

Good morning Blackfen students,

It's Week A.

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

"*When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others build windmills.*" Last week, we considered the school windmill, built by Blackfen's trailblazing students, families and teachers in their determination to harness and make good use of the huge changes in our lives since March 2020. It was good windmill weather during last weekend. Unexpected, gusty breezes reminded us of the force of the wind. The rose bushes in my garden did not enjoy the different and windy weather: they flapped around (rather like my uncut and very annoying fringe) and dropped their flower petals. But that's the nature of change: it makes life different.

The Chinese proverb suggests that we build 'walls' to resist change in our lives. Unlike windmill sails, walls are designed not to move. The stability of walls means that floors and levels can be built to skyscraper-heights; walls resist fire, earthquakes, gales; weather and ground moisture; sound and heat, and can endure for hundreds of years. The walls of the new building on the school site will be inspected, soon, to ensure that they meet all of these qualities, as set out in the regulations of the building standards.

It's true. Sometimes, we *do* build 'walls', to protect our lives from change. Throughout the gale-force change of the global pandemic, your family has worked very hard to build 'walls' to protect your education, by setting up home-study routines. Mr Brown has built 'walls' to shield teachers' work, so that they can deliver different sorts of lessons. Even you have built 'walls', to make sure that your learning habits remain in good shape; that your routines to keep in touch and look after your friends carry on and that you do new activities to stay physically, mentally and emotionally healthy. These change-resistant 'walls' are doing a good job; life has been altered but the things that *really* matter are being protected.

Today, we will watch Year 10 and Year 12 students come into school to start their third week of lessons. They know their bubble groups and their classrooms; their benches for break time and the location of hand sanitisers. Life in school is no big deal. This particular windmill of change is fading fast and soon, it will disappear completely. In its place, the 'walls' of normal life are steadily being built. Our trail-blazing students made windows and doors in the 'walls' of their lives. Through the windows, they took a good look at the potential change of routine; decided the best time to open the door and took up the opportunity to go back to school. They grasped the chance to enrich their learning, even if it meant sacrificing a long lie-in! It was certainly a change – but it was worth it.

It's important to know who and what is precious in your life and is worth protecting. But sitting in a room with four walls and no windows or doors is not a fun way to spend your time; nor is missing out on opportunities to improve life chances and experiences. Looking at change through windows doesn't hurt; choosing the best time to open the door, step outside and embrace change is usually your decision. In his staff and student emails, last week, Mr Brown's wise words included this quotation: "When life brings big winds of change that almost blow you over, close your eyes, hang on tight and BELIEVE".

I have opened doors to try out new ways of doing my job in the last three months. I believe that teaching is the best job in the world; working alongside the best people in the world and definitely for the best students in the world (as far as Blackfen School is concerned). I'm going to keep practising these new skills, so that I can do my job better when we get back to 'normal'. Mind you, I'm looking forward, even more, to opening the door of my local hairdressing salon, next month!

Best wishes to you and your family this week.

Yours sincerely,

Miss F Minnis

Deputy Headteacher

On behalf of Blackfen School leaders and teachers