



Governors Report
*Home / School Contact during
Covid-19 Lockdown*

9th July 2020

Contents

i. Timeline of Whole School Messaging

A representation of the comprehensive approach of the organization to home / school communication through a comparison of school issued letters against significant UK Government Covid-19 milestones

ii. Contact Data: Background & Breakdown

An explanation of how data on home school communication between teachers and parents was tracked, and a breakdown of that data, each proving how the organization has maintained meaningful contact with parents and families throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

iii. Case Study - M2

An overview of the exceptional work of one teacher in cultivating home / school contact between herself and the parents and families of students in her class.

iv. Case Study - Seymour Assemblies

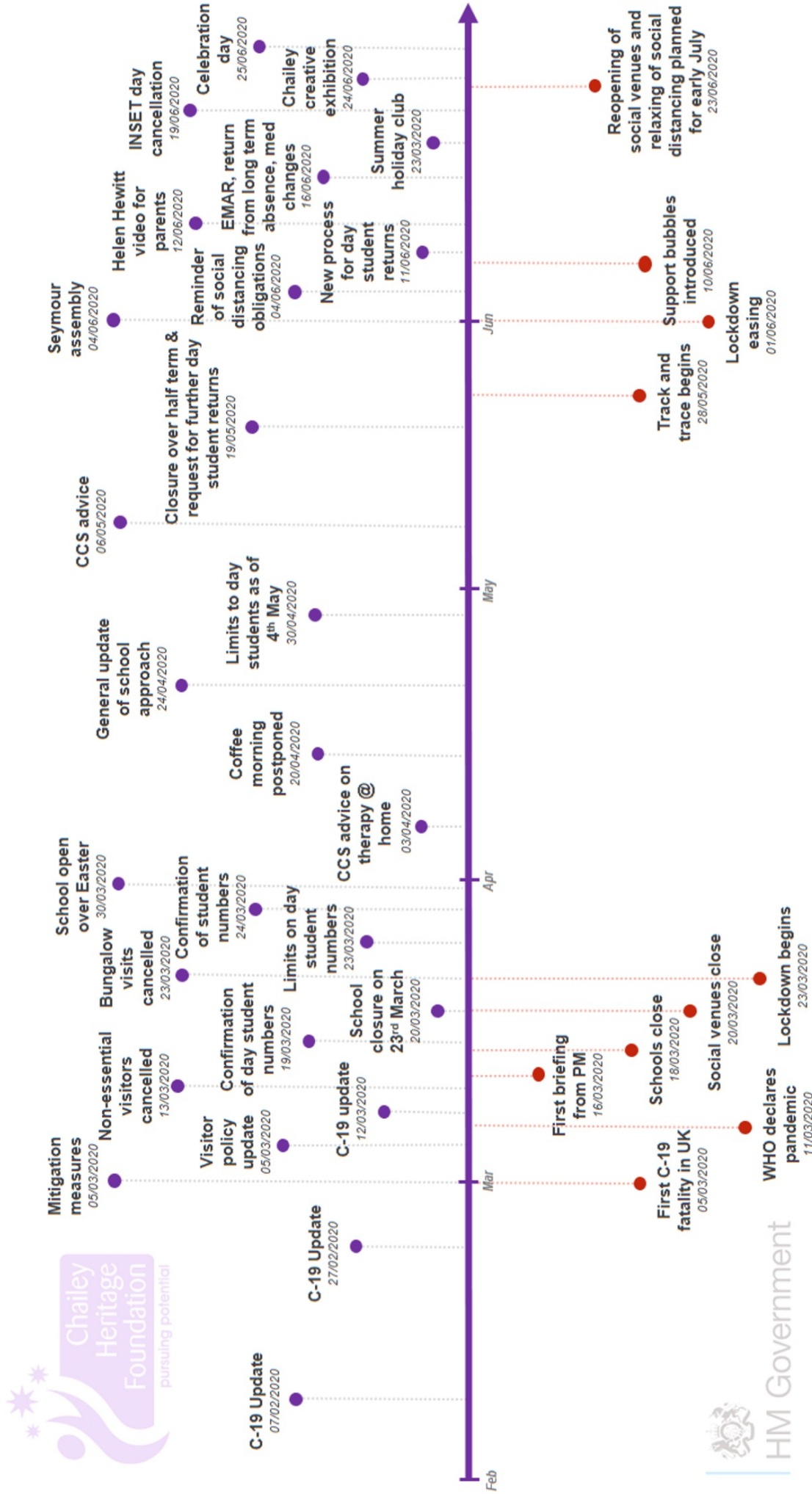
An overview of a department initiative to create a 'virtual school' through the creation of collective weekly activities for all students, whether in school or at home.

v. Conclusion

Final thoughts from our Head teacher, Simon Yates.

i. Timeline of Whole School Messaging

▶ The timeline below tracks whole school contact with families and carers during the Covid-19 pandemic against key milestones from the British Government. As the graphic makes clear, Chailey Heritage Foundation was able to react incredibly quickly to a fast moving and ever changing situation, and maintained thorough and constant formal contact with families throughout lockdown and subsequent disruption.

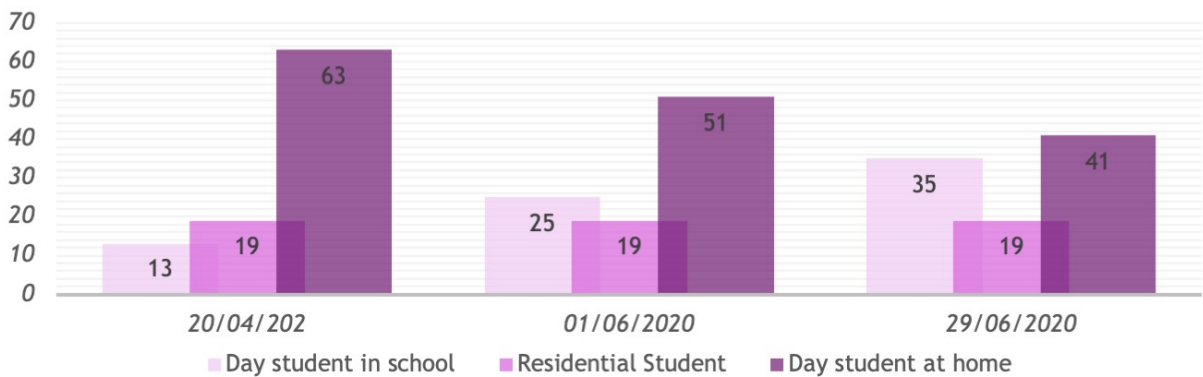


ii. Contact Data - Background

- ▶ The following data analysis is based on figures gathered through the Covid - 19 Family Contact Log and overall attendance figures gathered from the school office. The log was created to record and track contacts between teaching staff at Chailey Heritage School and families with children at home during lockdown: those students who were either 52 week a year residents, or who were day students still accessing Chailey Heritage, were primarily monitored and contacted through existing procedures for home / school communication i.e. home / school diaries.

N.B School staff did in fact contact the families of 52 week residents and day students attending school in addition to standard communication procedures (also captured in the Covid-19 Family Log), but these figures have been excluded from the parts of the breakdown data opposite in order to better express how the school managed and maintained contact with those students who were prevented from attending school because of Covid-19.

**Student attendance figures
(three week comparison)**



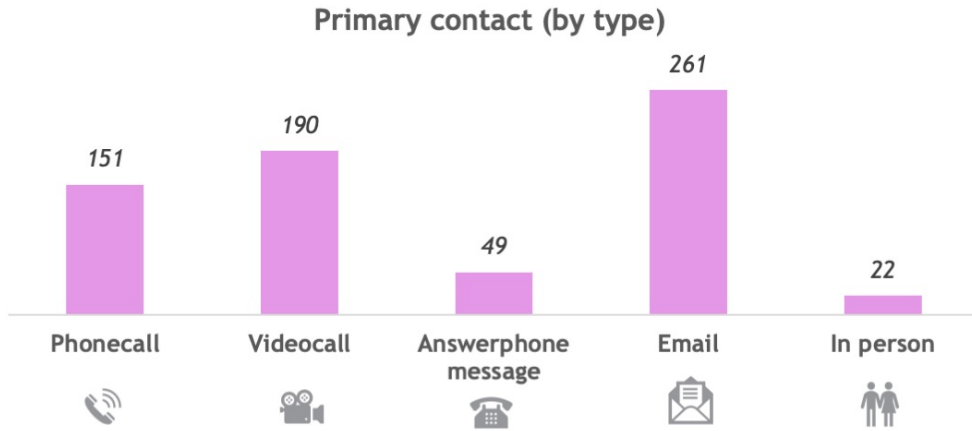
- ▶ The attendance figures above, provided courtesy of the school office, show the gradual return of day students absent due to Covid-19 over three example weeks at the beginning, middle, and end of the summer term (to date of this report). As the graph shows the numbers of residential students (52 week per year residents) remained constant throughout, with the variation coming from the withdrawal and return of day students
- ▶ The Covid-19 Family Contact Log tracks **one primary contact** per week between families and their son's/daughter's respective teacher. This approach meant it was easier to understand whether any given family had received sufficient contact 'at a glance' as the figures revealed whether or not that family had only had contact via email (for example) or had also been spoken to on the phone, via Microsoft Teams or any other more involved medium over a given week or period of weeks.

- ▶ The screenshot opposite shows the Covid-19 Family Contact Log, including the running total figures upon which the following data is based. It also shows the search functionality used to quickly identify whether any given student and family was receiving sufficient support from the school.

Covid-19: Family Contact Log				29/06/2020	
Search by surname	Search (surname)	Total no. of contacts			
Search by date	Search (date)	20/04/2020	192		
Search by class	Search (class)	Year 1	49		
		Year 2	22		
		Year 3	22		
		Year 4	22		
		Year 5	22		
		Year 6	22		
		Year 7	22		
		Year 8	22		
		Year 9	22		
		Year 10	22		
		Year 11	22		
		Year 12	22		
		Year 13	22		
		Year 14	22		
		Year 15	22		
		Year 16	22		
		Year 17	22		
		Year 18	22		
		Year 19	22		
		Year 20	22		
		Year 21	22		
		Year 22	22		
		Year 23	22		
		Year 24	22		
		Year 25	22		
		Year 26	22		
		Year 27	22		
		Year 28	22		
		Year 29	22		
		Year 30	22		
		Year 31	22		
		Year 32	22		
		Year 33	22		
		Year 34	22		
		Year 35	22		
		Year 36	22		
		Year 37	22		
		Year 38	22		
		Year 39	22		
		Year 40	22		
		Year 41	22		
		Year 42	22		
		Year 43	22		
		Year 44	22		
		Year 45	22		
		Year 46	22		
		Year 47	22		
		Year 48	22		
		Year 49	22		
		Year 50	22		
		Year 51	22		
		Year 52	22		
		Year 53	22		
		Year 54	22		
		Year 55	22		
		Year 56	22		
		Year 57	22		
		Year 58	22		
		Year 59	22		
		Year 60	22		
		Year 61	22		
		Year 62	22		
		Year 63	22		
		Year 64	22		
		Year 65	22		
		Year 66	22		
		Year 67	22		
		Year 68	22		
		Year 69	22		
		Year 70	22		
		Year 71	22		
		Year 72	22		
		Year 73	22		
		Year 74	22		
		Year 75	22		
		Year 76	22		
		Year 77	22		
		Year 78	22		
		Year 79	22		
		Year 80	22		
		Year 81	22		
		Year 82	22		
		Year 83	22		
		Year 84	22		
		Year 85	22		
		Year 86	22		
		Year 87	22		
		Year 88	22		
		Year 89	22		
		Year 90	22		
		Year 91	22		
		Year 92	22		
		Year 93	22		
		Year 94	22		
		Year 95	22		
		Year 96	22		
		Year 97	22		
		Year 98	22		
		Year 99	22		
		Year 100	22		

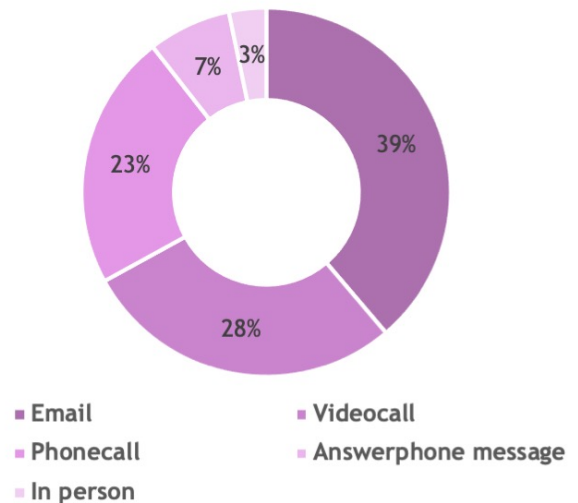
ii. Contact Data - Breakdown

- ▶ The graph below shows the total number of primary contacts of a given type over the specified period (April to June or summer term to date). That is to say that there were, for example, 151 instances over that timeframe where the primary mode of contact between the school and a given family over a given week was a phone call, 190 instances where the primary mode of contact was video call and so on.

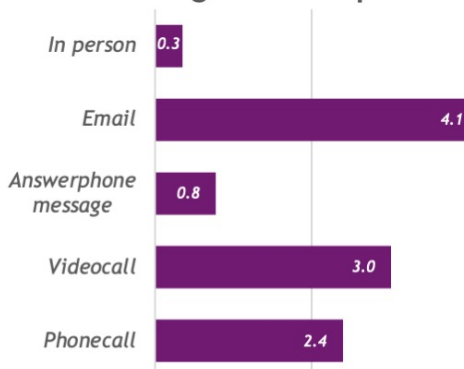


- ▶ Understood proportionally, this shows that while email was the single biggest mode of communication, with 39% of all communications being off this type, the majority of contacts have been made through a combination of phone calls and video calls - a combined 51% of all contacts were of these types. This is incredibly telling as it shows not only that staff were able to have meaningful and interactive communication with families, but also that the school as a whole embraced and promoted the most technologically advanced form of communication available to it, even managing to get a vast number of parents to use this new form of communication.

Frequency of contact (by type)



Average contacts per student



N.B The average figures above have been calculated by dividing the total number of contacts by the peak number of day students not present due to Covid-19.

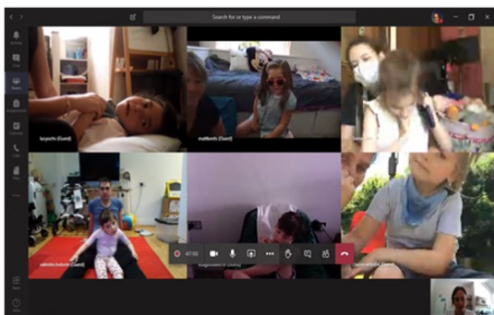
- ▶ The graph opposite shows the average number of contacts each student has received this term to date. The data shows that (on average) every student unable to attend Chailey because of Covid-19 has been contacted at least once a week, primarily by email, phone and video call (around 90% of contacts were of this type). And, while in person contacts are understandably low, it's key to note that answerphone messages, the least interactive form of contact, rank similarly low down. This again shows contact was meaningful, with parents engaged and involved in conversations.

iii. Case Study - M2

M2 in St Martins is a class of 7 students of varying levels of ability, taught by class teacher and MSI lead Amy Perkins. During lockdown Amy worked incredibly hard to research, develop, and deliver various online teaching strategies, that supplemented and complemented ongoing home / school communication.

In fact, and to the huge credit of both Amy and her students and families, these sessions have gone far beyond a 'weekly catch up', and have seen students develop MNS and progress skills they had fought hard to acquire.

- ❖ When lockdown began all students in M2 were at home (with one on the bungalow) and so Amy set about trying to find the best possible way she could to remain in touch with her class; "from the beginning I wanted to find a way to support and stay connected with families and children during this time, but had to think of the best way to do it" Amy said.

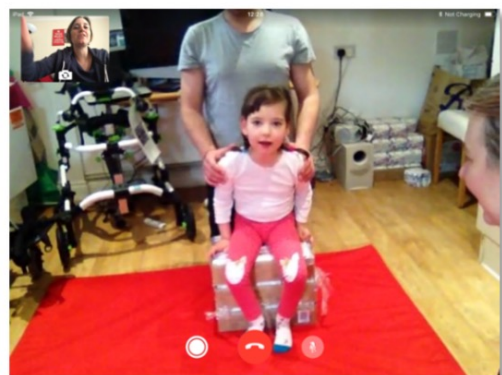


- ❖ After many hours of online research Amy began by sending links to parents via email to suitable resources and activities. Interestingly the decision to email rather than phone was a conscious one, "I made contact this way to start off with because while I wanted to be available and supportive, I was also conscious that parents were trying to get their heads around a rapidly changing world and this had big implications for their family" Amy explained.

- ❖ After exhausting her initial thoughts on practical essentials e.g. sending resources home by post, or ensuring students had access to necessary equipment where possible, Amy began to explore the possibility of virtual sessions. Owing to its secure nature Chailey's IT department had already begun launching Microsoft Teams across the foundation, and so that was the obvious choice for a platform for parents.

"Its been really great to spend time modelling to parents how we teach things like phonics and maths etc. so they can take it on at home"

- ❖ After setting up an M2 class Team, and adding all her class' parents (something we're glossing over here but which took many hours of troubleshooting and about which Amy also created a incredibly detailed 'How To...' guide for all other teaching staff!), Amy was able to start initially holding one to one sessions with specific families. These sessions focused on activities relevant to the child, be that switch work, communication, physio, or maths and phonics sessions, but also included broader social and emotional outcomes as Amy was able to offer more general support to her pupils and parents, and provide solutions to any problems or questions they may have.



"For one physio session for example, we used the students milk feed boxes for box sitting!"

iii. Case Study - M2

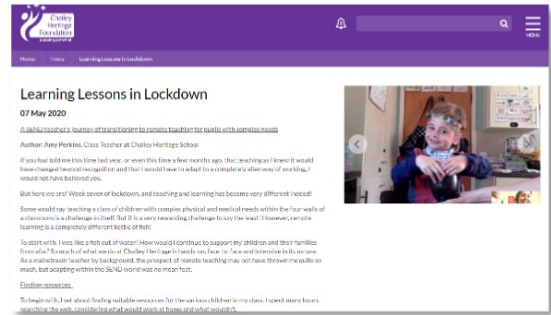
- ❖ As the weeks passed Amy supported this primary weekly contact with emails when appropriate, feeding back any issues that arose regarding therapy or equipment to onsite therapy teams, even managing to include therapists, SEAs and other teachers in the weekly video calls when possible! Alongside this, weekly plans and activities were (and continue to be) uploaded to Teams for parents to access, and session photos are added to a notebook for parents and students to share.

“from the beginning I wanted to find a way to support and stay connected with families and children during this time”

- ❖ Although lockdown presented some challenges regarding resources, it also gave rise to innovative and occasionally unusual solutions “some resources were sent in a pack for the half term (posted) or I used things I had at home or knew parents would be able to get their hands on. For one physio session for example, we used the students milk feed boxes for box sitting!” Amy told me.

“while I wanted to be available and supportive, I was also conscious that parents were trying to get their heads around a rapidly changing world”

- ❖ Though not the original purpose of home / school communication, the more the online sessions have developed, the more the additional benefits of them are becoming apparent, “for example, it’s actually been really great to spend time modelling to parents how we teach things like phonics and maths etc. so they can take it on at home” said Amy.
- ❖ Moreover the school has been quick to learn from Amy’s experience in online teaching, publishing articles on her approach on the CHF website to share best practice and promote effective teaching and learning among staff and parents alike.



- ❖ This remarkable example demonstrates the lengths teachers have gone to to try and give the young people of Chailey as much normality and stability as possible in these times of uncertainty. We’re truly proud to have staff like Amy teaching here at Chailey and wholeheartedly believe their dedication, expertise and commitment to our children is the defining reason we as a foundation have got through this unprecedented global crisis.



Thank you to Amy Perkins for her time and expertise in writing this case study.

iv. Case Study - Seymour Assemblies

This term Seymour department have delivered some pioneering virtual assemblies that aimed to reunite students still at home with those back at school, and provide an opportunity for a mixed group of students, parents, and staff, to take part in, and take something from, a shared activity.

As the weeks have passed these have grown in stature to include other school departments, and are now something staff and parents have both described as “the highlight of the week”.

- ❖ The idea to hold a whole department virtual assembly grew out of a music session hosted by Ollie (Class Teacher, S3) where an incredibly diverse group of students each were able to participate in and enjoy a collective activity. Speaking about the session Ollie said “It’s not often you stumble across an idea which everyone can get something out of, and when you do I think that’s something to get excited about”.
 - ❖ With the bit firmly between their teeth, the Seymour Teaching staff set about organizing their first whole department virtual assembly. After many myriad of technical hurdles were negotiated, not least of which was getting parents on board with the new tech, the inaugural assembly took place on the morning of the 12th June, where Sian (Acting Head of Seymour Department & Class Teacher S5) led everyone in a message story retelling of a Spike Milligan poem.
 - ❖ Since then every Seymour teacher has led an assembly, each choosing a different topic that reflects a particular interest, but with all achieving extraordinary engagement among the congregated students, parents, and staff alike. The Seymour assembly is now a hotly anticipated weekly fixture, with students from other departments clamoring to join.
- “It’s not often you stumble across an idea which everyone can get something out of, and when you do I think that’s something to get excited about”*
- ❖ The benefits of the assembly have been wide ranging and profound. Oner (Class Teacher, S6) noted that the assembly “almost acts as a brief training session for the parents and carers in how to deliver an activity which has an incredibly powerful knock on effect for the children who are in isolation at home”.
 - ❖ This ‘training’ was not limited to parents however, as the assembly also gave teachers the opportunity to take Chailey staff through activities with heightened focus; “because we have to be very explicit and explain everything, because it’s a virtual assembly, we’re also explaining to staff what our expectations are which refreshes their skills and thereby helps all students” Lauren (Class Teacher, S1) observed.
 - ❖ The assemblies have been much more than this however, they have fostered a real sense of unity and togetherness, the significance of which cannot be understated in these disrupted and isolated times: “It’s been really nice to build a sense of community among the students, parents, and staff, and it’s been the highlight of the week to see all the students at home engaging with each other and their families” said Sian.

iv. Case Study - Seymour Assemblies

- ❖ Initially, questions were asked about how a collective activity of this scale and nature would be able to reach such a diverse group of students, each of whom have a very different profile of needs. However the Seymour teaching staff have found that with careful planning it's actually easier to engage a large group virtually as this offers greater flexibility to emphasize different aspects of the same activity simultaneously. Speaking about her assembly Sian said "everyone has the capacity to enjoy a story for example, and one way to do that for our students is through massage. The nurturing touch allows our more PMLD students to 'experience' the story, while the narrative engages our more cognitively able students' understanding of language".
- ❖ This feeling has been echoed by all the teaching staff of Seymour with Oner adding that whatever the topic "there's always the possibility of making an activity accessible for any cohort of students".



- ❖ The impact of these assemblies has also been felt in the ongoing communication between teachers and parents which they supplement. The fact that teachers are able to take part in an activity not just with the students but with the parents as well, has resulted in a breakdown of barriers between individuals and a greater acceptance of what we have in common.

- ❖ Speaking about the assemblies' effect on interactions with parents Ollie said "having these assemblies really helps conversations with parents as it becomes much more personal - we can now talk about something enjoyable we've actually done together rather than an abstract lesson plan or outline".

"It's been really nice to build a sense of community among the students, parents, and staff, and it's been the highlight of the week to see all the students at home engaging with each other and their families"

- ❖ The 'halo effect' of the assemblies is something all Seymour teachers have noticed; "There are some parents who I felt haven't always wanted as much contact over the phone who I now have something to spark a discussion with that leads to conversation about how they're doing more generally. I've also organized video calls around the assembly which gives a real focus to our weekly conversations" Lauren commented.
- ❖ Through the outstanding work of the Seymour teachers, and the commitment and openness of students and families, the Seymour Assembly initiative has not only brought all of us closer, it has developed and improved the opportunities available to our pupils. What an incredible thing to be able to say at a time when all other things have been at a standstill.

Thank you to Sian Cox-Aldridge, Oner Ozdamar, Lauren Boal, and Ollie Dixon for their time and expertise in writing this case study.

v. Conclusion

- ▶ These past weeks and months have presented a huge challenge for our school, and our community more widely. Through a wonderful effort from our staff, students, parents and carers, I am proud to be able to say that we did not merely endure this pandemic, in many ways we progressed.
- ▶ Thank you Dan for this amazing piece of work, I am very grateful.

Simon Yates

Head Teacher

