

 **Ripponden Junior and Infant School**

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 ***Deputy Headteacher: Miss Lucy Taylor***

***“Challenge and enjoyment leading to excellence for all”***

**Headteacher: Mrs L Bamforth**

7th May 2020

Dear parents/carers,

 I hope that you are managing to settle into your routines. The weather has certainly helped to get out in the garden or out for walks. I have loved seeing the photographs you’ve been sending in for the Find a View Challenge, as set by Ms Gilmartin. It just shows how beautiful our local area is. I will be putting a selection of them on the website in the gallery section for all to see – go and have a look!

A huge thank you to Mrs Greenwood, who has been Mummy Hen! Usually at this time of the year, we have a set of eggs in school and we love watching their development from egg to chick, but obviously we can’t have them in school. Lockdown hasn’t stopped us! Mrs Greenwood has had them at her house and has been updating the school Facebook page with their development. We now have 4 fabulous and fluffy chicks! If you are not on Facebook, head over to the gallery section again – I will put some of those photos on there too. This has been so lovely and I have been waiting with anticipation at each update! Well done and thank you again to Mrs Greenwood for her dedication to the school and the chicks in this difficult time.

Mrs Kenny and I have continued to make our phone calls home. We have loved hearing what you are getting up to and there have been some really inventive ways in which you are home learning! We have spoken to lots of children this week too – it is so lovely to hear your voices! All of the adults in school are really missing the children and we know that when it is safe, we will be back together again. When you send in pictures and work, it really lifts our spirits – please keep doing it! We also fully appreciate that some families have parents working from home and are trying to help their child with their home learning. This is really difficult. Please, be kind to yourself! Be realistic what you can and can’t manage – there is no pressure from us. Like I said in one of my earlier letters – the children won’t remember ***what they did***but they will remember ***how they felt*** during this time. Whenever we come back together, we need our children to be happy, so they are in the best position to learn.

A huge thank you for the positive messages we have been receiving since we have had to close. This has included about the home learning packs, the communications sent out, the timetabled work with online work sent, the daily emails and feedback from the class teachers, childcare for key worker children and ultimately the lack of pressure around completion of work. Thank you for this positive feedback – it really is greatly appreciated.

There is a lot of speculation around government announcements, the easing of lockdown and the fully reopening of schools. What I would say is that the government’s position is that schools will reopen when it is safe to do so. It is unlikely that school will hear any updates earlier than the general population – we heard about school closures at the same time as everyone else – but I will send out an update as soon as I can to our families. What I would say is upon any news or update from government, please do not start emailing or calling – we will be incredibly busy putting plans into place and considering our reopening strategy – whatever that may be! Please be assured that we will be following any guidance given and that the safety of our children, staff and community will be at the heart of all decision making.

While on calls to families, there have been a couple who have mentioned the possibility of Zoom online teaching. I did explain to those families I spoke to, but I thought it a good idea to explain on an update. The teaching unions have issued strong guidance to their members that they should not be live streaming lessons from their homes. The main reason for this is a safeguarding one. As you know we take safeguarding incredibly seriously and so we will not be providing this type of learning. We know the children are missing their friends and teachers – as I have said above, the best way of communicating with their teachers is by emailing and sending in work – teachers will respond. I have also heard of various groups of children holding their own Zoom meetings or FaceTiming their friends, or talking on X-Box. What a fabulously technological world we live in!

Please remember to take care of each other. If you need help or support in any way, please do not hesitate to get in touch, either by email – office@ripponden.calderdale.sch.uk or on the school mobile phone – 07399 326030 and we will be happy to help or signpost you to any other agencies.

With kindest regards,

Lorraine Bamforth (Mrs)

Headteacher