

19 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you and your loved ones remain safe and healthy. As we face the difficult challenge of responding to COVID-19 our thoughts go out to those affected by this event and we send heartfelt thanks to the healthcare workers, local communities and governments around the world working to contain this unprecedented situation. The most important thing, I am sure I will keep repeating is that we stay positive and supportive as a community.

This week we welcomed five new Year 6 bubbles as well as a new keyworker bubble. Our children have certainly grown and it was so lovely to see them back! I suspect that they are quite tired after adapting to routines here, old and new...they all however coped so well and we are proud of them and all of our children, whether here or at home.

Thank you for being on time for bubble starts and dismissal; it really helps! Please do not enter beyond the school car park gates; on arrival, please telephone the Office.

Next week, our focus is 'Keeping Healthy and Active' and we would encourage everyone to have fun with this at home as well as at school. Think about making a new smoothie recipe or some healthy fruit kebabs; try some family races or go for a cycle ride! How many trampoline bounces can you do? At school, the children will also be thinking about this so we would suggest that they come in their full PE Kit and cap for next week only. They will have the chance to hone their long and high jump skills amongst other fun activities. As the forecast is good, please also consider applying sunscreen before arrival.

The senior leadership team are very aware that the year has not gone to plan whether children have returned or not. We are exploring what transition could look like and how to ensure all children are supported on their return to school in September. We are also reflecting on our curriculum and this idea of 'recovery' with a focus on our children's social and emotional well-being as well as looking at their educational next steps. I came across the article below, which resonated with me and I felt may be of interest to you.

It never rains...

As you know it rained heavily last Friday...and several times since then! Friday afternoon, whilst beavering quietly away in my office, I suddenly became aware of the increasing deluge...then realised that the rain was actually inside the building! Several of us rushed to the hall just in time to witness the rain gushing in before the ceiling collapsed in one area ... swiftly followed by even more water! Thankfully, the falling tiles missed Mrs Bucci. Now we have to sort out the mess as we are currently using the hall for storage. What can I say?

On a positive note, thank you so much from Team CPS to Willow Class for the vouchers for Nathan's Bakery - a cuppa and cake is always welcome! Staff are so busy juggling their Google Classroom alongside teaching their Bubbles as well as their own families - this was a thoughtful surprise.

As I mentioned last week, our positivity and values are shining through across the whole community so a Jammie Dodger assembly was definitely required...thank you and well done to everyone who joined in at home and it was lovely to see photos of some of you...Jammie Dodgers at the ready!

Thank you also for your comments and interest in assemblies; I have enclosed a handy parents guide to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support; it is very much appreciated!

INSET Day: Remains as 10th July: school will be closed to **all** children.

Kind Regards,

Mrs Sandra Cunningham

Head Teacher

The myth of 'catching up' after Covid-19

by Rebecca Brooks AUK Education Policy Advisor 12th June, 2020

When I was in secondary school, my parents requested permission to remove me from school during term time for a week to go on a holiday of a lifetime. The school reluctantly agreed, on the condition that I would work hard to 'catch up' the work that I missed.

I duly complied. I hadn't missed too much work in that final week of the term and, refreshed from our fabulous holiday, I was able to catch up what I had missed very quickly.

The Covid-19 conversation in education is rapidly moving on to what will happen after the majority of children are able to return to their settings, and whether a programme of 'catch up' is needed to address 'missed learning'.

But does the language and focus around this conversation miss the mark? I was able to 'catch up' on 'missed learning' after my holiday, but our children have not spent the last few months on an extended holiday. They have not been relaxing on beaches, or exploring exotic cultures, or engaging in a wealth of well-planned holiday activities. They will not return to school well-rested after a lovely break, ready to 'catch up'.

'Missed learning', too, is a problematic concept. What we really mean by this term is a concern that children will not have made progress through a specific curriculum, towards specific attainment targets and, ultimately towards a set of terminal exams, the results of which could determine their futures.

As a society, we have decided that such learning is important, but we cannot assume that children have not been learning during lockdown, even if that learning does not correspond to the usual curriculum. Children are always learning.

Many will have vigorously pursued their own interests, engaged in life skills activities like never before, and undertaken a fast track programme of social and emotional development as they navigate family relationships in a uniquely intense setting where issues must be resolved because there is no option to escape them. Prolonged periods of boredom can be a huge incentive to explore new things and be more creative.

While accessing the remote curriculum has been difficult or impossible for some, many respondents to Adoption UK's survey on home learning commented that their children had made remarkable progress, advancing reading levels, improving their speech and language, and growing in confidence and self esteem as they worked at their own pace, without the pressure cooker of comparison with their peers and fear of public failure.

Sadly, we also know that some children across the nation will have learned devastating lessons. They may have learned a deeper understanding of what it means to live in poverty, or encountered this for the first time as parents and carers have lost jobs to the pandemic. They may have learned the crushing grief of bereavement. They may have learned to hide, to become invisible, to protect themselves from adults who are not safe, without the respite that school can provide.

What children need – in fact what society needs – after the pandemic is not ‘catch up’. It is ‘recovery’.

‘Catch up’ implies a narrow emphasis on curriculum goals with a focus on getting all children to the same end point as quickly as possible. ‘Recovery’ acknowledges that the impact of this crisis has been far wider than ‘missed learning’ and that we will need to begin where children are, rather than focus on where we would like them to be, and how to get them all to that same point as quickly as possible.

Some will return to education having made surprising progress, not only in learning of all kinds, but also in terms of their mental health and wellbeing, which are foundational to learning success. Others may have maintained their learning to a degree, but be carrying an emotional burden which will guarantee that they buckle under the pressure of ‘catch up’ programmes. Still others will arrive on shaky ground in all areas, having endured a period of their lives where survival was the only attainable goal.

There is no possibility of a regime of ‘catch up’ that will restore all children to their curriculum targets in a few weeks. We cannot rely on extra tuition and summer classes and hope to continue on after that as if Covid-19 never happened. To imagine that we can not only ignore the impact of Covid-19, but also the inequalities that already existed in education and have, if anything, been exacerbated in recent months.

Recovery is not a one-size-fits-all process that can be achieved with a quick burst of energetic activity. It will probably be years before our society, our economy and our children come out from under the shadow of this crisis, if ever, and we must be willing to enter into a long period of recovery that recognises not only where we want to end up, but where we really are right now.

Celebrating Success!



A huge well done to Cecille (Sycamore) for getting her Advanced Student Honours Certificate in Kumon maths.