



Plaistow and Kirdford Primary School
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Headteacher: Mr C King

18th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Wow! What a term! I'm not sure how the term that usually feels the longest has passed us by in the blink of an eye!

We've got through to the Christmas holidays all in one piece and it's due to our fantastic school community (and some good luck). Thank you to all of our families who've supported school against a backdrop of shifting, changing and sometimes conflicting guidance. Thank you to all of the families who have really helped us by sticking to our Covid plan. Thank you to all of the families who have been patient as they've waited for gates to open or for their child to arrive on the playground a little late. Thank you to all of the parents who've attended meetings via phone, zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meet (I would never have predicted that zooming someone would be an appropriate verb!). Importantly, thank you to all of the families who have self-isolated when one of the household has shown symptoms – you have kept our community safe.

The pride and gratitude I have for our staff team is immeasurable. They go above and beyond as they are asked each week to do something extra. In amongst the extra break duties, gate duties, staggered breaks, quarantined books, forgotten lunch boxes, constant nagging from me about social distancing with adults and a regularly changing set of guidelines they have never lost sight of their core purpose or our school vision. They have worked hard to ensure that children catch up and fill in gaps in their knowledge and skills all the while working to move them on in their learning. They have helped nurture the children, supported their well-being and have never been quicker to step in and help them when needed. And what is amazing is that at the end of the day, when the children have gone home, they ask: What can we do to help? It is a strange time to be in education, but we have never been supported as well by a staff team as we are now.

Then there are the children. I didn't think I could top the feeling we had in June when some of the children came back to school. I was wrong. Having all of our children back to school has brought our school back to life and renewed our sense of purpose. The children have been terrific and have thrown themselves into their learning. They have laughed, sung, played. They have made mistakes and grown. They have been happy. Seeing children run into school each morning makes being on the gate a joy.

We've learnt a lot from the children about where they are in terms of their learning over the past few weeks and there is one key area we really need your help with: Reading. Some of our children have not made the progress in their reading that they normally would if they were in school. This is not surprising; families have been working during lockdown and children didn't have access to a reading scheme. We do need to try and move them on in their reading and we need your help to do it. Research shows that reading for a short period daily really impacts on children's reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. These in turn help the children in their writing and understanding across all curriculum areas. If every child is heard to read regularly over the Christmas break, it will greatly aid our reading recovery.





I am attaching a few key pieces of information to this letter to help us all make as smooth a start to the term as possible. Our Covid plan remains largely unchanged – the exception being drop off and pick up times for Reception which have changed slightly. There are no changes to current uniform expectations or routines. I am also attaching our Pencil Case Letter as well as information regarding PE and Forest School days.

I will be honest – I don't know what January will look like at a national level. I can't promise that we won't be impacted upon by Covid but I can promise that everyone at school will remain completely committed to supporting our children in their learning, having high aspirations for what they can achieve and keeping them safe and happy. No matter what 2021 throws our way, I know Plaistow and Kirdford will be a school where children work hard, learn lots, have fun and make great friends.

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all in 2021!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mr King", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Mr King