

Thursday 7 May 2020

"We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing: but let us not forget for a moment the toil and efforts that lie ahead." Churchill, 8 May 1945

Dear Blackfen students,

I thought it was pertinent, on the eve of the 75th anniversary of VE Day, to quote from the speech made by Sir Winston Churchill on that day 75 years ago. I do not feel, in the present situation, that it is a time for rejoicing but it is a time for reflection and remembering. Over the coming days you will see a great deal about memories of VE Day and the importance of VE Day as signalling the start of the end of the Second World War. A momentous occasion for Europe and the world. Of course, as history teaches us, it did not lead to the end of world disagreement and conflict. In some ways, nations and leaders did not learn from the immense suffering that took place across the world at that time and did not fully seize the opportunity to build a better world, nor that this would have been an easy task. There was indeed much toil and effort ahead.

Clearly, we should not compare VE Day with where we are now. However, you will also hear, over the next few days, speeches from leaders about what is planned to release the country from lockdown, when this will happen and how we all - people, families, businesses, schools and organisations - will pave a route to recovery. This cannot and will not happen overnight and there is much work to do. It is not a time to rejoice but it is a time to remember all those who have sadly died and all those who remain ill from this virus. We will move to a position of a "new normal" and there will be things that we will need to do differently as we rebuild society and communities.

Like in 1945, as young people, you have a huge role to play in building a better future for us all. We look forward to continuing this journey with you, even though there is much toil and effort ahead.

I have written to your parents/carers this week about us making contact with you over the coming weeks just to see how you are getting on and to remind you that you are very much in our thoughts as a member of the Blackfen school community.

With my best wishes to you and your family and friends at this time.

Matthew Brown