

This week we asked Mr Edwards-Grundy about his experience of the lockdown

What have you found hardest about the lockdown?

At the start of the lockdown I was very unwell and had to spend 17 days away from my family. I felt dreadful, which was bad enough, but having to stay away from my family made it even harder.

As a headteacher I love having the school building full of all the children. Having to close the school and then being open only to some children has been really hard.

Talking to the whole school community and sharing in Collective Worship is one of the bits of my job that I enjoy the most and I have missed that very much.

I miss seeing you and talking to you all.

What has been the best thing about lockdown?

Seeing the many different ways that everyone has risen to the challenges of this season. Across our country people have done amazing things to look after one another and I have found that really encouraging.

I have also been really impressed with the way children have adapted to so many different things and always given things a go.

What message do you want to give to the children?

Well done!

The past months have been some of the most challenging even your grown-ups have ever known, and you have been amazing.

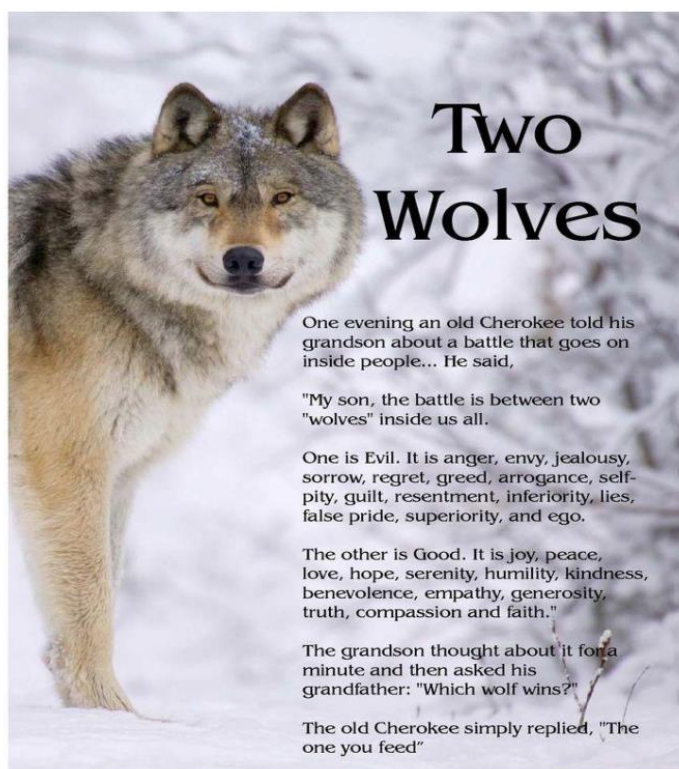
We will be so delighted to welcome you all back to school in September, we can't wait to talk to you face to face again.

Keep counting your blessings!

This week I was in a virtual meeting with some headteachers who work in Lebanon; they are working in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. As I listened to them, I was humbled. It reminded me that despite the challenges of this current season we have so much that we can (and should) be thankful for.

I know that all of you will be facing challenges and as you do so I would like you to remember the story of the two wolves.

In Collective Worship we often talk about how our actions can make a difference and can make it "on earth as it is in heaven". Over the holidays remember to focus on your blessings and keep feeding the right wolf – then you really will be making it in your homes, "on earth as it is in heaven". Tim Edwards-Grundy



Many local churches are now open for private prayer or reflection. If you want to take some 'time out' over the summer, church buildings offer beautiful and quiet spaces to sit, think and reflect.

Don't forget that many of our local churches, including [St Mary's Cogges](#), are still also offering online Sunday and midweek services, or you can join in with the services provided by the [Church of England](#) nationally, or the [local Diocese](#). You can [search for events](#) going on locally to find something you might like to join in with.

The members of St Mary's Cogges continue to pray for their local community. If you have any prayer requests, please do email them to prayer@coggesparish.com.

[New Wine](#) is a Christian festival that runs during July and August every year. This year, New Wine has gone online. They are running a virtual programme of children's events, which will be suitable for primary school aged children.

Very often, Simon Kirby, the Vicar of St Mary's Cogges, joins us for the last Collective Worship of the school year. As he is not able to do so this year, he has sent the following message –

"I've missed my regular visits to Blake over the last few months, and opportunities to catch up with children and staff. I hope that you and your family have kept well and not found lockdown too exhausting.

As we come to the end of another school year and enter the holidays my hope and prayer for you is that you would have an opportunity to be re-created. The word recreation comes from this idea of being restored and made whole again.

My hope is that you and those you love would know God's peace and blessing and the summer holidays would be a chance to rest, relax and be restored. I look forward to seeing many of you in September."

Adventure + is an organisation that has worked with The Blake School for many years and supports our annual Year 6 residential trip to Quinta. Every summer they run [camps for children](#), both locally and further afield. Keep an eye on their [Facebook page](#) for up to date details of their plans for the summer.

The teachers have all uploaded a video to the [school website](#) to welcome the children who will be joining them next year.

When you begin to think about the return to school, please do take some time to watch the video for your child's class with them.

The summer holidays are a time to relax and enjoy family time, but do keep reading with your children and enjoy sharing books with them – this is the very best preparation that you can give them, whatever school year they are going into.

The summer break can be a difficult time for many families. If you need any help or support, don't try to work it out on your own, do reach out to the agencies that are there to support you.

[FirstPoint](#) has produced some helpful resources for providing advice regarding common concerns for primary aged children and directing them to websites that they may find helpful.

[Childline](#) – 0800 1111 Support for young people.

[Samaritans](#) – 116 123 If you need to talk.

The [NSPCC](#) has lots of information to help support families. You can email them on help@nspcc.org.uk or call their helpline on 0808 800 5000.

[Oxfordshire Mind](#) – 01865 247788 Supporting mental health across the age ranges.

[MASH \(Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub\)](#) – 0345 050 7666 For advice regarding concerns about a child.

'[See, Hear, Respond](#)' has been launched in conjunction with Barnardo's, funded by the Department for Education. The aim is to identify and support children who are especially vulnerable as a result of Covid-19. The site has links for you to get advice and support, whether you are a child or an adult.

Where can we go during the lockdown?

This week, why not visit the [Bedlam Furnaces](#) in Ironbridge?

The Bedlam Furnaces are a very important historical monument, thought to be the only ones of their type remaining largely intact. The furnaces were used to smelt iron with coke.

We know that many of you will be out and about over the summer visiting friends and family whom you have not been able to see during lockdown. We hope you have a great time!

Please do remember to help us all by maintaining social distancing, washing your hands frequently and wearing a face mask when required.

Since lockdown began, [Creation Theatre](#) has moved all of their work online, creating a digital programme of workshops and performances.

Over the summer, Creation Theatre will deliver workshops, aimed at young actors aged 5 – 19, live over Zoom. All participants will be able to see and interact with one another throughout the sessions.

You can find out more on their [website](#), or you can call them on 01865 766 266.

[Excel Tennis Academy](#) is offering summer holiday tennis courses for children aged 4 – 16, that are compliant with the Covid-19 regulations.

Courses are taking place in Witney right through the summer break. You can find out more on their [website](#), or you can call them on 07734 059769.

Oxford Active is running '[Active Camps](#)' and '[Active Adventure](#)' this summer at Summer Fields School.

These summer camps provide childcare over the summer and therefore have a cost that reflects this.

The camps run right through the summer and cater for children aged 3 – 14.

Oxford Active also currently run the wraparound care at The Blake School. If your children have previously attended this provision, Oxford Active will contact you. If your child has not previously attended either club, but you would like to book them in, please contact Oxford Active on 01865 594325 or email them on info@oxfordactive.co.uk

Whatever you are doing over the summer holidays, please stay safe.

We would encourage you to check your internet safety settings to make sure that your children cannot access inappropriate material.

[Thinkuknow](#) has produced a series of home packs with 15-minute activities, suitable for all ages, being released every two weeks to help support your child's online safety.

They also produce some [help sheets](#) for parents and carers containing advice and links to other resources you may find helpful.

Oxfordshire County Council has produced a booklet called '[Footsteps](#)', which aims to support you as parents as you teach your children about road safety. There is a supplementary information sheet for parents to read if your child is moving to [secondary school](#) in September.

At this time of year we would normally remind the children of the importance of wearing cycle helmets if they are out on their bikes, as we know that wearing a helmet will protect them if they fall off/have an accident.

During the last Collective Worship of a school year Mr Grundy usually reminds the children that they should listen carefully to the grown ups they are with, because they are trying to keep them safe.

If ever a child is in danger, or you as adults feel at risk, you should always dial 999.

As we close an academic year, one of the great joys is to look back over the values that we have reflected on during the year and to congratulate children who have been showing them. We are not able to do this as a whole school community, but within your households, over the summer break, remind yourself of all the [school's values](#) and each week celebrate the person who has done something that has really shown one of them.

Mr Grundy would like to award a values certificate to each and every one of the children of The Blake School, throughout this really hard time you have all been showing the values of the school – well done!

Over the summer why not encourage your children to take part in some DIY scavenger hunts? You could find out who can find all of the things on each sheet the fastest, or you could complete the activity as a family and take your time.



This weekend would ordinarily have been the Royal International Air Tattoo at Fairford. If you are an aviation fan and are missing attending the event, why not attend the [virtual air tattoo](#)?

The event will be a free to view live-streamed event this coming weekend (18th and 19th July), with a minimum of four hours of unique video content aired each day.

As well as seeing flying display action, you will also be able to have a 'behind the scenes' view of military aviation with content from the RAF, International Air Arms and Aerospace Industry Partners.

The [Life Science centre](#) is currently closed, but they have moved a whole raft of activities online.

You can choose to meet scientists online and find out how they became a scientist, explore exhibitions from the comfort of your own home or try out some science experiments from stargazing to extracting DNA.

If you choose to get involved, you may want to share your videos and photos with the hashtag [#LifeGoesONline](#).

As you are aware, in May 2020, after a happy and healthy three months, Mrs Lynch's baby Toby, became suddenly unwell. Following a week on the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at the John Radcliffe hospital, Zoë and her husband Jake made the decision to move Toby to Helen and Douglas house for end of life care. Toby spent five weeks in their care before he died peacefully on 13th June 2020.

Zoë and Jake have now set up a [Just Giving](#) page, to raise money for Helen and Douglas House; they would like to raise money so that other families can continue to benefit from their support in the future. If you would like to contribute to their fundraising in memory of Toby, please do so using the page that they have set up.

Zoë and Jake have asked us to share this information with you and have made it clear that they would welcome their story (as they have shared it on the Just Giving page), being widely shared. Please therefore feel free to share the link to the Just Giving page with friends and family and on your social media accounts.

If it would be helpful for you, please do contact organisations who can offer support and advice –

[Child Bereavement UK](#) (0800 028 8840) or email support@childbereavement.org

[Cruse Bereavement Care](#) (0808 808 1677) or email info@cruse.org.uk

[Grief Encounter](#) (0808 802 0111) or email contact@griefencounter.org.uk

[Hope Again](#) (0808 808 1677) or email hopeagain@cruse.org.uk

Ordinarily the governors would send out a termly summary of business and a monthly newsletter, but they have not done so during the period of lockdown.

The governors have not however been idle! When the lockdown was announced, ODST set up smaller Emergency Advisory Committees to enable the work of the governing body to continue. The EAC, which includes the head, the school's improvement adviser and two governors has met regularly during lockdown. This small group has been able to meet flexibly, as and when needed, to deal with both strategic and operational matters and to provide support to the school.

The Full Governing Board has also met, though less often than usual, continuing to act as a strategic sounding board.

Working alongside staff, governors have agreed a detailed risk assessment for the full opening of the school in September and ODST has signed this off.

The governors look forward to more 'business as usual' in the new academic year and to advising you of the school's development priorities for 2020/21.

The staff would like to thank all of you who, over the past week in particular, have taken the time to drop into school, or send in emails or gifts, to say thank you to them.

Staff have been genuinely moved by the many expressions of gratitude they have received.

Thank-you!

Many of the staff have been involved in creating a [video](#) for the Year 6 leavers.

Do enjoy watching the video with your children, whatever year group they are in! A lot of toilet rolls were used and there are a lot of out-takes hiding on mobile phones...

All the staff send our Year 6's on their way with all good wishes for secondary school. The Year 6 staff team would love you to let them know how you are settling in.

The British Red Cross is organising a '[Wonderful Walk of Kindness](#)' to 'Cheer up Britain street by street'!

The event will take place on 1-2 August 2020 and can take place anywhere you like, over any distance that you like. You can walk as a family, or socially distanced with friends; you can even walk on your own around your garden.

If you are able to collect sponsorship for your walk, then you will be helping Red Cross staff and volunteers to continue supporting people who need it most, especially at this time.

Whether or not you get sponsored you can still use the walk to spread some kindness. The website has lots of ideas of things you can do as part of your walk, from delivering shopping to running an errand, from hand delivering a special drawing or letter to doing something kind for a neighbour.

Witney Neighbourhood police team will be bike marking FOR FREE! at Madley Park Hall this Saturday 18th of July from 11am to 1pm.

PCSO Leggott will be on hand to offer bike safety and security advice, so why not pop along?

Mental and emotional health and wellbeing remains as important as ever, the challenges of Covid-19 have not gone away and there is a need for everyone to keep adjusting to the new 'normals' of living with a global pandemic.

Over the summer holidays remember that routine is still good for everyone, whilst it is good to do different things, try and keep to regular bedtimes and eat together as a family. Getting plenty of sleep and eating well are both important for emotional and mental wellbeing.

Fresh air and exercise are not only good for physical wellbeing and a healthy body, they are good for emotional and mental health too. Get out of the house everyday and get some exercise. Witney is a beautiful place to live, with lots of green spaces and places to walk and cycle on your doorstep. [Why not try some of these local walks?](#)

Being together all the time can be hard work! Try and make sure that everyone in your home has some time on their own, everyday. Perhaps you can agree a special place where you can go to be alone and everyone knows to leave you for 5 minutes?

Don't forget to stay in touch with friends...

On Thursday of this week, it was 'Reading Together Day'.

Why not take a look at all of the resources on the [Reading Agency](#) website and find out more about activities to support reading?

Don't forget to sign up for the '[Silly Squad](#)' summer reading challenge. Get rewards, play games and earn badges as well as reading some awesome books.

If you want to try something a bit different, take a look at the [Authorfy](#) website.

The site brings readers and writers closer together through free interactive masterclasses, fun downloadable activities and exciting resources. Whether you are a parent or a child, an aspiring author or a reluctant writer, there's something on Authorfy for everyone!

You can also find lots of ideas of books to read, how to enjoy sharing books together and lots of book reviews on the [Book Trust's website](#). The site also has links to free online books, so if you are stuck for something to read over the holidays, head to the website for some great ideas.

Don't forget that Doodle Maths and Doodle English are available all through the summer – if you want something to do to fill a bit of time each day then keeping up with both of these is quick and easy!

Have a great summer – see you in September!