



February 12th 2021

A Very Different Half Term

When we returned for our Professional Development Day on Monday 4th January, few could have imagined the immediate lockdown announced at 8pm that very evening. As Head Teacher I had planned for various scenarios such as bubble closures and whole school closures, but it is one thing to plan, and another to put plans hastily into action. On Tuesday 5th January, with the help of all staff, we went through the plan thoroughly and I was so impressed with the teamwork and professionalism shown. Whilst none of this is ideal, we have stuck to my initial mantra 'Let's make the best of this!' and we at school feel much more connected to those at home – I hope children at home feel connected too. We have been delighted to receive lovely emails, videos and work and this has given us a big boost.

On Wednesday evening I watched some young people (sixth formers) speak about their time in lockdown. They talked honestly about some disappointments – such as leaving school in March rather than with a fanfare in July or missing the Leavers' Prom. But they also talked about things they had come to appreciate in lockdown: family, memories, conversations and laughter, simple pleasures and nature. Whilst the media can paint a bleak picture of children having time away from school, these children reinforced my beliefs that by making the best of situations, overcoming difficulties and coming through them, appreciating the things that often cost nothing, that it will have given them some very important skills to take forward.

Happy Year of the Ox

Xin nian kuai le (Happy New Year). Today is the start of the Chinese New Year and I know that several classes have marked the occasion with some wonderful work around school. The children really enjoy learning about cultures and I have seen some great examples. Children in Reception made lanterns and Year 1 decorated a tree with oranges and wishes. Harry's wish that COVID 19 would end is a wish I am sure we all share.

Further information on Chinese New Year can be found [here](#) under Lunar New Year 2021. There is a re-telling of the Zodiac Story, as well as worksheets and craft activities. There are also additional videos exploring New Year traditions like making dumplings, musical performances and much more.

Captain Sir Tom Moore

It has given us much pleasure to receive emails from parents and children highlighting their Acts of Kindness. We have made a good start towards our goal of reaching 100 and the acts to date are on the final page. Once we have reached 100 acts of kindness, we will make a display to go alongside our wellbeing display as doing nice things for others helps us all feel nice too!

The half term holidays gives us lots of opportunities to be kind and I would love to receive some more emails at montalbo@durhamlearning.net to find out about the kind things that you have been doing.

COVID 19 reminders

The Local Authority have produced some information that they would us to share with parents via the links below.

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/24952/How-to-prevent-the-spread-of-Covid-19-if-your-child-is-at-school>

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/24953/Self-isolating-for-schools>

Monday 22nd February

Over half term we are having new PCs installed in all of the classrooms. We hope to recommence live lessons on the morning of February 22nd February but please bear with us if things take a little while to work perfectly. In the longer term, these more powerful machines will bring many benefits.

Creative Children

This week I have seen some excellent work from some of our older classes. Luke in Year 5 read me his excellent rap about what he has been doing in school and at home during lockdown. In Year 3 I watched a very impressive video that William had shared in which he explained why he would rather live in the Iron Age than the Stone Age or Bronze Age. Miss Richardson shared a superb information text on the Incas from Hollie in which she engaged the reader brilliantly with flair. Well done to you all!

TCR Hub

TCR Hub continues to provide some exciting activities during lockdown. There are cookery courses, online crafts and lots of wildlife activities happening this week and over half term. For more information please visit. <https://www.tcrhub.co.uk/whats-on/>

The Great Big Montalbo Art Exhibition

Inspired by artist Anthony Gormley's 'Great Big Art Exhibition' Mrs Bartoli challenged the children this week to create their own piece of art and display it in the window of their home. The idea being that while museums and galleries are closed the streets of Barnard Castle could become our very own gallery to be viewed during daily exercise time! If you would like to take part more details can be found by watching the weekly wellbeing assembly on teams. If you decide to take part and would like to share your work you can email a photo to montalbo@durhamlearning.net.

Half Term

I hope that all children, parents/carers and staff have a safe and enjoyable break. After half term and until any further announcement, we will continue to operate in the same way as this half term.

Dates for the diary

February 15th - February 19th Half term

February 22nd – March 5th School closed to all but children of critical workers and vulnerable children

Mr C Minikin, Head Teacher

Don't forget to scroll down to see 100 Acts of Kindness from Montalbo



100 Acts of Kindness from Montalbo A tribute to Captain Sir Tom Moore



1. Amelia and Isla in Year 3 and Year 4 cleared snow for elderly neighbours.
2. Georgie in Year 4 baked cakes for his classmates and teachers.
3. Ethan in Nursery donated Easter Eggs to a foodbank for other children to enjoy.
4. Phoebe in Year 5 made her Mum and Dad scrambled eggs on toast and tidied her bedroom.
5. Katie-Marie in Year 5 cleared a snowy path for her neighbours.
6. Jack in Year 3 has been keeping the house tidy and tidying up his little brother's toys away.
7. Archie in Year 1 has written 11 letters to relatives to let them know how is getting on during lockdown.
8. Stella in Year 4 cleared the snow to create a clear path for her elderly neighbours.
9. Amelia in Year 3 used her pocket money to buy some little Easter treats for her cousins and made little baskets to put them in. She has cleared snow at several locations! Finally, she washed up the breakfast pots for mummy and dried them and put them away with Isla in Year 4.
10. Ruby in Year 1 has been helping to fold laundry and match socks!
11. Phoebe in Year 4 let her sister borrow a special hairband that she got for Christmas for Chinese New Year celebrations.
12. Grace in Year 4 has been a big help to Mum carrying shopping and helping to put it away. She is always helping her Grandma too.
- 13 Year 5 children who have created lovely cards to send to teachers, friends and family