

# HENDON NEWS

12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021

## Headteacher Message

Dear parents, carers and children,

**Gung hay fat choy!** This is how Cantonese speakers wish you a happy new year—"wishing you great happiness and prosperity." During my time living and working in Hong Kong and Singapore, this very special time of year in Asia is spent catching up with family and friends; something that we can all appreciate and are eager to return to. This year of the ox feels very fitting. Oxen are hard workers, intelligent and reliable, and always humble and helpful. In Chinese culture, the ox is much valued and over the past 6 weeks during this national lockdown I have continued to be witness to our hard-working and super resilient students who have adapted and have shown such an excellent work ethic.

Thank you to all parents who attended Parent/Teacher conferences this week. We had a huge turnout, with 90% of parents engaging with teachers to discuss progress this term. Feedback for the online system has been very positive and one of the things we may retain for your convenience moving forward.

We hope that the week ahead will be one spent happily and largely offline for children who can engage in a range of physical and creative activities before we resume online learning again. I will of course keep you informed as to any government plans to re-open school and I know we are all eagerly waiting for the announcement that gives us the go-ahead.

Wishing you all a happy and safe half term. We will see you all back online on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

Be well,

Mrs Gorasia

## School News

### Half Term

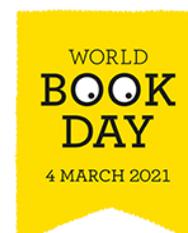
Just a reminder that next week is February half term and the school will be closed. Teachers will respond to any communications after they return on **Monday 22nd February**. Suggested online learning timetables for the Prep school will be sent out as usual next Friday 19th February for the week commencing 22nd February. After review and reflection, Pre-Prep timetables will remain unchanged.

### Internal Assessments

The week following each half term is usually our termly 'assessment' week for Years 1-6. These assessments form part of a learning and progress picture which informs teacher planning, next steps and is used as part of report writing. Whilst online we will do 'light-touch' modified assessments which we hope parents will support by allowing students to show what they can do independently. Once we return to school we will resume our normal schedule of monitoring progress.

### World Book Day

World Book Day is on **Thursday 4th March 2021**. Whether you are in school (Preschool and Critical Worker Care) or at home online, we want to celebrate this day and have everyone dressed up as their favourite book character. This year you will receive your £1 digital book token via the World Book Day website. Please visit <https://www.worldbookday.com/> for details on how and where to use your token.



## Resources for Half Term

With galleries and attractions still closed and travel restricted, the school has collated some resources which parents may find useful to help keep children entertained during the half term break.

Please don't forget to encourage regular 'outside break' times if you have a garden or nearby park and try to make time for regular family walks, which are not only good for physical well-being but also mental well-being.

### Free Reading Resources

To support children with reading during half term and lockdown, here are some websites and apps that offer free books, games and resources:

The Oak Academy are offering free books to support pupils and parents during lockdown.

<https://www.thenational.academy/>

Oxford Owls offer online books that improve independent reading as it allows pupils to check words that they could not decode. Books for younger pupils are also grouped in stages and book bands to ensure that they are appropriately pitched.

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/>

BookTrust Online provide free stories and games:

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/storybooks-and-games/>

Amazon are offering some free books for a Kindle, if you are a Prime member:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Childrens-eBooks-Prime-Reading-Eligible-Kindle/s?rh=n%3A362219031%2Cp\\_n\\_special\\_merchandising\\_browse-bin%3A12713393031](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Childrens-eBooks-Prime-Reading-Eligible-Kindle/s?rh=n%3A362219031%2Cp_n_special_merchandising_browse-bin%3A12713393031)

For younger pupils, the CBeebies Apps also offer some interactive books.

### FREE SuperCamps 'Live' this half term (15th - 19th February)

This half term our colleagues at Supercamps are offering free live streamed activities every morning and every afternoon. Creative messy play and physical contests are just some of the fun being delivered. If your child is aged

3-9 and would like to join a 30 minute session simply register your details to receive the free link:

<https://www.supercamps.co.uk/live>

Sessions are daily and as follows:

- AM: 10:30 - 11:00 - Early Years
- PM: 14:30 - 15:00 - Age 6-9 years

There are also many more free downloadable resources, including printed packs and videos at the SuperCamps website:

<https://www.supercamps.co.uk/access-free-activity-resources>

### Calling all Budding Artists

Hendon Prep are entering students into the following 2 art competitions and this half term is a great opportunity to get offline and creative.

- ISA (Independent Schools Association)  
Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021



- Royal Academy Young Artists Summer Show  
Deadline: 26<sup>th</sup> April 21

**Young  
Artists'  
Summer  
Show**

- Age: 5 to 11
- Theme: Any

All you need to do is create a piece of art (a painting, drawing, sculpture, print or photograph) that you feel really proud of and it may be entered into either/both of these competitions. Please submit your entry directly to Mrs Weigert via the school office.

# COGNITA



12 February 2021

It is hard to believe that it has been nearly a year since I last wrote to you about how we were working in partnership with your child's school to respond to the challenges of Covid-19. I thought I might share some reflections with you on developments over the last 12 months and how we are preparing to emerge positively from this highly disruptive event.

In the first lockdown there was a sense that we would soon see a return to normality and there was a surge of adrenaline as we adapted swiftly to online teaching and working from home. This time, parents, pupils, and staff are drawing on their reserves of energy to keep going, hoping that we can all get back to school in March as and when restrictions are lifted.

I think I speak on behalf of all my team by saying how very proud we are of the way in which our school communities have pulled together and adapted to the changing circumstances over the last year. We are all very proud of our pupils as they have shown discipline and keenness to learn during the pandemic. It is a particularly tough time for them, but teachers and support staff have shared with me many stories of their versatility and adaptability. Of course, the mental health and wellbeing of your children is our number one concern. Lack of socialising with peers, isolation and anxiety brought on by uncertainty about the future have all contributed to a surge in mental health issues across the UK. Fortunately, Cognita schools are well-placed to address this. Our pastoral approach continues even in the virtual world with many opportunities for children in terms of social connection and building community spirit. Equally, our teachers all look out for evidence of children who are at risk of wellbeing or mental health issues and our adoption of AS Tracking already being rolled out in many of our schools will increasingly help us monitor and address detrimental impacts on children where on the surface all seems fine. Our wellbeing programme continues to be an important focus to ensure all students can flourish.

I am also very proud of our teaching staff who have themselves been on a steep learning curve to adopt new software platforms which enable high quality online teaching including personalised learning pathways, use of breakout rooms, enhanced feedback to children, and tracking of progress. Teachers were trained to have the classroom as their 'stage' and spent years perfecting their teaching and differentiation skills, classroom management and motivation tactics in this format. How quickly they have learned to be masters of the virtual classroom as well!

Parents too have played a critical role in maintaining their children's focus on learning and we are extremely grateful for your partnership and support. We are very pleased that for the most part, the educational trajectory of our children has been maintained despite all the disruption of Covid-19, and we appreciate the kind and valuable feedback we have received from parents. Thank you. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's learning and/or wellbeing, I urge you to raise them with your child's school as soon as you can.

Cognita Europe has invested over £10m this year in Educational Technology, transforming our IT infrastructure and software and distributing laptops to all children from Years 3 to 13 in our 40 UK schools. As children move up into these year groups, they too will be given a device. This has underpinned our ability to maintain uninterrupted education of your children and has also released an explosion of online best practice sharing among our 2,000+ staff.

We were honoured that Cognita's EdTech strategy was cited by Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella as an exemplar in Europe at the recent British Educational Training and Technology (BETT) conference. Teachers have never worked harder to care for your children. Whilst most staff are teaching online, schools do remain open to look after Key Worker and vulnerable children. We currently have an average attendance of 10-15% across our schools, though for some this is over 30%. We have not furloughed any teaching staff so we can ensure the highest quality of provision during this lockdown.

At Cognita we have sought to contribute to the wider good of the education sector. We led a campaign to lobby government, along with HMC and several Multi Academy Trusts, to vaccinate the UK's 1m school staff over the half term break using a network of 150 school premises including our own. We have managed to push the subject of the early vaccination of teachers well up the government agenda and hope there may yet be a positive result for schools.

Whilst the pandemic has brought much sorrow and disruption, there are also some silver linings. At Cognita we feel energized by the prospect of leveraging the best opportunities provided by technology for teaching and learning in the future. This will work alongside our focus on developing character and the future skills required for our children to be successful in the society of the 2020s and 2030s.

Thank you for your ongoing support. We all remain committed to delivering the best possible educational experience for your child despite the constraints of the pandemic. We, like you, look forward to schools re-opening soon and are eager to welcome your children back.

Yours sincerely



**Chief Executive Officer, Europe**

#### **Lunch Credit Update**

Further to our recent letter, we are continuing to work through the credits that can be given for savings on catering for the Spring term. We are still reviewing and negotiating with our catering suppliers the cost savings that can be made, given that there is a fixed element to their service and given the exact duration of the lockdown is not yet known. We will push to maximise these savings whilst respecting the need to ensure, as a valued supplier, that they are able to perform again once the school fully reopens. Our Finance team will be able to provide specific detail on this in due course and a credit for catering will be refunded to parents in the Summer term bill.

