

“Hermes”

15th May 2020

Summer Term

Issue No. 527

Dear Parents

Welcome to this week's Hermes. Normal service has been resumed. We've left the experimentation of Publisher behind and there are no embarrassing photos of you all this week, though they could easily return if you have a good idea. Tom K recommended we send in photos of the last picture we took before lockdown began. Sounds a good idea for next week?

I had hoped to begin my editorial with good news following the Prime Minister's speech on Sunday evening. Sadly, little thought has been given to any educational setting beyond mainstream state junior schools. I had hoped that the phased return included flexibility for schools to look at their key transitional years. Locally, in the middle school system, transition is either at the end of Form 4 and Form 8. Both would have worked much better for us. We always have an intake in Form 5 and we are desperate to spend time with Form 8s before they depart for exciting new horizons.

This was not the case and we have little option but to follow the guidelines which are to prepare for Nursery, Reception, Form 1 and Form 6 pupils returning to school on Monday 1st June.

Including key worker children, we will have about sixty children in school spread across five classes. On Monday I will send you a letter detailing how this will work in reality. Please read this carefully and respond to the questionnaire on School Ping so we can accurately plan for numbers.



The wellbeing of your children remains my critical concern and if you think home schooling is working well and you would rather continue with this mode of education for the remainder of the term, you would have my full support.

At present we have about thirty pupils in school. Despite our very best efforts, social distancing, especially with our youngest children, is proving to be difficult to fully implement.

Anyway, that's quite enough doom and gloom for one issue. That's not the function of Hermes. Its real function is to share community news and to send us all into the weekend with a spring in our step and with a pride in our community.

This is a good moment to pay tribute to the brilliant job being done by all the teachers at the moment and also of the brilliant work that you are all achieving as co-teachers.

One forgotten group are those staff who have voluntarily agreed to be furloughed on 80% of their salaries, allowing us to pass on variations to your fees. Many of these have been in contact noting how much they are missing school, missing contributing to a massive team effort in school and missing their friends. Isolation and wellbeing are critical issues for society in general. Easing of lockdown will help though I fear this may be too early and we may have a second spike and head back into full lockdown.

Some amazing home learning has been evident this week and parents, teachers and children are finding ever more creative ways to share the joy of learning.

Mrs Nolan Stone has been asking children who play a musical instrument to send her their performance of "Somewhere over the rainbow" to her. Using the wonders of a home editing program she has laid the tracks down on top of each to produce an amazing performance that you will shortly be able to listen to on our website.

We also received LAMDA results from the spring term. Mrs Moss, leading home learning in Form 4 and inspiring us all with her innovations, reports that every pupil from Form 1 to Form 6 took their exams. Of the 88 entries, 82% achieved a distinction and 18% a merit. Congratulations to all the pupils for working so hard, and to their teachers and assistants for their excellent preparation.

Elsewhere in school Mrs Fernley continues to pose "thunks" for everyone to consider. Last week the question posed was, "Is it better to be nice or right?" Seemingly impossible to find the right answer, but not for Ren Ren in Form 3. He "thunked" deeply and came up with, "They are both important but being nice should be part of being right." A great answer!

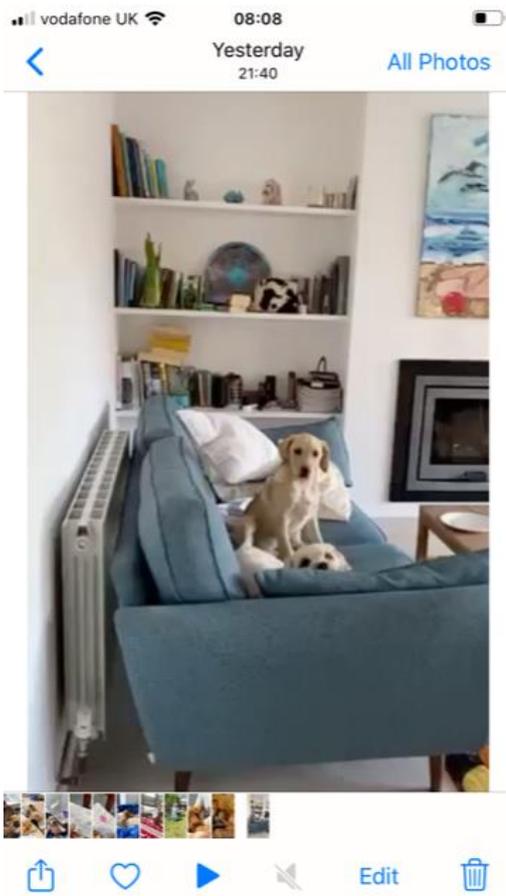
This week's think is even more testing. Mrs Fernley would like to know if ideas come from inside or outside of your head. Again impossible (but only just) and one I'm sure you will all be up to.

This "blue sky thinking" is very important in the development of the young mind. Questions which have no obvious answers, no right or wrong, lots of metacognition, all facilitate higher order thinking skills. I am sure you have heard me say this before but whilst clever children know the answer, really bright children have the questions. It's good to bear this in mind whilst home schooling and involved in a Q and A session.

In school, Mr Stazicker has been inspiring young volcanologists to build their own live exploding craters using vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. There have been some great results that we will put on our website next week. Here's a before during and after shot from Mirabelle S.

Whilst on the topic of Mr Stazicker I was reminded that the fab Form 5's should have been on exped this week. Lucy C was also aware of this and decided she'd have her own exped and camp in her garden with Rosie.





A quick “pupdate” now. Bonnie is doing amazingly well and comes to visit most days. She’s ten weeks old now and showing lots of promise, though I’ve told her it will be a while before she replaces Molly as my screen saver. She understands.

Bonnie has been picking up a few bad habits from Ivy and Rosie, neither of whom need any encouragement to sprawl across the sofa for long periods of time. As the photo shows, Bonnie has decided it’s a good idea.

Hmmm!

Ivy’s own pups are four weeks old now and becoming very mischievous and boisterous. Thankfully the weather has been good and we have been able to let them spend quite a bit of time outside.

Like me, I am sure family and friends continue to be at the top of your “care and worry list”. I haven’t seen my parents for many months now. Thankfully they seem to be safely isolated on Anglesey and are enjoying the simple things in life. My mum and dad are both very



traditional in their outlook on life. Mum does two things almost habitually. The first is that she knits perpetually, almost in her sleep. Her speciality is recycling old jumpers and creating amazing knitted slippers. They are prized possessions and are particularly well travelled, as the three pairs taken to New Zealand and worn by my fishing buddies amply demonstrates. If you are ambitious or envious I think Jo has the pattern. Whether she’ll share this closely guarded secret is another matter. Getting our Yorkshire pudding recipe would be even trickier.



My mum is also famous for hand writing letters and sealing them with a loving kiss in bright red “lippy”.

It’s quite endearing and nostalgic getting them now though when I was 20 and at college it was slightly more embarrassing. The one on show was sent to my eldest son Chris who is 30 and holed up in Cornwall. He is equally amused by them.

Well, thinking of family and friends seems to be a good point to head off for the weekend and to wish you a lovely weekend with your family.

Mr Thorpe