

Newsletter

April 2019 - 10

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our second letter of the Spring Term. At seven weeks, this has felt like a long term half term – for the children and the staff!

The children have really engaged well with their learning tasks, they are always so proud to show me their achievements as I walk around school.

Their learning has certainly been supported this term by the wide range of events that have occurred, Topic days, visiting authors, educational visits, able maths events, able writer's events, and sporting fixtures to name just a few!

Sadly this week Miss Curzon has left Potton Middle School to enjoy her retirement, she will be greatly missed! She has however agreed to accompany some of the school trips this year so we look forward to her returning for these events.

At Potton Lower School Miss Harris leaves today. Miss Harris undertook her Teacher Training qualifications with us five years ago and has stayed with us since then. She is now ready for the next step in her professional development and she is moving to a primary school in Luton to pursue her passion for outside learning. We wish her every success for the future.

Mr Brooks and I recently reviewed the progress of the Year 6 cohort, he is so proud of their achievements this year. They have applied themselves diligently to their work and this is clearly evident in their progression. Revision over the Easter holidays will certainly assist them in their upcoming SAT's assessments, however, please ensure that this is balanced with lots of rest and relaxation!

I hope the weather remains good throughout the holiday to ensure the children are able to be outside enjoying the sunshine.

Enjoy a peaceful Easter break. We look forward to welcoming the children back to school on Tuesday 23rd April 2019.

Mrs Smart

A message from Sarah Pryer – Chair of Governors for the Potton Federation

We would like to thank parents, carers, our pupils, and members of the wider Potton Federation community for the positive response we received to our letter regarding our proposed change of age range.

As the letter clearly stated, currently this is a proposal and we are not yet in consultation. We are unable to confirm any timescales for when this is likely to happen as we are working with the local authority, and other

BCUS cluster schools (Biggleswade Community Union of Schools) to ensure that we can provide a smooth transition during this significant change to the local education landscape.

Any school that is considering a change of age range, an expansion or any other alteration, are required to follow the relevant guidance from the Department for Education. Parents, carers and other local stakeholders will have the opportunity to give their views and opinions in a fair and transparent process.

The Governors also continue to work with the Executive Headteacher, the Senior Leadership Team and all staff to ensure that the pupils within the Potton Federation continue to receive the highest levels of teaching. Some of our Governors have already completed a number of learning walks throughout this academic year, with further ones planned for the Summer Term. During a learning walk Governors have the opportunity to visit every class, from Reception through to Year 8 and observe the teaching and learning that is taking place, it is an absolute pleasure to see the schools in action and watch the children so engaged with their learning! The last round of learning walks had a main focus of maths and to see the impact of a shared Senior Leadership Team across the Federation as the practices are embedded.

The Summer Term is always a busy term for schools, following the Easter break our Year 6 cohort sit their SAT's in May. The second half of the term sees the schools being able to celebrate achievements and reward the children for their hard work throughout the year. There are lots of wonderful days and activities planned which we hope the children and parents will enjoy.

Wishing you a Happy Easter.

Sarah Pryer – Chair of Governors

A message from Charlotte Coppenhall – Acting Deputy Headteacher

I have been so proud of all of the achievements of all of the children across the Federation this term. It has been so lovely to go into each classroom and see the children busily tackling new challenges and keen to show off their excellent work. My favourite moments are when children are brought to me to show off their fabulous work, and I'm so pleased that there have been so many opportunities for this this term.

Every class has such energy and enthusiasm, and I know that all staff have spent lots of time creating such exciting, memorable experiences for all.

The children have thrived this term, and their interest and engagement in their topics and learning has enabled them to make fantastic progress across the curriculum.

From bingo to tractor visits, pyjamas to talent shows, this term has seen it all, and I couldn't wish for better colleagues or pupils to share these experiences with.

We are all really looking forward to the events of the Summer Term that are fast approaching, and I cannot wait to celebrate the achievements that I know all children will make.

Wishing you all a wonderful Easter break,

Charlotte Coppenhall

News from the Key Stages

Reception – Miss Coppenhall

This term the Foundation children have been working extremely hard, and they have been making all of us so proud with their ever-growing confidence and their love of learning.

The topic of 'Do Cows Drink Milk?' has really captured their love of animals this term, with lots of learning about farms and the machinery used. We have had such a busy term, and we have had lots of exciting things happen in the Foundation unit which has supported the development of our Knowledge and Understanding of the World.



A special thank you to all parents who have volunteered their time to come into school and widen the children's learning of this topic.

We started with a visit from two beautiful miniature ponies, we then explored a huge tractor, and we finished with learning all about two very cute baby goats.



We have all really enjoyed reading 'The Little Red Hen' and 'Oliver's Vegetables'. The children have also taken on the challenge of another Big Write, and they have wowed us with their ability to recall and retell the details of these stories. We have been so impressed with how well all of the children have been able to write independent sentences retelling the events of 'The Little Red Hen' - so impressed in fact that I took them to show Mrs Smart their wonderful writing.

The Foundation children loved World Book Day where they came dressed as their favourite book characters, and we have also loved planting sunflower seeds for Mother's Day and creating Easter cards.

In Numeracy, we have learned to double and halve, add and subtract and begun to estimate. We really enjoy Numeracy, and lots of the children have completed their own sums during learning choices. We can also count to 100!

Well done Foundation, we are so proud of you! We are really looking forward to going on Safari with you during our next topic of 'Why do Zebras have Stripes?'

Wishing you all a fun filled Easter,

Miss Coppenhall

Key Stage 1 – Miss Fordham

Wow, I can't quite believe that we are coming to the end of another fantastic term! The children in KS1 have continued to amaze me with their hard work and determination to succeed. I've enjoyed seeing so much wonderful work but mostly I have loved seeing how proud the children are of their own work.

In Year 1 their topic has been 'Paws, Claws and Whiskers' and they have been learning all about different animals from the pets they have at home to the much larger animals that live in the wild. The children in Year 1 loved meeting Mrs Watson and learning more about being a vet and she even brought Tommy the Tortoise for them to meet!



During Topic lessons Year 1 have been categorising animals, exploring what different animals eat and investigating why animals live in different habitats.

Whilst learning about healthy eating, the children in Year 1 had a great time making their own fruit kebabs. In their value lesson, focussing on our value of Co-operation, the children worked together to build an outside habitat for a human. Next term Year 1's topic will be 'Superheroes'.

In Year 2 we have continued our topic of 'Towers, Tunnels and Turrets' and since half term the focus has been famous towers and tunnels from around the world such as the tower of London and the Bund sightseeing tunnel. We have investigated the history of these landmarks and then explored the countries that they are located in.

Year 2 have also used Google Maps in their ICT lessons to find each of the different famous landmarks which they have really enjoyed. They were so engaged with the book 'Tell me a dragon' and were inspired to write some fantastic poems. Next term Year 2's topic will be 'Wriggle and Crawl'.



Have a lovely relaxing Easter break!

Miss Fordham

Lower Key Stage 2 – Mr Adams

With the longest term behind us, the learning pace has been fast and furious – the children really deserve the break! We have finished the term on two topics: Scrumdiddlyumptious (Year 3) and Burps, Bottoms and Bile (Year 4). Last year, these topics proved very popular with the children and they have not disappointed again this year.

Having spoken to the Year 3 classes, a particular highlight of their term has been sharing the delicious foods they have made at home. The children have been very creative using a range of ingredients to create some unique dishes. Mr Hodgson mentioned that he loved trying the range of dishes brought into school and a number of these made their way to the school staff room for all of the staff to enjoy. Part of their project work has also focused on music shakers. The children used a range of dried foods in containers of different sizes to create musical instruments. Having a variety of sounds to work with, the children made their own songs about their learning during the topic.

In Year 4 the children have been delving into the inner workings of the human body. As the children investigated the human digestive system, they found out about the roles of the organs and participated in a working model experiment. This proved to be very entertaining as well as being insightful. Continuing the humorous elements of the topic, the children investigated what happens when we pass wind. Throughout the topic we have read the Demon Dentist by David Walliams. A great modern writer, the children have been enthralled by his made up words and his personal writing style. After studying his work, they have written their own stories and the quality of these hints that many children may have a future as an author.

Towards the end of the term we had the opportunity to visit Biggleswade Academy for an inter-school football match. Fourteen children from Year 3 and 4 represented the school. All of the pupils demonstrated exemplary behaviour and were excellent ambassadors for the school. With some tough competition to play against the teams played their hardest and came away with well-deserved wins after a slow start to their matches. In the summer term we hope to return the favour and invite our opponents to Potton for a rematch.



For Year 4's Summer Term topic, we will be learning about the blue abyss. On our first day back we are going to participate in a whole day learning about the current environmental issues of single use plastics. Year 4 would really appreciate it if you could save and plastic packaging (single use or recyclable) as we will be creating some artwork with these to increase awareness of plastics in the ocean. Please could any contributions please be handed in to Year 4 classes.

I hope you all enjoy the Easter break and come back to school ready to enjoy our new Topics: Blue Abyss and Flow in the Summer Term.

Mr Adams

Upper Key Stage 2 – Mr Brooks

Year 5

This half-term, Year 5 have been losing their heads about life in Tudor England. We have written some fantastic newspaper articles about the execution of Anne Boleyn as well as detailed biographies on Henry VIII, amongst other lovely pieces of writing. In Topic lessons, one task that we did was to create mood boards on Tudor clothing that we then used to design Tudor outfits. Elphinstone class in particular, had a ball trying out Tudor dancing. Stevens and Riddell class even had a Greensleeves-off!

As always, there were some outstanding Topic homework projects; clearly lots of time, enthusiasm and love were invested into them. They included board-game cakes, jester routines, torture devices, models of the Tower of London, a seemingly life-size representation of a Tudor house in cake, and many, many more.

Of course, it was also another half-term of working hard at Maths. We learnt lots about fractions, decimals and percentages. As well as sharpening up our long multiplication.

March's value of the month was co-operation. As well as discussions and classroom tasks to help us better understand cooperation, we solved problems as teams to develop our teamwork skills. Riddell class worked as a team to plan, rehearse and act out an adaptation of William Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream as an assembly – in under three hours!

Next term we have the creepy, crawly ... and creative topic of Beast Creator to look forward to.

Well done to everyone on another term of hard work. Happy Easter!

Year 6

Darwin's Delights

Year 6 are in the final few weeks of preparation for SATs week and, whilst working incredibly hard on their English and Maths, the children have been retracing Charles Darwin's expedition to the Galapagos Islands.

Challenged to investigate what initiated Darwin's development of the Theory of Evolution, Year 6 have been studying a variety of living things that inhabit the Galapagos Islands and used the same evidence of variation Darwin himself found, to help them understand inheritance, natural selection and Evolution.

Our curiosity and intrigue sparked initially by our visit to the Natural History Museum in Tring, Hertfordshire, where we were able to see a huge variety of specimens collected during the 19th century. The children were treated to a workshop on adaptation, which opened up their understanding of how creatures have evolved. Armed with this knowledge, we set about applying it to their understanding of Darwin's work, which initially had them writing a series of rather entertaining and contextually accurate diary entries. Having researched the Darwin family and their home (Down House), the children wrote informative letters from the perspective of Darwin's children, which explained the mischief and learning that would have taken place during a summer with Darwin as your father! In our Topic lessons, we got stuck into developing understanding of inherited characteristics, plant and animal adaptations and fossilisation, during which we celebrated the relatively unknown, yet vital, work of Mary Anning. Please ask your children to explain her story!

Over the course of the half-term, it has been a delight to see the children marvel at Darwin's achievements and wonder at the world we have around us. We are looking forward to engaging our creative sides with our next topic: Gallery Rebels.

Our Values and Guest Speakers

In a half term that has just about spanned three months, we have had the chance to explore the values of Perseverance, Co-operation and Courage, all of which play integral parts of the children's day to day lives. Some highlights of our values lessons and assemblies have included seeing: children persevere through the challenge of making a picture out of pencil shavings, everyone taking part in Upper KS2 mindfulness, classes playing some team building games and spending time discussing ways to find courage in difficult situations!

As an accompaniment to our Values-Based Education we have been very fortunate to have three guest speakers visit us to deliver some assemblies. Mr Scoot (Stratton Upper School) presented an assembly on E-Safety which gave the children a 'top-up' of their understanding of how to protect themselves when using the internet; whilst being a fantastic and essential tool in our lives, the internet can be a very scary place! In addition to Mr Scoot's visit, the British Red Cross spoke to the children about their fund raising work. I know the children were impressed and surprised by how much work they do. Most recently, the local authority have supported us in educating the children in how important it is to be road-aware when riding bikes and playing near roads over the Easter Holiday.

Easter Revision

Believe it or not, after returning from the Easter break, there are only thirteen school days until those SATs examinations! It is of vital importance that we all encourage children to spend a short amount of time revising each day over the holidays. Mr Brooks will endeavour to post a series of varied and beneficial revision techniques (via Class Dojo) over the Easter break, but we hope the following interactive learning sites can also be put into good use:

English:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/english/>

<https://www.educationquizzes.com/ks2/english/>

<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/7-11-years/spelling-and-grammar>

<https://play.edshed.co/login>

Maths:

<https://trockstars.com>

<https://www.mymaths.co.uk>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/maths/>

<https://www.educationquizzes.com/ks2/maths/>

<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games/hit-the-button>

Key Stage 3 – Mr Griffiths

Another very busy term for the older children in school. We have had STEM challenges; design competitions; after school bingo; sporting fixtures and CAD design; all on top of our normal everyday learning!

Firstly can I extend a big welcome to the newer members of our Key Stage - we have had a number of pupils join us from other schools and I hope that they are starting to find their feet and settle in.

The Year 8's had a very busy afternoon recently when they had an extended design session. They were set a challenge of moving tomatoes down a very steep mountain in a way that was efficient and protected their harvested crop. This had some important cross-curricular links with pupils not only thinking about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) but also about different people around the world who are set these trials on a daily basis.



Some children took this a stage further and had a very competitive day at Stratton Upper School. The pupils had to design and make a pulley system that was capable of lifting a heavy load. Unfortunately they didn't win the competition but they all said how much they had enjoyed the day.

Our KS3 sports teams have also been in action this term. They have definitely improved in the football matches that they have played. Even though we haven't always had the successes that they desired, showing a sporting attitude and perseverance can be just as important.

We have also had some lighter moments this term. It was lovely to see a good number of KS3 students help to arrange and participate in our after school 'Easter Blingo Bingo.' The pupils had a number of fun games and shared lots of winnings (mostly in the form of chocolate).



Very recently our pupils have been introduced to 'Tinkercad'. Tinkercad is a free, easy-to-use app for 3D design, electronics, and coding. It's used by teachers, pupils, hobbyists, and designers to imagine, design, and make anything. I hope that this is preparing our children for the future and that it could even lead to a career option for some of them.

Have a good Easter break and come back refreshed and ready for even more challenges in the Summer term.

School Calendar

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 13th – Friday 17th May

SAT's Year 6

Potton Middle School

SAT's week

These dates will be confirmed by the Local Authority

Monday 27th May – Friday 31st May 2019

May Half Term

Both Schools

Friday 21st June

Bikeability

Year 3

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

Trips Week

Year 5

Monday 1st – Friday 5th July

Condoval Hall Residential Trip

Year 6

Monday 8th – Friday 12th July

French Residential Trip

Potton Middle School

Year 7 and 8 residential trip to France

Thursday 11th July

Proms in the Playground

Both Schools

Wednesday 17th July

Leavers Assembly

Year 4

Leavers assembly for parents

Wednesday 17th July

Leavers Day Out

Year 8

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

Thursday 18th July

Leavers BBQ

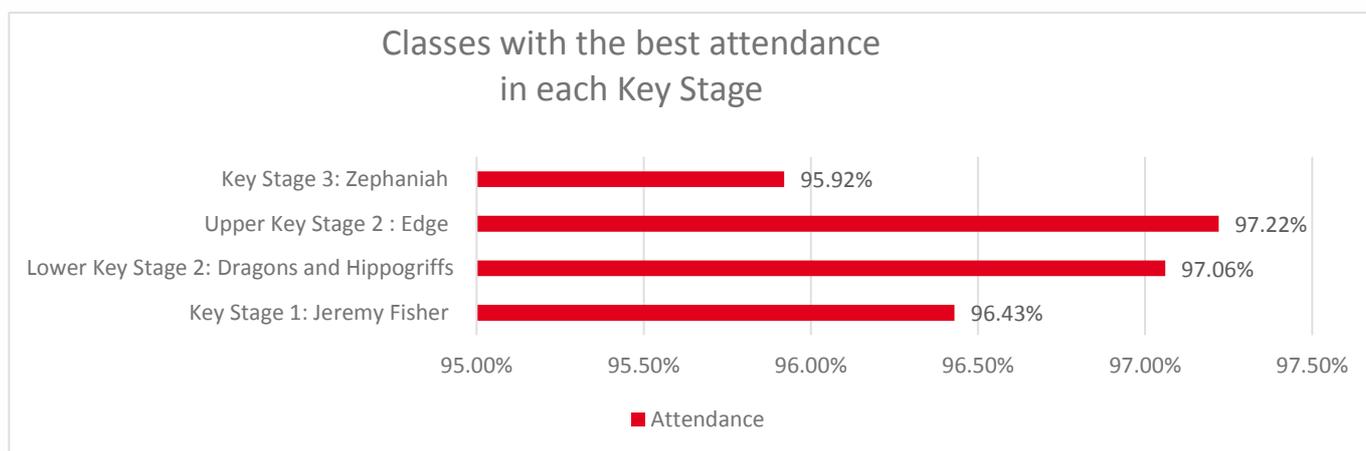
Year 8

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

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		92.41
Puddle Ducks		94.68
Squirrel Nutkins		95.80
Tiggy-Winkles		95.26
Jerry Fisher		96.43
Tom Kittens		96.33
Dragons		97.06
Phoenix		97.03
Salamanders		96.01
Hippogriffs		97.06

Potton Middle School

Class	Attendance Present	%
Elphinstone		96.97
Riddell		95.13
Stevens		96.04
Edge		97.22
Evans		95.69
Torday		97.15
Almond		95.46
Rundell		92.29
Pullman		92.30
Zephaniah		95.92

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.
