

Governing Links

Our Lady Governor's Newsletter Summer 2020

Over the last three months we have all needed to embrace change, particularly in the field of education. From being used to having time to plan ahead for class based learning the entire school has had to adapt to new challenges. The staff have tackled the difficult subject of how to provide home based learning that caters for the range of different abilities in each class as well as providing in school childcare and support for our keyworker children. With the local authority re-prioritising support services the staff have also provided additional help to our most vulnerable pupils and their families who may no longer have the support usually available to them. Now with the government requiring certain year groups to return to school we have again collectively to rise to the challenge and provide the best we can for all our pupils within the restrictions imposed on us. The only certainty is that there will be more challenges as we turn our attention to planning for the next academic year.

Throughout all this, each member of staff has had their own individual challenges – looking after their own children, or parents, or both, and/or dealing with their own health. In this special edition of our newsletter, we would like to share some of the staff's experiences of lockdown and their messages to the wider school community. The Governing Body of Our Lady School is very proud and appreciative of all who have supported our school during this time, and continues to support our success. We look forward to the time when we are all physically back together in school.

Miss Davis



During lockdown I have been busy working and have been doing lots of virtual meetings. I have also been in school, looking after twitter and planning year 6's home learning. It's been really busy! I have been exercising a lot, I have made my own gym in my garden! I have also been baking, reading with my cats and Face Timing my friends and family every day! We have also celebrated my fiancé's birthday in lockdown which was very different to usual and I attended another friends "virtual birthday!" Also the weather has been amazing so being able to be outside in the garden and have lots of BBQ's has been great!

The most difficult thing about lockdown is not being able to see my family- it is really hard! It has shown me how lucky we are to have the technology to speak and see each other still. I also had to postpone my wedding dress shopping because it wasn't safe to go. I miss seeing the OLS children and parents everyday. I cannot wait until we can safely all be back at school but I am so proud of how everyone has adapted to their home learning and love seeing your photos and work come in via email and twitter!

Other than thinking of fun and exciting things to keep the reception children busy at home, I've been playing teacher to my 2 girls at home. Connie (5) has been enjoying planting in the garden, junk modelling and performing her songs which she has started writing! Ella (11) has been trying to join in with Connie's learning because there are only so many SAT's paper anyone can do! The Snowballs have also been busy packing boxes as we are moving house at the end of May.....I've been tempted to hide away in one of the boxes a few times!! The hardest thing has been missing my friends and family! My best friend had a baby a few weeks ago and I'm yet to have a cuddle!

For Reception - I miss you all very much. It has now been 63 days since I saw you all which is a very long time (especially for your mummies and Daddies). Each and everyone of you has been working so hard at home with your grown ups and it's great seeing the pictures of you enjoying your home learning. I know these times have been hard for many of us and everyone is missing school and their friends but I want you all to know, no matter when we all come back together; June, July, September.... we will always be a class, a family that work together, play together and smile together. I hope you know... I'm proud of you, I miss you

Mrs Snowball



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Mr Gribben



During lockdown I've been trying my best to improve my health. I've been following Joe Wicks' workouts each morning and doing one run per day. I've also been trying to eat healthier. My motto has been "healthy body plus healthy mind, makes a healthy human."

What cheers me up is the thinking that we may have a group of children who are learning skills that they otherwise wouldn't learn until a later stage. I feel as a result of this lockdown, children will be more empathetic, more resilient and more independent.

I've found not being able to see my family difficult. I've haven't seen anyone in my family since Christmas, which is the longest I've ever spent which seeing everyone. I had flights booked to go home over Easter which were then cancelled. I call everyone regularly, but it's just not the same. I would just like to say how proud I am of everyone, children, parents, key workers and carers, everyone is playing their part. It's in the most difficult times that we learn most about ourselves, and as a community, we have done ourselves proud. There is a sense of togetherness, which I hope continues long after this difficult period is over.

During lockdown I have been busy developing remote learning resources packs, researching activities for art, having online training and looking for new ways to keep our class motivated and engaged.

I have been cheered up by looking at all the work emailed in and my calls with the children and their parents, as well as clapping for the NHS each week. I also enjoyed the water challenge!

When I look back I will remember the motivation of the children and how they have worked to improve, as well as the practicalities, such as the inability to travel. It has been hard to be able to visit my family in France.

We are very proud of what the Y4 children have achieved and learnt with the support of their parents, a huge thank you, keep it up and hopefully I will see you very soon.

Mrs Luquet-Gerrard



Miss McNabola



During the day I have been going on long walks with my dog, enjoying the sunshine that we have been having recently. In the evenings I have been using the time to catch up on some good books! I have loved seeing pictures of home learning and seeing the 'Lettuce Watch' that was done by some of the children in year 2. The toilet roll challenge was fantastic as well!

I have found the most difficult thing for me is not seeing my lovely class everyday and not being able to teach them face to face. I hope they all keep smiling and working hard! They are all doing such an amazing job and I can't wait to see them again.

During lockdown I have been trying to keep my Y11 daughter motivated as her GCSEs have been cancelled as well as over seeing school work for my 14 year old and keeping him off his gadgets.

I have also been caring for my mother and updating the school website. I also had to keep an eye on the kitchen when the children attempt to cook and turning off the smoke alarm! Both my son and daughter have had birthdays in lockdown which was challenging. Looking back at this time I will remember staying at my mother's house, taking long family dog walks and family time.

I am missing teaching all the computing lessons, so am looking forward to getting back to school to continue that.

Mrs Kelly



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Mrs Kinsella



At through this time I have missed all the children so much. I miss their smiling faces, hearing their news and seeing them in class, on the playground and in the sporting clubs. I am really looking forward to when they are all back.

It has been hard worrying about my mum who is isolating on her own in Somerset and not knowing when we will see each other again.

I have been trying to keep busy with work or pleasure. I'm getting lots of reading and gardening done and go for a daily walk or run. I have really improved my running and spending time with my family who are working from home

Miss Shannon



I have been keeping myself busy during lockdown, doing quizzes, jigsaws, watching wildlife webcams and walking. It has cheered me up to watch the daily talks from Shepreth wildlife Park while it's closed - I've learned so much from them.

I've missed not being able to see my sister. I've missed seeing my colleagues in the flesh as opposed to our Zoom sessions and of course the children.

We need to remember we will come through this. Let's keep caring for each other.

Take care, stay safe, stay alert.

Mrs Marinho



I have spent some time organising my work so that I can do it from home as well as keeping in touch with family and friends. So many Zoom sessions/ WhatsApp videos etc. I have been reading, exercising, and discovering different ways to walk around Hitchin to get an hour of exercise time. I have been cheered up by seeing my plants grow in the garden, the great weather, singing and dancing while cooking, talking to friends and family, and reading. Like many others it has been difficult for me not being able to have friends and family over, and not being able to hug people.

To the children I would like to say you are all wonderful and I miss spending my days with you! I know this situation is hard but .. how about we treat it as an adventure, an obstacle we all need to face? Just keep putting your best foot forward and remember – It will all be good at the end and if it is not good yet that only means it is not the end yet. We are stronger than we think and capable of amazing things. All we need is a little faith and supportive people around us. So if you need a helping hand we are just an email/ phone call away and we are always happy to help !!!

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Mrs Nicholson



At school I have been busier than ever in my new role as 'virtual' Head. Many, many meetings via Zoom (I'm a bit sick of looking at myself!) and supporting staff, pupils and parents from a distance with different 'new' challenges every day. At home I've enjoyed growing lots in my garden, going for walks with Mr Nicholson and reading some new books. I am just about to start 'The Beekeeper of Aleppo'.

It has been difficult to miss my friends and family but when I look back at this I will remember all the videos, messages and tweets from the children, and I also think Captain Tom is fab!

My message to the children and parents would be that we miss the children lots, and parents - you have done an amazing job and taught your children much more than you'll know 🙌



During lockdown I have been busy, along with my family; Michael, Hannah, Imogen and William. We have been home schooling, walking, working and also with my running, cycling and more recently open water swimming!

Looking back I will remember our celebrations for VE day. I organised a socially distanced party on our close. It was a super afternoon! It has been difficult not seeing friends and giving them a hug or meeting up for a coffee.

I had a smile when I was nominated for a Hitchin Heroine award from the lovely Art Nest in Hitchin to say thank you for looking out for and shopping for my neighbours, writing to those in isolation and phoning them. I received a gorgeous goody bag, it was so exciting!

For all the children, and parents, remember to keep going, take each day at a time and try and do something kind each day.

Mrs Litterick



Mrs Elliot



I have been keeping occupied by home schooling my son, reading, dog walking and eating!! Thinking about what has cheered me up or what I will remember, it's the little things...cut flowers in a vase on the dining table, a hot cup of tea or coffee 😊, time in the sunshine with my family and Zoom! I will remember how communities came together to support each other. How people smiled and called out 'hello' on the street. Kindness 😊

What has been difficult is the isolation from friends and family and the confines of home with family members when you just crave quiet...

I would like to tell the children, and parents, that I am so proud of how they have all adapted to the changes that Lockdown has thrust upon them. I have loved seeing their photographs and videos and look forward to seeing them in person very soon.

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The school staff and governing body have been very appreciative of all the kind messages sent in over the last couple of months, and we wanted to share some of the most recent comments with a wider audience. We genuinely appreciate the support offered and it just shows the lovely school community we have.

"Many thanks for the regular correspondence regarding the phased return to schools. We understand how difficult all of this is for schools to plan and we would like to offer our support and gratitude for everything that you and your team of teachers and support staff have been doing to keep our children learning through this crisis. Wishing you and your team all the best at this challenging time."

"I just wanted to thank you for keeping in touch with us so well about the changes. I'm sorry for you that the most recent guidance has come after you have already put in an incredible amount of work into planning.....I also wanted to pass on my thanks to the teachers for their phone calls with us and the children. They have been incredibly helpful and, from what I have heard from friends elsewhere, it is by no means standard to do this."

"I can only imagine how difficult it is for schools to plan for the return date of 1 June. As you say, the only certainty is uncertainty, and how can you plan against that? We hugely respect the detailed thinking you and your management team are doing to ensure that children can return to a safe environment. "

"I'm mainly dropping a note to thank you for your support for our children and your continuing (near impossible it seems) efforts to apply Government guidance to the reopening of the school. Many thanks for all that you are doing for our children"

"You and your staff are doing a stellar job and it's very much appreciated..... Thank you again for the excellent communication and support you are all offering to us. "

