

Friday 10 July 2020

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.” (Albert Einstein)

Dear Blackfen students

This week Ms Minnis wrote to you about how you have had to adapt by learning new things and doing things differently to how you have done things before. We have all had to learn new skills and adapt to the new environment that we live in. One of the key attributes that has shone over the last few months has been that of kindness to others. It is clear that the global pandemic has made us, more than ever before, think about others whether that be through clapping for the NHS or key workers, helping out at home or caring for someone else. There have been some remarkable stories of acts of kindness over the these last few months.

We have simply had to adapt. All of us know about the camel and the various parts of the anatomy of a camel that make them able to cope in the harsh environment of the desert. Have you ever met a camel or had a ride on a camel? I have done the former but not the latter. To be honest with you, the size, snarling and snorting of the camel I once saw on holiday in Egypt put me off them for life. I am sticking well clear. (Interestingly that holiday in Egypt many years ago also involved the longest train journey I have ever been on, from Cairo in the north to Aswan towards the south...but that is a story for another time). This reminded me. I have still not done one of the things I aimed to do in 2020.....ride a horse! Like most things, this has been put on hold (phew!), having been presented with a voucher for a horse riding lesson in Hyde Park by some of my colleagues (a birthday "present" they tell me). We know about the camel but do you know of any other animals or reptiles which are adapted to their environment?

The world has been around for an awfully long time, depending on your view of creation and how planet earth and the universe were created. During that time dinosaurs have come and gone, mountains and valleys have been formed and new lands and continents have developed. Change has happened and the world has adapted, often over many, many years. Our world - whether you see that as your immediate surroundings or as a global citizen has changed very rapidly this year. This is why this quote, by none other than Albert Einstein is so relevant. We have all had to "change our thinking" as we have had to adapt to do things differently. The new world we are creating is a "process of our thinking" and that process of our thinking is how well we adapt to our new being.

We will have experienced many changes in our lives over the last few months. I was recently reading about change and I came across this, "Change is by definition a disruptive process. Change requires a heroic portion of human energy. It requires a willingness to leap into the unknown. It requires tearing down the walls we build around old ideas, pet projects, best intentions, incomplete thoughts, even past successes.....Resistance to change is a very human response-why isn't what we've always done good enough? Why do we have to go change everything? If it was good enough in the past, why can't it be good enough in the future? We each have a threshold for change, hardwired directly to a panic button." Brilliant! It says it all. None of us welcome too much change and we get set in our ways. Change is also hard work and we have to trust. Earlier this term, when writing about Black Lives Matter, I wrote about "tearing down walls (barriers)" as we change the people we are and how we view ourselves, each other and the world. Events of the last few months cannot be forgotten and buried and we must move forward and act. Things do look different to how they looked at the start of March. The world has moved on and we have had to change our thinking. If we don't change our thinking, we will get left behind.

This journey has been full of change, leaving some things behind and creating lots of new beginnings. It is how we adapt to these changes which will make us the people we are. As we approach the end of term, our thoughts continue to turn to September. The school still stands as a school - if you have not been near the school recently it still looks pretty much the same. Internally, though, and how we do things, have changed and will continue to change as we prepare for the return of staff and students in September. In some ways change has been forced on us, and this is not necessarily a bad thing. We continue to adapt and to respond to this challenge by changing our thinking. The world is a different place and we must see the world differently as we build the future.

How have you adapted? What new skills have you learnt? How will you continue to show kindness? How have you and how will you change your thinking? I, for one, am looking forward to being able to ride a horse and get yet another new perspective on this world we live in.

With my best wishes to you, your friends and your family.

Matthew Brown