Rise and shine: wk. bg. 06.07.20

Good morning Blackfen students,

It's Week B.

THE PIPS HAVE SOUNDED! GET UP! GET DRESSED! GET GOING!!

Humph!

Last week, Mr Brown wrote about missing 'the wonderful sound of young voices' outside his office window. Well, that's ok for him, sitting in his office, in peace and quiet. He'll be writing poetry, next. Sitting in my office, just a stone's throw from the grey hoarding that surrounds the new building, I was thinking about something different: how much I would *not* miss the jarring whine of electric drills; toe-curling squeals of sheet-metal saws and eternal hammering of nails. Humph! It was too hot to close the windows and too noisy to work with them open. Humph! I considered grabbing the nearest hammer and going to join in. Sadly, my uncut and very annoying fringe now prohibits clear vision beyond the end of my nose. I look like a highland cow. It's the breed that has a straggly fringe which falls over its eyes. In this state, I would deliver more havoc, than help and so I abandoned the idea. Humph!

Crash. Pause. Blip. Blip. Blip. Silence. I don't know the object that fell from the new structure, but little stone chips flew up and pinged off the grey hoarding. The drilling stopped for 10 minutes. Bliss!

The glass in my office windows was protected by the hoarding but the incident focused my attention on this clever material. Glass is made of sand that is mixed with lime and soda ash and then blasted with heat of up to 1700°C to make it melt. The clever bit happens next. When the molten sand cools, it undergoes a complete transformation and gains an entirely different structure. It becomes an amorphous solid - a cross between a solid and a liquid - with some of the crystalline order of a solid and some of the molecular randomness of a liquid. This special structure means that glass can be adapted in different ways to suit different purposes: it can be transparent; easy to shape when it's molten and resistant to heat when it's set. It is chemically inert (so a glass jar doesn't react with the things you put inside it); relatively cheap to make and can be recycled any number of times. But it is always glass.

You are just as clever! You have adapted to learning at home; using Teams; organising deadlines; helping with daily chores; fitting in with family members on a daily basis. You have found out how to continue to be 'you' in all these circumstances. You have built windmills and walls to help you to do this and you have changed. You are not the young person who walked out of Blackfen School on 20th March 2020 because of the new things you have learnt to do and learnt about yourself. But you are still 'you'. Well done you! As teachers, we have adapted our skills to do our job differently and yet continue to be the teacher we would want to be, in a classroom. I'm still 'me', as a teacher, even though I look different with my highland-cow fringe and work differently, on Teams.

Maya Angelou, the celebrated poet, memoirist and civil rights activist, wrote a poem called 'Continue' for Oprah Winfrey, the American talk-show host. You should read the poem in full but below is an extract for today:

Continue

To be who and how you are
To astonish a mean world
With your acts of kindness

Continue

To dare to love deeply
And risk everything
For the good thing

Continue

Next week, we will *rise and shine* for the last Monday morning of the academic year and for the last time. Some of the restrictions of lockdown are also ending. Let's finish on a high note by thinking about the things that should 'continue': the new skills that we have learnt, the new ways of being ourselves and especially the acts of kindness that have cheered us up and kept us going in difficult moments.

Best wishes to you and your family this week.
Yours sincerely,
Miss F Minnis

Deputy Headteacher
On behalf of Blackfen School leaders and teachers