

## **WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL: HEADTEACHER'S BLOG – 23/10/20**

**MASSIVE** shout out to Huws Gray, local building suppliers, who have very kindly donated a tonne of sand for our top secret Commando Joe (CoJo) project (special thanks to the Ellesmere Port branch manager, Darren, for sorting this out for us). The sand was delivered on Tuesday and the site team are already busy with it... CANNOT WAIT for after half term when we launch the whole project!

A HUGE thanks also to one of our mums, Elliot's mum from Badgers, who has won us a week's livestream of the **SNOWMAN**, musical show which includes:

- a toe-tapping 'Christmas Overture'
- a fun 'Guide to the Orchestra'
- an animation of the award-winning book, The Bear and the Piano, narrated by Joanna Lumley
- a dance-along Snowman Waltz
- a DVD of The Snowman
- and for the teachers.... Some lesson plans 😊

Mrs Moss has booked our week w/c 30 November. We will share further information when we receive it, but how exciting? I honestly think the Covid situation has enabled so many people to do things in a different way and schools are benefitting in some ways – I LOVED the 'Room on the Broom' thing the other day and the fact everyone is trying so hard is evident!

For the last few weeks, the children have been able to do some weekly singing (in a C-19 safe way) through a company called 'Amasing'. An online concert was held on Monday and the school rang out with singing – it was fab! Thanks to Miss Hallmark for liaising with them these past 8 weeks and making sure the children were safe, but signing and we look forward to the Christmas singing that I know she has already booked us in for.

Parents Evening was a success I think! The whole 'online' malarkey is a bit odd, but we can get used to that! A big shout out to the staff who are learning about all of this, just as you are 😊. I know that informal feedback on the gate has been very positive with parents saying they loved it, some even felt it was better as they didn't have to source childcare, but mainly that they were just grateful it could happen online due to COVID restrictions. You're welcome! And so many of you have tweeted, and emailed to share all the positives. Brilliant.

We are excited to welcome a new governor to school, Mr David Hardick. 'Governors for Schools' finds, places, and supports skilled volunteers as governors and trustees on school and academy boards. I approached them last year when we needed to enhance our governors team with co-opted members. They support schools across England and Wales to run effectively by finding high calibre governors to bring their skills and expertise to the table – and improve education for children and it appears we have benefitted from this. We are also tickled pink to welcome Miss Evans and Mrs Lowe onto our staff team as of November. We love our team and it grows in strength and numbers.

Sadly, we said goodbye to one of our mid-days today, Mrs Collinge, and thank her for her support whilst she has been here.

You may know that it has been 'Black History Month' and after all of the press coverage about, 'Black Lives Matter' it cannot have escaped even the most TV averse amongst us (me included in that group) that our lovely inclusive country continues to battle with bigotry and racism. I have said before that this is not something that school tolerates, and this will be followed up should it ever happen, because our school isn't just 'inclusive' on paper, but authentically inclusive. The other side to this is, however, the positive and are so many positive stories that show adversity overcome and tenacity - we want to celebrate the life changing work of so many individuals who may have been from historically marginalised groups and show our children that anything is possible. I came across this brilliant little awareness creating online resource and urge you to take 5 minutes with your child to have a look at it too <https://ourhistoryissharedhistory.com/#>

As for overcoming adversity, it is safe to say that the whole world continues to battle with the C-19 pandemic. I am speechless that we have managed to keep school open for an entire 8 week half term and can only thank you and

the staff for clearly being stringent in following the guidance and the rules. I know we have appeared to be daft, controlling, over the top at times, and people have been cross with us, whilst also being pleased that their child has remained in school when so many have not been able to – but we are delighted and wish this to be the case for the 7 weeks after half term – for the sake of our children. Therefore, although it is half term, and we would all like to let our hair down and relax and do the things we are used to doing in the holidays to unwind, PLEASE stay safe and follow the guidance, it is our civil and social duty to do so, but moreover, it will mean as little disruption as possible for us moving ahead. My son's Army College has cancelled half term break for them to prevent the youngsters coming home and then returning for the last 4 weeks and having to socially distance and potentially quarantine for 2 weeks. We are super sad, as he was meant to be home for his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, but it does make sense. Please remember, if your child has had a test, or you want to report any Covid associated issue, use the specially designated Covid email for our school: [covidtest@woodlands.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:covidtest@woodlands.cheshire.sch.uk).

When your child returns, they will need 'layers' (such as an old fashioned vest, or sport 'skin') for the colder weather – not just for queueing outside but also because we must maintain the ventilation in class and this means windows and doors being open etc. my nan would say we are 'heating the street' but we must do our bit and ventilation (whilst also heating the room) will happen. I don't like the idea of anyone getting cold, so please, layer up your child as you deem appropriate.

I did an interview last Monday night, live on Twitter, with Tom Rogers, and a podcast on Wednesday this week that I will share below. It appears there are a few folks who are interested in what I have to say about education and leadership and I appear to be asked now quite regularly to share. At every opportunity I celebrate our school, staff, governors, pupils and parents – so thanks for being a part of the reason I can celebrate so unashamedly! ☺ Here is the link for last Monday if you are wanting to listen: <https://t.co/5JT0Gfu3pj?amp=1> and the link to Wednesday will follow after half term ☺

Xmas plans are afoot! I may start these a little early this year.... If you know me then you know that I LOVE Christmas and love bringing that joy to Woodlands. I know this year will be affected, obviously, nothing has escaped the *Covid effect*, but we won't let that stop us! Little things will start happening after half term and the PTA will begin working with us on the Christmas DVD! This is beyond exciting!

CoJos.... the long awaited character education programme.... Is due to start the week after half term, as I mentioned at the start of this blog, so grill the children to find out ALL About it from their perspective in the new half term ...

Until then, enjoy Halloween, enjoy some down time with the children, I am not sure what we can do (although I plan on a lot of reading for my latest MA and also some fitness training so if you see me running around give me a wave), but let's make the best of it! See you all in November.