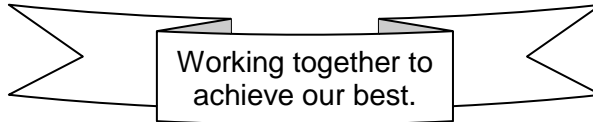




## Newsletter

Issue No.2  
Date 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2021  
[www.firslower.co.uk](http://www.firslower.co.uk)



**Chair of Governors:** Gareth Jones

**Governors:** Adam Campbell, Fran Sherry, Jon Wilson, Louise Haigh, Annette Anderson, John Ashley, Joanna Milne and Tom Stead

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Dear parents and carers,

### Remote Learning Update

I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge well done to the children who are not in school at the moment and who have been accessing our remote learning programme via Google Classroom. Teachers have been so impressed with the fantastic responses they have received back from children and we have found GC so useful as a tool in enabling us to see the work children are doing.

It has been great to get so much positive feedback from parents about GC and the learning we have been designing for children to access remotely and that it is better than during the 1st lockdown. I am currently holding discussions with each year group, one at a time, to review our initial remote learning programme and to ensure consistent high standards in our provision.

Any provision at a distance, with young children, in circumstances like this, will require some adult support and intervention but we are hoping that gradually, children will get more and more used to GC and adept at using it, as will staff! (We have certainly improved our ICT skills during these strange times!) I really want to thank all of you for all the help and support you have given to help with remote learning at home, I know it must be stressful at times and we are very, very grateful for your efforts!

We are evolving our approaches and we will continue to do so, as always, seeking best practice. Ofsted have produced a report this week [Ofsted Remote Learning Advice](#) which makes interesting reading, indicating for example that 'live teaching' is 'not the gold standard' that some people believe it to be, as actually, recorded lessons can be more convenient and can allow children to replay parts they want to hear again. We are also experimenting with much shorter 'mini videos', to demonstrate certain processes and concepts. Again, the idea here is that children can replay them as needed, to support them in the individual work they are doing.

### External Provider Support with Home Learning

I wanted to share some information that may be of use.

BT have communicated that customers using BT Mobile, EE, and Plusnet Mobile can use BBC Bitesize content from the end of January without eating into their data allowance.

Bitesize provides structured lessons in maths and English for all year groups, as well as offering other curriculum material. You may want to use this to supplement the online learning we are providing or as an alternative if our work is not available for some reason.

Content from other providers is likely to be made free in the coming days and more mobile companies are expected to follow suit in making such content free to use.

All contract and pay-as-you-go customers of BT Mobile, EE and Plusnet Mobile will be eligible and the free package will continue while schools remain closed. No registration is required - the free access will happen automatically.

The BBC is also running three hours of curriculum-based TV programmes alongside the [BBC Bitesize collection of educational resources](#). Primary school programming will be on CBBC (with two hours for secondary pupils on BBC Two.)

Other aspects of BT's scheme include:

- unlimited data for some families who can access the scheme via their children's schools
- free wi-fi vouchers, which have been available for customers since June
- a £10-a-month fixed broadband tariff for low-income families

The following links may also be useful to you:

- [Lockdown learning: BBC puts school materials on TV, iPlayer and online](#)
- [Covid 19: The challenges of home-schooling](#)
- [How to be the school of mum and dad \(again\)](#)

### **Chrome Books from The Firs**

We are very aware that some families are finding it very difficult to give access to their children for remote learning, either because they have no access to a laptop or because children are having to share equipment, thus limiting their access.

We have invested in more Chrome books, so that we can deliver learning for the Key Worker children in school, whilst allowing us to lend school chrome books to some Firs families. We want to ensure that all our children get the same opportunities to make progress with their learning. I would like to say a big thank you to Mrs Ashby for organising this essential project, that will make such a difference to the learning of a number of our children at home.

### **Key Worker Children**

An email was sent out to you on Wednesday after a review of the google sheets that you submitted. Following phone calls and emails from some parents in trying to help with the numbers of children attending Pine, we have now managed to keep the numbers to 15 children per day by swapping some of the days children were attending. We are very grateful for this and would like to thank you for all your support.

We are also very grateful to the parents who have been letting us know when they are not working, so that their child can be learning at home and again your support with this is greatly appreciated.

### **Saplings Learning Packs**

Thank you to Mrs Sherry for sending out learning packs for the older children in Saplings who will be starting Reception year in September. I hope they all enjoy the activities in the pack and have lots of fun doing them.

I hope you are all keeping safe and have a good weekend.

Yours sincerely,



Adam J G Campbell