

Ickford News

If I am honest, I would like to have got this newsletter out earlier but, in order to include the winners of awards and commendations this week, I have had to wait.

Unfortunately, (I don't say this often) the holiday has come at a bad time and too early. Having only recently returned to school, several of the children are still 'finding their feet' and getting back into the 'swing of things'. We are using time this week to assess progress as we would normally but this snapshot is an important one and I am hoping it will give a realistic picture of the impact of the recent lock down on the children's progress and attainment. Without a clear understanding of where the needs are greatest, it is difficult to direct limited resources to the areas where they will have the greatest impact and we as a staff team, shall be having to work hard for the remainder of this week in order to design an action plan.

We are already aware that the greatest negative impact has been on progress in the Early Years and in the infant children, Key Stage 1. These are formative years and at Ickford, a great deal is done to build a strong foundation in reading, writing and maths that the children can then build upon as they progress through the school. The adverse impact on Year 3 is also quite evident and whilst this is mainly in the area of reading and writing, it is also clear that a small minority have found it difficult to adjust to the expectations of behaviour required to learn at school within a classroom full of children as opposed to being at home with busy parents.

I can't help but sometimes think of the phrase, "*The difficult we do at once, the impossible takes a little longer*" which I know has appeared on numerous decorative signs in the receptions of garages, shops, dry cleaners etc often with the word '*miracles*'

instead of impossible. At times, teaching can feel like this especially when home and school seem to have different agendas and expectations. It is a well-researched and proven fact that, children who are supported in homes that value education and recognise the importance of support, are more successful in terms of attainment and progress. Nonetheless, I am a realist and I have had enough experience in a number of learning environments to know that support at home is not a given and the education of the child can never be reliant on it.

My request at this time is that you try and give some time to helping the children during this holiday particularly with the things for which regular practice makes a big difference. Do not let the reading slip. It is really critical that the children read every day particularly those in the infants and those who are older but not fluent. Practise multiplication tables, doubling and halving numbers, number bonds and quick mental calculations. The more that these are repeated, the deeper they sit in a child's memory where they can be drawn on at will and as necessary.

Usually, I would be advocating a good rest and time away and certainly not proposing homework. I do not agree with the suggestions that schools need to remain open during the Easter and Summer holidays (although I would be happy to discuss dividing the year up differently on a permanent basis if ever the opportunity arose) as I think teachers and their families need consideration. However, I am going to repeat the message that the learning I have mentioned above needs to be continued and monitored rather than left to the whim of the children.

We shall be writing the annual school reports during the holiday and I hope that they will be sent out to parents alongside attainment information not long after we return to school. Each report will contain a summary of

where a child is as well as targets to work towards during the summer term. Every year, I say the same thing to the teachers, "Be honest" because I believe that, whether good or not so good, parents need to understand in order that we can explain their role in supporting the school and ultimately their child.

I am writing this before we have our Celebration Assembly and, although we have not been able to have PE and French this week due to the time constraints, I am delighted that we have awarded several special awards for consistent achievement. These were introduced last year to be awarded to children who are considered to be working above expectations and making such effort that they could be given a Headteacher's award every week. Their badge comes in their House colour and they are awarded 10 house points. We have only given out a small number so far and Isla Thomas is still the youngest recipient. I wonder if one day she may be the first child to receive a second!

Mme Basnett and I spent another afternoon working on the outdoor area with year 6 this week and we are making progress. The raised beds are almost constructed and the fence around the pond is coming along. Hopefully, weather permitting, we can get all of the children out after Easter to begin planting the beds and exploring nature. My greatest hope however, is that we can have a whole term in school, uninterrupted and able to do things we could in the past. I have had a vaccine (age!) and Mme Basnett has (luck) but I am still concerned that most of our teachers still have a long wait. Please be vigilant and continue to follow the guidelines so that we can open school in good health after Easter.

Mr Ronane

Ickford News from the office

This Week's Celebration Assembly Hall of Fame:



Music Award:

William Wallace

Mia Makris

Sophie Winspear

Phoebe Boardman

Pippa Harding

PE Award:

Isabella Saunders

Deutsch Award:

Jake Fletton

Headteachers Award:

Amelia Vorotyntsova

Jasper Fletton

Amelia Hargreaves

Nathaniel Wakelin

Georgina Palmer

Consistent Achievement Award:

Mia Makris

Emily-Jay Friday

Chloe Makris

Pippa Harding

Zara Smith

Ryan Roberts