

## Stapleford School in Lockdown.

On your lockdown walks around the village you may have heard the joyful sound of children in the playground at Stapleford Community Primary School and wondered what is happening there when schools are closed. In a short answer, the School has never fully closed so let me explain.....

The Government directed that schools must close at the end of the school day on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March. In response, the staff worked very quickly to ensure that every single child received a physical home learning pack to take home that day. Since then during term time, the teachers have continued to upload individual learning packs each Monday, with both the packs and resources being available on Google Classroom and on the School's website.

Meanwhile, the school team have continued to make provision for the children of key workers to enable our communities to function effectively and to provide the support that is necessary for some of our vulnerable children. The School has been open for these children every weekday since 23<sup>rd</sup> March from 8:30am to 6:00pm including a Bank Holiday.

All pupils who would normally be in school having a free school meal have been allocated vouchers to purchase food. The DfE has created a website for schools to order these vouchers but the system has been fraught with difficulties, the site invariably overloaded so it can only be accessed after waiting many hours sometimes in the middle of the night! However, Mrs Spain has ensured all eligible parents have received some, if not all of the vouchers and has been able to use the School's credit card.

The staff are coping well but missing the children and the routines. I was fortunate to attend a virtual staff meeting recently and was struck by the dedication and commitment of Mrs Spain and all those working at the School. They have been doing a terrific job in both preparing and commenting on work, encouraging the children with online learning, undertaking online training and of course, helping those attending throughout the lockdown. They clearly miss being with the children and cannot wait to see them again. Whilst across the country there has been terrific support for the NHS and other key workers we should not forget the dedication and tireless work of the teaching profession as exemplified by Mrs Spain and her staff at SCPS over the past two months. Preparations are now being made for the possibility of a phased return of Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in June.

The school team have been very grateful and appreciative of the support they have received from Anglian Learning and the Local Authority who have been available daily to assist in whatever way they can.

It has been good to see the School reaching out with a brilliant collage of art work, which is on display in the entrance to The Royal Papworth Hospital, and a performance by the Stapleford School Rainbow Virtual Orchestra involving children from the Nursery to Year 6. Do take a look:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HWCz260CZY>

The Governors' priority throughout this crisis is to support Mrs Spain and all her staff whilst maintaining their strategic role. Monitoring Head Teacher and staff wellbeing is a key responsibility as well as monitoring continuing education, safeguarding and health and safety. We have had two virtual governors' meetings in this period to share our findings, consider the implications for our budget and plan for the future.

I look forward to the time when everyone can return to school but in the meantime keep healthy and safe.

Paul Izzett  
Chair of Governors

May 2020