



Itchen Abbas Primary School

'Growing Hearts and Minds'



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Headteacher: Mrs A. Dear

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Dear Parents

We have now completed our first week of school closure and I hope it has been as good as possible for you all and that you are all safe and well.

Teachers have been keen to ensure that your children are provided with lots of learning on our Google Classroom and I know they have enjoyed interacting with the children through the comments.

If you are a working parent, you have probably realised, like me, that working whilst trying to support your children with their schoolwork is not an easy task! Please don't worry! We accept that the children will do what they can and don't expect everything to be completed every day. At this stage, we would like them to keep their word study / phonics, number and tables work and daily reading going as best as they can. If they can maintain these basic skills, once we are back at school, it will be much easier for them moving forward. Whatever else they, and you, can manage is a bonus!

Our aim is to give some purpose to each day, to keep the routine of learning going and to keep their minds active. But most important is your whole family's well-being. So my advice is, keep it light, break it into small achievable bite-size chunks and don't worry. I personally think that the most important thing right now is to take advantage of the opportunity to spend time together playing games, doing something creative, getting in your gardens or just talking. Your children will remember these things and they will help you all get through these strange times.

Google Classroom – Moving Forward

Today, all the teachers had a video conferencing meeting - another first for Itchen Abbas! As well as being lovely to see all their faces and hearing that they are well, we reviewed the Google Classroom and considered the children's responses and what is being uploaded. Whilst we know this isn't a true reflection of what the children have completed, it is giving us an idea. We think we may have set our sights a little high on what is achievable and have reviewed for next week.

So next week, we will.....

- Have fewer pieces of work, many of which will last more than one day and require uploading only on completion
- Have longer deadlines to alleviate pressure of completion by a set time
- Try to have more practical or interactive ideas
- Ask you to create a letter or picture etc for your senior citizen as one of your weekly tasks

Please remember, that working in this way under the restrictions we have, differentiating the tasks for different abilities is very difficult, so we are setting as many tasks as we can which are 'low threshold, high ceiling.' This means that all children can access the task but complete it at their

level. We cannot adjust tasks for individuals at this time. Therefore, if a task is too difficult, adjust and simplify it for your child or leave it. If you would like greater challenge, add more complex steps or do something alternative. Remember, higher level thinking requires creativity. Your child should be able to suggest ways of making the work trickier for themselves!

We are already planning for after Easter so we would really like your views and opinions on our Google Classroom so far.

We would appreciate you taking time to email us with your thoughts on:

- What is working well?
- What is proving more difficult?
- Quantity of work – too much, too little, just right?
- Interest level of children – are they engaging?
- Anything else you would like to share?

As a country and profession, we have never had to do anything like this before and have had to re-frame our entire way of working. It has required a great deal of thought and I know there will be tweaks along the way. Your feedback will help us get it as right as we can. All the teachers, including myself, wanted me to pass on our thanks to you for the kind and positive comments we have received.

In case you have missed us, here is a photo of the teachers in our online video meeting!



Key Workers

Our thanks to you all. The number of children in school each day has been lower than we initially anticipated. This tells us that you are really abiding by the principles for Key Workers and only bringing your children to school when it is truly necessary, when there is not an adult at home, thank you. This will help us to do our part for the community in limiting the transmission of this virus.

We have had fun in school. The children have painted, cooked, made clay models as well as completing their Google Classroom work. We'd also like to thank every child who has been in school. They have been fantastic; very accepting of these strange circumstances and so beautifully well-behaved and supportive of each other. Well done, children, you make us all very proud.

Self-Compassion and Mental Well-Being

Maureen Bowes, who delivered our self-compassion evening has responded to these difficult times by adding to her website 'When the Tension Goes.' She has added a new section called 'Reassuring Myself.' This is a beautiful resource meant to support people in times of worry and anxiety and to provide some simple tools to turn to. The resource is suitable for children and adults and I do hope you will all take a look and use this with your children if they are finding things tricky,

<https://whenthetensiongoes.com/>

Lastly, I would just like to say we miss you all and hope you and your families are keeping safe.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aimee Dear', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Aimee Dear
Headteacher