

23rd April 2020

Dear Parents

I hope that your first week back to home learning, after Easter, is going well and you are all healthy.

The teaching staff enjoyed seeing some of the work yesterday, which the children had done and have fed back with pointers for improving writing. Thank you to those of you who managed to send it to them before midday on Wednesday. Please try to send us a piece of writing for feedback and something which makes your child proud – we will try to review work every week.

Teachers continue to plan and are regularly coming in to teach some of the children. Many of the staff, like you, are trying to juggle work with their children's home learning; looking after young offspring; and, for some of us, supporting elderly relatives. We do, therefore, have some understanding of how difficult it is for many of you.

One of the many school-related things I thought about over Easter, was to consider how we feedback to the children. Before being a teacher, myself, I was dreadful at it! When working with your children, it is important that you are not too picky (which I certainly was!).

I suggest you look for the good bits of the work, if you don't already, and praise the children for working hard (if they have - but not if they haven't!) ie be truthful. Remind them that if they work hard and practice things, they will get better at whatever they find tricky.

When feeding back on something, look for the positives and point these out. Try to correct the key elements – not everything. I used to want my children's work to be perfect straight away, but this can be somewhat demoralising for the child. Choose one or two things to re-teach (or talk through), if needed.

Some while ago, there was a fashionable system for marking. I can't remember what it was called but it was referred to as 'Two stars and a wish'! This meant that teachers praised two elements of the children's work and added one thing, which needed to improve. This method would be good to use at home, particularly with writing:

- Look for two good features eg content, writing style, spelling, punctuation, etc (avoid going for the handwriting as this is a physical skill)
- Suggest one improvement (and identify a couple of spellings which could be improved – focus on common words, rather than ones which are less often used, unless your child finds spellings easy. There are lists of the 200 most common words on the website.)
- For spellings, you could write two or three out correctly and ask your child to write them out underneath and tick all the letters which they got right

By now, you probably have developed a routine, but I thought this information might be helpful. I found it so difficult not to be overly critical, before being a teacher, simply because I wanted them to do well. Equally, don't be too hard on yourselves if things don't go perfectly!

I do wonder, sometimes, how my children managed to turn out alright! I'm sure they could share all the mistakes I made!! I did try my best though – all that each of us can do!

We do miss seeing 'our Harting families', especially the children. Please send our love to them.

Best wishes

Fiona

