Ivy Learning Trust Newsletter | Spring 2021

It's hard to believe that in the short time since our last Ivy newsletter, we've experienced yet another lockdown.

Closing our gates to the majority of pupils was something we hoped that we would never have to do again. However, when the time came, we were ready for it. Our schools were better prepared for a smooth transition to remote learning and, thanks to your incredible efforts at home, the children continued to learn and engage throughout lockdown. Thank you for sharing your children's fantastic work with us and for all your messages of support and gratitude to staff during this challenging time – it really was appreciated.

Now the children are back where they belong, and it was wonderful to welcome them and to see the joy on their faces as they greeted their friends and teachers after such a long period away. They very quickly got back into the swing of school life, enjoying the simple pleasures of being back in the classroom and playing in the playground again, along with special events such as World Book Day and Red Nose Day to get involved in. Everyone is looking forward to the summer term and, hopefully, a slow return to some of our normal school activities.

After such a challenging time, it's natural to worry about lost learning and the impact of lockdown on children. We have already put additional resources in place to ensure that children get the support they need. Yet their adaptability to the new normal has been astounding and we must also praise children, acknowledge the skills they've learned and support them in recognising how these will help them in the future. They have become more independent, resilient and self-motivated. They are excited about school and ready to embrace learning in classrooms again. And they will be at the forefront of an education system which has become more innovative and responsive as a result of Covid.

This month many of the children created daffodils in remembrance of all those who have been impacted by Covid. Daffodils symbolise the end of winter and new beginnings. Spring has arrived and with it comes hope. Half of all adults have now been vaccinated and we can see a roadmap back to normality. There may still be some uncertainty in the path ahead but whatever happens, with our support, our children will grab education and fly.

Matthew Kleiner-Mann
Leader of the Ivy Learning Trust

Brimsdown Primary School

Brimsdown Primary School
Enfield

We've had a really positive start back to school and the children are loving seeing their friends. Our recovery curriculum is focusing on restoration, relationships and responding. This is all about the wellbeing of our pupils, so that they are in a positive place to learn and continue to make progress.

We celebrated World Book Day with lots of activities, including a dress up day, Stop & Read and The Masked Reader. In Year 1 we based our activities around the story Handa's Surprise.

The children had lots of fun reenacting scenes from the story and enjoyed learning how Handa's fruit basket was made. They practised weaving and designed their own front covers. Lots of discussion was used to recommend their favourite stories to their peers!

We held our Skills Builder Challenge (WOW) Day on Friday 19 March. The theme for this term was Staying Positive. The children were given a challenge day project, called Creative Spaces, where they had the opportunity to design a new arts centre in an effort to celebrate and promote creativity.

They used essential skills such as teamwork, creativity, leadership, listening, speaking and problem solving to produce their project. This was a really exciting and engaging way for children across the whole school to reinforce their essential skills by applying them to a real-life challenge.

"Our nursery children had a wonderful day and continue to settle in well."

Churchfield Primary School

Happiness

We don't know who has been happier that the whole school is back together again – the children or the farm animals!

The children at Churchfield have been learning more about the science of happiness, and how they can positively impact their own happiness levels by the actions they take. Some of the things they are learning include mindfulness techniques, the importance of sleep, gratitude and 'kindfulness'.

Children made daffodils to mark the National Day of Reflection. It was lovely to walk around the school and see the host of golden daffodils which were made to symbolise hope.

Eastfield Primary School

Feel Good Friday

It was clear from our surveys that both pupils and parents wanted some extra time away from the screen during lockdown. As a result, we introduced Feel-Good Friday, where children were encouraged to spend the afternoon taking part in some fun practical activities or learning some life skills instead. They could do this either independently or with their family members. The children thoroughly enjoyed these activities.

World Book Day

Thanks to all the children, parents and staff for helping us to celebrate World Book Day. The children looked fantastic and had a great time enjoying all of the lovely activities planned. The staff at Eastfield disguised themselves and read a short story and the children were very excited to identify the Masked Readers.

Remote Learning

We were delighted to receive some wonderful comments from our parents about our remote learning provision.

"I would like to say huge thank you to Mr Mannion and Miss Hardy for their amazing live lesson. Zach has been struggling for the last few weeks with motivation to want to do work. He really enjoyed the live lesson and it definitely helped him to focus on his work. Also, a big thank you to Mr Mannion for always managing to make Zach smile/laugh with his great sense of humour on the videos and the stream."

Year 5

This is fantastic!

The girls built the Eiffel Tower in 3D. Great teamwork, well done.

Year 2

Allena enjoyed the weather, we went for a walk and bike ride.
I love your blue bike Mrs Hussain.

Larkspur Primary Academy

It has certainly been a busy term and lots has been happening here at Larkspur. While we were continuing with our remote learning, we thought we would have a bit of fun and we held a Wacky Hair Day. The children had some amazing hairstyles, from coloured hairspray to doughnuts. Some teachers even had post-it notes and pens in their hair!

We also had an amazing opportunity from Britain's Got Talent finalist Jasper Cherry. Jasper is a magician and he entertained us with his magic tricks via our very own Zoom magic show. There were some very excited children, who thoroughly enjoyed every minute, as well as some amazed adults! You can follow him on Instagram at @jaspercherrymagic

We are working with the charity Give a Book to promote reading and get our children passionate about books. This term we have had a new library installed and some amazing books have been given to us to start us on our journey. We are really excited to get our new books on the shelves and start to enjoy the space.

Lavender Primary School

#ShowTheLove

In a virtual assembly, the children learned about the Climate Coalition's campaign to show the love for our planet. Inspired by this, they created beautiful green heart window displays in their homes.

Even though they were physically apart, they came together to show that they want everyone to help tackle the climate crisis and celebrate our environment. It was wonderful to see the green hearts proudly displayed in windows and many children took a walk around the local area to see how many they could spot.

Dress to Express

Children at home and in school took part in a Dress to Express day as part of Children's Mental Health Week. They enjoyed lots of different activities, across all year groups, and helped to raise more than £300 for the charity Place2Be.

World Book Day

We also celebrated World Book Day and the wonderful photos and work we saw in Google Classrooms showed just how much Lavender loves reading. The children had lots of fun getting involved in activities, including making book characters out of household items.

"Even though the children were apart, they came together to show the love."

Walker Primary School

Walker children are finally settling into their brand-new classrooms and are keeping an eye on the builders as their new playground is taking shape.

Parents, children and staff are working together and have already planned a pebble painting trail where all the children will be placing a decorated pebble along their new playground paths.

We will also be raising money through a variety of fundraising activities to purchase a number of items, such as benches and climbing equipment, to brighten up our vast new playground.

Woodside Primary School

Starting the year in lockdown did not mean that the school closed. It was open for all, just delivered remotely. We were impressed with how children and families embraced the new online learning. Live lessons were exceptionally well-attended and we were able to continue to deliver the majority of our planned curriculum.

The quality of work during this lockdown was vastly improved and we were really pleased with how we developed the remote learning. Key worker and vulnerable children coming into school were provided with devices and were able to join in with all of the learning online with their classes. We continued our British Sign Language lessons remotely and dance and fitness sessions were provided for all children to join in with.

We are so glad now to have everyone back in and are proud of how the children have settled in. We developed a reconnect curriculum for the return, with a focus on rebuilding relationships with each other; settling back into school life as we now know it; ensuring mental health and wellbeing takes priority over everything. Children have outdoor learning once a week as well as daily exercise and meditation.

Creativity is high on our wellbeing focus. Each child has contributed to our reconnect tree which adorns our entrance hall, and each classroom has displays of individual trees. This was based on the work of Kandinsky and followed several PSHE lessons on feelings about being back.

We are looking forward to the summer term where we hope to be able to do lots more of our usual school activities, like sports days, a school production and some fun community events.

As part of our “Reconnect” project we held an outdoor music concert where children sang songs linked to coming together. What a music showcase it was. It was so lovely to see all the Woodside staff and children reunited, nearly a year to the day that our school was shut.

We could hear cheers, claps and even some tears of happiness from members of staff. All the songs emphasised and related to our school values, we sang about friendship, happiness and trying our best. We were particularly impressed with Nursery and Reception, who sat beautifully throughout all the performances considering it was their first time participating in a whole school event. Well done to all the children for learning the song words, making the music showcase enjoyable and bringing Woodside back together again.

The Wroxham School

International Women's Day 2021

Year 5 watched some performance poetry from Anisa Nandaula, where she talked about #ChooseToChallenge. They were so impressed with the language, passion and performance that they wrote their own poetry and performed it for our new Wroxham YouTube Channel. The children thought really carefully about the content and how they would demonstrate their passion on the subject, which led to very powerful performances.

Year 5 are taking on more responsibility with pupil voice in school, and will be leading on our new Learning without Limits Newsletter, which is starting next term. They will be working with our Year 4 children to support them in reporting on activities and learning that fits with the ethos at The Wroxham.

Year 4 turned boat makers!

Year 4 took a trip down to our local stream during their Forest School session to see if the boats they had designed and built would sail away into the sunset. It is still a pretty muddy affair to walk down to the stream, but the children loved every minute! They put so much effort into the planning and design of their boats, with many successes on launch.

Forest School is an integral part of our curriculum and the teaching teams are always thinking of new ways to engage the children in their learning, especially when looking at trying to support teamwork and collaboration. All of the children thoroughly enjoyed their outing and are looking forward to the summer weather and more opportunities for outdoor learning.

Reception and Nursery sliding into Spring term.

Thanks to the kind donation from The Furzefield Sports Centre and the hard work of a number of our parents, Reception and Nursery have been able to enjoy the new addition to their playground. The slide has already proved to be a hit and has been encouraging the children to run up the hill and down the slide since our return to school. I also know that there might have been a few adults who have had to test it out in preparation for the children.

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