and made my life easier.

Mr Ronane