

Wednesday 1st April 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

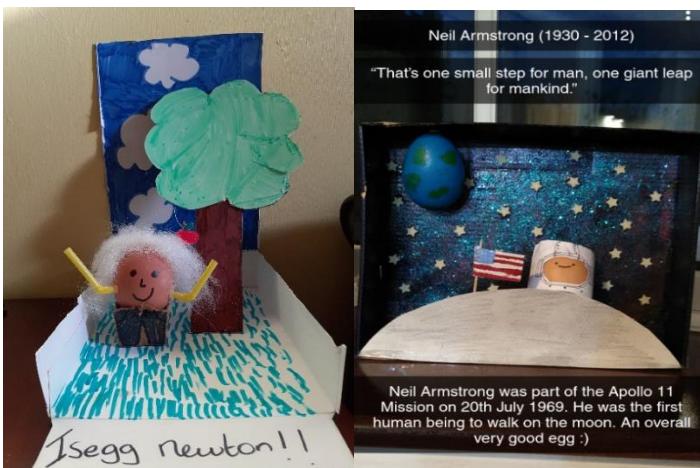
Re: Weekly update

Well, we are a week in to our new *temporary* way of doing things...and we have learned quite a lot...much is going well and of course there are things we can improve along our journey through this massive learning curve.

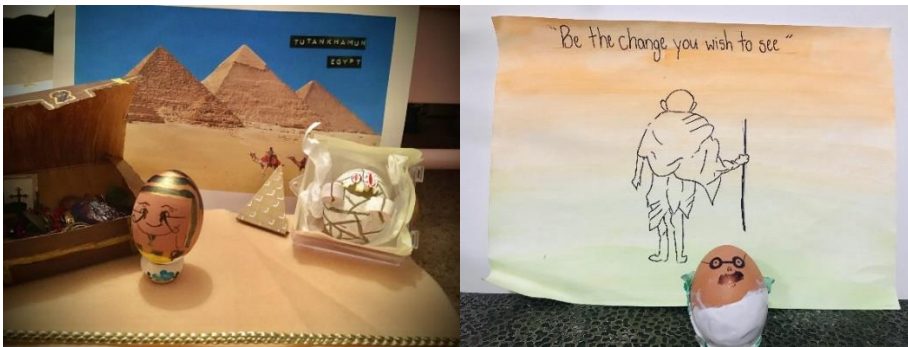
What is great, is our teachers are working incredibly hard as ever, to deliver lessons the best they can in these rather unusual educational times. It is also lovely to be reminded about how wonderfully flexible and resilient children can be...we have heard from a few students this week, even sending us pictures of themselves embracing outdoor learning in the sunshine as they adapt to their new "normal".

I have also been impressed with the entries for the "Hardboiled history" competition run by the history department.

Here are a few that made me smile...*Amelia Egghart* by Leila Rose and *Rosa Parks* by Georgina.



Isegg Newton, by Sophie... and *Neil Armstrong* by Seren...



Tutankhamun by Izzy and *Ghandi* by Arushi

Please do keep them coming in and we will tweet them.

Other good news came in from Blandy and Blandy a firm of solicitors who are this year's (virtual) judges of the Young Enterprise competition. They emailed in to praise The Holt's team which was called Utopia, to say what a great job they did, and how they are a credit to the school. Well done to everyone who took part this year and to Mrs Styles for guiding them through the process and Mrs Williams and the technology team for helping them with their manufacturing.

Presentation Assembly Certificates

Before school closed, staff had nominated two (KS3) and four (KS4) students in each of their classes for a certificate. The purpose of the certificates is to celebrate the progress made by students this term in schoolwork but also through enrichment activities. The certificates acknowledge girls who have taken on a challenge, learnt from making mistakes, reacted positively to feedback or made a big effort in class and homework over the last term. Tutors also chose a student in their tutor groups for *Tutee of the Term* - someone who has given over and above to help/lead/organise tutor events or who has just been a very positive influence or maybe helped another student out and another student for a Flourish certificate, which is given to girls who have shown true growth mind-set qualities in the last term. If your daughter has received a certificate it will come through on your Sims app. Congratulations to everyone who received a certificate!

Home schooling

I am hearing this term a lot on social media and my own friends and family are even talking about it and then getting quite worried by not being able to maintain five hours of "teaching" per day... Please don't get worried by this term...we are in unusual times...the expectation is not that you are "home schooling" your children. Mrs Kennedy and I have secondary school aged children of our own and we know it is hard! ...especially if you are also doing your day job.

To re-assure you, our teachers are aiming to set about 30 minutes of work for every KS3 timetabled lesson, making about three hours a day of study in all. You know your child best, if they are doing too much, please stop them and let us know. We are trying to set as much recapping work as possible plus cultural activities such as virtual museum tours and reading to make it more manageable, but please do take the opportunity to involve your children in other things; housework tasks; cooking, gardening, DIY...we can look at this time we have together to spend as a family as a total gift...one that we would never have expected to have...we are doing "Ready, Steady Cook" in my house. In teams of two we use whatever we have in the house/managed to buy from the supermarket and we then get creative about what we are going to make!

IT

We are pretty well set up with our IT, but every system is being tested at the moment, not just our own, but national educational platforms are also struggling and we are aware of a few issues. Thanks for letting us know about these and thanks your patience whilst we sort through them. The IT guys are working at full pelt so please continue to bear with us.

For staff, we are also on a steep learning curve. We were already preparing our whole school “leap” away from Frog and towards TEAMS and we now find ourselves straddled between two systems, both of which we need to continue at least for now. Please can you remind your child to check *both* teams *and* Frog for work set, at least until we have made the “leap” to Teams. We have asked all staff to post work on Frog, even if it is to say the work is on TEAMS to try to make things easier for students and parents.

Please note however, that we have asked staff not to hold live streaming or video conferencing style lessons via Zoom for example. This is for reasons of safeguarding, which I am sure you will appreciate as well as access to suitable spaces to record these.

Homestudy inbox

Thank you for your communications to report IT and work concerns through this inbox. It is manned everyday by a member of the SLT, but please be patient- the volume of traffic is very high but we will get back to you. The email address is homestudy@holt.wokingham.sch.uk if you need to ask about any work set or are having IT problems Please also use the homestudy inbox to let us know if your daughter is unwell so we know not to chase her for work.

Exams grades for Years 10, 11 and 13

We hope to hear from Ofqual this week for the latest guidance, but please can we remind you and your child not to contact teachers asking about their grades, as they will not be able to give you any information.

Holiday work

Teachers will not be setting daily work over the Easter holidays. However, to help with possible boredom, we are asking staff to set some things of cultural interest that students may wish to pick up.

Opportunities for Year 13

We have heard from WBC about an opportunity that our Year 13 students might like to get involved with to help the local community. There is an anticipated, increasing need for Domiciliary Care Workers to support the vulnerable adult population and they are looking for:

- Year 13's (if applicable) who may be looking for employment opportunities until there is more clarity with regard to their futures
- Parents and carers who may be in a position to help.

As with Teachers and NHS staff, these roles have been identified as critical to the Covid-19 response. If you are interested in this opportunity, then more details can be found [here](#).

Best wishes



Katie Pearce
Co-Headteacher