**News from St Peter’s School**

It seems incredible to think that we are coming to the end of term with only a few weeks until Christmas. As you can imagine it has been a challenging term. We had been open throughout the first lock down so COVID-19- 19 routines were in place and we were confident with our risk assessments. But as the whole world has discovered, nothing goes to plan in these times. Unfortunately, just before half term we had to close a bubble for two weeks and we have had a regular trickle of pupils and staff who have had no option but to self-isolate. This inevitably puts additional strain on existing resources with school and home learning working in tandem, with fewer staff. But overall, when we hear experiences from colleagues in other parts of the country, we are pleased that we have been able to offer as near a normal school experience as possible.

Children continue to thrive and we have really appreciated the impact of having such extensive grounds and outdoor facilities. All pupils have had time down in the woodland area with learning linked to their curriculum topics. Our Forest leader even came up with the idea of organising a bonfire for each class with forest activities and hot chocolate to make up for the absence of firework displays this year! This event also raised some much-needed cash for the school as inevitably all of the fund-raising events have been curtailed. Our fabulous PTFA has also been busy organising an online raffle to help out further.

The guidelines for schools have been to continue the curriculum as much as possible. Socially distanced history workshops have gone ahead and two of our classes were able to enjoy live workshops run by The British Museum. Unfortunately, we had to postpone a much-anticipated visit to Farnham Pottery to participate in a community project. We are hoping that this may still go ahead before Christmas – let’s see what comes after the four weeks are over!

In reality though for schools, life is very much business as usual. Our before and after school clubs are operating as normal which means we can provide for pupils from 8am until 5:45pm – a great facility for working parents. Green Shoots, our nursery has exceeded our expectations and from January will be almost full to capacity. This is great news as the opening of the nursery was a long-term ambition but was always going to carry an element of financial risk. Having said that, please send any new neighbours with children aged 2-11 our way – as there is still fierce competition between primary schools, with too many places for the figures which are forecast by Surrey.

You may wonder how we are managing our Christian distinctiveness without being able to meet. We record an assembly which is listened to in every class on a Monday and then the teachers continue with the theme in class for the rest of the week. In this way, we are able to ensure that pupils have opportunities for reflection and for developing their own spirituality. We are looking forward to Signposts online Advent assemblies and our parents will be looking forward to a recording of a nativity play and Christmas carols.

Of course, we all miss the visits to church but we shall all definitely appreciate it even more when we eventually return! We wish all parishioners a Happy and peaceful Christmas.