



Message from the Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are all well.

My last official newsletter was eleven weeks ago. At the time I wrote it, I still thought that we might manage to get to the Easter holidays before we were told to close. Little did I know that we would only make it to the end of that week.

The last three months have been the strangest of my whole career. I have said this many times in tweets and letters, but I am very grateful to my staff, governors and trustees for their support.

I also want to thank you, the parents of children at Orton Wistow. I am sure that this period has not been easy and may still be a challenge. Many of you have had to juggle working from home and educating your children. Most of you are still doing this and have chosen to continue doing it for the remainder of this term. I have appreciated the kind words of support from many of you and your appreciation that we are working hard to get this right. As you would expect, there isn't a book called 'What to do in a Pandemic' sitting on my shelf, waiting for this situation. We have had to read countless DfE and Government documents, often updated before the ink is dry, frequently sent at strange times of the day with little time to digest them before we were expected to act.

What we have done is our best. It might not have suited you at times, you may have got a bit frustrated, and you may even have had a moan about us to your friends on Facebook or your WhatsApp group. I understand. It can't have been easy at times. As a headteacher, you quickly learn that you can't please all of the people all of the time. It would be my first piece of advice to a new Head. What you do have to do is trust your professional instincts and do what is right for most of the people and hope that the others will understand.

I felt relieved this morning that our staggered start and bubbles worked well and there were only a couple of hitches where parents had not read which gate they should come through. I am sure that by the end of the week we will all have adjusted to the new normal. It will no doubt feel strange and a bit weird but we will make it work and keep our fingers crossed that as soon as possible we will be able to welcome everyone back.

I genuinely do not know what the Government is going to announce about Phase 2 of reopening. As I said in my letter this week, we have very limited space for any extra children so the rules about social distancing would have to change before we could admit more children or we would have to do some form of part-time timetable. We will cross that bridge when we come to it.

We will continue to support those working at home with our emails and work. Teachers have been working hard to make sure that there is a balance between what we do in school and what we set for the children to do at home. I was told last week that there has been an increase in the amount of reading that children are doing at home. Every cloud has a silver lining!

As you will see from this newsletter, we have already made some decisions about the coming weeks and months. I hope that you trust us enough to know that we are taking our time to do things right. There are lots of great things about working at Orton Wistow. Two of my favourites are that we plan everything that we do carefully and that we are a team. These two qualities have been tested in the last few months and we have come up trumps!

Simon Eardley
Headteacher

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Congratulations

I am pleased to announce that Mrs Fidgett and Mrs Simmons have both passed their National Professional Qualification in Senior Leadership (NPQSL). They began this qualification a year ago and had to undertake a school wide project to help them to develop their leadership skills. They then had to submit a lengthy document to their assessor. Congratulations to them both!

New Classes

As you know, by now we would have already started the process for creating the new classes by asking the children to name five friends.

We have had to do this differently this year. Year group teachers have divided their classes to create two new classes for September. We did this after checking our notes from previous years and every teacher has looked at all the lists to make sure that they can't see any mistakes. This is particularly useful when they have taught the year group previously. The class lists are now complete and we are thinking of how we will announce this to the children as our usual transition arrangements will not be able to take place this year.

Reports

We have followed the DfE advice about end of year reports. These have now been written and will reflect the time that your child was in school between September and March.

We will report on:

- General progress
- Brief particulars of achievements, highlighting strengths and developmental needs
- Attendance record

There will not be any end of year test data, EYFS results, Y1 Phonics assessment or national data for Y2 and Y6.

We are looking onto how we can share the reports with you and hope that we will be able to send them via email.

Transition

At this time of year we would have already started thinking about transition arrangements. Our new FS parents evening would have been this Wednesday and children would have met their new teachers on 1st July.

Transition will have to look different this year. We will put together various resources that we will share with you so that you can look at them before we return in September. We will write separately to new FS parents to share with them the information that we would ordinarily cover at the open evening.