

Spring 2nd Half-Term 2021



Bollington Cross C.E. Primary School Newsletter

It's been great to be back!



"It's great to be back in school because we get to see our friends in the sun. It's better than learning at home as well because the teachers are here. All classes have loved having so much space to play!"



Dear Families,

It has been a real pleasure to see all pupils back since the 8th March and we are feeling reassured that we have had no classes needing to stay home and isolate and only one instance in the past half-term of a positive case amongst staff. It is testament to all parents, staff and pupils following the risk assessments, procedures and guidelines inside and outside school throughout. Thank you all for supporting us in keeping the school community safe.

It has been a privilege, as usual, to get back to catching those insightful (outdoor) conversations with our amazing pupils and they really do range in terms of topic! Pupils have spoken with fondness about how they were able to stay in their pyjamas, have an afternoon nap, have breaks when they wanted and learn at their own pace during the school closure and that has been one of the main 'shocks to the system' since coming back. The pupils I spoke to also said that teachers had done a good job in the sense that, from a learning point of view, they had felt that they had been able to pick up where they had left off. This is lovely to hear and what I hoped to hear from our learners as it is vital that their education suffers as little disruption as possible after such a challenge over the last twelve months.

Primary schools are such positive places and we are always seeking to find the positives in all situations and take any learning we can, as staff and children, from a challenge. In my recent research and through conversations with staff and pupils it is clear that there are some longer term impacts that school is now working to support with. Sir Kevan Collins, the Recovery Commissioner has stated that stamina, passivity in learning and lack of tolerance for others have been potential impacts on young people during the last 12 months. Discussing this with the teachers, I can hear that, to varying degrees, our pupils are showing evidence of these impacts and we will address this through our curriculum. From an academic point of view, teachers are already well on the way in trying to ensure that the impact of the school closures is minimised. They have swiftly looked to audit any key elements that children may be missing and will continue to address these next term, whilst ensuring that the next teacher is well aware of any potential gaps which remain, as our pupils move to a new year group in September.

Our staff are continually assessing pupils to ensure progress, but I wanted to make you aware that we made a collective decision to not formally assess our pupils prior to Easter. We believe that our pupils needed a transition back to school which acknowledged their time away from friends and gave them great opportunities to be outdoors, get active and socialise. We will carry out our formal assessments in the second week back after Easter and then have parent's evening appointments a couple of weeks after our assessments, to ensure we are keeping you informed of your child's progress. As usual, a written report will then follow towards the end of the school year.

Our starting point for overcoming the challenges mentioned above, is fantastic. At Bollington Cross, children have returned well, they have settled back into learning, they are loving socialising and building the self-esteem, which comes with new learning, new experiences and accomplishments. We have brilliant attendance across school of 97.3% as it stands, which supports all of the things we are trying to accomplish.

I hope that all of our families and pupils have a great Easter and we have given pupils a few little things on this last day of term. Each pupil has a 'Toucan Box' craft magazine to bring home and also a pen and pencil. The pens and pencils are made from recycled cds and they were a little gift to the children from Canon Rev Veronica Hydon when she retired before Christmas.

Once again, have a great Easter and I hope you all get the chance to recharge and relax.

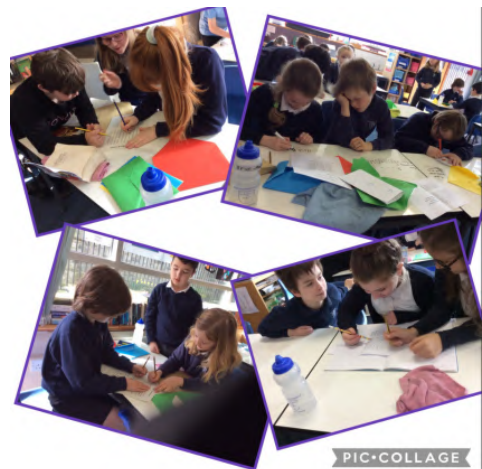
Mr Yenson Donbavand
Headteacher





Year 3 have had a great start back in the classroom. They have enjoyed being back with their friends and teachers and have shown lots of enthusiasm and resilience in their learning - attendance has been fantastic!! Amongst the many things they have been doing, they have impressed us the most with their hard work in learning some of their favourite songs, such as 'Count on Me' by Bruno Mars in British Sign Language. They are continuing to learn some basic sign language in the classroom, including greetings. We have adopted a Polar Bear through the WWF and have had lots of fun transforming the classroom with our Rainforest art and have had a great time making Eater bonnets and crispy cake nests. Well done Year 3, we are very proud of you all!

It has been wonderful to all be back together in school again, and we are so proud of Year 4. They have come back with smiles, enthusiasm and have settled back in to our school routines really well. It's not surprising there are some very tired children this week, they have been so busy and they have been working really hard. They have enjoyed being creative in their learning, using playdough to make a Viking museum of artefacts and in Forest School, where they have been digging for clay to make runes and impressive Viking longships! They have also enjoyed cooking some traditional Viking foods. Their drumming skills are fantastic, as they work as a team to create some great music (see their video on Class Dojo).



Year 5 came back to school raring to go! They have needed to be very active and busy and have enjoyed practical sessions in a range of contexts, including deciphering codes, solving pentomino puzzles and making 3D boxes. I have seen new-found independence in many pupils and it is clear that some enjoyed directing their own learning during lockdown. A really successful and enjoyable set of activities were the codebreaking lessons planned and delivered by Gwil (see page 1 for pic). The children really enjoyed experimenting with and developing their coding skills.

Year 6 have had a brilliant half term! All the children have settled back into our school routines exceptionally well. They have loved and worked exceptionally hard throughout our topic 'Darwin's Delights'. This has resulted in them completing their best writing so far this year - next time your walk past our classroom you will be able to see them as they are displayed in the windows. As a class, they have been kept very busy with lots of practical sessions and being outdoors to help to break up their learning. Coding on Scratch was a real highlight for the children as well as lots of practical science investigations.



Lord, thank you for the gift of new life, the greatest gift of all! Amen!



Reception

We have also been thinking about different celebrations including Mother's Day and Easter – lots of opportunities to get creative! Our new Junk Modelling area has been particularly popular as has our new "Tinker Table" – this is an area where we can explore and create using real "hardware" such as nuts and bolts, washers, screws, picture hooks....We shared a wordless picture book called "Junk DNA" which tells stories through pictures made of small metal objects. Next term we will explore tools and support the children to use these safely. Our mini topic of Dinosaurs has been very popular – we have learned about different kinds of dinosaurs, sorting dinosaurs into carnivores, omnivores and herbivores, reading facts about dinosaurs and making our own "lava!" We have loved learning outdoors, especially in Forest School and we have been very busy planting too! The children have settled well into their new RWI groups and have been working hard to help their partners learn too! Well done Team Reception – we are very proud of you all!



The children in Year 1 returned to school with big smiles on their faces, eager to meet their friends again and get stuck into the learning...and what a lot of learning we have done! Highlights from the last four weeks must include the discovery of frogspawn and two badger setts in the hollow, which has excited the children and really supported their understanding of life cycles and habitats. We have also brought nature into our artwork, inspired by Cheshire-born artist Andy Goldsworthy. The children created wonderful, 'transient' art pieces from natural materials they collected from our school grounds. The pièce de résistance, however, has to be the art project that followed our study of author and artist, Eric Carle. Our focus was really on the process of using different artistic techniques, including marbling and collage to build up a layered landscape. I think you will agree that the outcomes are vibrant and the children are rightly very proud of their achievements.



Year 2 have come back to school with smiles on their faces, enjoying their friends and seeing staff. It has been great to see them all settle back into the busy routine of the school day. They are eager to learn and happy to play and have reconnected, together, to form a strong team bond. We have had a focus on a book called, 'What We'll Build', by Oliver Jeffers. This inspired us to develop our construction skills to create a frame. We have needed to select our joints (butt or mitre), shape (rectangle, square or even a kite!) saw, glue and sand, before finally decorating them. The final versions of our frames will be sent home very soon. Keep it going Year 2!