

8th January 2021

Dear Parents

A short newsletter from me today – to be honest I expect that you are all fed up with hearing from me this week and ready for a break! I feel like I have written more letters to parents this week than all last half term! But there were some messages that staff wanted to send and so a short newsletter seems appropriate.

This has been a very challenging week in school and the support of all our families has made such a difference so thank you. Thank you especially to those who have taken the time to send a quick email of thanks – I write a daily message to staff when we are working remotely and I have been able to include some of your words which really does help when we are all isolated from each other in this way.

As I have said before online learning is a new skill for all of us – although I did a fair amount of teaching via Teams in the summer term and for self-isolating bubbles last term, it is still an unfamiliar way of working and much that we take for granted in the classroom does not work on a computer screen. So thank you also for bearing with us when things don't go to plan or when the technology lets us down.

Mrs Bailly sent me the following message for Year 11 and I would echo it – Year 11 are my absolute stars this week because of the way in which they have just got on with it! I've just finished a really thoughtful discussion with my class about the nature of kingship in Macbeth., despite the fact that they are all in limbo over GCSE examinations this summer:

I'm very proud of how well year 11s have risen to the challenge of what is perhaps their most difficult week so far. They say that a week is a long time in politics, but this week has been a very very long week if you are a year 11 pupil. They have responded to continuing their school work, without knowing what they are preparing for, magnificently. Very well done!

Mrs Bailly

Miss Blundy and Mr Turnbull had a similar message for Year 6:

Miss Blundy and I would like to say how impressed we have been with Year 6 and their move to online learning. After just a few days they have picked up everything so quickly and many of them have displayed excellent levels of maturity and conscientiousness. The technical gremlins have visited us on occasion but everybody has really worked together to find solutions. To quote one parent '52 10 year olds picked up Teams a lot more quickly than many of the business people who I work with.'

Well done Year 6

Mr Turnbull

And Miss Barras and Mrs Elsdon wanted to congratulate Year 2:

I would like to say how proud I am of Year 2 - you have all been superstars this week! I have seen some thoughtful, beautifully presented work and it was lovely to share the day in school with the Key Worker children today. I would also like to pass on my sincere thanks to the parents - for your patience and continuous support at home - it is very much appreciated at this time. You are all marvellous - keep up the brilliant work. Mrs Elsdon.

The staff who have been working with the Key Workers in school have also been full of praise for the way in which they have adapted to the new environment and working with new staff: Miss Allen sent me this about the Year 7 and 8 pupils in Ancora:

We have been so impressed with the hard work, community spirit, and behaviour of the year 7s and 8s who've spent this week working in Ancora. Their positive attitude has made what could have been a stressful week a very enjoyable one.

And Mr Robson had this to say about the Senior School Key Worker children:

Just a really positive shout out to all the seniors who have been in keyworker provision this week. They have coped amazingly well, produced high quality work, and their attitude to learning and adaptability has been outstanding.

I'm going to give the final word to Ms Holmes who asked me to thank all of our parents for your support with online learning. Ms Holmes has been troubleshooting Teams issues this week – there have been one or two of those as I'm sure you can imagine! Thanks for working with us and for making sure that your sons and daughters are well supported at home – we very much appreciate that this is not easy at your end either!

Have a good weekend

Kate Reid