

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL: HEADTEACHER'S BLOG – 06/11/20

Hope you all had a fab half term break and well deserved rest, not sure how many of us managed it but nevertheless I hope just a change of scene for a week was beneficial.

For November, Mrs Dutton has chosen Michael Rosen as our author of the month. As he is our author of the month, children will be exploring his poetry as well as his narratives as it's a great chance for children to hear and perform poetry. He has a fab one called 'Chocolate Cake'. I am hopeful that some of them get really into performance poetry and I can see it!

Those of you who already use it will know that all of S4YC Nursery's, Preschools and Out of School Clubs will remain open, despite the lockdown. They remain committed in offering local families childcare throughout this difficult period.

It may have gone unnoticed, as he didn't bring in the usual staff-room cakes as we are not allowed to socialise, but Mr Bull had his birthday on Thursday! He is our own little firecracker and has this week launched our Co-Jo's project! One of the things with leadership is when you have an idea, nurture it, share it, let others build on it, plan it in, sort training for it, embed it in your curriculum, and then hand it over to a keen member of staff to run with and develop, it can feel like watching your child leave home! CoJo's may have been my little 'baby' but Mr Bull has really taken it to the next level and I am SO proud of the ENTIRE school (excuse the capitals) because even the early years children have been hooked and this is all down to Mr Bull and his organisation. I have had to share my cam cream to make sure staff were properly kitted out for the event, and now you all know why we have HQs on both sides of the road covered in cam netting!

We have also relaunched the behaviour system and houses in school. In Parent forum, last academic year, before lockdown, I had asked Mrs Liversey to share with parents our slimmed down and focussed 'Ready, Respectful & Safe' Behaviour rules to parents and it was discussed that we were planning, as a whole school to move away from the Good to Be Green visual display and focusing on the positive behaviour we see in school. Staff have had training and as a school we will be using recognition boards, house points, postcards home etc. to celebrate positive behaviour using the Ready, Respectful & Safe to underpin ALL that we do. Making this simple and memorable will assist us in our common language with children and their transitions through school.

If you have a look on the website, on our information page, it will remind you all about our Houses and there is a copy of the child friendly powerpoint that staff are sharing this week with the children to explain the new behaviour system in a child friendly way to new children, and remind those who may have forgotten it what our expectations are - each week we will, as a whole school staff, be focussing on a key behaviour across school - this will ensure consistency in expectations. This week & next week's focus is on using good manners - saying please and thank you etc so you can join us in sharing examples of when children have been showing good manners at home and tweet us or share on the class email! If you want to see the Behaviour for Learning policy, it is on the website in the policies section.

One thing that has had a huge impact on us as a leadership team this week is the (late in arriving) guidance document that we have had to implement at very short notice. Schools are clearly very different to other workplaces, even those that are being asked to remain open during lockdown, and we have already seen that measures such as social distancing cannot be replicated in schools in the way they might be applied in many other workplaces. *My union*, following the prime minister's announcement, has asked for urgent clarification for the government's position on Clinically Vulnerable and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable staff in schools. On 4 November 2020, the government **published its guidance on this issue**. It states the following:

"Those individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to work from home and not to go into work."

Clearly, this presents an enormous challenge for school leaders. We know that it is likely to prove impossible for many schools to remain fully open if all Clinically Extremely Vulnerable staff are expected to stay at home during the national lockdown. At the same time, we have to be extremely concerned about the safety and well-being of our staff.

Ultimately, it will always remain the case that schools can only open as far as it is safe to do so. If our school finds that we reach a point where a reduction in staffing numbers means we do not have the capacity to keep all classes open safely (ie if there is no staff available) the governors and I may have no alternative but to review whether we need to implement a short-term partial closure. We are not at this point yet, but each day is a balancing act and forewarning you all is a good idea. On that topic, I have sent an email today in regard to our actions on children presenting with symptoms during the school day – please check it hasn't gone into your spam.

We are having increasing numbers of children who are now isolating for the full 14 days due to households receiving positive Covid tests. This means that we now need to adapt our Google Classroom provision. All teachers have now trialled teaching and delivering lessons through Google Classroom with children in the class, for at least 1 core and 1 foundation subject. From Monday all teachers will now have their daily lesson resources (powerpoints etc.) accessible on Google Classroom - this is because if, for example, a child is isolating or a child is sent home during the day then school provision is mirrored at home to the best ability that we possibly can. This means no more Tier 1 work from next week. Please bear with us, give feedback if you think we can improve, but be kind 😊

Alongside this, we have been planning some fun Christmas things to try to keep everyone's spirits up, and this also involves the wonderful PTA Christmas extravaganza! Watch this space!

In other news, at our full governing body meeting in October, it was recommended and endorsed that Rev Jackie Bellfield and Mrs Helen Hill act as co-chairs for this academic year. This is due to increasing demands on Rev Jackie's time and also to allow a suitable sharing of the role as we deal with so much behind the scenes.

Helen and Jackie will share responsibility for everything and although email addresses will be changed in due course, in the meantime please contact Rev Jackie or Helen, if you wish to lodge complaints or send positive feedback about the work of the school, through the following email chair@Woodlands.cheshire.sch.uk

Again, in other news, please also see the email about RE that I have shared with you all today!

After a busy week, I will be on parade on Sunday for Remembrance Day, where I have been asked to do a reading, and we will do a 2 minute silence next week in school.

We shall remember them.

