As we come to the end of this week it is a very strange feeling not being sure of when we will be opening our school gates again. Many things remain uncertain and there are so many things that we do not yet have answers for - you will be kept updated during the two week closure and if necessary during the Easter break. I hope things will be clearer before the start of Summer Term on Monday 20th April. I would like to thank you for your understanding during these difficult times: communicating to over 1000 people isn’t always easy.

I will be posting messages to pupils, alongside side the work teachers are posting so please remember to take a look. Above all, please stay safe and healthy in the weeks ahead.

Miss Kondo

British Science Week 2020

Last week West Acton Primary School celebrated British Science Week. The focus of the week was “Our Diverse Planet”.

All children across the school participated in science experiments as well as taking part in an interactive science assembly –

“With audience participation and exciting demonstrations, we investigate sounds and make a bucket sing, discover why bubbles are lazy then make an enormous head-swallowing bubble, and finally we create an exploding dessert with a custard powder cloud!”

These will have helped them develop their skills in observation, testing and making conclusions, as well as hopefully inspiring future scientists of Britain!

Thank you to Mr Humble for organising Science week last week!
School counsellor Lia’s tip for this week.
How to talk to your child about the Coronavirus

There are lots of big changes happening around us and panic can easily take over. It is normal to be feeling confused, scared, angry and children can feel particularly anxious. How can you help?

First: look after yourself

As we face so much uncertainty, we can feel powerless and helpless. It is important for us to manage our own fear so that we can support our children with theirs:

1. Use your PAUSE button: when you start to worry, stop what you are doing and take a few deep breaths.
2. Notice your thoughts: when there are gaps in what we know, our mind naturally wants to fill them up with stories. Unfortunately these stories often make us worry and can grow and grow like a snowball. When this happens, pause and notice your storytelling mind: it is working hard to try to keep you safe, but remind yourself that you don’t know yet if these thoughts are true. Take a few more deep breaths.
3. Avoid excessive exposure to news updates: they can feed our fears, which can make us ‘flip our lids’. We find it very hard to think straight, which can also make us feel less patient than usual with our children.
4. Stay connected with your loved ones through calls, texts, the internet as much as you can.

Now... how to support your child

1. Reassure their story-telling minds: Children have big imaginations so their storytelling minds will be making up all sorts of scary stories about the virus and what might happen to them and their loved ones. Talk about it with your child: but first, ask them what they have already heard about the coronavirus. This gives you a chance to reassure any fears and to correct any rumours that aren’t true. It is also important to limit their news exposure.
2. Comfort their ‘flipped lids’: Listen to your child’s feelings. If they find them hard to talk about, perhaps they can show you how they feel using drawings or acting them out with toys. Empathise with all feelings. And then reassure them that:
   - “Grown-ups are doing all that they can to keep them and everyone safe.”
   - “There are experts working really hard to find a cure.”
   - “There will be big changes: schools and other places may close to help to better control the spread of the virus.”
   - “There are also lots of positive things happening: people are helping each other in creative ways around the world: “Can we think of ways that we can be kind to each other and our neighbours?”
3. They may have many questions: it is OK for you to say that you do not have the answer but that you can think about it together. Empathise with how difficult it is not to know what will happen. Then find something they can repeat to themselves to help them feel better: “My job is to wash my hands and sneeze/cough into my elbow. My adults’ job is to keep our family as healthy as possible and they will do their best.”
4. Offer them a sense of control: taking belly breaths, washing hands, wiping surfaces after they have used them, and do offer them choices wherever you can.
5. Create a routine and structure: this can feel reassuring, especially when things are uncertain. Creating a daily schedule can be helpful but also allow some downtime: children release stress and big emotions through play, movement and creative activities. Creating new family rituals can also help everyone feel safe and connected.

THANK YOU for coming to the book fair this week! Keep reading whilst school is closed!

Listen to Mr Downs and Miss Kondo reading stories here:
https://www.westactonprimaryschool.org/governance/celebration-wall