

Love

Live

Learn

Summer 14
21st July 2020

Godalming Junior School

Newsletter

Thank You

Message from Mr. Samson

As we draw a close to another year at Godalming Junior School, I cannot help but think there will never be another one like it. Never in the history of this great school has the school been closed for as long as it has, nor has it ever had to put on provision for 'VIP children' and neither has it had to contend with a pandemic on the scale we have witnessed during these last few months. Tracing back through the wonderful log books I inherited as Headteacher here, the closest I could find was when the school closed for 3 weeks, ironically, in October 1918 due to an influenza epidemic and in 1939 when there was a delay to opening the school due to war being declared, the school being commandeered by the military and having to provide provision for 15 evacuees!

I would like to take this opportunity in the final newsletter of the year to thank everybody who is part of this wonderful school community that has pulled together to get through the last 17 weeks. You, the parents, have taken on the baton to provide home schooling for all the children, setting up daily routines and structuring your days and work around the Google Classroom provision provided by the class teachers. I know how stressful this has been for you as you have had to also manage new work expectations of your own during these very uncertain times. I would like to thank the governors of the school who have been extremely supportive during this time, constantly 'checking-up' on the school to ensure we were all supported and had the resources we need to carry out our duties and care safely.

The staff at GJS during the last 17 weeks have been nothing short of incredible.

Most have been available the whole time, willing to be put on rotas, often carrying out roles that they would not normally carry out and generally being hugely supportive of one another. Without the staff making themselves available and literally 'rolling their sleeves up' we would not have been able to offer the provision for Year 6, the care for our key worker children and be in a position to have EVERY year group return for a week before the end of term. We honestly feel we could not have done any more and I for one, feel very lucky to lead such a committed, caring and skilful group of staff.

As for the children, what can I say?

During this whole time I have been so proud of hearing the messages from staff about how much children were engaging with their online learning, often going above and beyond the requirements their teachers set. Most weeks there were children uploading their work showing fantastic originality, independence, creativity and perseverance! They have been a real credit to the school and you as parents!

During the entire 6 weeks of Year 6's return, we had a 'perfect' time. There was not one behaviour incident, every child responded with great maturity to the hygiene measures in place, the adjustments to timetables and the limitations on what they had access to. Never was there any fuss made and ALL fully understood the measures we had in place and why we had them. Having had the weekend to reflect, and catch up on some sleep, I have never felt prouder of a group of Year 6 leaving this school. Though they have been affected academically, socially and emotionally, I have no doubt that they have become the most resilient of learners and I am certain that the experience will stand them in good stead for September! I simply hope their new school, wherever that may be, are as supportive as we have been.

Thank you once again for all your support these last few months and I hope that you are ALL able to relax over the summer before we go again in September. Though we will still have restrictions in place and there will be further changes to make, we are determined to do all we can to help the children. We are committed to ensure we do all we can to help our new children settle into their new surroundings and to continue to provide the finest pastoral care and academic provision we can to ALL children and I know this is a commitment shared by all GLP schools. Though we will be determined to provide opportunities for the children 'catch up', this will not be at the cost of their mental health and wellbeing. We will continue to offer the bespoke curriculum we have become so proud of, teach them about the core values which we hold so dear here and encourage them all to Love, Live and Learn. Have a wonderful break and stay safe.