



Pegasus News
End of Year

20
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LONG CLOSE
SCHOOL

HEADTEACHER

Miss K Nijjar

The Coronavirus pandemic has without doubt brought seismic changes to many areas of our lives and I have to say that despite the unusual circumstances, Long Close has thrived. I have never felt so proud of our community and the way our staff, pupils and parents have pulled together to meet the challenges of the pandemic.



There are so many highlights that it is impossible to touch upon them all. That said, a personal highlight for me, and a moment that I know I will never forget, is seeing the children return to school following such a long Lockdown period.

The smiles on their faces, the genuine delight to see their teachers and friends and the laughter, have made the past six weeks some of the most special weeks I have ever experienced in school.

I am most grateful to all of you who took the time to write to me and thank the staff for all they have done in these most trying of circumstances. I also want to take this opportunity to thank every member of the Long Close community for the truly exceptional efforts that have been undertaken across recent months. To have rolled out an Online Learning programme, including the Inspiring Futures Programme for Year 11, virtual Sports Day, virtual Talent Competition, virtual VE Day Celebrations and everything else alongside, has required an extraordinary work ethic, flexibility, resolve, patience and good humour from all.

As we complete one of the most unusual years in the School's history, we should look back with pride on what we have achieved together and look forward with a renewed sense of optimism that we will continue to meet the challenges that lay ahead. Next year will mark the 80th anniversary of our School, and we hope to make it a year of celebration.

My sincere thanks to everyone – staff, pupils and parents – for the part you have all played in enabling the school to flourish this year. I do very much hope that you can all enjoy a summer holiday in whatever way the circumstances allow.

THE BEST STUDENT LIFE

What makes Long Close special

Head Girl, Layla Year 11

At Long Close, I have loved being a part of such a small and caring community. I can say that the team of staff have been the most helpful which has helped me academically too. As well as this, I believe Long Close has enriched me with skills and rounded me as a person rather than being just a set of walking talking results.

I have enjoyed being Head Girl because it gave me more responsibility and allowed me to take a more active role at the school. Being Head Girl has also allowed me to become more confident which encouraged me to do tour guiding and speak to an audience.

Lockdown has enabled me to focus on myself and find out new things about myself. As well as this, it gave me all this new free time which I would not have had since I would've been at school. It's full of ups and downs plus multiple and many emotions. It also makes me realise how much I appreciate and love school - at least for me! I can't wait to start sixth form in September.

Head Boy, Aman Year 11

I began my journey at Long Close in Year 7, and I can honestly say that I have truly loved my time here. Although I joined Long Close without knowing anyone, I immediately felt safe, secure and settled.

During my time at Long Close, I have made friendships that will last a lifetime and have been lucky enough to be taught by some amazing teachers, all of whom I know have always had my best interests at heart. The small class sizes mean that the teachers can get to know you really well and can pick up on any issues, concerns or worries you may have. They are always available outside of lessons and often give up their break times to help. I have always felt completely supported during my time here, not just by my teachers but also my peers, and that is a wonderful feeling.

I have been fortunate enough to attend three overseas school trips to Iceland, Germany and Barcelona. These trips allowed me to visit places I have never been to and experience the culture of the country and people. I enjoyed the trips thoroughly and they helped to build my independence and confidence within a safe environment.

LOCKDOWN

When School Went Virtual

When school started in September 2019, no-one predicted the world would be locked-down within seven months. Everyone had to adapt quickly, including teachers! Microsoft Teams was introduced, and learning went online for the first time in the school's 80-year history.

After the initial learning curve, teachers soon adapted, and lessons were resumed, albeit virtually. We surveyed our pupils to find out how they were doing and were overwhelmed when 88.6% agreed that the key elements which make online learning successful were being delivered.

Parents were also incredibly supportive of our transition and left us some very encouraging reviews.

Everyone felt a real sense of pride and achievement as they reflected on the Lockdown term. Staff had demonstrated such enthusiasm and produced virtual lessons to a high standard whilst still meeting individual pupil's needs. Students showed commitment to learning in a new virtual world and continued to make excellent progress in what became a very unusual year. All of them displayed the resilience, determination, and independence a Long Close pupil possesses, making the teachers very proud.

Even when school returns to normal, Long Close will continue to use some of the EdTech adopted during Lockdown because it added value and improved some of the existing processes.

Virtual Sports Day

Mr Powell devised a virtual sports day to replace our popular annual event. Children competed in 12 different activities over four days, challenging themselves to see how many sit-ups, press-ups, mountain climbers, star jumps, burpees and speed bounces they could do in 30 seconds. House points were accumulated and added to the year's total making Kensington the overall winners of Sports Day!

Year 2 parent:

"The school and teachers are doing an excellent job with respect to online teaching. Very well organised and structured."

Year 7 parent:

"The teachers are doing a great job interacting with children via teams. The lesson delivery is good."



Online Music Lessons

Even music lessons went online!
Joshua continued to enjoy his guitar lessons with Dr Oliver Chandler.



Teaching Online and at Home



For many teachers, life at home presented a new challenge: combining online teaching with home-schooling. Head of Prep, Mr Tanton, employed a few tactics

to make life easier. 1. Routine: structuring family life helped everyone. 2. Kindness: both to ourselves and our families. 3. Thankfulness: remembering all those who were working on the front-line and saving people's lives, plus being thankful that we were safe and that Lockdown would be over one day.

RETURN TO SCHOOL

Reopening School

Everyone was delighted when the school gates could finally be opened at the beginning of June, even if things were a little different.

Social distancing meant waiting for classrooms with pupils respecting the 2 metre rule, the school day was shorter and hands had to be kept clean. Despite all the logistical changes, it was worth it when the school gates were opened, and staff were greeted by the huge smiles from children who couldn't wait to see their friends again.

In our Voice of the Parent survey, 100% of parents agreed that returning to school benefited both children and their families, while 95% of parents agreed that every possible risk mitigation, that could have been taken, was taken by the school.

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*Early Years
Parent:*

"We felt well informed about the plans to come back. Also, the video was very useful for my daughter and the rainbow in the playground was very much appreciated by her."
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YEAR 3

End of Term Party

Year 3 discovered they could fit 54 people into a virtual end of term school party!

HOUSE NEWS

Since introducing our new House system last year, children have been earning House Points throughout the year for excellence in all areas.

We are delighted to announce that this year's end-of-year House competition winners are Windsor with 1428.

2nd place: Buckingham 1298 points

3rd place: Kensington 1249 points

4th place: Hampton 1231 points

ETON COLLEGE

Josh Receives Conditional Offer



Josh started Long Close in nursery and has continued to work hard throughout his time at the school. It was wonderful to hear of his conditional offer for Eton College's 2022 cohort. His mum said: "Josh is the boy he is today because of the nurturing environment of Long Close. It is the reason we chose the school. We felt he would benefit from the small classes and the well-rounded education it provides, which includes sports and pastoral care. Being part of the Long Close School family has been thoroughly enjoyable for us. Our son has benefited greatly from the one-to-one teaching and has also thrived from having close interaction with a number of friends who spur each other on, both in education and sports."

READ WRITE INC.

Model School Status for 2nd Year

Ruth Miskin and the Oxford University Press awarded Long Close School model school status for the second year running.

The Award recognises Long Close’s commitment to teaching children how to read and write for one hour each day, plus regular staff training and intervention lessons for children who need extra support, ensuring they can keep up with their peers.

Children are subtly introduced to the Read Write Inc. programme from the age of three, giving them a head start to confident reading and writing.



INSPIRING FUTURES

Cognita Schools worked with industry experts to create a bespoke personal development programme for its Year 11 cohort which replaced their GCSEs. The programme is designed to equip them with life skills that will make them stand out from the crowd. This is what they thought:

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"I've found Debatemate really useful as it helped me see both sides of an argument, and I liked working with people I don't know. Innerdrive has helped me increase in confidence in speaking when other people, and the taster sessions have allowed me to make a better decision about my A levels." Alex

"I've really enjoyed the leadership skills I have learnt in the course." Efferson
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Peer Education Programme - Senior School

Volunteer Year 11s were trained by Mr Lee over 6 weeks using materials and a programme developed by the Mental Health Foundation. As key volunteers, Aamna and Surabi then delivered lessons about mental health awareness to the Year 7 children, over a six week period. This peer education process is proven to be beneficial to both the volunteers and the learners.

Computer Science

This year’s Safer Internet Day encouraged young people to explore how they manage their online identity and how the internet shapes what they think of themselves and others.

Long Close pupils focused on how to celebrate differences and actions that can be taken towards creating a truly inclusive internet.

The initiative started with a senior school assembly challenging pupils to think about how they represent themselves online. This was followed by discussion, creative thinking, debate and self-expression. It was a great week celebrating diversity and thinking of ways we can make the internet inclusive by the actions we take.





ART AND DT

Long Close children continue to produce outstanding artwork. As well as classroom lessons, we also encourage creativity outside of the classroom too. Students are encouraged to develop their skills and find enjoyment from creativity in many different forms. Long Close children enjoy a weekly extra-curricular Art Club, regular competitions and trips to exhibitions and art galleries.

Quilt of Hope

Pupils, families and teachers at Long Close School have been creating squares for our 'Quilt of Hope' to remind us of life in lockdown.

It will be constructed when we return to school. Squares are made using a variety of creative methods.

This one was knitted by our Head of Art and DT, Mrs Fragoso.



VE Day Celebrations

On Friday 8th May, Long Close children joined in celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of VE Day. There were lots of activities, from homemade bunting to delicious bakes and cakes.



SCHOOL TRIPS AND ENRICHMENT



Tower of London

On Friday 7th February, Year 2 travelled to visit the Tower of London. The coach journey there was filled with chatter and excitement for the day ahead. The children enjoyed seeing the historic White Tower, magnificent Crown Jewels, creepy dungeons and the gruesome Bloody Tower. The children were also mesmerised by the ancient tales that were told to them during the Great Fire of London workshop.

Year 1 – Whipsnade Zoo

Year 1 attended Whipsnade Zoo on the 11th February. The children thoroughly enjoyed seeing a variety of animals in their enclosures. Everyone was amazed by how close they were able to get to all the animals, especially the lions! The children were thrilled as they witnessed them roaring unexpectedly! Another highlight of the day was the hands on workshop about fur, feathers and scales. The children were able to touch a snake and stroke the fur from a tiger!



Bushcraft Day

Outdoor learning is an important part of the Long Close enrichment curriculum.

Early Years children have Forest School once a week, and other years have Bushcraft sessions as part of their enrichment curriculum. At the end of this Summer Term, the Bushcraft Company came into school and provided the children with a day of fun and activities - not to mention some mud!

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Discussing Racism

On 25th May 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black American man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during an arrest for allegedly using a counterfeit bill. This sparked global outrage. The emotive subject of racism was tackled by Year 7.

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"Being anti-racist is probably not what you are thinking. Anti-racism is not saying you are not racist but proving it. Examples are donating to worthy causes and calling out people who are racist. Being anti-racist is not a job, but is something rewarding because you know you are doing right." Alexander

"Anti-racism is an individual's choice of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organisational structures, policies and practices, attitudes and the way we treat people so that power is redistributed and everyone is treated the same way." Krishan

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LONG CLOSE HAS GOT TALENT

Virtual Talent Show



Due to Lockdown and government guidelines, we decided to postpone all of our usual end-of-year events until we can meet in person. However, we didn't want to end the year without a little fun. To replace these events, Mrs Hallett and Mrs Carter organised Long Close's first virtual talent show through Microsoft Teams. More than 40 children entered! Children watched videos of the entries for the first round of voting, before tuning into the live final on the last day of term.

Happy Birthday Long Close School

Next year, Long Close School will be celebrating its 80th year. It is quite incredible to think that the school has been delivering outstanding education to children for such a long time. The school has built a reputation for raising incredible children who are equipped to succeed in this ever-changing world. We are all looking forward to celebrating this amazing milestone with pupils past and present.



Cognita Home Games



From 18-22 May 2020, students and their families from Long Close School, Slough, joined their teachers in an Olympics-style global lockdown competition with thousands of students in schools around the world.

Along with around 60 Cognita schools from across the world, participating students, staff and families from Long Close School competed, as part of Team Europe, to win the trophy for the region with the highest average score and the highest average participation.

We were absolutely thrilled when Team Europe were announced as the winners and all our pupils' hard work was rewarded!

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Long Close children have been enjoying lots of initiatives designed to raise awareness about the importance of mental health and wellbeing.



The Prep School took part in a Community Project about Loneliness run by PC Poppie. Year 3 designed and wrote their own postcards which PC Poppie and her colleagues then delivered to some of Slough's elderly residents.

As a school, we focused on Mental Health Week with this year's theme of Kindness. Year 2 came to school wearing odd Socks and Year 4 created their friendship wreath for Anti-Bullying Week.

Throughout the year, we have been making the most of our outdoor environment and learning how to practice mindfulness. Every year group has been enjoying Wellness Walks each half term along with taking part in the Daily Mile around our school playground and field.



WHAT OUR PARENTS SAY



"Our son is the boy he is today because of the nurturing environment of Long Close. It is the reason we chose the school. We felt he would benefit from the small classes and the well-rounded education it provides, which includes sports and pastoral care."

Year 6 Parent

Pupil secured conditional offer from Eton College



"Fantastic. Thank you to all the staff. My son who attends Long Close has been very engaged and really enjoyed the lessons."

Year 11 Parent

Voice of the Parent Survey
Covid-19 Online Learning



"Thank you for the confidence that you continue to give to my daughter, I think that makes a big difference to her. She has become confident in Maths as a result of your efforts."

Year 5 Parent



"Both of our children have gone through the Long Close Early Years department and it has been a wonderful experience. It is amazing to see the progress they have made over the years. The enthusiasm of the staff is infectious and they capture the childrens' imaginations. Our children are kind, respectful, confident and happy and absolutely love attending school."

EYFS Parent

We aim for higher things.

'Outstanding in All Areas' - SIS Inspection Report

The only co-educational, independent school for ages 2-16 years in Slough.

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**LONG CLOSE
SCHOOL**