

Whitechurch National School

Newsletter May 2020



Welcome to our first 'at home' newsletter! Although we're not in school, we wanted to highlight the good work going on in classes at the moment and give you a few notices.

The Great Isolation Activity Book

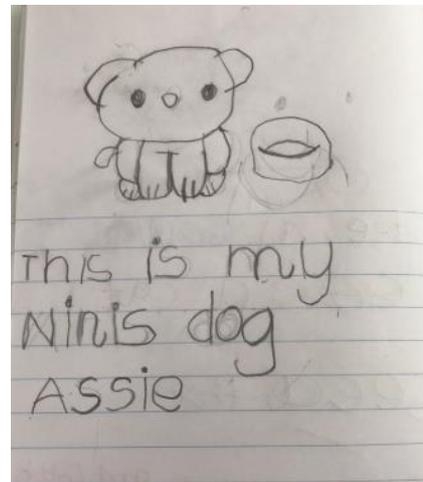
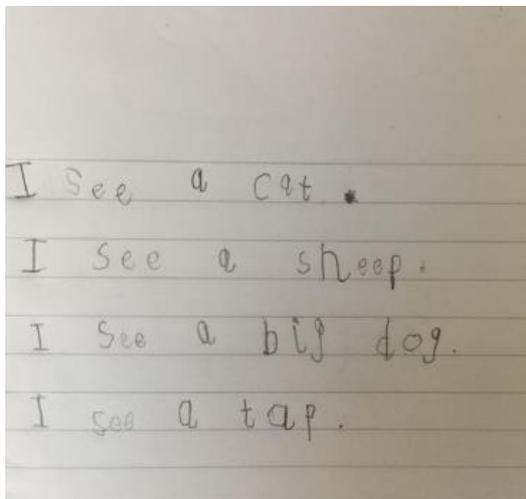
Congratulations to our 6th Class teacher, Fiona Masterson who along with another teacher friend, has created "The Great Isolation Activity Book" which is a wonderful resource for kids staying home during this Covid-19 crisis (and could make a great time capsule keepsake). They've also created an adult version, both available to download for free. However, they are asking for a donation which will be given to Cystic Fibrosis Ireland.

You can download the book and make a donation to Cystic Fibrosis Ireland at the below links:

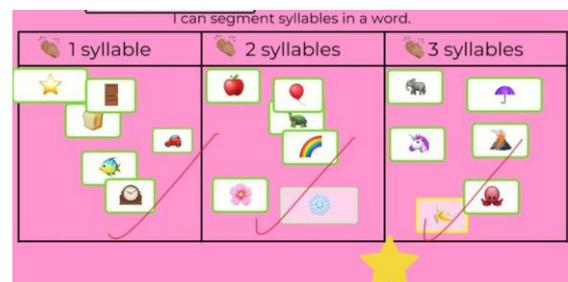
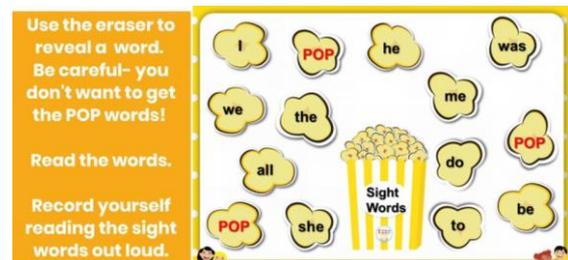
<https://give.everydayhero.com/ie/the-great-isolation-activity-book-for-aaults>

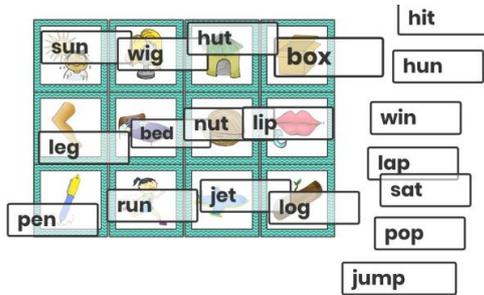
Junior Infants

Junior Infants have been very busy getting familiar with Seesaw. We've been working very hard on our letters and writing some sentences on our own.



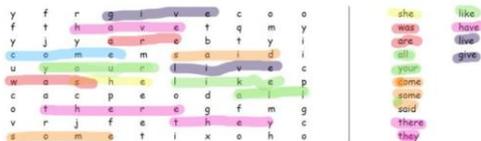
We've played some games on Seesaw too- rhyming words, reading words and matching them to the picture, sorting pictures to the amount of syllables and revising our letter sounds and tricky words.





Can you find the tricky words in the grid?

Tricky Words Wordsearch



In one of our art lessons we listened to a story about a famous artist called Kandinsky. We looked at his paintings and decided whether we liked them or not. Then we created our own version of Kandinsky's 'Square's with Concentric Circles'. Here are some of our pieces of art. Some of us used Seesaw and some of us used pencils and others painted!

For Music, we listened to a piece of music called 'Horse and Buggy' by Leroy Anderson. We drew some pictures of what we saw in our mind as we listened to the music. We also decided if we thought the music was fast or slow, how the music made us feel and whether we liked it or not.



Put a circle around your answers

Did you like the music? thumbs up thumbs down

How did you music make you feel? happy sad angry surprised

Was the music fast or slow? fast slow

Was the music loud or quiet? loud quiet



Senior Infants

Senior Infants made Amazing Art with recycling for Earth Day.



Daniel's delightfully detailed robot



Luc's menacing monster



Leo's excellent elephant



We are loving singing along with Ms. Barry at home!

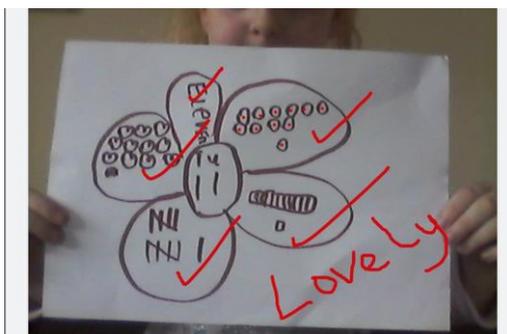


Joe's sophisticated swan



We adore dancing and are making sure we don't miss a beat at home.

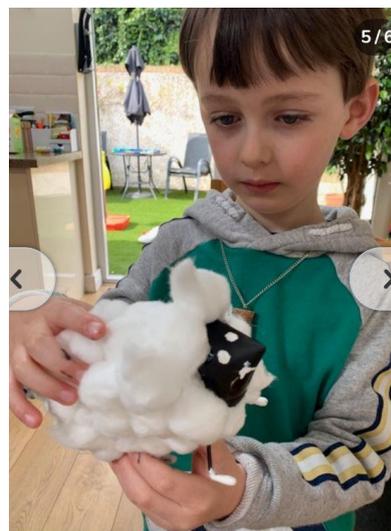
We are doing so well with Maths that we have moved onto 1st Class Maths concepts in Magical Maths with Ms. Lalor.



Our Irish is just so much fun and we have been doing so well that Ms. Barry might just burst with pride.



Most important of all, we have been spotting our good friend Mr. Puddles around the place, the little rascal!



Alex's loveliest little Lost Sheep



Tom's wonderful Wind Chimes

1st Class

First class have been amazing at adjusting to their new "normal" and Home Learning. Can I say a really big thank you to all the First Class parents who have been simply brilliant supporting their children's learning and interacting on Seesaw with me! It has been a learning curve for all of us! It has been lovely to watch their videos as they show and explain their work. We have some possible News reporters and presenters in the making!

They have been learning how to write procedural texts and have followed

procedures in the correct order to create some very tasty looking Very Hungry Caterpillar Sandwiches, Apple Turtles and Apple Race Car Snacks! They are budding engineers who have designed and built bridges, and investigated slopes and ramps.



Amy Harrison



Tadgh Hurley

They have written about their dream cars and some have even made them! We have had cars that come with accessories such as swimming pools and diving boards, slushy machines, bars and amazingly can travel on land, water and by air!



Lola Fulton

They enjoyed making Funky Bunnies in art.

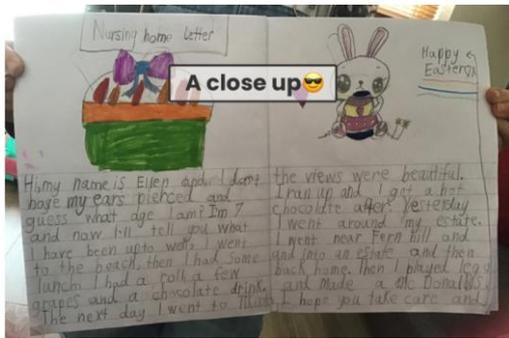


Dylan Snowdon



They explored the water cycle and created rain gauges which... due to our sunny weather were not really put to the test! They wrote a Recount of their Easter Holidays.





They are keeping active every day and have participated in an Active Week Challenge. They have all been super stars and I have been really impressed with them all! Let's see what the next month brings...!

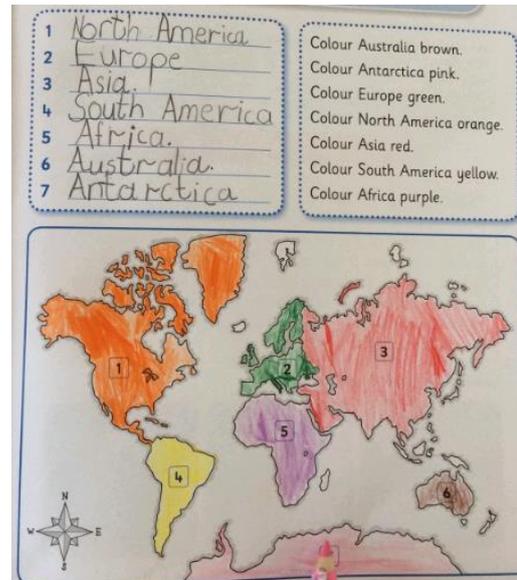
Mrs. Shirley

2nd Class

2nd Class have been very busy at home adjusting to this new way of learning. They have been showing off all their computer skills by quickly adjusting to all the different features Seesaw has to offer! They all completed projects on a country of their choice. Last week, there was a lot of active learning in Maths as the children used different sized containers to measure water. 2nd Class have also learned the 7 continents of the world in S.E.S.E and designed posters encouraging children to take care of the environment. The pupils have been really active also, getting out for daily walks and bike rides, jumping on trampolines and taking part in online P.E. lessons.



Sebastian Jenner measuring capacity out in his garden



Morgan Hillis' work on the continents



Grace Penar

Turner's environmental awareness poster

Third Class

3rd Class have been all working so well on Seesaw with their class teacher, Ms. Wilson. Here is a selection of their wonderful work!

Symmetrical Cow Heads



Leon Stewart Munnelly



Winnie Comerford



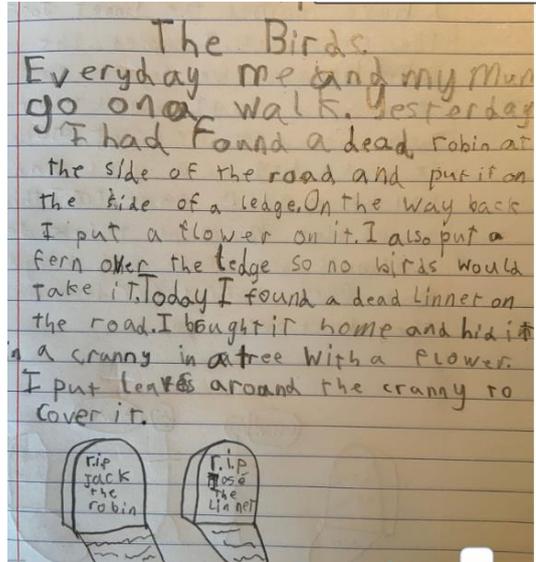
Isla Costello



Milo Mc Guinness



Model of the water cycle by Katie Harrison



I have named the linnet Jose and the robin Jack. I named the linnet Jose because we figured out that it was a boy. I named the robin Jack because we didn't know whether it was a boy or a girl and Jack can be a girl's name too. I think it's weird that humans think dead animals are gross and disgusting but feel sorry for dead humans they don't even know.



A heartwarming story by Ivor Guinness

Fourth Class

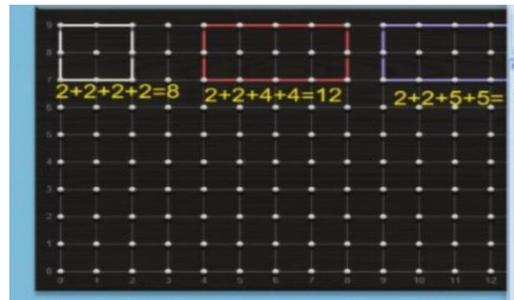
The pupils in 4th class having been working really well using Seesaw. Every day they do some Irish, some English and some Maths. Once a week they do a Geography, a History, a Science and an Art activity. We meet each Tuesday on Google meet in small groups. In our first meeting we did a "Show and Tell" activity. In our second

meeting we did some brainteasers. The winners were excused from a written activity that day. Next week in our google meet we will do activities called "Cool of Pizza", "Toast a classmate" and "Would you rather?" I am really looking forward to those activities. We have started reading using Reading Eggs and everyone is doing really well at learning how to use the Reading Eggs website. Thank you to all the parents for being so involved and for helping their children learn how to use Seesaw.

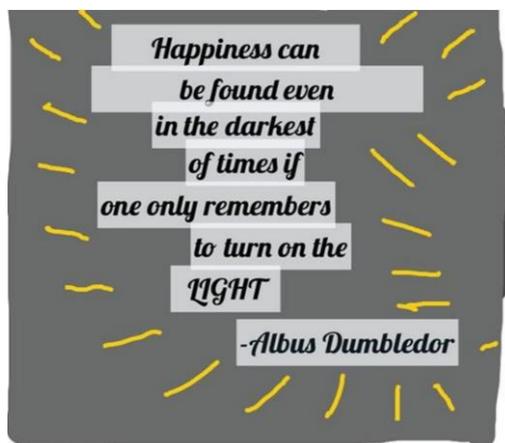
Ms. MacLachlan



Alice Mae Lyster



Matthew Ryan



Juno Bartrina Milligan

Fifth Class

5th Class have been working very hard over the last few weeks! Some of the things we have been learning about are: friction and gravity in Science, the Irish Famine in History and even long division in Maths! We did a creative construction competition and pupils also designed cool pieces of environmental art, inspired by artist Andy Goldsmith!

ALAN MANNUS GK	RONAN FINN CM	ARRON GREEN ST	
LEE GRACE CB	AARON MCNEFF CM	GRAHAM BURKE ST	STEPHEN BRADLY MANAGER
JOEY O'BRIEN CB	JACK BURNE CM	SHAMROCK ROVERS	
ROBERTO LOPEZ CB			
GARY ONIEL CB			

James Loughnane



Erin Anthoni



Beatrice Stewart-Miller



Cael Bradley-Brady



Emma O'Donnell



Peter Kenna



David Cron



Ava Mc Call

Sixth Class

Sixth Class have been working hard at home since school closed. They took on the challenge of trialling Seesaw with enthusiasm and have been showing great maturity and skill in managing online learning. There is no doubt that they are ready for secondary school! I love interacting with the class on Seesaw and it's so lovely seeing their work and photos of what they're getting up to. We have Sixth Class video calls each week in which we catch up and play a game or quiz. I'm so proud of them and hope to see them soon!
Ms. Masterson



"Moonlight" by Katie Tara Willis Kenny



"Tree and Lanterns" by Aster Mc Guinness

100 things I'm grateful for when school is closed.

1: Being healthy	51: My brother (kinda)	76: Riding my bike	26: Bath
2: Home	52: Fluffy socks	77: Doing DIYs	27: WiFi
3: Bed	53: Mug cakes	78: Reading the 200+ messages on the group	28: Sunrises
4: Food	54: Grilled sandwiches	79: Candles	29: Sunsets
5: Clean Water	55: Talking to people	80: YouTube	30: Radio
6: Education	56: Amazon prime	81: Hairbrush	31: Online shopping
7: Netflix	57: Workout	82: Battery charger	32: Long walks
8: My phone	58: Comfy bed	83: Making dinner for everyone	33: Hot chocolate
9: Hikes	59: Pyjamas	84: Making really long daisy chains	34: Golden hour
10: Baking	60: Basketball games with my bro	85: Popcorn	35: My Blanket
11: Mum	61: Climbing trees	86: Battery saver	36: Pillows
12: Dad	62: Washing my hands	87: Big green to run around on	37: Binge watching
13: Sleeping	63: Spotify	88: Playing piano	38: Binge reading
14: Sunday lunch	64: Coloring	89: Back garden with lots of grass	39: Google
15: Organizing my room	65: Doing art	90: Deck chairs to sit on	40: Chocolate
16: Group face time	66: Going up the mountains	91: My own room	41: Calling my Granny
17: Couch	67: Home made ice cream	92: Beanbag	42: My friends
18: Fresh air	68: BBQ	93: A PS4	43: Headphones
19: Goodnight hugs	69: Birds chirping	94: Tv	44: Listening to music
20: Movie nights	70: Having to save all the spiders	95: Fireplace	45: Playing music
21: Lye ins	71: Games nights	96: Sunshine	46: Starry Nights
22: A kindle	72: Making coffee for my mum	97: Gardening	47: Smoothies
23: Hot showers	73: Making slime	98: Electricity	48: Clean sheets
24: Snacks	74: Face timing for hours	99: Alexa Echo dot	49: Making edits
25: Comfy clothes	75: Waffles for breakfast	100: My teacher	50: Learning new things

Gratitude By Anna Rainsberry

<p>MAHMOUD</p> <p>I liked Mahmoud chapter because it was really intense. It left on a huge cliffhanger. I really hope that Mahmoud and his family can find Hannah, get to Germany and find peace.</p> <p>Mahmoud woke up to a gun being pointed in his face and the taxi driver demanding more than twice of what they had originally agreed to pay him. After being kicked out of the car they found their way to the border only to find that there was a huge fence in the way and no way that the refugees could get through. When a group of refugees charged at the fence, tear gas was fired into the crowd and Mahmoud couldn't escape.</p>
<p>JOSEPH</p> <p>Joseph is now wishing that he had never grown up. The pressures of what he's facing are very big for a child and he doesn't want to do it, but he has to for his family's sake. But despite his fears he ends up being the voice of courage and speaks up for the rest of the men. The captain remains calm and tells them that if they leave the bridge now then he will bring them to England and everyone agrees. Except for Joseph, but what chance has a 12 year old boy got against a group of fully grown men. None. So they're heading back to Europe, and there's nothing Joseph can do about it.</p> <p>I really liked this chapter because you never knew what was going to happen.</p>
<p>ISABEL</p> <p>Isabel has been found by the coastguard and they think all hope is lost, just as they are about to give up the ship finds another refugee boat and sails over there. All they have to do is row to shore and make sure they are quiet so that they don't get caught. But mommy's gone into labour and it's impossible for her to keep quiet. Just as they think that they've made it, the coastguard boat spots them and starts sailing towards them. They are so close to shore but they won't be fast enough, they are going back to Cuba.</p> <p>I loved this chapter because the whole time I thought that they would make it and I was really happy for them but at the end they left on a huge cliffhanger.</p>

Book review by Grace Mc Carthy

School Garden



We are very grateful to Cherry Sleeman who is very kindly growing our onions and tomatoes in her garden in Wicklow. Mr. Kenny is also looking after the potatoes and rhubarb that are growing in the school garden!

Standardised Tests

As you may have heard in the news, the DES have cancelled all standardised tests for primary schools this year along with the grant that pays for the testing materials. These are the 'Drumcondra Tests' that are usually done in Reading and Maths in May each year with SI-6th Class. Obviously when it comes to reporting pupil progress to parents in the End of Year Reports, we will not have those test results for you. However as we say every year, the tests are just one part of the overall picture of your child's academic performance. We'll be able to report on progress in school up until the closures and also with your child's engagement with distance learning tasks. Some teachers may send you small assessment tasks to complete to assess progress to help with their reports. The reports will be a bit different this year however we will adapt as with everything else!

Birthdays!

Since schools have been closed we have had a lot of birthdays celebrated at home. We usually announce birthdays each Friday in Assembly and give a big birthday clap to

the birthday boys and girls. I would like to wish the following children a big Happy Birthday and send them a virtual clap:



Katie Tara Willis Kenny
David Chuckwueke
Samuel Sutton
Nathan Barry
Fraser Carey
Tymek O'Shaughnessy
Florencia Peña
Lily-rose Lalor
Seán Cacciato
Isla Costello
Naoine Bradley-Brady
Noah Gibbons
James Lawford
Lucy Coughlin
Tyler Neill
Ella Burgess
Holly Mc Cormack
Cooper Mc Cormack
Colm Montague
Ross Finn
Aaron Alexander
Hannah Moffett
Elisa Cunha
James Fitzsimons
Lily Lonergan
Johnathan Cosgrave
Xavier Magennis
Marianna O'Shaughnessy
Aoife Nolan
Ella Girdham
Luke Gamble
Sebastian Jenner
Ramiro Peña
Thomas Finn
Tilly-Rose Burgess
Beatrice Stewart-Miller

Student Council

The Student Council had a meeting on Wednesday morning with Ms. Richards. The meeting was held to discuss the current home school situation and to hear suggestions for how the school can help improve things for the pupils working at home. All members of the Student Council did a great job at voicing their opinions and came up with some very good questions and ideas including holding quizzes for classes and families online.



Student Council clockwise from top left: Ciara Roets, Daniel Burke, Hannah Moffett, Ella Girdham, David Cron, Tilly Rose Burgess, Emma-Jane Murphy and Tristan Magennis

Some of the issues that are coming up for pupils at home at the moment are:

- >Distractions- it is harder to concentrate on doing work at home.
- >Devices- some pupils are not always able to access devices when they want to as they are having to share and wait their turn.
- >Wifi- some pupils have unreliable connections, particularly those living near the mountains.
- >Missing their friends and school.
- >Disappointed about having no Graduation Ceremony, May Fete, Sports Day or school tours.

Some of things that the Student Council like about home school are:

- >Seesaw- the pupils love getting feedback from their teachers, being able to ask questions and interacting online. They

thought Seesaw was much better than getting a list of work on the Class blog.

>Video group meetings- the senior end pupils are enjoying seeing their friends and teachers on group video meeting calls via Google Meet.

>Getting to stay in bed later in the mornings!

>Spending more time with their family and getting to play games that they might not usually get time to.

It was lovely for the Student Council to be able to meet online and discuss the issues facing all pupils at the moment. We hope to have another Student Council meeting soon.

Well done Nia!

Nia Jessup wanted to say thank you to the Gardaí who were at the bottom of her road everyday, so she very kindly baked some muffins and brought them down. They were delighted with their lovely treats!



Video Meetings

We have held video group meetings with senior end classes which have been really well received by the pupils. We know that it can be hard to get a device in many homes where people are sharing a small number. We will continue to hold regular video meetings with the senior classes whilst also remaining conscious of different family situations. As always, if there are any

issues, please let the class teacher know. We hope to hold some video meetings with the junior classes over the next while.

Class Family Quiz

Well done to parent Jennifer Murphy, who organised a family quiz for 1st Class. It was a great success and enjoyed by all who took part. It was a great way to maintain a connection in the class group. If any other classes would like to run something similar, please get in touch with Jennifer via the school office and she can advise you.

Financial matters

Many people are finding themselves in uncharted territory at the moment due to additional financial demands, illness or loss of employment due to the current pandemic. Please contact Ms. Richards in confidence if you would like assistance and she will put you in touch with charitable funds.

Return to School

We have no official word from the DES about a return date to school or the arrangements for when we do go back. Whatever is decided, please rest assured that the number one priority of the school will be the health and safety of the pupils and staff.

Please remember...

All teaching staff are just like you- they are working from home and juggling family and other responsibilities. They are all working in the best way that they can and I know from regular and close contact with them, that they are all working every spare hour they have to research new work ideas, lessons and activities for their pupils. Some families want more work, some less work, some offline work only, some online work only! Spending countless hours replying to messages, thinking about responses, liaising with colleagues, updating and moderating Seesaw, setting up new online maths and

reading resources, attending meetings, writing reports, completing planning, CPD etc. from home has become the new norm for our staff.

In the interest of staff health and wellbeing, I have asked all teachers to set aside one day per week that they will not be on Seesaw. This is so they can attend to their planning and other administrative work uninterrupted. It is my hope that this will enable them to then be able to have some free time at some point over the weekends. Each class teacher will let you know which day they will not be on Seesaw. Please do not upload work on those days. Our teachers always work so hard for their pupils but I am so extremely proud of the work each and every one of them are doing in the current circumstances and I am very grateful that our school parents have been so supportive of our teachers during this time. Thank you for all your kind messages- they do mean a lot to us and we appreciate them.

Whitechurch Parish

Canon McKinley includes a weekly spiritual message on the Whitechurch Parish website. Any person is very welcome to view and avail of this particular resource, during these testing times.

Thank you

From Whitechurch National School, we want to say a big thank you to all of our parents who are helping to keep things running and who are helping to keep us all safe and well during this time. Thank you to our frontline health care workers who take big risks daily, many of whom have become ill, since recovered and are now back at work. Thank you also to those who are doing other vital frontline jobs such as retail, essential public service administration etc. Let's not forget also those who are doing their work from home but are none the less contributing to the

wellbeing and care of others by providing whatever service they are involved with.

Coming Together

It is strange that at a time where we have been told to stay apart, people everywhere are finding new ways to come together. I have been so impressed by the ways in which our school staff have managed to connect with the pupils and parents. If you have any suggestions or indeed can offer assistance in any way to help our school community find new ways of coming together, please let us know. Please do contact me if you are struggling with any aspect of your child's schooling and I will do my best to help. While we are not at school, we are still here for you and your children to help support their learning. I hope that you can all enjoy the Bank Holiday weekend in whatever way you can and we look forward to continuing with our school work on Seesaw on Tuesday 5th May.

With every best wish,

Sarah Richards
Principal

