

Paddock Wood Primary Academy, Friday 27 March 2020

Good morning

I have heard and read so many uplifting stories of how inquisitive, creative and generally wonderful all of our (your) children have been this week. I doubt many people would have foreseen this situation even a month or so ago, but here we are, and our community has risen and engaged with this new norm with real positivity and a resolute determination to see it through.

Some teacher and TA volunteers are continuing to teach children of registered key workers in school, on a three-week rota. It is a mark of the strength and unity of our academy that almost 50 staff have volunteered to this, including catering and cleaning staff, with about another 20 colleagues supporting their efforts directly online. In line with government advice, the actual number of volunteers in school each day is about 9.

You will appreciate that all teachers have spent considerable time over the past fortnight preparing learning packs and learning how to use the ClassDojo platform to interact and engage with pupils and their families. I know teachers have really valued the positive feedback they have received. The comment below is 1 of at least 100 that truly recognises and encapsulates our school ambition:

Hello! Firstly, thank you for your lovely reassuring message regarding my concerns. It was great to hear and actually once the feeling of needing to officially 'home-school' was taken away it became easier to offer [my children] some of the smaller, more appealing tasks that you suggested on here. We seem to be working one day behind for everything, but I'm sure that doesn't matter! There are always one or two things listed that are along our usual lines of activity and that I can adapt for [them] to do so they are all 'working' together. I would like to say to Mr Opstad that all your teachers have been simply amazing!! In a totally new and unknown situation you have managed to find suitable exciting activities for the children to choose from amongst their regular recognisable school tasks. [My child] even requested doing some daily 10 this morning as [they] obviously felt the need for something familiar. That was wonderful as a parent, I simply don't have the capacity to 'enforce' learning at the moment so much of it is based on them choosing to do it and having some encouragement. Working a school schedule at home is not everyone's cup of tea - and combined with [other factors] it's pretty impossible - but if as a parent I can just feel that allowing the children to choose one or two activities from a selection is sufficient then that makes our lives much, much better. Dojo has been great to use both for guidance and for [my children] seeing their work commented on. Your comments and message responses have been much quicker than I expected which only goes to show how hard you are all working and how seriously you are taking the online teaching. Thank you all so much. X

If you have not signed up to ClassDojo yet, I would strongly encourage you to do so; speak to other parents to find out how, or email enquiries@paddockwoodprimaryacademy.org.uk for a link.

Our teachers are keen to maintain contact over Easter, to say hello and perhaps to set daily games or challenges, in place of core learning - all voluntary and nothing too arduous!

Without a doubt these are difficult and challenging times, but the driving unity and strength that's come about after just one week is quite overwhelming, and, at the same time, truly humbling.

Please stay safe

Scott

Scott Opstad, Principal