



United Schools Federation (USF) St. Mary's CofE Primary School

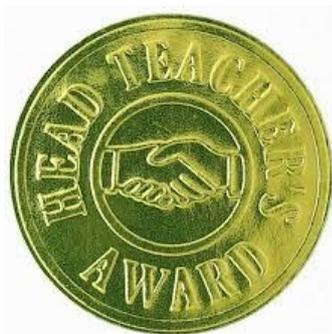


Friday 29th January 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

Here we are at the end of January and I thought I would write to you to thank you all. This is a very difficult time for everyone and when the news every day is filled with statistics that don't particularly make good reading, along with the continuing uncertainty that we are all living in at the moment, plus the gloom of the current weather, it's important to occasionally stop and think about the 'good stuff'. So here's some good stuff for you.

Home Schooling –



We can only commend every single person for this. It is not easy! Teaching children is something that takes years of work and for those of us who trained for this role, we are still learning better ways to do things every year. I firmly believe that at the point of retirement, I will still be thinking of things that I could do to become a better teacher.

Every child working at home is working in different circumstances. Maybe there's different equipment available. Maybe there are siblings in different year groups that all need help at the same time. Maybe the way the teacher has shown it, isn't the way '*I remember learning it when I was at school*'... Whatever your situation, please remember that we are on your side and we fully appreciate the effort that is going into every activity that you do at home. We love seeing the work that is being done and we love seeing the children joining in for their morning register and afternoon sessions. All these things make a difference.

Government guidance asks schools to provide 4 hours per day for KS2 children and 3 hours per day for KS1. We fully appreciate that there is plenty of work being provided and we think it's great that everyone is doing as much as they can but please remember to find the balance that works at your house. This includes the time allocated for classwork and the time to do some physical activity and 'chill' activities to support positive mental health too.

I have personally enjoyed seeing everyone for our Friday assembly and I really hope that the children have enjoyed the chance to be together as a whole school too.

So well done to all of our new home-schooling staff. You can have one of my head teacher's stickers (above). Print it out and cut out as many as you need and wear them with pride.

Children's Mental Health Week –

As I have mentioned before, we think a lot about mental health and it is something that keeps coming up in the news. Next week there will be a focus on mental health as part of 'Children's Mental Health Week'. The theme for the week is 'EXPRESS YOURSELF'. Every day the teachers will post a new



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suggestion or activity to try and it would be excellent for you to take part too. Looking after our mental health is a vital part of looking after our complete self.

The staff at school –

If we're looking to celebrate some 'good stuff' then I certainly don't have to look much further than all of the staff at school. Every single one of them is working incredibly hard and I cannot thank them enough for their commitment. Whilst I am asking them to support and look after the children in their classes, it is important for me to remember to make sure that they also get the support and care that everyone deserves at this time. All of them have different challenges in their own lives to deal with and take it from me, even teachers find home schooling a challenge, and yet they all give more than 100% with a smile on their face which demonstrates their true commitment. When there are less children in school, as we have at the moment, it doesn't make it an easier job. A lot of thought goes into the planning and the delivery of lessons. Whereas you would normally collect in the work at the end of a lesson and be able to mark it all together as one set of books for example, teachers are now having work submitted at all different times of the day and so the balance of marking and recording and planning and teaching is more challenging than when the classroom is full. But they are all being amazing. They are all helping each other. All of the support staff are going above and beyond and I can say that this is a really strong team! Your messages of support and appreciation also go a long way so thank you for those too!

The children –

The children are amazing! When I look around the school, I see our oldest children in KS2 getting on with it. This is their current 'normal' and children are brilliant at adapting. Then I look at the children in KS1 and I see a group of children who are going to have memories of the start of their school journey, being dominated by home schooling, masks, one-way systems, handwashing and bubbles. A school needs all of the children though and we all look forward to the day when everyone is back and we can all be together in our lovely school.

And finally.....

As an optimist, I also like to think positively about the weather. It is the Spring Term which hopefully means we will start to see the move away from the dark and damp days that we have at the moment. We look forward to seeing more of the sunshine. So for now....if you're missing it.....here it is!



Stay Safe,

Adrian Clements
Head of School



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