



Executive Headteacher: Dr C Wilson  
Associate Headteacher: Mrs L Wood  
Fir Tree Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2RA  
Tel: 01635 42129 Fax: 01635 230484  
Email: [office@firtree.newburyacademytrust.org](mailto:office@firtree.newburyacademytrust.org)

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope you are all safe and well. Thank you for all of your support in these challenging times and well done to all the children and yourselves for getting through another week of home learning! Hopefully you are feeling a bit more into a routine now and you know staff are only a click away if you need any help or support. Can I first thank everybody for their efforts in assisting their children and the staff in facilitating the home school learning. I'm conscious that many parents are helping each other overcome the technological challenges too which is another example of the great teamwork which exists within our school community. I can confirm that a number of laptops have been ordered this week and are currently being built ready to get out to those who have no access and we will be in touch in due course with those families.



It has been great to see how well you are encouraging your child to use the online learning and to access the work set. The staff and I love to see how everyone is doing and we are immensely proud of everyone, including yourselves for your hard work and support. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and we have loved seeing the work that is being produced at home. Well done to all.

On 7<sup>th</sup> January the Department for Education issued guidance for schools about provision during this period of national lockdown.

### Remote Learning

When teaching pupils remotely, the government expects schools to:

- "set meaningful and ambitious work each day in an appropriate range of subjects"
- *provide teaching that is equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school. **This will include both recorded or live direct teaching and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently.***

Last week, Ofsted published a helpful guide to remote education -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whats-working-well-in-remote-education/whats-working-well-in-remote-education>. In the document they challenge the myths around remote education, including the belief that live lessons are the superior form of remote education:

"Some think that a live lesson is the 'gold standard' of remote education. This is not necessarily the case. Live lessons have many advantages. They can make curriculum alignment easier, and can keep pupils' attention, not least as the teacher has more control over the learning environment. But live lessons are not always more effective than asynchronous (not live) approaches."

We feel it is important that your child continues to keep routine to their days and thus why we are providing remote teaching according to the timetable and curriculum children would have

followed had they been in school. Following the advice and guidance of Ofsted a blended approach to remote learning with a variety of delivery methods is being used.

There is no ideal model for remote teaching, as every child has individual needs, and every family has their own challenges they are currently facing. One of the myths propagated by the media and outspoken commentators (who have often never taught in a school) is that all-day live lessons is the ideal. Whilst this may suit some students, it is very unlikely that a constant diet of sitting in online lessons is healthy or productive. Whilst teachers have been teaching in classrooms for decades, we have very little knowledge about what effective remote teaching looks like. Our aim is to ensure that pupils have diverse learning opportunities that keep them engaged, learning and feeling connected with the Fir Tree community.

With that in mind please let me share some fantastic work in addition to those who we celebrated in assembly this morning.

**This week:**

**Last Friday Year 2 had a forest school activity - to make a den for a toy. This was Breanna's and Ellie made a den that was symmetrical. Well done both and thanks for helping out Rhys!!**



**Jaydon worked really hard in RE to describe who is special to him - keep up the fab work!!!**

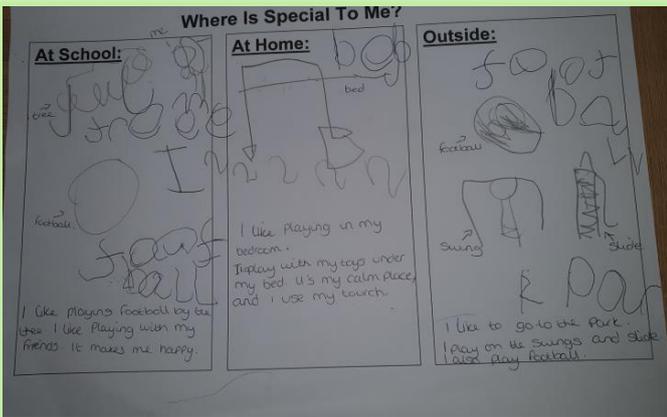
Suddenly, an enormous threatening rock dominated the sea, staring down at the tiny wooden boat. The rock was as black as a creepy shadow appearing from the darkness. "Watch out, were going to crash! Is this the end for all of us?" Thought Erin hysterically.

The tiny boat rapidly swerved to avoid the monstrous rock. Splish! Splash! Splosh! Erin plunged into the ice cold sea. "This is freezing" thought Erin "Help me! I am going to die!" shouted Erin at the top of her lungs. The harsh unforgiving waves were pounding against the frightful ominous rock.

Suddenly, she was pulled in by the brutal waves, only to be dragged down to the bottom again. Deeper, deeper, deeper, she slammed to the bottom of the black menacing ocean. Terrified! An ear-piercing echo growled around Erin- deep, dark and menacing.

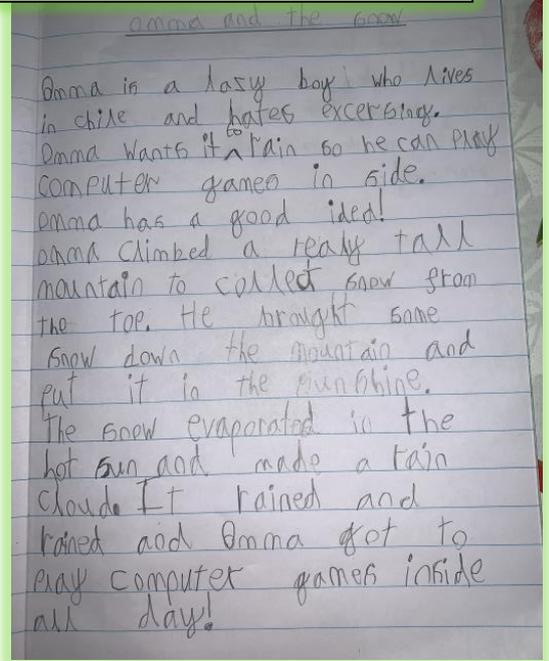


**Miss Burton shared Lily's amazing writing this week with me. Wow Lily fantastic writing and word choices, I'm gripped!!!!**



**Well done to Summer in Year 1 who produced a beautiful icy landscape as part of her home learning.**

**Congratulations to Logan in Year 4 who has achieved his 100 nights Reading - well done Logan, keep it up!**



**Mrs Smith shared Yanis' Science experiment with me; Year 3 are learning about volcanoes this term. Looks like great fun Yanis, hope it did not make too much mess!**

**Year 6 have been learning about Bridges in DT. Mrs Purcell was most impressed with Jack S' arch he created when exploring arch bridges - well done Jack!**



**Phoenix in Year 2 created his own story based on a story the class are exploring in Literacy - super work Phoenix!**



**Wow Jonah - Year 1, what a stunning and creative colour wheel you made in Art- amazing!!!**

Well done to **all** the children for uploading and sharing your work on TEAMS; I cannot wait to see and share more next week!!!

**Value of the Month for January is...**

## **R E S I L I E N C E**

Throughout this month I think we are learning and focusing on the importance of being resilient.

This value is one that we have been working on across the school since September and formulates part of our weekly GROW awards. This year we have been working with the children to know and understand how to be resilient.

**Developing our resilience will help us in the following areas:**

- Helps us to be confident people and have a positive attitude
- Allows us to stay calm at times of stress or pressure
- Helps us 'bounce back' from when we haven't done our best and gives us determination to succeed
- Allows us to believe in ourselves and our abilities



## Suggestions for parents to work with children at home:

1. Where have you seen your child show resilience?
2. Praise your child for persevering and not giving up when completing activities or helping at home.
3. Discuss how being resilient is all part of learning and that learning from our mistakes and not giving up is a fantastic life skill.

# ChALLENGE

I thought it would be nice to set a weekly challenge for you all to complete and to help fill the time when needed. Participation is not expected as it just a bit of fun, but it would be lovely to have some entries from the school community. So our first challenge Fir Tree is....

## The Alphabet Challenge



To play this game, participants are expected to compile a list of A – Z things associated to a given topic. Try to complete by memory and through discussion and not the internet!!

The point of this game is to see how many answers we get that are not repeated or thought of by others. Players will be awarded 1 point for an answer and 5 points if no-one else has submitted an answer the same as them. Certificates will be awarded and a scoreboard shared next week!! So your topic is..... **things associated with school.**

Good luck everyone!! Please email entries to [office@firtree.newburyacademytrust.org](mailto:office@firtree.newburyacademytrust.org)

So as we continue with more intensive home learning, please be kind to yourselves. Whilst there is an absolute expectation that all children will continue with some learning at home, we know that many of you continue to work – including from home – and this presents very significant challenges. You know your child's limitations, so don't get stressed by any parent social media groups! Remember home learning, in small ratios, is much more intensive than being in a class of 30+. Look after each other and if at any point you need help, support, an ear to listen – please just contact us. We have people who can help on every level, either through the school or through our network of services available to school. Just ask.

Also can I ask you to encourage your children to stretch their legs between lessons (before the start of the next lesson) in order that they remain healthy, active and alert.

Have a good weekend and thank you for your continued support. Stay safe!

Best Wishes

Mrs L Wood  
Associate Headteacher

