**Dear Parents and Carers, 15 July 2020**

**At this time of the year I always like to take an opportunity to draw the year to a close with a celebratory newsletter. As I have said in our children’s reports, it’s been a year like no other! Our main point of celebration must be that, despite the challenges and worries caused by Coronavirus, our school community has been unremittingly positive and resilient, we have all pulled together and supported one another and as a result our children are able enter the summer break safe and happily.**

**This year has been completely unprecedented with challenges that none of us could have predicted back in September; despite events it is clear however that we have still achieved many things. Not necessarily all of those things we had set out to achieve initially, but through responding to need, dealing with change and displaying courage and resilience in adverse times, our school community has navigated the storm and reached the end of the term.**

**Please take the time to read through some of our achievements and activities this year; I know there’s a lot here, especially if you reading it on your phone, but I am sure you will find it interesting.**

**I would also ask that you complete the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire by clicking the link below. Your feedback is vital in ensuring that we know what works well and where we can make improvements.** [***https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/***](https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/)

**Many thanks for all of your support this year and during this very different summer term! My staff and I are highly appreciative of your thanks and appreciation!**

**Best wishes**

**Adam Croft**
Despite no schooling in the “normal” sense in the summer term this has still been an incredibly busy year and a busy final term and I know you will join me in thanking all members of the school staff and wider school community for their incredible support, hard work and good humour.

I am incredibly privileged to lead such a strong school team who are dedicated to doing all they can for the children in our care; the sheer volume of achievements below is testament to another successful year at Charles Darwin. I have shared with staff the many messages of thanks you have sent me; your recognition that school staff consistently go well and truly above and beyond in their efforts is hugely appreciated.

**I would also like to say thank you and goodbye to some staff who are leaving us this summer.**

Wendy Ford has unfortunately been absent for much of this year and, although much better, is sadly not able to return to her teaching role in Y2. Wendy has been with us since September 2016; we have really missed her this year and are all desperately disappointed that she is unable to resume her role. Sophie Ashton is also leaving us; Sophie has been brilliant in Y4 for the last two years and leaves with our thanks and best wishes to take up a role at a Special School in Chester. Last but not least we must say thank you and goodbye to Jean Dobson who is retiring from the teaching profession after a mighty 22 years! Jean joined us in September 2014 and everyone in our school community knows her! She has taught many of our year groups but her prime role has been as our Pastoral Care Lead. I know many parents and children (and staff!) have benefited hugely from spending time with Jean; her patience, knowledge and positivity have been instrumental in supporting Charles Darwin families and I know she will be hugely missed by us all.

**Academic Results**

I always say that whilst results are absolutely not the be all and end all of school life it is essential that we give all of our children the best possible opportunity to reach their academic potential and getting each child the best results for them is important.

This year there are no school tests of any kind. I do want any children or parents to worry about whether they may have fallen behind during the school closure period. We will take stock in September and teaching programmes will meet the needs of cohorts and individual children; I am confident that with focus and hard work from everyone our children will swiftly get back into the ways of school and progress rapidly!

**Attendance**

There is no official annual school attendance data for this year.

Prior to lockdown on 20 March our whole school attendance for the year so far was 95.3% this was lower than for the same period in 2018’19 when it was 96.4%. Thanks all parents and carers for your support with attendance and punctuality this year and we look forward to a new start in September.

**Our school year**

As well as the following autumn and spring term breakdown of special events and functions our children have participated in the following: Y2, Y3 and Y4 enjoyed free swimming lessons, the pool is aiming to reopen after October half term and we will make sure our children resume their lessons as soon as possible. Junior classes enjoyed weekly Spanish lessons, Y4 have thoroughly enjoyed free ukulele tuition, we had a highly successful sporting year with competitions, tournaments and events including the whole school long distance run at Moss Farm and the Sportshall athletics Cheshire School Games Final. Even during lockdown we couldn’t be stopped, with lots of our children participating in National School Sports Week challenges at home as well as in school. Reception and Year 1 even had their own mini Sports day this week!

 **Below is a simple list of activities done across two terms this year.**

 **Autumn term**

* Brilliant start for our youngest children in Reception as their buddies supported them on a daily basis
* Hosted Family Learning Alliance course “Supporting your child’s social and emotional development”
* Raised almost £280 for Macmillan Cancer Trust
* Phonics workshops
* Raised £242 for charity Jeans for Genes
* Help your child to read workshops
* Took all classes to Northwich Library
* Whole school took part in “Go Run for Fun” at Moss Farm
* Chester Zoo workshops for YR, Y2 & Y3
* Junior children took part in PhysKids challenge
* Harvest Festival ~ donations to local Foodbank
* Y3 to Marshall’s Arm Nature Reserve
* Harvest festival singing at Daneside Mews residential home for elderly
* Tag rugby competition Y5/6
* Whole school Readathon
* Heartsmart assemblies and afternoons
* Mixed football competition
* Y4 Roman workshops
* Y2 attended SJD’s for musical performance
* Whole school Book fair
* Parents’ evenings
* Y6 residential visit to Conway Centre
* Tag rugby Y3/4
* Girls’ football competition
* Tennis coaching for YR to Y4
* Y1 visit to Verdin Park
* Halloween Disco ~ FOTSA
* Y3 to Marshall’s Arm Nature Reserve
* Successful Open days and Open evenings for prospective families
* Vale Royal cross country competition
* Hockey tournament Y3/4
* Junior Road Safety Officers initial meeting
* Raised £345 for Children in Need
* Northwich Children’s Parliament ~ Kian Kendrick and Charlie Lewis represented Charles Darwin
* Open afternoons
* Boccia competition
* Whole school anti bullying ~ awareness week
* Y3 Yellowfish project
* Lantern Parade workshop and participation
* YR trip to Riverside Organic Farm
* Y6 “Dragon’s Den” team work & “pitch” to judges
* Christmas fair ~ FOTSA £1650 raised
* Reception Christmas Experience visit to Stockley Farm
* Y6 Love My River Project
* Y5/6 basketball tournament
* Whole school environment week including neighbourhood community litter pick
* Rec / Y1 Christmas Nativity production
* Y2 Christmas production
* Y5/6 Sportshall Athletics competition
* Carol singing to Townbridge Court
* Christmas craft morning ~ parents / grandparents invited
* Christmas Bingo
* Whole school pantomime treat at memorial hall
* Junior Christmas Service at Holy Trinity Church
* Christmas parties

**Spring Term**

Class achievement assemblies all term ~ parents invited into classes afterward

* Chester zoo workshops Y1 & Y6
* Whole school poetry day
* Y4 classes begin weekly ukulele
* Northwich Education Partnership Y3 Dance festival
* Y4 trip to Liverpool Museum
* Netball competition Y5/6
* Y1 visit to Marshalls Arm Nature Reserve
* FOTSA film night
* Y2 SATs information meeting for parents
* Y3, Y4, Y5 & Y6 dance workshops
* Y1 phonics meeting for parents
* Y1 visit to Marshall’s Arm
* Hockey finals Y3/4
* Y5 various Gifted & Talented Days at High Schools
* Sportshall Athletics Vale Royal Finals Y5/6
* Young Voices Choir to Manchester Arena
* Fundraising for British Heart Foundation £250
* Northwich Education Partnership Northwich Art Trail
* Y3 trip to WeaverHall
* Y2 Puppet making with parents
* Coffee and book afternoon
* Whole school Internet Safety day ~ performances and workshops
* Around the World week
* Y6 Barclays Bank workshops
* World book day ~ dress as a non-fiction character
* Whole school library visits
* Reception class People who help us topic ~ assorted visitors to school
* Valentines’ disco ~ FOTSA
* Chinese New Year
* Tag rugby festival
* Y5 Smokebusters Fire Education
* Reception Parents “Stay and play” all week
* National Science Week including workshops led by parents
* Sportshall Athletics Cheshire & Warrington Finals
* Sport relief fundraiser
* Y5 trip to Stockport Air-Raid Shelter
* E-cadet assembly & activities

**Sadly, that was the end of our *whole school* year as we closed on Friday 20 March.**

During the closure period I have been proud of the way in which all members of our school community have supported one another.

Home learning has undoubtedly at times been challenging, but our children and mums, dads and carers have all worked hard and done their best; our website is full of evidence of beautiful work and lockdown’s positive side. The return to school for eligible children from 22 June has been an incredible success and it has been lovely to see our children happily laughing, playing, working and spending time together.

Disappointingly, the loss of the summer term has meant many highlights of the school calendar have not taken place. I look forward to the resumption of the following in the summer term of 2021!

A full round of class assemblies, infant Easter craft days and bonnet parade, Sports day, the Y4 residential, Northwich sings concert, Reception fun day to Llandudno, Y2 adventure day at Delamere Forest, the Cheshire & Warrington Summer Games, the family picnic lunch and music afternoon, the always lovely Reception end of year celebration, House Point winners’ treat afternoon, the whole school sleepover, Charles Darwin’s Got Talent, end of year parties and discos and last but not least the always stunning Y6 production and leavers’ assembly.

Sadly, we cannot go back in time and redo these events with the same children; I am bitterly disappointed for our Reception and Y6 children that they have not had the opportunity to enjoy the pivotal performances and shows specific to those year groups but I am proud that they can still move on to the next stage of their education safely and positively.

**It is clear that despite the massive impact of Covid 19 upon our school and the wider community it has still been another incredibly busy and successful year at Charles Darwin. In fact, I will go so far as to say 2019’20 has possibly been more successful that previous years because it has shown just how incredibly supportive, positive and resilient our school community is; I am proud to be part of it.**

 **It just remains for me to once again thank everyone; staff, parents, carers, governors, FOTSAs and most importantly our truly amazing children for a year to remember and a year to be proud of.**

**It is a genuine pleasure to work and spend time with such committed, dedicated and positive people; have a safe, healthy and restful summer.**

**School closes at 12.30pm, 12.45pm and 1pm on Friday 17 July for the summer holiday.**

Yours sincerely

Adam Croft