

Wednesday 20 May 2020

“Be like a swan, graceful but furiously paddling below the surface.” (Anon.)

Dear Blackfen students

I was running along a riverbank quite early last Saturday morning. (Don't worry it is not one of those stories where I fall over, bang my head and ooze blood everywhere). The sun had risen, the dew had left the grass and the early morning mist had cleared. As I was watching my step on the rather rutted and uneven ground, out of the corner of my eye I saw something in the river. It was brown and a head was bobbing up and down in the water and the forward swimming motion was causing a slight ripple on the surface behind. A duck, I thought, enjoying the majesty of early morning silence. I looked again and stopped running. As I peered into the water I saw this most wonderful scene. Not a duck, a bird nor a crocodile. It was a small deer gracefully gliding through the water without a care in the world. The deer glanced up at me as I watched in stunned silence and it then continued upstream. I had learnt something new, deer can swim! Sadly, I did not have a phone to capture the scene so you will just have to imagine. Behind the deer was a none too pleased swan (and you don't want to annoy one of those). It was an incredible scene and put a spring in my step for the rest of my run. The first thing I looked up on my return home was whether deer can swim. I had seen it but did not quite believe it. Of course, they can!

Earlier this week Ms Minnis wrote further to you about tomato plants! Just like the work of the roots working hard beneath the ground to keep the plant going, so the legs of the deer and the webbed feet of the swan were working hard and furiously to keep swimming....and to keep looking elegant and unflustered. I am sure, over the last few months, there have been times when you have had to paddle furiously and fast just to keep up with things, whether that be school work, a family situation or the ever changing news reports. On the surface, you have looked calm but deep down it has been hard work to show this. Make sure that, if you feel you are struggling to keep up and to remain calm and not stressed, you seek some support and talk to someone about this. We all know that it is hard work to keep up on this journey we are on and sometimes we just need some help so that we can, like the deer and the swan, continue to look graceful and move forward. There is no shame in seeking help. A list of useful resources including help sheets and contacts are on the Covid-19 section of the website.

A reminder that today is thank a teacher/member of staff working in school day. I will thank staff on your behalf but it would be great if you could do this too.

With my best wishes to you and your family and friends.
Matthew Brown