



Mill Water School

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12th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of the first week of increased numbers of pupils in school, and of more pupils being taken out into the community by staff, I'd like to thank you all for your ongoing support.

We have been able to make offers of some time in school, or outreach, to every parent who has wanted this. We have had face to face contact with 75 pupils (65% of our number on roll) and this is set to increase. I know that some of you are still nervous about the ongoing situation & want to keep your child safely at home, and that some of you are still shielding. Everyone's decision is individual to them and will be fully respected & supported.

Staff that have visited pupils have had very positive experiences and the smiles on the faces of pupils returning to school has been a sight worth waiting for.

Emails from TAs

I just wanted to share how amazing my experience of taking our pupils out was yesterday. I was beaming with how positive and uplifting an experience it was. I only wished I had brought an iPod to capture the lovely moments I witnessed between the pupils having been reunited after so much time apart, whilst in this strange situation. The way they interacted with one another was in fact more social than I have seen before (even in the school setting).

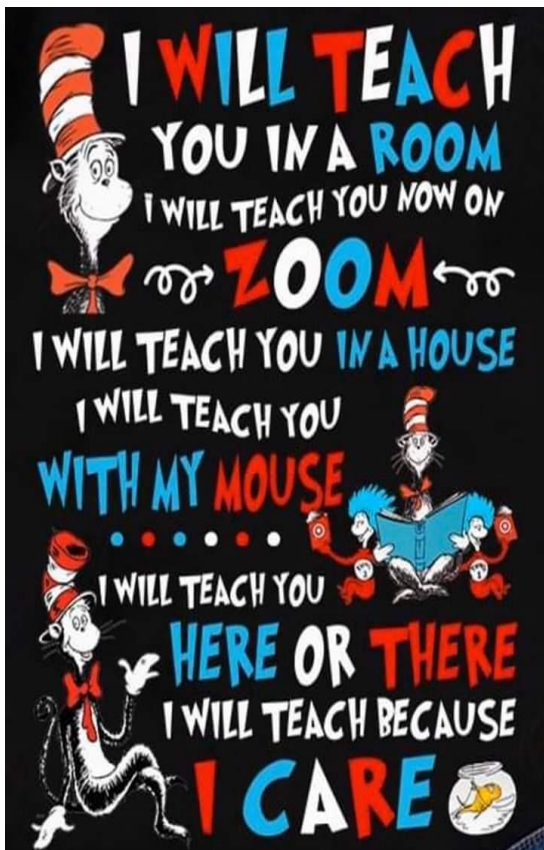
This is the first time 🧑 has come out and was very happy and excited to come out.

The weather was terrible and we got soaked, but 🧑 was happy to have the time out with us.

🧑 seemed to thoroughly enjoy the walk with us as well as spending time with his class friends, smiling and interacting with both staff and pupils whilst we were out.

🧑 was in excellent spirits and was dressed very smartly and was very excited to see us.

Our home learning offer will continue for as long as it is needed, in whatever form most suits your needs as a family. It's been a learning curve for everyone and teachers continue to work hard to make sure that what they are offering is right for your child and family circumstances. New ways of working are becoming established and I know that group zoom sessions are proving very popular with both parents and pupils alike. We will continue to add home learning content, success stories, well-being support and signposting to our website over the coming weeks.



It has been heartening to read teacher reports detailing the progress that children have been making at home, and especially to read about breakthrough moments that you have had. No success and/or attempt goes unnoticed. We have heard about bike riding, baking, toileting success, increased relaxing, sharing, waiting, tasting successes: the list goes on.

Our new ways of working within school, following Covid-secure guidelines as best we can, seem to have worked well and we have even had pupils reminding staff about the need to maintain social distance! Knowing this, we are now intent on increasing pupil numbers in school over the coming weeks, and we will be contacting you individually to talk about what this might look like for your child. We have purchased two additional school vehicles so that we can undertake more trips out. We have to follow DCC guidelines on the numbers of passengers who can be accommodated in vehicles, and having two more of our own will give us greater scope.

Like you, we wait to hear the latest government announcements every evening. I listen to the briefing each Friday before writing to you, to ensure we are all working in line with the latest advice. We are anticipating and hoping that there might be further relaxation of the rules around bubbles and social distancing, which will make a huge difference to how we can operate safely on a daily basis if and when they happen.

Unfortunately, or fortunately for those with gardens and because we like to talk about the weather in England, you'll be aware that the rain has arrived. I hope you can still enjoy some fresh air dodging the rain this weekend and if your child's session relies on good weather, we may be in touch to rearrange but as Alfred Wainwright said *"there's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing."*

We look forward to seeing as many children in school or out in the community as we can next week.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Pickering
Headteacher