

15th January 2021



Rockport Newsletter

The latest news and updates from Rockport School



Headmaster's Headlines

The Salami Approach (Or How to Eat an Elephant): The Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) makes it clear that if children fail to engage effectively with remote learning (or that if schools fail to provide it) it could potentially hinder a pupil's long-term engagement with education, leading to undue levels of stress on their return to full time schooling.

The trouble is that the process of remote teaching and learning brings its own unique stresses. Long hours spent in front of a computer screen, muting and unmuting tinny sounds, with cameras off and an inevitably intermittent reception eventually becomes draining and mentally exhausting for student and teacher alike. It is certainly never going to replace the magic of bringing people together in the same place, creating those special times in a lesson when everything comes together and the 'flow' happens. And if we try to look forward or plan ahead too much there is a danger that we can become overwhelmed with the sheer volume of work that we see have to get through whilst working in this semi-detached environment.

I'm guessing that the patron saint of animals *Francis of Assisi* didn't eat much elephant in his time but he certainly seemed to understand the 'one bite at a time' approach when he said:

"Start by doing what's necessary, then do what's possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

With four weeks to go until half term (and despite the hope provided by the current vaccination programme), our strategy definitely involves not looking too far down the road but instead doing what is necessary and possible each day and, as we did in the spring of 2020, together, bit by bit, we might just achieve the impossible.

George Vance

Headmaster

General News

Online Learning

Well done to all of those students who have managed to engage with every single session on Meet with their teachers; I've been keeping a close eye on online attendance and I'm delighted to report that there are several year groups in the school where 100% attendance at Meet sessions has been reported every day this week. This is no mean feat and it means that learning continues apace for all students who are engaged and focused in what they are doing.

We are encouraging all students to activate their cameras at the start of Meet sessions, so that the teacher can verify who is in the virtual classroom; it is up to the individual teachers thereafter if they wish to have cameras on or off.

On a separate note, a reminder also that students should review the security of their Google accounts and reset passwords if they haven't already moved from the default password set up when their account was initially activated by Mr Smith.

Mrs Rhonda D. Palmer

Deputy Head

Keep Dancing!

Lockdown isn't stopping our dance team! Our students have logged on each week for virtual dance lessons which have included body conditioning, stretching and even TikTok challenges. This week was unmissable as we had a very special guest coach join us virtually!

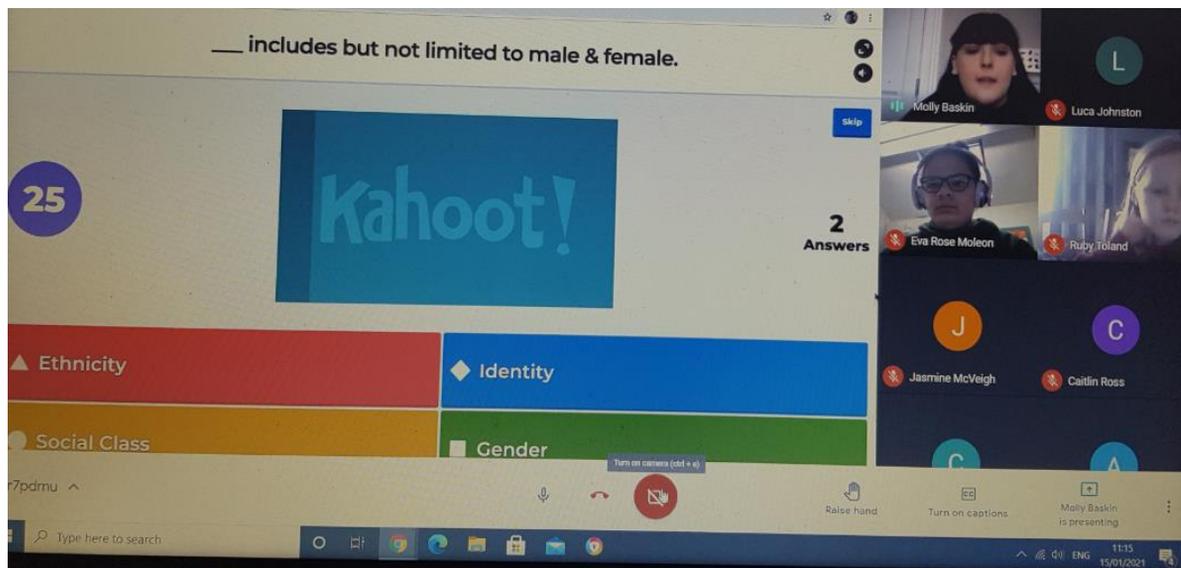
Lewis Frobisher from Sanderson Dance in Burnley joined us on Google Meet and taught our dancers a Latin Cha Cha step and a Samba step - all of the dancers had a great time and listened to Lewis' every word. Lewis is a 10x Classical and Modern Sequence British Champion and holds the current UK and all England Ballroom Champion titles. The dance team can't wait until we can get him back to teach us again - hopefully in person next time!

Thank you Lewis!

C Rice



Miss Baskin tests R7 on the theme of 'Citizenship' in a fun and interactive way. Very impressive R7!



A big well done to Jack McGimpsey who is continuing with his fitness and enjoying his workouts at home, and to Peter Thompson too, who braved a cold water dip after working hard during his P.E. lesson!



H.E.

It wouldn't be online teaching and learning without some lovely practical dishes, courtesy of Miss McConaghy! Delicious pizzas from Year 9, fruit crumbles from Year 8 and Chilli Beef noodles from Year 10.

