

4 December, 2020

Dear All,

It is Friday, the gateway to Monday! Then, a mere two weeks, 50 hours of teaching, a thousand and one emails, 400 hours of duties and a thousand phone calls to appease concerned families to go until the end of an interesting, challenging term. One that we should all look back upon with immense pride. Right now, though, all most of us can think about right now is looking forward to sleeping...

This week has seen a number of welcome announcements from the DfE. Why it took quite so long to make these is a matter for discussion but at least they have been made now.

I wonder if the people who make these announcements appreciate the impact of their delay? However inarticulately put, the Secretary of State did take the time to praise the work carried out by all of those working in and around schools. About time too.

This week has also seen confirmation of a fully clean audit. This is no mean feat and testament to the superb support we have at the centre of ESW. Congratulations to all involved. It has also seen Emily step-up from the position of Head of School to be confirmed as the Headteacher with full responsibility for Dartmouth Academy. Tina, having played a supporting role for the last year or so reverts to being solely the Principal at Kingsbridge. The journey of Dartmouth is one we should all be proud of and I would like to publicly thank Tina for all she has done.

As parents, governors and carers tell me repeatedly, you are an amazing group of people who are doing an amazing job. The ways in which you have come to work (whether remotely or literally) every day throughout this term; the ways you have operated, putting the needs of children first, have been inspirational. I am also immensely proud of the myriad ways across schools that you have been looking after one another. It has been great to see and hear about Christmas lunches, Secret Santas, escape rooms, Elf days, pantomimes and other plans for generally silliness... Laughter is the best medicine. Working with colleagues who care about one another, as well as all they do in their role, is a privilege.

The next two weeks will continue to be difficult as anxiety grows amongst people for different reasons, as we become even more tired, and as some of the families we serve approach the Christmas period with their own very real worries and concerns. But we will get there.

All best wishes for the weekend, when it finally comes, and thank you again for all you are doing,



Matthew