

Newsletter

February 2019 - 9

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our first spring newsletter, it has been a busy term with the highlight for the children, most definitely, being able to play in the snow last week!

Thank you for attending our Celebration of Work afternoon, I hope you enjoyed looking at the children's work. Parent's evenings are coming up after half term and I look forward to talking to many of you on those evenings. Thank you for your responses to our recent Parent Questionnaire. We received a very good response and we are always so pleased to get your feedback about both schools. Miss Coppenhall has collated the results and has shared both the parent and pupil questionnaire feedback in this newsletter.

I have received a number of parental complaint letters this academic year about absences being unauthorised, can I just clarify again that I am unable to authorise term time absences. When a request is refused it is not personal, I am following the local authority guidance on attendance. Our attendance officer Caroline Northover attends the school each term to review our attendance figures, checking late registers and all absences. Letters that are issued by the school may seem cold and unfeeling, but they are local authority templates triggered automatically as attendance falls below set parameters and form part of a legal process ongoing if attendance does not improve.

Sadly I have to inform you that Mrs Kate Golding who worked at Potton Lower School and lead our Reception team for many years died last Thursday. Our thoughts are with Kate's family at this very difficult time. We are intending to organise a tribute to her in the next few weeks and we will write to you regarding this when we return after the half term break.

I hope you all enjoy a well-deserved half term break, and I look forward to seeing the children back in school on Monday 18th February 2019.

Cathy Smart
Executive Headteacher

A message from Charlotte Coppenhall – Acting Deputy Headteacher

Our whole school Value for January is 'Hope' which ties in brilliantly with New Year's resolutions made and challenges that we all set ourselves. We have enjoyed talking about our hopes and dreams for the future and what we can do to make them happen. Hearing the pupil's hopes for themselves and the school has been wonderful to listen to and I have enjoyed talking to some of our pupils about their aspirations for the future and what they want to do or be 'when they grow up'. It has been fantastic to see and hear how they feel they can use their own strengths and skills effectively not just today, but in the future to make our world a better place.



These are some of the aspirations our children shared with me!

It has been a busy start to 2019, but one filled with lots of achievements and success. I was particularly proud as I showed three of our school governors around both schools one morning. They enjoyed their tour so much that they asked to go and revisit several classes! The children's behaviour across the Federation was outstanding, and it was such a joy to see the enthusiasm and determination across all year groups. This governor walk had a particular focus on Maths, and we were able to see a range of practical learning which inspired all pupils to overcome barriers, solve problems, and challenge themselves. The children's feedback was also very positive, and they were so keen to show off their mathematical investigations and how they had learned in collaboration with each other. As a school we know how invaluable practical work is to applying and developing skills, and Maths is no exception!

Another of my favourite moments this half term has been sharing hot chocolate with pupils across the Federation on a Friday afternoon based on their demonstration of the school Values. This has been a wonderful chance to discuss school life and the elements that they enjoy the most as well as the areas they feel we could enhance, all whilst sipping hot chocolate and eating jammy dodgers! I am looking forward to continuing this next half term as it is a very lovely way to end the week.

I hope you all have a lovely, relaxing half term break.

Questionnaire Feedback – Charlotte Coppenhall

Thank you to everyone who completed our annual Parent Questionnaire at the end of the Autumn Term. We are delighted by the responses and comments we received. It is good to see that the hard work that goes on at school has been recognised. We very much rely on this process as a way of evaluating the performance of our school for the last year and have identified strengths along with aspects that we will continue to work together to develop. We feel that it is important that the responses are fed back to you as parents, to keep you informed. We also thought that it was important to share the responses from our Pupil Questionnaire too. You will hopefully see how these have been used in focusing our future developments for the year ahead.

Parent Questionnaire

97% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child is happy at this school
98% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child feels safe and well looked after at school
Over 95% of parents agreed and strongly agreed that their child is taught well and making good progress
Over 96% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they find the text updates, weekly emails and half termly newsletters interesting and useful
92% of parents feel welcome in school and have the opportunity to be involved in school life

Pupil Questionnaire

95% of pupils enjoy school and believe that teachers help them to do their best
Over 96% of pupils enjoy their learning and feel that they are challenged.
Over 94% of pupils believe school looks after their physical, emotional and mental health
98% of pupils say school encourages them to be independent and to take on responsibilities
Over 90% of pupils feel they and the other pupils show the school values well

Future Developments

- Give parents more notice leading up to events
- Increase outdoor learning for pupils
- Improve the consistency of the use of Class Dojo across the school

As always, your child's class teacher is your first port of call with any queries and an appointment can be made via the relevant school office. Staff often have training or meetings to go to straight after school so can't always be available without notice.

News from the Key Stages

Reception – Miss Coppenhall

This term the children have been working extremely well and they have been making everyone in the Foundation Unit so proud with their ever-growing confidence and love of learning.

All of the children have been so excited to learn about fairy tales and we have had the chance to read and act out lots of stories. We have even identified the differences between traditional tales and alternative versions. We were all invited



to Cinderella's Royal Ball and the children and adults came dressed as their favourite fairy tale characters. We have also enjoyed planting a magic bean and watching it grow into a Beanstalk, conjuring magic potions and baking gingerbread men.

The children have also taken on the challenge of their first ever Big Write, and we were so impressed with how well all of the children have been able to write sentences when retelling the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.

Well done to you all for a fantastic first half of the Spring Term!

Key Stage 1 – Miss Fordham

This half term has whizzed by and it only seems like yesterday we were celebrating Christmas with our friends and families but even in a short five weeks so much wonderful learning has taken place in Key Stage 1.

The topic this term in Year 1 has been 'Bright Lights, Big City', the children have loved learning about London from travelling around the school on a London bus to writing poetry using their five senses. They have read the story 'The Queen's Knickers' by Nicholas Allan and have been retelling the story using drama. To conclude this topic children in Year 1 wrote invitations to the Queen to invite her to their tea party. They made crowns, their own sandwiches and even had a special visitor during their party. Next term, Year 1 will be moving onto the topic 'Paws, Claws and Whiskers' and I know it will be just as exciting!



In Year 2 our topic has been 'Towers, Tunnels and Turrets' and it has given us the opportunity to explore the history of castles and how they've changed over time. We have been investigating the different ways in which castles would have been attacked, defended and the methods that were used.

In Science, Year 2 even created their own castles and tested how strong they were! We read the story 'The Dragon Machine' by Helen Ward and it has been a pleasure to see the children get so excited about designing the maps of the mysterious dragon island and writing letters of advice to the main character about how to help the dragons.

Year 2 had a fantastic Art lesson where they used mirrors to help paint self-portraits. We are continuing this topic next half term with more of a focus on Geography looking at different towers, tunnels and turrets around the world.



Have a lovely half term!

Lower Key Stage 2 – Mr Adams

Five weeks does not seem very long when talking about school terms but the children in Lower Key Stage 2 have managed to achieve so much!

After the Christmas holidays, Year 3 returned to their new topic – Ancient Greece and Year 4 – Traders and Raiders. The two different time periods have brought to life ancient history for the children and they have immersed themselves in life thousands of years ago.

Year 3 started their topic exploring the Ancient world and discussed questions to direct their learning throughout the term. Since the start of their topic, they have learnt to write in Ancient Greek using the Greek alphabet and learnt about the infamous gods and goddesses of the past. Their unique attributes have helped the children discover why Greek soldiers were considered some of the best fighters of the past. As well as their History off the Page day, one of their memorable experiences involved discovering the story of the Trojan war, and the children created their own Trojan horse as part of their topic.

In Year 4 the children had a wow start to the year, sailing across the North Sea in their longboats. An Art and Design day meant all of the children had the opportunity to create their own longship and Saxon helmet. Every day the children have had the opportunity to wear their helmets during topic lessons and this has helped them imagine that they were a Saxon over a thousand years ago. After learning about how the Saxons and Vikings arrived in England and where they settled, the children have been architects, designing a long house; a blacksmith, creating tools fit for purpose; and a jeweller, designing and creating a piece of jewellery out of clay. To finish their topic, the children have worked on fact files to create a class information book about traders and raiders. This independent writing task has produced a finished product fit for the school library!

As we reach the end of the half term, all of the pupils in the lower school have been given a login for Times Table Rockstars. They can challenge themselves individually or a part of a group and it is an excellent, exciting resource to help them practice and learn their times tables. I hope you all enjoy the break and look forward to seeing you after half term and the start of our new cornerstones topics.

Upper Key Stage 2 – Mr Brooks

Year 5

This term Year 5 have been learning all about the exciting art of gold as part of our topic – *Alchemy Island* – and harnessing their knowledge of geographical feature and map reading. In the first week, Year 5 had to identify how to get to Alchemy Island using a portal. We studied a variety of stories and films that use portals to transport characters to fantasy worlds, and (with a little imagination) we explored the school and the grounds for possible portals that could take us from Potton to another dimension. The children have also had to solve a mysterious riddle to identify where this portal would bring them out on the island and from there have examined a map to plan a safe route to cross it.



From this, as part of our Science work, we have collected various geological samples from different locations across Alchemy Island. The children have had the opportunity to identify the properties of various materials as well as determining what their different uses could be. This then led up to our end of term experiment where the pupils were able to examine the properties of some rather unusual specimens. We have also learnt about various climate zones and how the weather, temperature and landscape can differ depending on that country's location on Earth. The children have been incredibly excited when learning about volcanoes and earthquakes and through this we have seen some budding geologists!



To link our topic to English, the children have learnt to write fantasy narratives throughout the term focusing on their use of description to capture the reader's imagination. We have looked at a range of stories written by authors such as JK Rowling and C.S Lewis to take inspiration from their style of writing, as well as using similar features and ideas in our own narratives. We have also gained inspiration from Michael Morpurgo's 'Kensuke's Kingdom' – following the adventures of Michael as he is washed up on a mysterious island with only his pet dog Stella and a strange character for company. The pupils have then applied their understanding of gold from our

topic in non-chronological reports, studying famous alchemists as well as the various uses for gold. We were all surprised to learn that gold can be used to treat various illnesses and can even occasionally be eaten!

The Year 5 pupils have worked incredibly hard on their homework this half term, especially on their project homework showing everything from alchemists to the American gold rush! All of the pupils had the opportunity to look at one another's homework and give feedback, as well as congratulate one another, on their hard work. I feel all of the Year 5 team have learnt just as much as the children from the homework and are incredibly pleased with the effort put into their learning.

Our topic next half term will be "Off with her head!" so if you have a passion for The Tudors or Britain's gruesome history of Kings and Queens then please pass this on to your children so they feel fresh and inspired for the new term!

Best wishes,
Mrs Chamberlain

Year 6

Our budding little professors and surgeons were introduced to this term's new topic – *Blood Heart* – with an undoubtedly gruesome yet unforgettable learning experience. Scientists from across the ages have been fascinated with human anatomy and made ground-breaking discoveries about the heart. Upon returning to school in the New Year, our Year 6 cohort rolled up their sleeves and participated in a controlled scientific exploration of an animal heart! Contrary to our initial predictions, the children were far from squeamish as they examined the veins, arteries and chambers of the dissected hearts up close. Needless to say, their curiosity was well and truly inflamed. These memorable learning experiences are key to enthusing and exciting young minds, and I'm sure this investigation will stay with them for years to come. We'd all like to thank Mrs Bingham for setting up this captivating scientific exploration.

Throughout the term, children were led through a fascinating and appropriately inquisitive exploration of the Circulatory System, studying the features of the human heart, the importance of blood and how to keep healthy. During the early stages of this journey, pupils were tasked to demonstrate their initial knowledge of how blood is circulated around the human body. Complete with rules, resources, quiz questions and in some brutal cases forfeits, they all designed interactive board games and quizzes that clearly demonstrated their growing knowledge of the human body.

To support their scientific curiosity, the children have also spent time in English delving into Malorie Blackman's *Pig Heart Boy*. This deeply moving and highly unpredictable story captivated the attention of the children across the term and was used as a foundation to build their writing skills from the outset. From developing their ability to include figurative language in descriptive writing to integrating dialogue as a technique to build tension, the creative writing from so many of our students not only improved across the term, but really encompassed the themes and style of Blackman's powerful story.

As ever, the quality of this term's Topic Homework Projects were indicative of the valuable and enjoyable classroom experiences the children have had this term. Creations ranged from colourful heart montages, clay models, exercise plans, songs, poetry, self-programmed animations/games and of course, cakes! Our 'Topic Project Celebration Afternoon' was the perfect way to congratulate the children for their efforts this term. I'd just like to take this opportunity to once again thank the parents for all the support and hard work that goes on at home. Without you, these memorable moments don't happen; it is greatly appreciated and certainly doesn't go unnoticed.

MOCK SAT's

Upon returning to school from the half-term break, Year 6 will be sitting their second and final round of Mock SATs. Please encourage them to spend a short amount of time keeping their skills sharp across the week by accessing the following websites:

English:

- www.spellingshed.com
- www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/english/
- www.educationquizzes.com/ks2/english/
- www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/7-11-years/spelling-and-grammar

Maths:

- <https://play.edshed.co/loginmaths> (for MathsShed)
- <https://trockstars.com>
- www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/maths/
- www.educationquizzes.com/ks2/maths/
- www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games/hit-the-button

Best wishes,
Mr. Brooks.

National Child Measurements Programme

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) measures the height and weight of children in Reception class (aged 4 to 5) and year 6 (aged 10 to 11), to assess overweight and obesity levels in children within primary schools.

The data can be used nationally to support local public health initiatives, and locally to inform the planning and delivery of services for children. The programme is recognised internationally as a world-class source of public health intelligence and holds UK National Statistics status.

The programme was set up in line with the government's strategy to tackle obesity, and to:

- inform local planning and delivery of services for children
- gather population-level data to allow analysis of trends in growth patterns and obesity
- increase public and professional understanding of weight issues in children and
- be a vehicle for engaging with children and families about healthy lifestyles and weight issues.

Heights and weights are measured and used to calculate a Body Mass Index (BMI) centile. The measurement process is overseen by trained healthcare professionals in schools.

Taking part in the programme

Before the programme starts each school year, local authorities write to the parents and carers of all children eligible for measurement to inform them of the programme.

Parents or carers can choose to withdraw their child from the process by responding to the letter.

Potton Lower School Data

These results are based, where data is available, on the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 years combined to give a sample large enough to produce reliable estimates of overweight and obesity.

Nationally, schools achieve an average participation rate of 96% in Reception and 94% in Year 6.

In your school **99.3% of children in Reception** were measured.

High participation rates (over 90%) ensure that the estimates of overweight and obese children in your school are reliable. Participation rates below 90% may result in unreliable estimates.

Proportion of **Reception** children in your school who were overweight or obese

NCMP 2014/15, 2015/16, and 2016/17 combined

Obese	Overweight
5%	13%

The proportion of Reception children who were overweight or obese (17.7%) is statistically similar compared to other schools across England (22%). 20% of Reception children were overweight or obese in Central Bedfordshire local authority.

Potton Middle School Data

These results are based, where data is available, on the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 years combined to give a sample large enough to produce reliable estimates of overweight and obesity.

Nationally, schools achieve an average participation rate of 96% in Reception and 94% in Year 6.

In your school **92.8% of children in Year 6** were measured.

High participation rates (over 90%) ensure that the estimates of overweight and obese children in your school are reliable. Participation rates below 90% may result in unreliable estimates.

Proportion of **Year 6** children in your school who were overweight or obese

NCMP 2014/15, 2015/16, and 2016/17 combined

Obese	Overweight
17%	15%

The proportion of Year 6 children who were overweight or obese (32.3%) is statistically similar compared to other schools across England (34%). 29% of Year 6 children were overweight or obese in Central Bedfordshire local authority.

School Calendar

Monday 11th – Friday 15th February

Half Term

Both schools

Children will return to school on Monday 18th February.

Thursday 7th March

Parents Evening

Both schools

Monday 8th April – Monday 22nd April

Easter Holiday

Both schools

The children will return to school on Tuesday 23rd April after the bank holiday.

Bank holidays: Friday 19th April and Monday 22nd April

Monday 27th May – Friday 31st May 2019

May Half Term

Both Schools

Thursday 27th and Friday 28th June

Transition Days

Both Schools

Year 4 - Potton Middle School Transition Days

Year 8 - Sandy Upper Transition Days

Monday 1st – Friday 5th July

Condover Hall Residential Trip

Year 6

Thursday 11th July

Proms in the Playground

Both Schools

Tuesday 26th February Thursday 7th March

Parents Evening

Both schools

Thursday 7th March

World Book Day – Children will be invited to dress up

Both schools

Monday 13th – Friday 17th May

SAT's Year 6

Potton Middle School

SAT's week

These dates will be confirmed by the Local Authority

Friday 21st June

Bikeability

Year 3

Monday 1st – Friday 5th July

Trips Week

Year 5

Monday 8th – Friday 12th July

French Residential Trip

Potton Middle School

Year 7 and 8 residential trip to France

Wednesday 17th July

Leavers Assembly

Year 4

Leavers assembly for parents

Wednesday 17th July

Leavers Day Out

Year 8

Thursday 18th July

Leavers BBQ

Year 8

Year 8 will be heading off to Thorpe Park for their leavers day out!

More information will be provided on each event during the school term

History off the Page – Year 3 Mr Hodgson

What a wonderful half-term we have had in Year 3 learning all about Ancient Greece. On Wednesday 30th January we had History off the Page join us to bring our learning to life. The children had a wonderful day taking on the role of Athenian citizens at the time of the battle of Marathon. From the safety of the Agora, the pupils await news of the outcome of the battle, discussing the events that led to this pivotal date in Greek history, and to the rise of Athens as a major power in the ancient world.



With this story in their minds, the children set to work making a range of items that they could sell at the marketplace. In the morning, the children got the opportunity to create wonderful artefacts to take home. Some of which included; wax tablets, mosaics, pottery dishes or pots and oil lamps. The children were fully engaged as they worked their way through the different activities. The children also learnt to play a range of different games that would have been played in the times of Ancient Greece and discover what it might have been like to be a slave.



In the afternoon, the children got to experience what it would have been like at the theatre. The children were split into groups and needed to create a play or dance based around a myth. The children then performed these to their fellow citizens while enjoying a wonderful banquet served by the slaves. The children fully embraced this role-play and created some wonderful pieces in the short time that they had!

We had such a fantastic day and would like to thank you for your contributions towards this event, without these the day wouldn't have gone ahead. I also want to thank our lovely helpers throughout the day for supporting the children's learning.

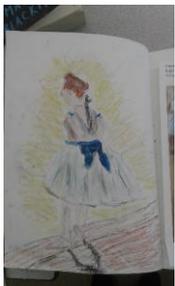
I hope that the children will remember this for years to come.

Key Stage 3 Art – Mrs Topple

Art is bigger and stronger than ever here at Potton Federation. The art club is oversubscribed and all children are enjoying and engaged in creative activities. The quality of KS3 homework is outstanding and all children have been working hard to improve their art history knowledge as well as focussing on improving the layout of their homework books to make the most visual impact.



In Year 8 we have been using a variety of different mediums, building on their work from Year 7, to create work on Renaissance and Baroque. Here are examples of work using oil pastels and pencil.



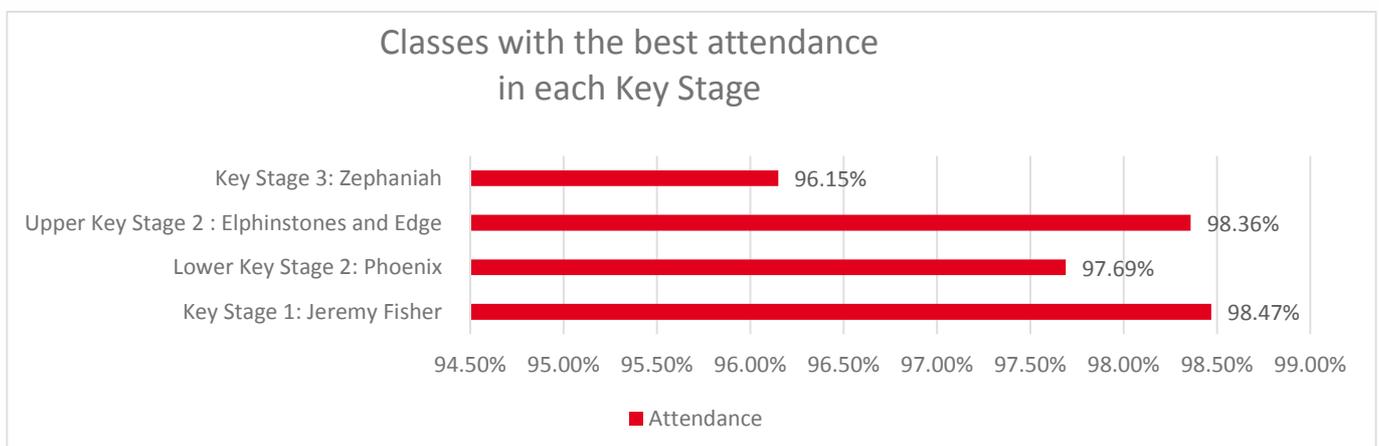
The year 7's have been thinking about how art work has changed from Realism to Impressionism. They have been thinking about why art changes and the impact this has on culture and people's lives. They have looked at key features impressionism and artists that have had a major influence.



Attendance

Well done to all of the children on their attendance this half term. The Local Authority set our attendance targets, the Federations target is 97%. This half term has seen the winter vomiting bug have a huge impact on our attendance causing our figures to be lower than our target.

A special congratulations to the following classes who have had the highest attendance across their Key Stage so far this half term!.



Attendance

We are a school that sets ourselves high expectations in all areas and attendance is no exception. Attending school is extremely important for children's social, emotional and educational development and children who miss a lot of time at school can suffer in the long term from significant gaps in their learning.

Potton Lower School

Class	Attendance Present	%
Cottontails		92.02
Puddle Ducks		96.83
Squirrel Nutkins		95.69
Tiggy-Winkles		95.57
Jerry Fisher		98.47
Tom Kittens		97.68
Dragons		97.25
Phoenix		97.69
Salamanders		94.84
Hippogriffs		97.44

Potton Middle School

Class	Attendance Present	%
Elphinstone		98.36
Riddell		94.93
Stevens		95.90
Edge		98.36
Evans		96.18
Torday		97.14
Almond		97.87
Rundell		92.04
Pullman		92.71
Zephaniah		97.32

Attendance Policy

The Federation's Attendance Policy sets out our systems and procedures for ensuring regular school attendance. The policy can be found on our website <http://pottonlower.co.uk/parents/attendance/>. If you have any queries relating to the Attendance Policy please contact the school offices on: plsoffice@pottonfedtraion.co.uk and pmsoffice@pottonfederation.co.uk

Reminders for parents

Medicines in School:

A reminder that we CANNOT administer medication that is not prescribed to your child and/or is only prescribed for three times a day. This includes Calpol and Nurofen. Parents can come into school themselves if their child needs a dose of medicine although we do advise parents to keep their children at home if they are poorly.

Reading:

We would really like to encourage all parents with children in Reception and Key Stages 1 & 2 to read daily with their child. Children in Key Stage 3 should be reading independently each day too!

Water Bottles:

Please can all parents ensure that their child brings a named and filled water bottle into school with them each day, and that they **only contain water**. It is important for the children to drink regularly throughout the day. Children may of course bring juice to drink with their packed lunch, and juice and water are also available for children having a school dinner at lunchtime.