

St Mary & St John CE Primary School

Headteacher: Elizabeth Burton



Newsletter 18: 23.03.21

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing on this significant day, a year on from our first lockdown. I felt very emotional coming to school this morning. We talked at our Leadership Team meeting yesterday about the last year and we were struck by just how many shifts we had made, at often short notice. We considered the positives of our school community in adapting to a different world, whilst accepting the enormous losses of the year, the grief, the strain, the sheer unpredictability. Today is significant, a day of reflection, but it will take much longer to absorb our collective experiences. And we are still in a national lockdown. The slow easing of restrictions should give hope and relief over the coming months, along with the massive and successful vaccination roll out. We're pleased that a significant number of us have had our first jab, second coming shortly.

On a positive note, we have been truly delighted to welcome all the children back five days a week with fantastic attendance, lots of noise, enthusiasm and laughter.

There is a lot of chat about a recovery curriculum and catch up. The first is more about emotional support and the latter about academic catch up. Our approach is to use this term of three and a half weeks to settle the children back into a routine with their class teachers, use our outside space, keep lessons of manageable length and have some fun! We are already identifying children who need emotional and/or academic support. We will take each child's needs as they emerge. We have talked about lockdown experiences in class and assemblies. They differ enormously so is too blunt to think of a 'recovery curriculum' for everyone. As much as I can generalise, children's adaptability is humbling and it is refreshing to observe how well they have slipped into a school routine again, albeit in class bubbles.

We had some fun in the first week back with a postponed World Book Day on Thursday 11 March, full of book character costumes, both adults and children, and lots of book related activities. I am the world's worst at dressing up but the Year 1 team have a range of costumes enabling Chris Chamier-Williams and me to be dragons for the day! Not sure that's the right message for a Headteacher and Deputy!

The governors have put together a very impressive pack for the headteacher appointment which is now live on job sites and our website. It celebrates our wonderful school community in the heart of East Oxford, whilst being aspirational for our school's future. It makes me very grateful that the governors chose me 10 years ago. I fully intend to enjoy every day of the Summer Term and I hope we will be able to get together as a whole school on lots of occasions as the term progresses.

Term will finish on **Wednesday 31 March** at the usual time of either 3.10 or 3.20 and the Summer Term starts on **Monday 19 April**.



Best wishes,
Liz Burton