



Castle Camps C of E (V.C.) Primary School

Learning together with faith, hope and love

Autumn Term 2020

After one of the most challenging years in our living memory, it was wonderful – joyful, in fact - to see everyone returning to school in September. There was a lovely atmosphere and certainly much excitement for the new academic year. Our Nursery and Reception children settled in well and made a very positive start. It was a pleasure witnessing their first few weeks and, despite the COVID-19 situation, it is our hope that the parents will remember their child's first day as a happy one. We certainly will.

Supporting our Armed Forces

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils are signatories of the the Armed Forces Covenant, which shows their commitment to supporting the active and retired Armed Forces community. Saturday, 27th June 2020 was Armed Forces Day (#SaluteOur Forces) and at the request of the Local Authority, we produced a short photo collage to support the event. The theme of the video is how military personnel have inspired and supported us, particularly during the current pandemic. It includes photographs of the children saluting, pictures/videos of military personnel with close ties to staff at the school and ends with a dedication to 1st Lt. Kenneth Allen (48th Fighter Wing RAF Lakenheath) who was killed during a training exercise on 15th June this year. In November, we continued our school tradition of supporting the Royal British Legion by selling poppies.

<https://www.castlecampsschool.co.uk/gallery/>

Staffing

In September, we welcomed Miss Melissa Rankine (Deer Class Teacher) and Mrs Gemma Swan (Teaching Assistant) to the staff. Immediately, they felt part of the team and setted into the new roles smoothly and confidently. They have already made a very significant contribution to our school and it has been a pleasure to work alongside them.

Reception Open Morning

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we have been unable to conduct parent tours. However, we have established a webpage for parents containing information for 2021 Admissions. On the webpage, parents can find all the information needed regarding applying for a place, including a video and virtual tour of the school. We currently have a few places in Reception for September and would encourage parents to contact the school for more details. <https://www.castlecampsschool.co.uk/admissions/>

The Friendship Run

During the Autumn Term, we would normally be preparing for inter-school cross-country competitions. Unfortunately, they couldn't happen this year, but we didn't want the children to miss out. Instead, everyone took part in the '**Friendship Run**'. The idea of the Friendship Run was for children to take on one or more of the personal challenges throughout the week, with the focus on **FRIENDSHIP, FUN & WELL-BEING**. It was a lovely moment to see Squirrel Class cheering each other on in their mini running event. Friendship, fun and well-being were clear to be seen by the smiles on the children's faces.

Spring Term 2021

In January, we received the devastating news that the school would need to close again to all pupils, with the exception of the children of critical workers. Again we faced the challenges of remote

learning, but in keeping with the Castle Camps tradition for community spirit and resilience, we pulled together and worked through it.

Computing Devices for Disadvantaged Families

In the Spring, we purchased 18 Raspberry Pi400s, which were distributed to our families in need of a computing device. I am extremely grateful to Eben Upton and the team at Raspberry Pi for their assistance. Thanks to their support, many of our families were able to access remote learning online as soon as possible. A special thank you also needs to go to the Swan family for producing 2 excellent videos explaining how to set up the Raspberry Pi computers. These are available on the school website (Key Information/Remote Learning), together with information on how to install a Raspberry Pi webcam. David Swan also produced an excellent virtual tour for our school, which can be found on our school website.

Food Parcels

During lockdown, staff volunteers delivered food parcels to our families in receipt of FSM. Thank you to Mrs Furner, Mrs Swan, Mrs Evans and Mrs Garbutt for regularly delivering these each week, as well as staff members that stepped in when needed. Special thanks must be passed on to our cook, Kerry Cross, who prepared balanced, nutritious food parcels, while also ensuring our critical worker bubble were well-provided for.

Ely Diocese Lent Challenge 2021: Hope for a Future

Bishop Stephen's Lent Challenge 2021 was based on the theme: Hope and a future - a future for us all in God's world. As a whole school, we explored the idea that although there is much in the world at the moment where hope is needed, God's love is always there for us. Videos of the children's work was shared with the Diocese and the children were extremely insightful in their reflections. We even received a personal message from the Bishop's Officer, Rev'd Sue Martin, who stated:

'everyone at Castle Camps Primary School understands the need for hope for ourselves and across a wide range of communities and problems in our world... I am delighted with, not just the quality of the work, but the thoughts and Christian messages from each of the classes.'

HRH Prince Philip – A Life Well-lived

We are always living through history, but there are times when we appreciate that we are experiencing something extremely significant. In April, as a school, we remembered the life of HRH Prince Phillip. We considered ways to create a better, more loving community, just as he tried to do during his lifetime. We also explained to the children that a life 'well-lived' is about making the most of every moment; every opportunity that's before us. It is about living not just for ourselves, but for others.

Summer Term 2021

Following the Spring lockdown. our children returned to us and settled back into the familiar routines of school. They were definitely chattier, but we put this down to the excitement of seeing their friends again. It really was wonderful to be together as a whole school: we had missed everyone. Our teachers and support staff worked extremely hard to ensure that the transition back to school went as smoothly as possible.

Forest School

This term, Mrs Swan (Squirrel Class Teaching Assistant) completed her Forest School training and is now running sessions with the children in the Millennium Wood. This is a really exciting time for our school and we are sure everyone will benefit from the experience. It is our aim that every child will have the opportunity to experience the great outdoors; take supported risks, gain confidence, build motivation and bring home a positive attitude. We hope this positive outcome will echo back to the classroom, too, and will support classroom learning.

Y6 Bikeability

It was wonderful to see all the children in Y6 pass their Level 2 Bikeability this term. The instructors were very complimentary about the children and we were delighted to have achieved a 100% success rate. Our Y5 pupils will be completing their course in July.

Castle Camps World Book Day (and special lunch)

We will be celebrating Castle Camps Book Day on Thursday, 20th May and staff are busy planning a number of exciting activities to support the event. We are asking the children to dress up as their favourite character from a book. We hope as many children as possible will come in costume for the event and join us for the special lunch. Please check Facebook and our school website for photographs.

Closing Thoughts

There has been a very strong sense of community within the parish during the pandemic and never have our school values of *'faith, hope and love'* felt more relevant to us all. Through the most challenging moments, we have all pulled together and gathered much strength from each other. On a personal level, I can not thank the staff, governors and parents enough for their support, resilience and determination. They have been truly outstanding – selfless and resolute in their conviction to *'keep calm and carry on'*. Of course, the children have remained a constant beacon of hope for us all and a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to put their needs before our own. As we look back on the academic year, I hope everyone appreciates the scale of what they have achieved and feels a sense of pride in the contribution they have made – in however small a way - to our community. Despite the most difficult of times, there is still much for us to be grateful for.

Alexandra O'Connor
Headteacher