

Good morning Blackfen students,

It's Week A.

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

WOW! Did you see the gigantic crane on the school site, in Mr Brown's email photograph, last week? I was so shocked by its sudden appearance that I almost forgot to drive forward when the school gates opened. You simply couldn't miss it.

Mr Brown compared the huge crane to a huge helping hand, enabling people to do a difficult job that they could not complete on their own. It reminded me of the *trail-blazers* that we considered last week, who step in, step up, step forward and leave a trail for people to follow and do difficult things. In his wise words, Mr Brown quoted the trail-blazing motto of Jesse Jackson (Sr) that gets the best out of each one of us: "Never look down on anyone unless you are helping them up". The Queen, at the age of 94, single-handedly raised the hopes of a nation in lockdown, when she told us, "We will meet again" and proved that age is no barrier to trail-blazing inspiration. "How dare you!" raged Greta Thunberg at the UN climate summit in New York, last September, dramatically blazing the environment trail that young people across the globe followed with courage and determination. These are the public trail-blazers who dare to go first and leave a trail that endures for years to come. Without them, it would be a bit more difficult to do magnificent things, on our own. You can't miss them.

Public trail-blazing starts privately, with a helping hand. Jesse Jackson, Elizabeth Windsor and Greta Thunberg grew up with parents, brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles and best friends whose names and backgrounds we don't know so well but who quietly nurtured the passion, beliefs and talents which would lead the world in new directions. Without the private, helping hand of their family and friends, our public trail-blazers would not have taken their magnificent actions.

Almost invisibly, the helping hand of your family and friends guide you, as you find your feet, find your goals and find the trail that you will blaze in adult life. Have you ever considered the private trails of these people? I think about my Dad, who grew up on a farm in Newry but took his small family on the trail to Scotland and then onwards, to live in England. Would I be working in Blackfen School, without his bold decisions? Or my Mum, who studied for extra qualifications after completing her teacher-training course, despite opposition from tutors who, at that time, didn't think teaching required specialist knowledge. Would I have developed a passion for education without her resolute beliefs? These are the private trail-blazers who take quiet and magnificent decisions.

The quiet and private trails of your family have endured for years. Their life-experience, beliefs and decisions shape the helping hand that you take for granted. This week, you might be meeting elderly relatives who have shielded for almost three months in their own homes. Take time, while there is time, to discover their magnificent trail over many years and see how it has directed the trail of your family (and you). The legacy of family trail-blazers is in your head and in your heart. Their vision, courage and love is part of you, being you. You can't miss it.

Who's to say that your trail, quietly nurtured and guided by those helping hands, won't be the next magnificent action that inspires a nation to follow in your footsteps?

Best wishes to you and your family this week.

Yours sincerely,

Miss F Minnis

Deputy Headteacher

On behalf of Blackfen School leaders and teachers