

# Wellsway Multi Academy Trust Parent and Carer Newsletter

June 2020



## Message from the Chief Executive



We have been very pleased this week to begin to welcome children back into our primary schools and it has been a delight to hear the positive comments coming back from parents, children and staff. We appreciate however, that not all children can do this and certainly hope it will not be too long before they too will get this opportunity. Our secondary schools are gearing up to provide more face-to-face contact for pupils in years 10 and 12 preparing for GCSE and A Level exams next year, and this provision will start from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June.

We are also focusing on how we work with year 6 pupils and parents to get the children ready for the move to secondary school in September. We have a transition group of staff working on this, led by Dr Cottrell, who are looking at how we can replace the traditional activities with virtual experiences. They have some great ideas that will shortly be rolled out across our schools.

It is great to see how everyone is adapting to the new ways of working and there is lots of great practice emerging across the trust. Many thanks to parents and carers for your continued support as we navigate our way through the challenges of lockdown and begin to open our schools more widely.

With thanks and best wishes,

**Andrea Arlidge,**  
Chief Executive

## Letter from the Chair of Trustees

Dear Parents and Carers,

We've all had to adapt to new ways of working so wanted to take this opportunity to say what an amazing job you've been doing, supporting your child's wellbeing and learning during this time.



It seems strange to think that we have just started the final half-term before the end of this academic year. This half-term we would normally see all those important and special parts of school life including Sports Days, Concerts, Proms, Year 6 visits and other celebratory events. These are all such important parts of school life that we will have to sadly pause this summer. Please be assured that next year, we will work with a determination to do them bigger and better than ever before! I know many of you will miss them this year, as will our staff.

It's definitely been a strange and challenging time, and it's normal if you and your child/children feel anxious at this moment. We're here for you every step of the way as we work together to find the best ways of keeping your child/children safe and at the same time providing them with the best possible education. Remember, if you have any concerns about helping your child learn or you need any other support from your school, please let us know by contacting the appropriate Headteacher or Principal.

I am sure the road ahead will continue to throw up challenges for us all, but this week we have taken a big step towards restoring what has been lost over recent months, and over time we will take further steps because there is still much to do. As part of the WMAT family, with your support and commitment, I feel we can achieve great things together as we look to the future, and I wish you and your family safety and good health in the weeks ahead.

With very best wishes,  
Malcolm Broad MBE  
Chair of Trustees

## Advice re childcare provision for key workers in critical front line roles

In light of the recent information coming from central government regarding schooling and childcare, we thought it might be helpful to remind parents and carers of the guidance around our childcare provision for key workers in critical front line roles.

The following information **does not** apply to those children in the year groups that have returned to full time schooling.

As stated by the Government, all pupils with a working parent/carer in a **critical role** will be offered a childcare placement. We are working hard to ensure that we provide a safe environment for our pupils, which is adequately staffed with appropriate pastoral and first aid provision. **Please be aware this will be childcare and not schooling.**

We remain committed to, and are immensely proud of, the parents and carers in our community providing vital and essential support during these difficult times. In order for us to continue to do this we ask all families to consider carefully before requesting this provision.

If numbers requesting this provision increase above our safe operating guidelines it may be necessary to operate a waiting list or priority order system.

Full government guidance can be accessed via this link - [Government advice for critical workers who can access schools or educational settings](#)

## Secondary school remote learning

I know how challenging remote learning can be for families and I am grateful for all the support you are giving us in our endeavors with remote learning. I am also very conscious of the role that remote learning will continue to play in young peoples' education for the foreseeable future. We have continually refined and quality assured the remote learning on offer for secondary pupils but we would like to hear your thoughts on how it is working. The link below will take you to a short survey, with the opportunity at the end to provide further comments.

Thank you in advance for sharing you views.

Please complete the [secondary school remote learning – parental survey](#).

## Wansdyke Primary



*Under the sea: It was a very marine themed week at the Wansdyke Hub over half-term, this is just some of the craft activities created by children of key workers.*

On Monday Year R children returned at Wansdyke Primary and everyone has reported on how positive this has been. When asked about their experiences over the past few days, here are some examples from the children:

"I like seeing and playing with my friends." Ellie-Mae

"I can play with more people." Max

"I liked seeing my friends and playing musical statues." Hope [socially distanced statues!]

"I liked the chocolate in the treasure chest and playing in the water." Eva Rose

"I like doing colouring in." Oscar

The staff were amazed at the way the children have observed the changes that have taken place. After removing all equipment, furniture and displays from the Year R classroom except tables and chairs and after lining the tables up, one child simply said, "Well, that board wasn't yellow the last time I was here!". We are now looking forward to seeing our Year 1 class return on Wednesday and Year 6 at the end of the week.

## A letter from the Queen



As part of Wansdyke Primary's Year 2's English work they were tasked with writing a letter. Roux chose to write hers to the Queen and was very excited to receive a response.

## Saltford School welcomes back Year R, 1 and 6!



On Monday we welcomed back many of our Reception, Year One and Year Six alongside our Keyworker children. It has been absolutely wonderful to see busy classrooms and smiling children and parents. While school is looking a little different to usual, the children and staff have worked together to remember all the things that keep them safe and healthy. Reception have been looking at what's Under the Sea, Year One have embarked on a Seaside project and Year Six, Viking and Rivers.



## First day back at Chandag Infant School



I just wanted to pass onto you and all the staff at Chandag how thankful myself and my husband are for all the hard work that's clearly gone into the last few weeks.

Probably like a lot of parents, we've been feeling really anxious about whether to send Keira back to school or not. It's felt like an impossible decision to make at times. Everything you've sent from the initial plans through to the information on the structure and bubbles has been so reassuring. I realise it must have felt like an impossible task for you all at times too.

The video in particular for the children to welcome them back has really helped put Keira at ease which in turn puts us at ease.

I just wanted to show my thanks for everything you are all doing in these strange times.

Some lovely feedback from one of our parents.

## Chandag Junior School



We were so pleased to receive these positive comments from our Year 6 parents after their first day back:

Hope today went well. Please can you pass on my thanks to all, Daisy had a fab day and came out 'buzzing'.

Just a little thank you to you and your team for making the return to school for George and his peers such a positive and enjoyable one. He has had a fantastic day and was positively beaming tonight when he recounted the day in full detail. I'm so grateful that you have managed to organise such a happy positive learning environment for them to finish their primary schooling- thank you, I'm sure it's taken an incredible amount of hard work and challenging planning.

## St John's Primary

It has been absolutely lovely having more children back at school. The new arrangements for social distancing have all gone very smoothly and the children are having a great time in their new pods.



We were pleased to receive this parent comment - My daughter has really enjoyed her return to school and has been excited, each morning, to see her friends and teachers.



The school has set up good entrance arrangements so that the children go into school calmly and safely. She comes home talking about the different lessons and activities that she has been doing with her class. She is happy to be back at school!

Year 1 pupil, "I like seeing the teachers and we get more knowledge."

Year 6 pupil, "School is very fun and motivating because I get to see my friends and it feels very safe."



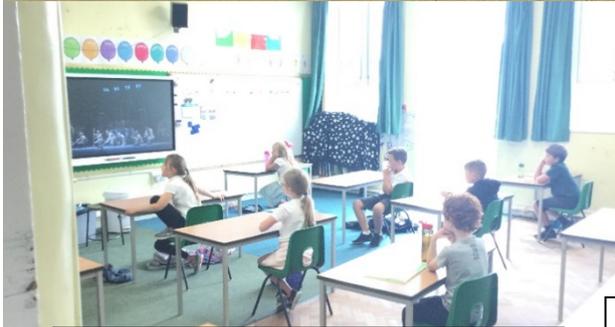
# Cheddar Grove School



*"At first I was shy, then it got better, now I am really happy." (Isla Reception)*



*"I am happy to come to school and see my friends and teachers again!" (Lilly-May Keyworker Year 4)*



*"It's super-good!" (Quinn Reception)*



*"It is has been lovely to see the children return to school from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & 6. Watching them play on the field brought a smile to my face!" (Paul Jeffery- Head Teacher)*



*"I really enjoyed today and I love it because I haven't been to school in a long time" (Iola Year 1)*



*"I thought it would be boring coming back but actually it is a lot of fun!" (Mason Year 6)*

## Aspire Academy - Aspiring through lockdown

Throughout the past two and a half months of lockdown Aspire Academy, as a special school, has remained open. Through the process we have been challenged daily, laughed a great deal and got to know our pupils even better, including how best to support them. Their anxiety levels are high normally and the crisis has exacerbated this. However, in managing these we have learned a great deal, which we hope will impact our planning for provision in the long-term.



Staffing levels have been relatively high, since we have found that the children are returning to school with huge levels of anxiety. They have needed extensive and personalised nurturing to be able to be calm and safe. Answering difficult questions and allowing space to share how they feel have been vital to this. Many children have also wanted to discuss wider national and international responses, and on 27<sup>th</sup> April they did themselves proud during the memorial silence for NHS workers who have died during the pandemic – standing in silence respectfully and showing an awareness of the magnitude of the sacrifice.

We have observed across both our Primary and Secondary centres that these high levels of anxiety are seriously impacting pupils' ability to manage and retain any new core



learning, so staff have needed to plan creative tasks which revise prior learning rather than introduce new topics. In addition there have been more PE and Thrive lessons and the use of our own outdoor spaces for learning has been extended – here exploring the willow sculpture in the playground to support work in Science. (should there be a willow sculpture picture here?) As schools plan a wider return, maintaining social distancing will be a challenge for all pupils and getting the balance correct between explaining the current situation, and seeking to allay anxieties will continue to be an on-going juggling act. Making distancing fun and a challenge to which everyone can offer solutions has helped at Aspire. For example, socially distanced playtimes – the assault course elements help us judge how far apart we need to be. And socially distanced assemblies on the playground have become popular too.



This period has been an enormous challenge, but I think staff at Aspire would acknowledge that it has also been a time of unexpected value. We know our pupils, each other and ourselves better and feel stronger to address our pupils' needs. We can look ahead beyond the immediate situation, to a stronger place where provision is more precisely tailored than ever before to support our children and young people.

## SBL Academy Hub during half-term

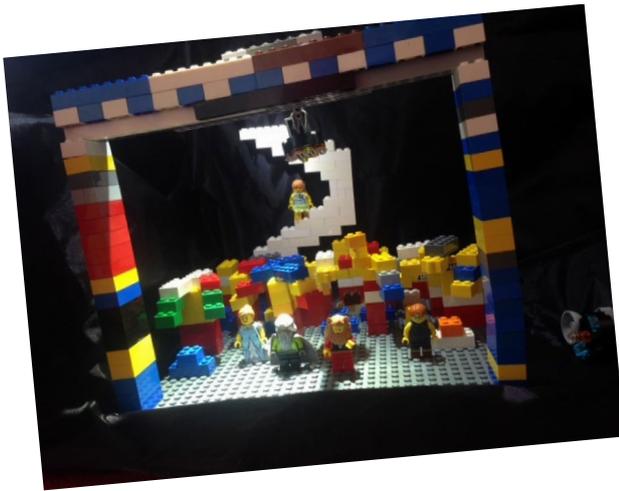
A selection of activities from keyworker students during half-term



Teachers and support staff in the community were delighted to welcome 26 pupils from all years for a week of activities and fun at SBL Hub School over the half-term holiday. Our youngest pupil was 4 and a half, and managed her "big school" days incredibly well.

Pupils put up tents and had a camp out (with noodles!), learned to Draw With Rob online, completed an assault course, created a fabulous version of the Fresh Prince dance and enjoyed an afternoon at the "cinema" with popcorn. Their enthusiasm and willingness to try new experiences was inspiring. The week was a wonderful opportunity for pupils to make new friends and explore a different side of school life. We also had incredible luck with the weather!

## Wellsway School Hub



Year 7 students' work



Year 8 students' work

### All the world's a stage: getting creative with Shakespeare

At the end of Term 5, both Year 7 and 8 were tasked with creating a set design for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. After studying both

plays, some of our students rose to the challenge and put together some wonderful designs for both plays. Well done to everyone involved and thank you so much for sending through your creative master pieces. We have loved having a look at how you have applied your knowledge. Keep up the great work!

## Calling all poets and performers!

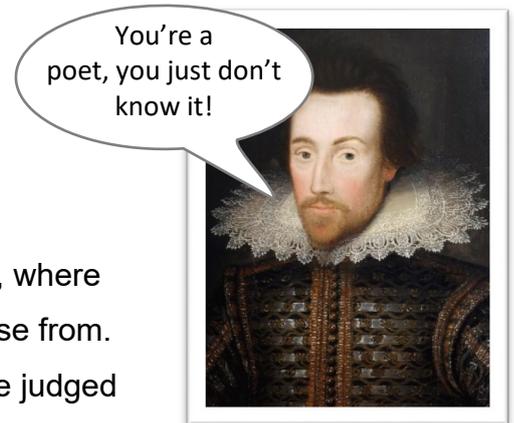
We are hosting a virtual poetry slam to find the best performance poet in the Wellsway Trust. There are three categories: EYFS and KS1; LKS2 (Years 3-4); and UKS2 (Years 5-6).

To enter you will need to upload your video to Seesaw, where you will find further information and the poems to choose from. The best entry from each phase and school will then be judged by students of English at Wellsway to decide our winning performance poets.

For more information please see the [Virtual Poetry Slam poster](#) (Pdf)

Good luck!

Miss K.Pilkington, Year 5 teacher, St John's CofE Primary



Mr W. Shakespeare