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What follows are speaking notes that Mr Macdonald would have drawn upon to share his experiences with the Forum, had we had time:

**Our challenges in restarting education:**

1. adapting the curriculum. We have made Health & Well Being a key focus, creating new lessons and resources to make the children's transition back to physical teaching as smooth as possible. We have done away with ability sets for Maths, French... this means longer spells for the children sitting in the one classroom all day, which can potentially lead to fatigue and disengagement.
2. adapting routines. One-way systems, labelling doors so that children know where they can and cannot go, opening windows (in December!), staggering break and lunch times, no visitors (including parents) allowed on site... and adhering to all this!, while not compromising on teaching & learning. We have become used to thinking on our feet e.g. finding digital alternatives to submitting homework, hosting assemblies, etc...
3. adapting extra-curricular activities. As a very active, sporty school, having no music concerts, hardly any sports fixtures with other schools, some of the things by which we define ourselves, has been a challenge. My own Malawi Club has been shelved, and our partnership has suffered as a result.
4. what I call 'hitting the reset button'. The children's experiences of distance learning were hugely varied, some loved it, some found it very challenging. So their experiences in coming back to a level playing field will also vary widely.

On this last point, I have been enormously impressed by the resilience, and adaptability that our children have shown. I think young children often have greater reserves of strength than we sometimes give them credit for. This has helped made us, as staff, cope better with points 1-3, and it gives me hope for the future of our school community when we finally come through the other side of this pandemic. I am sure that young people in Malawi have been similarly inspiring in their approaches, and I look forward to hearing some of their stories.