

Friday 19 June 2020

**“It does not matter how slow you go as long as you do not stop.” *Confucius***  
*(Philosopher)*

Dear Blackfen students

Summer arrives this weekend! Yeah! What is he on about now, I hear you mutter as you read this. It is the "longest" day on Saturday (tomorrow) and the official summer solstice is at 21.44. This is in the northern hemisphere and is officially the start of the summer. The longest day will be 16 hours and 38 minutes long. Enough facts for one day....even if it is the longest day. Over the last few months you have probably said, countless times, that it has felt like a long day. You have looked at the clock or your phone and thought that time has stood still. I realise how tough things have been for you as time has gone on and it has been interesting talking to the year 10 students in school this week. They were all pleased to be in school to take up the formal learning opportunities. But it also ensured that their day went much quicker because there was a variety in what they were doing during the day. To make this time more bearable it is important that you continue to do the things which help you physically and mentally including getting some fresh air, and having a change of scenery. We all need to add more variety to our lives when things go a bit sterile and it seems like we are doing the same things day after day.

In reality, there is no such thing as a longest day or shortest day. They are all 24 hours long (give or take a nano-second) but isn't it funny when your mind plays tricks on you and time seems to go slowly or quickly. That is why we must live in the present, not waste time and continue to progress. Confucius – who was a philosopher and someone who wanted to travel the world – quoted the above. The key is to continue on the journey you are on. It does not matter how slowly or quickly you think you are going. I am sure you have heard the fable about the tortoise and the hare and you would have heard the expression “more haste, less speed”. If you don't know the story then look it up and think about what the moral of the story is. So, as we approach the so-called longest day and the arrival of summer, remember that it is not an excuse for stopping. You need to keep going on the journey that you are on. Stopping and giving up at this point is not an option. To give up would be to give in and I know how resilient you are as young people.

The problem is, and I can hear you saying it now, that we are constantly told to hurry up, get this finished or meet the deadline for this. This is not just in school, it is in all walks of life. Just ask your parents/carers or other family members how often they are set deadlines and have to meet deadlines and have to work with speed. Sometimes, it therefore does matter if you go so slowly that you miss deadlines and get left behind. The key is to ensure that you continue on your journey at a pace which best suits you and which you have control over.

The end of the week arrives and it has been so lovely to see students in school in lessons this week. The school feels like a different place with so many more young people and staff in school. I look forward to the day when I can open the door wider and welcome more young people in.

My best wishes to you and your family at this time. Keep going and don't stop.

Matthew Brown