



"To have life and live it to the full."

Ditton CE Junior School Newsletter – 26th February 2021

Finally, some kind of **normality** is on the horizon! Can I send out a big thankyou to you all for everything you have done to support your children, and for the support you give us. We're putting the last tweaks in on our plans for full re-opening on **MARCH 8th** and will send a **detailed letter and guidance** to you very shortly. Feel free to ask if things aren't crystal clear. As part of this we have a clear and strong plan to address any **anxiety and emotional worries** amongst our children, and to identify where our teaching needs to be intensive to address gaps. But, children don't learn unless they are happy and secure at school so that will be our first priority. On top of that, it is the art of teaching to provide the right level of challenge for each and every child so, despite all the white noise out there in the media, we know our tasks and we will be primed and ready to see where the pushes and the supports need to go in! I continue to be so delighted with the efforts of the team here and it was a great credit to them that the Local Authority wrote the following to us last week: ***The dedication and commitment of the staff in the school is to be commended. Staff have been quick to take on board advice and support and have risen to the challenges of the (new) school plan.***



We hope everyone has had the information about **parents' evenings** for next week. It was really important to us that we got a chance to talk with you but it will be new for you and staff. Please appreciate that if anything doesn't work perfectly this time round, it is to be expected and you are very welcome to ask for a follow up via the school office but don't expect it this week. Quick reminder that this system cuts a conversation off after ten minutes too! If you don't know what on earth I am banging on about then give the office a call.

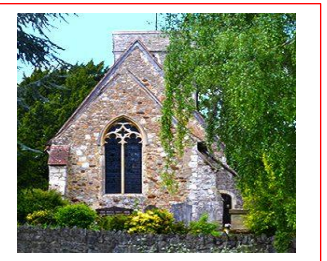
Don't forget that the **PTA** are doing **Mother's Day gifts**, a cupcake and flowers, courtesy of Butterfly Bakes and Katie's Florist, all beautifully wrapped for £5 - but they need orders by March 5th. You can even order extra cupcakes and Gluten Free available if required. You should have received order forms but, if not, call the school office to get one. Please do support the PTA and the school.



Last week I mentioned we have been working on a new vision for the school. This is based on the bible verse John 10:10

I have come that they may have life and live it to the full.

I want all the team and the children focused on exploring full lives here at Ditton CE Juniors. In addition, we've changed the **bible stories** we use to underpin our four key values: **Perseverance, Responsibility, Respect and Empathy**. Feel free to discuss what a full life means in your families and please feedback any thoughts on the attached website page below.



Richard Sutton-Smith

Christian distinctiveness

Our school vision is to embody the words of Jesus in the bible verse John 10:10

I have come that they may have life and live it to the full

For us this really means exploring with, and for, the children, all the opportunities school can provide to offer the fullest of lives.

As we function as a team here it is also our staff who deserve the leadership, support and empowerment to live full lives and be the best they can be!



Our Christian distinctiveness can be seen in a wide variety of ways:



We have close links with St Peter's, our local church.

We have a space in school and online for children to create and share prayer

We have a school song we learn to embed our values in our daily worship

And, we have four key values that we teach to our children using key bible stories to help them remember the values.

Empathy

Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you"

We learn the parable of the good Samaritan and apply it to our behaviour



Responsibility

Timothy 1:7: "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

We learn the story of Moses, his responsibility to his people and in the obedience he showed by doing what God commanded him to do.



Respect

1 Peter 2 v 17:

Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the king.

We learn the story of Ruth and the respect and loyalty she showed her mother in law, but also how tolerance in society can build a better future



Perseverance

- Galatians 6:9: "Let's not get tired of doing what is good, for at the right time we will reap a harvest- if we do not give up"

We use the story of Paul and his many challenges as God turned his life around and he was used to spread God's word.



In everything we do our efforts for the children and for each other will be captured in our overarching vision:

We will provide a happy, safe and stimulating learning environment rooted in Christian values. We recognise that the potential of every child is limitless. We will offer opportunity now and for the future that they may grow as lifelong learners, developing empathy, responsibility, perseverance and respect. We strive for excellence in order that our children can play and work together, overcome challenges, seek opportunities, and aim high, and that we as educators build strong partnerships between ourselves, partners and parents.

At DJS we believe that "To have life and have it to the full" means making the most of all of the gifts we are given in the way we live our lives, including embracing the gift of Jesus dying on the cross for our salvation, so we might know God's love and the way we should try to live but can make mistakes, learn from them and be forgiven. We also believe that God himself will provide us with many opportunities and the strength to enjoy the fullness of life.