

Here we are, with just three days left of this school year, and what a year it has turned out to be! Back in January when I talked to staff, governors, children and wrote to you parents about my decision to finish my teaching career in July, I had no inkling of what was to follow! The past four months have demanded a different direction for my leadership but has certainly meant I have maintained my commitment and passion for the two schools in a similar way to how I have always tried to lead.

So...., these are the last three days of my teaching career which spans forty three years! Where has the time gone? I can only say that I feel truly blessed to have lived out my childhood dream to become a headteacher which I have held since my first ever day at school. Despite the inevitable wave of emotion I feel as I write my final newsletter to you it is important that I don't forget to pass on the important day to day messages for a final time so here goes:-.

I make no apology for speaking again as a wider community leader, which is part of the role of Executive Headteacher when I say: Don't forget that whilst the Covid 19 virus may be less evident at the moment, because of the relative success of lockdown, it nevertheless remains a deadly, very infectious, menace for which there remains no definite cure that doctors can provide. Please, please, therefore maintain social distancing as far as possible, wash hands very regularly and wear a face mask in shops and on public transport. The Coronavirus has caused too much misery and has disrupted our children's education so let's put a stop to it by strictly following the safety guidance.

Last week saw a number of children return to school for the first time since March as they attended their transition sessions. We hope that all those learning from home enjoyed the **Virtual Sports Day** - the results have been totalled up and the winning house is Betteshanger Blues. Thank you to all those who sent in photos and results of the various activities.

Next week we hope even more of our **Year 6** children will be in school on Tuesday for the leavers assembly as we celebrate all their achievements through their time at Eythorne Elvington. The assembly takes place outside on the field at 9am on Tuesday 21st July and we ask all those attending to adhere to the social distancing measures. Although the final events for Y6 have been much more low key than normal I would just like to say what a great Y6 they have been and how much they have contributed to the school. All of them deserve great credit and they leave with our prayers for a happy, fulfilling, future as they take the next step on their educational journey. I know they will not forget the values the school has taught them.

I also have important Information for **Year 5** parents. The children who have been entered for the **Kent Test** will be taking the test in October which is a month later than normal. You will be able to name 6 schools on your Secondary Common Application Form (SCAF), which means you can name both more selective schools and non-selective schools than in the past. There will be meetings at both Sibertswold and Eythorne/Elvington in September for all Year 5 parents, to explain the procedure for entry to all types of secondary schools. These meetings will therefore apply to **all Y5** parents, both for those whose children are not taking the Kent Test as well as for those parents whose children will be taking it. I had a phone meeting with all Year 5 parents, at both schools, who are considering a selective school and strongly advise these parents to continue giving their children short practice examples of the tests and to pay particular attention to timings and working at speed. These factors are very important as they are the aspects that can negatively affect the result of the tests when the children do not work quickly enough through the questions.

I am pleased to report that at last week's Full Governing Body meeting held via Zoom, the governors approved the detailed plans that the Leadership team of both schools have drawn up for a full and safe return in September. The Information for school in September will therefore be sent out by email tomorrow however I can confirm that **school will reopen for pupils on Wednesday 2 September**.

I dedicate the the poem below to our **Year 6** children at both schools who will be leaving us on Wednesday. As stated earlier, I wish them all the very best as they move on to their Secondary Schools in September and am so sorry that they could not have the opportunities to experience the usual events that our Leavers enjoy so much. I hope they will make good memories during these final coming three days and that they will all take with them to secondary school the most important lessons we have tried to teach them about being a good friend and trying to share happiness where ever they go.

Let no one steal your dreams

Let no one steal your dreams,
Let no one tear apart
The burning ambition
That fires the drive in your heart.

Let no one steal your dreams,
Let no one tell you that you can't
Let no one hold you back
Let no one tell you that you won't.

Set your sights and keep them fixed,
Set your sights on high
Let no one steal your dreams
Your only limit is the sky.

Let no one steal your dreams,
Follow your heart, Follow your soul.
For only when you follow them
Will you be truly whole.

Below is the final prayer of the term which you may wish to share with your children. Stay safe and have a great holiday which will hopefully be filled with sunshine and joyful moments.

Dear Father God,
Stand beside us:
If we are afraid, calm us,
If we are tired help us to rest,
If we are fearful, inspire us to hope.
Breathe your Spirit on us
And show us new ways to live
May we continue to learn what hope means in these troubled times and
May you be the source of our peace, our joy and our everlasting life.

Amen.

And finally.....

As we come to the end of this school year and look back over the last four months since COVID 19 changed our lives and our school, I must pay tribute to the tremendous efforts and dedicated work from every member of staff of both schools. It has been the most difficult time that we have ever known and I am proud to say that as a team we have managed to enable the prescribed year groups and children of Key Workers and Vulnerable children to come back into school, as far as the limitations of social distancing allowed us, with smiles on their faces. As I have said in previous weeks we are truly sorry that children in Years 2,3,4 and 5 were unable to come in but we look forward to seeing them on Wednesday when, hopefully they will be with us, if only for a short time.

Finally, I want to say thank you to you all for the great support you have shown me during the time your children have been here and for helping make this school the great place it is. It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to be your Executive Headteacher. I will miss all of you so much, but know that the schools are in very capable hands in September.