

FLORA NEWS



Head's Blog

Welcome back to Flora Gardens and a warm welcome to our new pupils and parents!

It was wonderful to have the children back this week. As a whole community I know that things have been tough; we all have our stories, experiences and losses during the time that school was closed. One of the great things about Flora Gardens is that as a community we come together, we stand together and we look out for each other. Whilst these have been difficult times, it is heart-warming to see first-hand the resilience of our children and our school.

We continue to do everything we can to make Flora Gardens as safe as possible, and as normal as possible. We will follow the advice that we are given, despite this being disjointed at times. And it does mean that there are changes to lunches, to start times and to leaving the school, to coming into the office and meeting with friends and staff. I can't promise that we will always get it right, but trust me, we always try to get it right and where errors are made we learn from them and endeavour not to make the same mistakes twice.

It is very easy to criticise from the outside; I note that the Health Secretary is now blaming us, the citizens of the United Kingdom, for wanting to be tested rather than concentrating on having enough tests for everyone that needs or requires one.

The press criticise teachers and schools for being concerned about the health and safety of their staff and pupils, very easily done but they are not the ones daily facing the challenges and dangers that this pandemic has brought. Once again, as the year starts, we are faced with financial uncertainty due to a lack of funding from this government. They have not funded our response to Covid-19 within the school sufficiently, they are not funding the teachers' pay rise and the additional money for catch up has to be spent with groups connected to the government that do not know our children and cannot therefore deliver the catch of education they require. I have increased the amount of additional adults in the school so that we can target the catch up where it is required and once again we can get all the children back to the educational levels they are capable of achieving.

All this is external criticism, not based on fact and without direct experience. I saw a flyer this morning released by the Ravenscourt Action Group regarding the rebuild of the school. Their flyer is inaccurate, it spreads untruths and it is another example of people on the outside jumping to conclusions, spreading lies for their own personal interest.

The work on the rebuilding project has continued and I will be able to share more details with you and our pupils soon. This school was built in 1953 and had a life expectancy of 20 years. In the summer it is boiling hot and in the winter freezing cold because the windows do not close. When it rains we have to avoid buckets in the corridors so that the water leaking from the roof does not cause slip hazards. There is no money from central government to rebuild schools. The only way the children at Flora Gardens, current and future, can have the school they deserve is by raising money through the introduction of housing to the site (50% of which will be affordable and 50% leasehold apartments for private sale), with LBHF always remaining the freehold owner of the land. The plans that we are drawing up are modern, inspiring and exciting. They offer the pupils more usable space, a better education and a better chance in life. I really can't wait to share with you these plans.

The pandemic has shown me how unjust our society is. It has made me more determined to seek equality for all pupils in our community and to robustly stand up to the privileged in society, in our community, that are quite happy to keep the status quo as it is; protecting what they have and preventing those that don't have aspiring for more, achieving more and having aspirations for themselves and their families.

I finish with Theodore Roosevelt's - "The man in the arena"

"The poorest way to face life is to face it with a sneer. A cynical habit of thought and speech, a readiness to criticize work which the critic himself never tries to perform, an intellectual aloofness which will not accept contact with life's realities—all these are marks, not ... of superiority but of weakness."

Then he delivered an inspirational and impassioned message that drew huge applause:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

Roald Dahl Day

On Monday 14th September we will be celebrating one of the world's greatest storytellers, Roald Dahl. Pupils are invited to dress up as their favourite Roald Dahl character for the day. The costume doesn't need to be expensive but it does need to be creative! The pupils will take part in Roald Dahl themed activities throughout the day and there are prizes up for grabs for the most creative costumes. There are lots of ideas online if you are stuck for inspiration. As Reception, Y2 and Y6 have PE on Monday, they can wear something underneath their costume that is suitable for physical activity. Pupils not dressing up should wear their school uniform.

We have noticed, and have received reports from neighbours, that some cars are not adhering to traffic regulations so we will be liaising with the local road safety officer to ensure that vehicles are not blocking fire exits, private driveways and are parked appropriately with consideration to others. We are really pleased to see so many families embracing exercise and the outdoors by walking, cycling or scooting to and from school.

Year 1 have been learning all about plants this week! We've potted our own and are responsible for watering them every day. We've been learning about the parts of a plant. To help us remember the different parts of a plant we've been painting them using watercolours. When we realised we didn't have all the colours we needed, we discussed ways of mixing paint to make different colours. We learnt that red and white make pink, blue and red make purple and that yellow and red make orange. We did some still life painting using some flowers.



In Year 2 we have been reading the story of 'While We Can't Hug'. To support our learning we collected some Autumn leaves to make beautiful hedgehogs.



Good News!

Snack Shack will resume next week. Pupils in Key Stage 2 (Y3,4,5 & 6) can purchase a mid-morning snack during their breaktime. A different snack is available everyday and they cost 30p each. Snacks include vegetable sticks, samosas, hash browns and flapjacks.

Value Award Winners

Every week a pupil in each class wins a certificate for displaying one of our six school values. Usually these certificates are presented to the winners in a whole school assembly, but unfortunately we are unable to have assemblies for the time being.

At the end of each term pupils have the opportunity to be nominated by a member of staff for a Head's Value Award where they earn a Value Badge.

The Value Award Winners for this week are:

Nursery: Whole Class!

Reception: Daniel

Year 1: Sofiya and Asmaa

Year 2: Ewan

Year 3: Ibrahim

Year 4: Ionana

Year 5: Jaroine

Year 6: Mohamed I

PE: Mickey – Y1

Trust

Respect

Adventure

Fulfilment

Personal Wellbeing

Choose Your Attitude