



St James' Church of England Junior School

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"With exploring minds, and faith; we grow and learn together."

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we fast approach our Christmas break, I felt it timely to write to you all with my reflections on the year past. As part of this annual tradition I offer thanks to the community for the support shown. This year, we owe you our thanks considerably more than ever, so please let me offer it now.

Thank you for your trust. We always recognise that, in sending your children to our school, you are putting great trust in us, both to care for and to educate them. This year, this couldn't be more true. So thank you for continuing to trust in us through this uncertain time, particularly when there must have been times of real worry for you.

Thank you for your patience back in March, when we all found out that St James' would be closing in a number of days. Myself and my staff had a challenge on our hands working out what school closure would look like, but we were also very aware that every delay in us sharing information with you was adding to the challenges you faced of balancing work and childcare plans.

Thank you to keyworkers who continued to serve in frontline roles, while entrusting your children to our care in June and July. You must have worried that you were putting them at risk to allow you to go to work; know that we were grateful for your contribution to tackling the pandemic in its most worrying phase.

Thank you all for being such fantastic temporary teachers. Very few school teachers would opt to home-educate their own children as we know what a challenge it is. However, families met that challenge head on and ensured that children's learning kept on going throughout the summer.

A special thank you also for the families that joined together through our 'Wellington Row Why Don't You Gang'. This was put together temporarily to offer a light-hearted break from the bad news we were surrounded by at the time. I think it worked! Blame it on cabin fever (or maybe an increase of alcohol consumption) but the result was some suspect Tik-Tok dancing, and a creative sports day involving Toilet Roll. I know that staff, families and children all enjoyed the welcome distraction from the bleak news around us.

Thank you for listening to our messages, reading our emails, and watching our videos, while all around us was contradictory information in the press and on social media. Often, we found out about big



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announcements at the same time as you, watching the prime minister and his experts on the evening broadcasts. Too often we then had to wait on detail to help us – and you – to understand what it meant in practice.

Thank you for all your support in returning the children to school in September. Every Headteacher in the land I'm sure was worried in late August as we prepared classrooms, corridors, playgrounds and dining halls for the return of the pupils, but we also relied on your support to make it all work. Our unbelievable attendance figures are evidence of your support and trust.

Thank you for your continued kind words of support. We have all felt challenged and stretched like in no other time that I can remember in my 20 year career. However the timely kind remarks from parents and local residents have helped us all keep going.

And lastly, thank you for working with us over the last few weeks and months. It has been a term without our traditional parent's evenings, school trips, nativities, discos, clubs, and special visitors. However we have found a way to stay as connected as possible and delivered a remote version of some of our events. A year that I'm sure many would wish to forget, but it is important to also recognise the positive inner-strength we've all mustered to simply crack on with life!

Lastly, may I wish you and your families all the very best over Christmas and best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2021.

Best Regards



Mr A Beattie
Headteacher

