

March Newsletter



March 2018

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends,

I can hardly believe that the 'spring' term has come to an end. I haven't seen many signs of spring yet. The only thing that seems to be growing is the new build and the school roll! Many people have asked if the new building is on two floors. It isn't. Those high windows are to let light in. I have had my first tour of the building wearing a protective hat etc. and very glamorous boots! It really is going to be fantastic when finished.



FS/Year 1 Parent Workshop

On Tuesday 20th March, the Foundation Stage and Year 1 classrooms were awash with excited children and adults ready to take part in some egg-citing Easter themed activities. From hunting for Easter eggs to creating Easter crafts, making repeating and symmetrical patterns to testing parachutes to keep an egg safe, the children were busily engaged in some truly wonderful learning. We hope you had an egg-cellent time if you came!

Year 2 Trip to the Zoo



On Tuesday 20th March, Year 2 visited London Zoo to explore the rainforest and to see the rainforest animals, we have been learning about, up close. We had the most amazing day.

'We saw a yellow spotty giraffe; it was lifting its long neck upwards slowly.' Ellie

'I liked the jumpy little poisonous dart frog. It was tiny. You could hardly see it.' Olly

'After that we went to the mini rainforest. Have you been to London Zoo? I saw a sloth. The sloth was as quiet as a leaf.' Hector

'Did you enjoy your day at the zoo? I did! I had a lovely day!' Izzy W

Year 3 & 4 Inspiration Day

As we reach the end of our Greek topic in Year 3 and 4 we would like to thank parents for the support they have given. We had the most amazing inspiration day to launch the topic. The children wore wonderful costumes and the workshop was very exciting. The children were able to visit a range of stalls and made wax tablets, clay lamps, frescos and many other items. In the afternoon they enjoyed Greek theatre and a feast of Greek food. I would like to thank all the people that came into help us. It made a huge difference to the smooth running of the day. I would also like to thank you for paying for the workshop; the children learnt a lot and had fun whilst doing it.

The year 3 and 4 team would like to say a big thank you to all the helpers that came to support the children at the Greek parent workshop. We welcomed not just parents but grandparents and aunts and friends too; the children were very pleased to spend the afternoon with their helpers. The children had a wonderful week planning how to make the Parthenon and then recreating it out of clay. We have been busy painting them this week and they now look amazing! The children have felt very proud of their work and a lot of people have admired the quality of their final pieces.

Year 5/6 Trip to West Stow Anglo Saxon Village

On the 22nd of March, year 5/6 arrived at the Anglo Saxon Village in West Stow. The journey took around 45 minutes, so we arrived at about 10:30am. Once we had split into groups, it was time to explore...

We were split into the two groups and had two main activities, one was a visit to the museum, the other was to explore the houses and village. We first went into the museum.

Although the museum wasn't huge, it was full of interesting information and artefacts. We saw a small child's skeleton (which was roughly 40cm long and 15cm wide); a wild boar's skin and of course an ancient poo! Ben, the guide, told us that the poo was approximately 1,500 years old, but you would never guess what it was it looked just like a pile of dirt.

After the museum, Ben gave us some time to explore the village. The houses incorporated different building techniques. All of the houses had a thatched roof, but the walls were made of various materials, including wattle and daub and wood. Most of the houses had raised floors. The house that stood out the most was the 'sunken house'. This house was one of the first designs for Anglo Saxon living that was found at West Stow. The floor of the house sat below ground level, making the house cold and at risk of flooding. Ben later informed us, during a question and answer session, that actually this probably wasn't how the houses were built and that all houses probably had raised floors. He explained that even though they know a lot about Anglo Saxons and how they lived, they are still learning.



Overall, we found this trip extremely enjoyable and very interesting.

Lauren Schofield and Jess Wainwright Swift Class

PE news

It has been a busy month for PE fixtures. We have had a successful second round of the A Team High 5 netball competition, with this team progressing through to the A team plate finals after Easter. Our B team also took part in the finals of their competition at Impington Village College, showing great determination and perseverance throughout their matches. We have also played the final match in the South Cambs Riverside Football League, with the team winning 6-1 against Fowlmere Primary School. The girls' football squad also took part in a friendly match against Barrington Primary School, developing their skills phenomenally during the match to eventually win 7-4.

Ambulance

The Foundation Stage children were awestruck to go out into the car park on a cold Wednesday morning to find an ambulance waiting for them. The children learnt about what the ambulance and paramedics do and how and when to call for them. They then got to sit in the driver's seat and make the siren work before having a tour in the back of the ambulance to see what equipment was stored there and how and when it would be used. Thank you so much to Steve and Paul for bringing the ambulance in to visit us; it was truly a memorable occasion.



Mother's Day



We were delighted to welcome over 160 mothers to our Mother's Day activities, despite the lack of tea and cake! It was incredible to watch the enthusiasm with which the children and their female relations took part in the fitness activities and tucked into the delicious fruit kebabs and loaded rice cakes. We hope that you enjoyed taking part in these activities with your children and that it has inspired all to make healthy and exciting changes. Don't forget to use your 5-a-day logins to continue this splendid work at home.

Gaming

The adults in school are really worried about our children. There is a definite change in behaviour and language when compared even to last year. Sadly, we are hearing children talking about death and killing and we are dealing with increasingly physical and inappropriate play. This is the view shared collectively by other headteachers locally. We are aware that many children are spending long hours gaming.

We are currently particularly concerned about children playing 'Fortnite'. It is a free-to-play online, interactive game accessible on PlayStation, Xbox, Windows and Mac, which combines resource collecting and survival gun battles. Hundreds of strangers go head-to-head in a gun battle until only one man or team is left standing. Sadly, we know from talking to our children, that those as young as year 2 have been playing this game. Fortnite is rated as PEGI 12 for frequent scenes of mild violence. Several parents have noticed that playing the game can make their children cross or angry. This is common in a number of games but exacerbated in Fortnite because of the large number of competitors and because each player only has one life. Parents also need to be aware of the interactions between players, who can hear each other during the game, and the possible implications here.

As with any game, parents should be aware of the amount of time spent playing and who your children are inviting into their home when playing. We have had reports of children being exposed to highly inappropriate language and comments through a variety of online games. Finally, playing games until the early hours is bound to have an adverse effect on children's readiness for school. Children's brains are still developing, and they need sufficient high quality sleep.

Staffing Update

The bigger we grow, the more staff we need to meet the various demands across the school. We are currently 347 children, that is 29 more than last year. I am delighted to report that Miss Sorrell Hawkins has been appointed as a teaching assistant to lead a nurture programme. Miss Hawkins will be based in Badger class supporting children there and across the school. Miss Hawkins is also outside during KS2 lunchtime, as the adult to help children resolve friendship difficulties. Mrs Natalie Mulvey has been promoted to be our School Business Manager and we have also appointed Mrs Laura Gregory to work in the school office, Monday to Wednesday, to help with the increased administration of a growing school. Mrs Gregory will start after the Easter break.

With a growing staff also brings higher rates of staff turnover. Sadly, Mrs Arnott has decided that juggling her job as an Early Years teacher in another setting, being a busy mum to three boys and teaching for us one day a week in Foundation is juggling one role too many. I appreciate all that Mrs Arnott has done for us in the Foundation Stage and hope she will come back to us one day when her boys are older – I know where you live Sally! Mrs Arnott's last day will be Monday 16th April. We are working on a replacement and will share this information as soon as we know it. Mrs Davison has made the very difficult decision to resign due to ill health. We are extremely disappointed to lose Mrs Davison, she is an excellent and caring teacher, but we know this is the right decision for her and hope that when she is well again she will be able to return to teaching.

I shared with the staff yesterday my reflections on parenting. I believe it is our job to raise our children with the skills needed to be independent of us. When the time comes to allow them that independence it can be daunting and emotional. I shared how, when you leave a child at university, you are proud and excited for them and the life opportunities before them, but you are also sad to leave them. Similarly, as Headteacher, it is my responsibility to raise my teachers into the next generation of school leaders. It is with immense pride but all those mixed emotions of a parent whose child is about to leave the nest, that I can share that Mrs Pine has been successfully appointed as Headteacher of Newport Primary School in Essex. I know that this news will come as a huge disappointment to you, but it is Mrs Pine's time to fly now. She needs to go and make a difference for the children of Newport. Having worked with Mrs Pine for four years and got to know her as a colleague and friend, I know that her empathy, integrity, leadership skills and inclusive ethos of education will make her a superb headteacher.

Mrs Pine has been key in supporting me and the school governors move the school from Requires Improvement to Good. We are now transitioning into a new chapter of our school, that of growing into a two form entry school. We are consolidating all the improvements we have made to become even better. With this change, I am working with the governors to put together a new leadership structure for the school so that we can appoint the correct staff to support me in this important next chapter. As Headteacher, I am proud of the sense of family I have created at Melbourn and am excited about who is going to join our family next and the skills they will bring.

Midday Supervisor & Cleaner Vacancies

We are looking to appoint Midday Supervisors to join our team. Duties will include assisting children in the dining hall along with leading and supervising play activities. If you are someone who enjoys being part of a team, has good communication skills and cares about the welfare of all children then we would love to hear from you. Playtime is a highlight of the day for the children and securing the very best people who are willing to give up an hour of their day to help supervise the children playing and help them develop healthy interactions always proves difficult. This is a crucial role to ensure child happiness and safety and gives valuable school experience. If you are thinking about working in a school, this is a good opportunity to gain experience. The rate of pay is £7.90 per hour.

Visit to the Baptist Church

As part of our RE curriculum, the children were lucky enough to be invited into the Baptist church to experience the Easter Story. The whole church was creatively transformed into seven different points, each depicting an element of the story. They heard about the last supper and sat around a table, whilst listening to the Reverend Clarke tell them of the significance of the different foods they ate. Sitting in a circle they re-enacted Jesus washing the feet of his friends and finally they looked in wonder at the empty tomb. To help them remember the story, they ended their visit with the opportunity to decorate a biscuit. A huge thank you to everyone from the Baptist church for making this experience so special.

Finally,

I do hope that whatever you are doing this Easter that you manage to get some fresh air and sunshine. When I was growing up I used to watch a programme called 'Why Don't You?' with the theme tune lyrics, "Why Don't You Just Switch Off Your Television Set and Go Out and Do Something Less Boring Instead?" I think as parents, we need to claim that for our children, replacing the *television set* with *game console*! Have fun and enjoy a chocolate egg or two!

Mrs Stephanie Wilcox
Headteacher

Dates for April

- Monday 2nd – Friday 13th April
- Tuesday 17th – Year 2 Inspiration day – Children invited to dress in a space inspired theme
- Thursday 19th – Year 1 Inspiration day – Children invited to dress in bright / flowery colours
- Friday 20th – Year 3 & 4 Inspiration day
- Friday 20th – New date for PTFA Quiz Night
- Friday 27th – Foundation Stage Inspiration day – Children invited to dress as an animal



Dates for the diary

New date for PTFA Quiz – Friday 20th April

Movie Night – Friday 18th May

Summer Fayre – Friday 6th July

Disco – Friday 20th July



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