

Thomas Russell Junior School

'Ambitious culture, strong team ethos, outstanding academic achievement, high expectations, exemplary behaviour' Ofsted 2019.



Newsletter



Issue No. 17

Headteacher: Mrs S Sharpe

15th January 2021



Just the one Lockdown birthday this weekend,
we hope you have a lovely day Lily ☺:

#LD21 Rainbow Learners

Congratulations this week to: **Ethan K, Thomas B, Rory B, Ruby D, Eisa K, Josh T, Lily M, Juppie K, Chloe W & Joe L.** We continue to be impressed by the children's efforts, attendance at Zoom lessons & assemblies, and also the wonderful examples of work that we are seeing. Keep shining ☺



Please find attached to the Newsletter a Twinkl Guide to Grammar that we hope might prove useful to parents when supporting with home learning. There is also a similar version via the following link:

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/primary-grammar-glossary-for-parents>

Specialist Music Provision

Thank you to those who responded to the questionnaire – we have a lovely level of uptake and are delighted to be able to start these lessons from Thursday 21st January. You will be contacted directly (if you signed up) with the code and information required ASAP.

For all of those parents interested in children's private or small group lessons on a musical instrument, your letter will also contain the information you require – thank you.

Passwords

We sent individual Microsoft 365 and Charanga log in details to every child this week via parents' e-mail. We have asked parents to check these work because we know some children have already used these accounts in the past and may have changed their passwords, but not remembered them. Thank you to those who have checked if they are working. If you have yet to do so, please give it a try over the weekend. If it does not work, drop us an e-mail to questions@thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk and let us know. We will reset all of those that need it on Monday and resend information asap.

It is not our intention to move our teaching to Teams, however Microsoft 365 gives children free access to the latest versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint etc. which may help with access to the teaching resources on the website. Microsoft 365 also offers additional features such as storage and sharing of documents, so going forward it may be useful for children to have access to these facilities.

We are really grateful for all of the amazing feedback we have received and delighted to hear not only how much the children are enjoying their Zoom sessions but how they are helping to keep them motivated and connected to school, as well as how much parents appreciate the support.

Thank you for all the effort you've put in this week. My son has really enjoyed the sessions and has helped him feel connected to school life

He seems a very happy and motivated little fella at the moment, the energy and enthusiasm you put in to each session is inspiring.

Just wanted to say thanks for a great week of Zoom lessons – you have so much energy and motivation and it's definitely helping a lot! It is so helpful having the Maths and English Zoom lessons in the morning as it gives a real structure to our days

I wanted to say that I think you and the rest of the staff are doing a brilliant job. I really appreciate the amount of interaction my child is having with her teacher and classmates which is so important, particularly when she has no siblings and only her dad and I for company at home. I've also found all of the resources really easy to access and work through to ensure that she is kept occupied during school hours while I'm working from home. Having compared the home learning offer with friends whose children are at other schools around the country, I can safely say that the parents and children at TRJS are extremely lucky!

We just wanted to say a huge thank you to all at TRJS for the way this week has been handled. My child was in floods of tears when she knew she wouldn't be coming back to school but has fallen back into remote learning with confidence. I'm sure this level of resilience is helped by knowing that her teachers and the school are there for her.

Just wanted to say a big thank you and well done for how this morning's lessons went. I don't want to tempt fate 😊 but my son really enjoyed it, felt part of the class again and it is a huge weight off my shoulders that he's going to have 8 focussed lessons a week from now on by a qualified teacher rather than me trying to struggle along pointing him in the right direction 🙏.

I just wanted to feedback how brilliant the zoom lesson are. Miss Murfin is doing the most amazing job at making it interesting and engaging for the children. Thank you so much to everyone involved in helping to make this happen!



Just wanted to feed back as a parent how well the English and maths zooms are working. My daughter is really engaged with the work and it gives a great structure to the day for us. Thank you for all your hard work. The breakout rooms are really good - I think she is more chatty in these and it's nice for her to talk to different people. It definitely seems to be flowing really well, thank you again.

Thank you for keeping my daughter motivated, enthusiastic and happy during her zooms. She need no cajoling or encouragement. This is all down to you. Thanks so much.

You must be exhausted! I certainly wouldn't have the patience to do those zooms. Thank you so much for all your hard work, I really appreciate it and my child has loved them all. It definitely helps with the motivation when they see their teachers.

As well as celebrating what has gone well, we know it is also important to reflect on ways we could make things even better. We are looking at ways to reduce the use of zipped files, as we know these can be difficult to access on some devices and also doing our best to reduce printing requirements for those who do not have reliable access to printing. I hope that the Microsoft 365 access will help where children didn't have the latest version of Office so were unable to play PowerPoints. Please do keep talking to us if there are further ways that we can help.

We will continue to e-mail Zoom codes separately, directly to parents. Although we understand it may appear more streamlined to have these on the Weekly Overviews and Assembly Information on the website, it would not be right to allow worldwide public access to these codes. I am sure you understand and agree with us protecting our children in this manner.

Don't believe everything you hear in the News!

There has been lots of talk in the news this week about **Free School Meals** and the inadequacy of some food packages provided. As often happens, the very worst examples hit the news and are shared nationwide, these can cloud people's perceptions or understanding of what is happening in the vast majority of schools.

At Thomas Russell Junior (similar to a large percentage of schools across the county) we are providing a £15 voucher, per child, per week, to be spent at a supermarket of choice (purchase restrictions apply). Although the Government's voucher system is not expected to be up and running until at least next week, we implemented these vouchers within hours of the lockdown being announced.

We have been really pleased over the last few months to see an increase in people claiming the Free School Meals to which they are entitled. There is no need to feel any embarrassment about doing the right thing to ensure your children are properly provided for. We can assure you the information is handled very discreetly in school. If you think there is a chance you might be entitled, please follow the link below and complete the application. It takes about five minutes and you will receive an immediate decision. [Apply online - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Wellies please!

We are really conscious at school (as I'm sure you are at home) that too much screen time without a proper break is not healthy. That is why we are trying to ensure we do 30 minutes of physical activity from 9:00 – 9:30 and also getting outside for break every day between the Zoom lessons regardless of the weather. If your child is in school, you are most welcome to send them with their wellies and warm socks in a carrier bag on wet days ☺ (all labelled please)

And finally:



Take care and be kind to yourself. We've got this ☺

Best wishes, Mrs Sharpe