



Thursday 30th June 2022

PRINCIPAL'S END OF YEAR LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents,

It is hard to believe that another school year has come and gone. While the 2021-2022 school year was not affected by Coronavirus as much as the previous two years, its impact was still felt during terms one and two. In fact, during January and February of this year, we experienced the highest number of confirmed cases and lowest attendance of any time since Covid arrived. We did however, come through these very difficult times by working closely together, parents sharing news of what was going on at home concerning Covid and by continuing to follow the precautionary steps we had learned to take in previous years. When we could, we relaxed in-school restrictions; when case numbers rose, we re-tightened our procedures. Openness, common sense and teamwork brought us through. Thank you!

In May, our school community was devastated by the death of Poppy Ogle, a pupil in our P6 class. Poppy was an amazing child who is missed every single day by school: her classmates and her teachers and assistants. There is no text book for schools to follow in such terrible circumstances but once again, our school community (children, parents, staff, governors, local Churches, Julie our school counsellor and the remarkable Ogle family pulled together to help each other find a way through the initial shock and heartbreak of those initial days and first few weeks. We continue to grieve for Poppy and her family but are so thankful that our lives were blessed and made better by knowing her. Sharon, Mark, Maddison and Isaac will remain very much in our hearts, minds and prayers over the summer break and over the months to come. We will be in touch you in the autumn with details of how our school plans to celebrate and commemorate Poppy's life.

So the past year has brought sickness and heartbreak for many. It has also brought hardship for many, as we have watched a crisis develop with the cost of living. Cregagh Primary School has helped families connect with thousands of pounds of financial support, food supplies and uniform grants. These things cannot be 'advertised' for fear of breaking confidentiality but I know of no other school (anywhere) that works harder than Cregagh Primary in trying to support the **whole** family and we are so happy to be making a practical difference to many.

Throughout the past year we have also enjoyed countless good news stories, successes and victories. Just last week, we celebrated excellence in attendance (100%) and *Good To Be Green* Super Gold winners at a glistening Prize Day celebration. These awards reward our pupils for their hard work over many months and in the case of our P7 pupils, many years. We've also known sporting and exam success, with our pupils making fantastic progress across the curriculum. We also saw the completion of our new Family Resource Centre that will be officially opened in the autumn.

In summary, it should hardly be a surprise to find children and staff happy to reach the end of what has been a very challenging school year: the most difficult by far of my 23 years spent at Cregagh Primary. However, I am greatly encouraged and heartened by the fact that we have made it this far. If there ever was a time to find out whether "Learning, Family and Community" meant anything more than mere words on a little East Belfast Primary School's jumper, it was this year. And we did find out. And it does mean more. And I thank you all.

On behalf of the school governors, staff, girls and boys, I wish you all a restful and enjoyable summer break.

Yours sincerely,

D. Heggarty B.Ed., M.Ed., PQHNI
PRINCIPAL