



Thomas Russell Infants' School

'Our children blossom through nurture and challenge'

Newsletter number 34 - 12 June 2020

School update

We wanted to write to you today after the government announcements made on Tuesday evening. At the time of writing, we have no further information other than what was in the media and the parliamentary debate. The Secretary of State's statement to the House confirmed that primary schools will not welcome all primary children back for a full month before the summer but confirmed that he would like to see schools with capacity bring back more children before summer, if they are able to.



We currently have 20 Year 1 and 2 key worker children attending school and 30 Early Years children split into five bubbles or groups. Working within the current guidelines we have - children and staff keeping at a distance—we have very little room for accepting further children, as ten children in a classroom at this distance is the maximum our classrooms will take. The possibility of forming a sixth bubble is not currently an option whilst we have staff shielding, as we are unable to staff a further bubble. What we can say though is that we are constantly reviewing our numbers and our capacity and if our circumstances or the guidance change (for example the distancing rules are relaxed) then our priority is to welcome back into school as many pupils as we are able and as soon as we are able.

We are also being asked what September will look like and unfortunately we cannot answer this question at this point. We are aware that the Government is currently being lobbied on a daily basis urging the Department for Education to publish early plans for September so that we can a) plan and b) communicate effectively with you. We have our own thoughts and preferences but could spend hours preparing our plans to then be told we cannot implement them in the way we would like. We will let you know of any developments as soon as we hear anything!

Weekly challenge!

Thank you to everyone who responded to the competition this week. Please see the children's newsletter for pictures and more information on next week's challenge. The running totals so far are Swans 15, Penguins 15, Robins 11 and Owls just in the lead with 18!

Picture News e-resource 15th-21st June - Managing Money

Please see the attachments to the Newsletter for some nice children's activities on Managing money.

Teaching staff for September

Our staffing will look a little bit different in school from September as we welcome back Mrs Smith from maternity leave and we sadly say goodbye to Mrs Davis-Wort, who has been a real asset to our Early Years and whole school team over the last year. Mrs Davis-Wort was with us on a temporary contract and we wish her the very best of luck in her new school for September.

Reception:	Mrs Mears (RM)	Miss Pearson (RP)
Year 1:	Miss Fairley	Miss Rowley and Mrs Smith
Year 2:	Mrs Moore	Mrs Walker

We will inform you of where our support staff will be working at a later date and you will receive information about which class your child will be in later this term.

Home/school learning

Well, there was definitely some speculation back in March when schools first closed as to the length of time our children would be at home but we don't think many truly thought it would be for this long. Many of us in school are parents ourselves, with children of varying ages and we know exactly what the reality is like. Parents and staff alike are each having their own struggles, whether this is because you aren't able to work and are completely fed up with the daily grind or whether it is because you are working and trying to juggle work and children and there just aren't enough minutes—let alone hours - in the day. Guilt and failure seem to be common feelings on a regular basis but we need to recognise that we are all doing our best in the circumstances that have befallen us. None of us are miracle workers!

We hope that the Seesaw app is going some way to helping parents and children engage with the learning we are providing but equally we recognise that this will be on a very individual basis and not all children will always be accessing this. Teachers are working hard to address any concerns parents have with the learning as and when these are raised and we are finding that for many it has really helped to personalise the learning and the communication.

We have had a few requests about the provision of online lessons but unfortunately it is a real juggling act for our staff, as all available staff are teaching all day in school and supporting our two teachers shielding at home with the home school learning. This in itself is quite a task, which makes online lessons impossible at this time.

We have also had some feedback around the format and general ease of use of Seesaw (or sometimes not so easy) which we will be feeding back to the company to see if any advice can be given to us on this.

Thank you to all of those children who joined our first Zoom meetings this week - we had a really fantastic turn out and it was lovely to see and hear how everyone is and for everyone to have the chance to see the rest of the class. Please do get the dates of these on your calendars so that the children have the opportunity to join us next time.



Stars of the Week



RR—Joe Rollins for showing resilience and working hard in all areas.

RM—Sophie Ward for beautiful letter and number formation at home.

1P—Henry Chantler for super counting in 2s, 5s and 10s.

1F— Oliver Baird for his super questions to Evil Pea.

2M—Mollie Crisp for excellent home learning as seen on Seesaw!

2W—Harry Gwynn for his creative and imaginative design for a new dragon machine.



Children's Newsletter

Please note the children's newsletter will now be sent out fortnightly so the next one will be sent next Friday.

Wishing you all an enjoyable weekend.

Best wishes

Mrs S Burton and Mrs L Farmer