

Newsletter 12:

Spring Term 2021



**A Message from Susannah Connell,  
CEO, The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust**

A year on from the first lockdown, and none of us could possibly have predicted the year we have lived through. There has been tragedy and loss all around us and our children. But we have also witnessed incredible resilience, care, thoughtfulness and resourcefulness in this past year. As we look back over the last year, I am so proud of the DLPT's staff, governors and parent body for the lengths they have gone to and the ways they have worked together, to maintain learning and community during this most challenging period. I am equally proud though of every pupil our Trust serves for keeping going - for meeting unprecedented challenges with cheerfulness and determination, and for giving us all hope that we will emerge from this pandemic stronger than before. The final weeks of this term have breathed life back into our school sites with all children returning. But as you know yourselves, and will see from this newsletter, even apart we have continued to learn and grow.

I do hope that you and your families can all enjoy a happy and restful Easter break.

Kind regards

Susannah Connell, CEO



## Braybrook



In our first week of full school opening, children planted bulbs to celebrate our Braybrook family being back together. We planted begonias, freesias, irises, geranium, gladioli and lots of wildflowers too. We are going to call this area our 'Garden of Hope' as we look forward to the future together. We are all looking forward to the flowers starting to appear in the coming months and hope to keep adding to this area over time to give us all-year-round colour.

We virtually celebrated World Book Day this year by making our own booky hats from things we had around the house. The whole school got very creative and showed off their makes on their class Zoom sessions. We had book prizes for every class, which children were able to choose when they returned to school. We also took part in lots of virtual author sessions, and all classes chose a book to study for the week. Some children were even lucky enough to take part in the Doorstep to Digital campaign which was part of the Peterborough Reads project. The children had lots of fun and also got some beautiful free books to enjoy with their families.



Our Early Years Foundation Stage were very excited upon their return to the classroom in March to find eggs in an incubator. They all watched with absolute delight as they began to hatch over the coming days. Children learned lots by having the chicks in class and it will be a moment of awe and wonder they will always remember!

## Glebelands



As we reflect on the last year it would be easy to be overwhelmed by the negative impacts of the pandemic. As the vaccination programme rolls out and brings more hope it is important for us to focus on the children, most of whom are just glad to be back in school. Online learning actually helped some children to learn to really concentrate, others found time to get into tables rockstars, practise handwriting, get into books, develop artistic talents, cook and do a whole host of other things alongside their school work. We are proud of what has been achieved. All was not lost, indeed an awful lot was gained. Thanks go to our whole school community for a successful Spring Term on which we can build.

In January we implemented our remote education plan, having learned a lot from the first National Lockdown. We wanted the children to continue to feel that they were part of their class and school. Everyone was nervous about being on screen but over time that anxiety was forgotten by most and guess what... learning continued. We all gained new computer skills and parents gained huge insights into how their children are taught so that they could help. It was an amazing effort. We particularly like the 'cinema view' on teams. That really did make us feel like we were all in the same room.



Towards half term we took a couple of days to take stock and explore the Vikings together as a whole school. We particularly enjoyed sharing the encampment and outdoor cooking route taken by one family.

We also shared the same whole school text for World Book Day – everyone dipped into 'The Book of

Hopes'. The children dressed up as their favourite characters from their own reading and had great fun working with their families to identify the masked reader, whilst listening to the story being shared.





## Gorefield



At the time of writing, our children have been back in school for two weeks following lockdown. They have settled amazingly well, which is testament to all staff, parents and the pupils themselves.

During lockdown, we had just over half of our children attending school. Delivering remote learning was a challenge but our staff were amazing in how they rose to this, learning new skills and delivering remote learning through a mix of live and recorded lessons. Children learning at home followed the same curriculum as those working in school. Daily Zoom sessions and live lessons ensured that we were able to support all our children who were at home, both with their learning and their wellbeing. Of course, we could not have done any of this without the support of our parents who did an amazing job during lockdown.

Gorefield gardeners were busy during lockdown and have been happy to see the outcome of their efforts with tulips almost ready to flower, and pansies and primroses brightening the outside of the school. They have also planted potatoes, carrots, and beans, which we look forward to harvesting, alongside other vegetables which will soon be planted.



We are very excited that after Easter we will have a school dog. Mrs Bailey is rehoming a rescue greyhound called Pippin, who will be joining her at school on the days when Mrs Bailey is in school. We can't wait to meet Pippin!



## Great Staughton

It has been absolutely wonderful to see all the children returning to school – we all missed them so much, including Clark, our school dog!



We started our first week back with a couple of well-being and pastoral days. Our children in Reception and Year 1 have been talking about their feelings and reflecting on them during lockdown and coming back to school, using the colour monster. Years 2 and 3 discussed their feelings and created pieces of art to represent them and our children in Year 4, 5 and 6 reflected on learning from home as well as reminding themselves of collaborating and working with others.

Since being back we have been celebrating British Science Week, the theme this year was 'Innovating the Future'. Year 2 and 3 carried out different investigations and experiments around food tasting, splitting light into different colours, herd immunity Jenga and visualizing classrooms of the future. Years 4, 5 and 6 completed different activities ranging from Robo-bugs, to how inventions from the past still can be developed and evolved in the present. They also spent some time reflecting on their science home learning activities, and continuing their focus with the digestive and circulatory system.

Reception and Year 1 investigated the seasons and gained an understanding of how rain works, and were given a challenge: each child received a desk pet and was asked to give them a name, homes and to look after them. This has brought some amazing discussions during circle time, and shown how creative our children are. Whilst we have not been back as a whole school for long, as you can see we have all been so busy here at Great Staughton!



## Kimbolton



It has been a delight having the children back in school again! Each class started by easing themselves back into school life. For the first two days, we focused on PSHE and well-being with a specific focus on our lockdown experiences. We reviewed our class rules and created some lovely lockdown art work showing the different feelings and memories we had. We compared how we felt being at home and how we felt being back at school and there was a huge feeling of excitement at being back together with friends again!



### British Science Week – Innovating For The Future

In **Rowan Class** we have been thinking about 'innovation and diversity', also discussing the development of vaccines and the role of women in such innovative work. We also researched micro-organisms based on what we have learnt about the role of microbes in food decay, working with others to

plan a scientific investigation into factors affecting the growth of mould on bread. In **Oak Class** we

carried out four investigations: herd immunity

Jenga; classrooms of the future; blind tasting test and splitting light. Finally, **Ash**

**class** have been learning about the weather and seasons. The children shared what

they had learnt about the weather at home, and we spent time observing the

weather and measuring the temperature and rainfall. We also created our own

rain using shaving foam and coloured water after learning about the water cycle!

The children worked really carefully using pipettes to drop water into

shaving foam. The result was rain drops in a jar!



## King James Academy Royston



Across the Academy our focus has been on supporting pupils' smooth transition back into whole class face to face education. We are proud of our young people and how well they have responded to remote and blended learning whether in Key Stage 2, 3 or 4, including all of our young people who are preparing for their final GCSE assessments in Year 11. We are thankful for the hard work and dedication of all of the staff community at King James Academy, who have supported our learners to have a seamless transition back into school.

After such a long time away, our focus as a team in these first weeks back has been on safety and well-being. With this in mind, in KS2 we introduced our new *Worry Monsters*,

with the idea being that children in each form share their anxieties

with their own 'monster' in order that these are picked up and

addressed by form teachers. The KS2 team provided a week of

activities which took the children on a tour of different countries,

cultures and traditions from around the world. It was wonderful

to see the children working together, communicating and - most

importantly - having fun! The KS2 teachers have been delighted with the children's attitudes

and efforts as they settled back into familiar routines, and there have been many instances of

children demonstrating - both in lessons and at break-times - our school values of **challenge,**

**respect, aspiration and resilience.** In their character, their spirit and their constant optimism,

we have been so proud of the children in Years 5 and 6.



Thanks to a massive effort by staff, governors and volunteer parents, the senior site school hall was transformed into a mass Covid screening centre. All Key Stage 3-4 students were screened before returning to classrooms. Full medical-grade PPE and other equipment were provided for the challenge of multiplying capacity from 200 tests a week to more than 1,500. The students were given time slots to come to school, tests were completed within five to 10 minutes and the results were emailed to pupils and parents within 30 minutes.





## Leverington

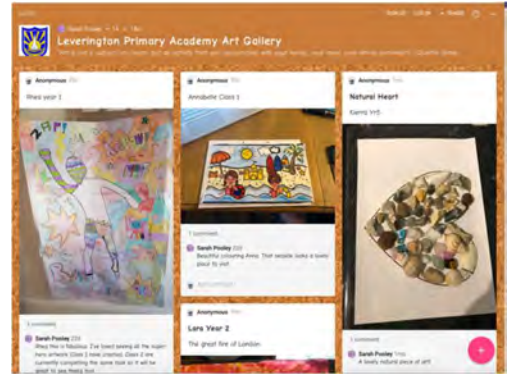


Once again, what a crazy Spring term we have all had! Staff, children and parents have shown true resilience to deal with the pressures of home learning and we could not be prouder of each and every member of our school community. We are extremely grateful to finally have the buzz back that comes with having all children in school.

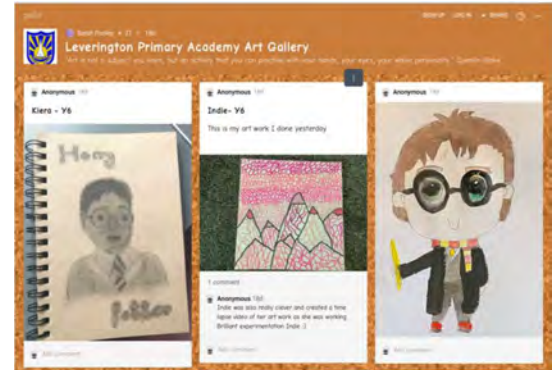


Our school dog **Ralph** has been making regular visits to school now all the children are back, bringing a sense of calm and positivity to all. He is really getting used to his surroundings now and enjoys spending time in the Haven with Mrs Brightey and the children who regularly visit him. He is even getting used to walking around the corridors without his lead and spending time in the classrooms with the children as they learn.

During the school closure this term, our **Online Art Gallery** was launched by Mrs Pooley, our Arts Lead. Each week, children at home and in school were given an art challenge and any of the creations made by children were shared online via the Art Gallery Padlet. This has now developed further, with children and staff making comments on each other's work. Children are keen to share their masterpieces for all to see!



We would normally celebrate the end of term with an Easter assembly at Church but as we still cannot do this, each class have chosen their favourite song to learn, perform and record so they can be shared with parents via our remote learning platform, Showbie. Each class has also contributed to a wonderful Easter/Spring display of bead eggs, egg wreaths, origami bunnies, 3D daffodils and stained-glass crosses, which have brought some much-needed brightness and colour to our school entrance.



## Middlefield



The speed with which we plunged into lockdown presented our staff a significant challenge – how to produce worthwhile, sustainable learning opportunities for children at home and in school. They rose to the challenge magnificently. Lessons were recorded and posted on our learning platforms for home learners, and used for teaching lessons in the classroom with children of Key Workers. The children produced some amazing work (which they were able to upload to the learning platforms for feedback) supported heroically by their parents.

We did not allow lockdown to dilute our sense of community – we continued with our Zoom celebration assemblies throughout lockdown and enjoyed **Whole School Themed Days**. Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January became Snow Day, allowing us to admire the children's creations and experiments! In response to the reliance on screens for learning, we declared Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March Wellbeing Wednesday, a no screen day with a menu of fun activities to do instead. World Book Day saw everyone dress up, whether at home or at school, and participate in book-driven activities.



Upon returning to school, the wellbeing of the children has been paramount. In the first week back, alongside all the direct PSHE activities, children could be seen pond dipping, gardening, making clay sculptures, making Worry Monsters, and taking advantage of a particularly windy day by designing, making and flying kites. As a whole school we have focussed on the daffodils which have appeared all over the site – sketching, using as the basis for Mother's Day cards. The children have been amazing at sharing their experiences and feelings and settling once again into school life. It is good to have them all back!



We have all been very busy this term, working at home and in school. Our youngest children have explored Chinese new year, and have worked so hard on their maths. Year 1 and 2 children have been writing an information text about growing vegetables and have started a cress experiment in science.



The children have also taken part in the big garden bird watch, they made their own binoculars and some bird feeders which were hung in the woodland area. Photos and a video were sent to the RSPB. The theme of learning in years 3 and 4 has been Choccy Woccy Dooh Dah! They have been creating adverts to promote their chocolate bars, researching the history of chocolate and looking at the Aztecs and Maya people. The chocolate tasting was an interesting experience - not many of the children enjoyed the chilli in the chocolate! Some wonderful written work in the

form of newspapers has been completed.



Year 5 and 6 children have been continuing to work hard finding out about the Titanic, creating fact files, posters and writing a diary imagining they were on the Titanic. Their art work has been inspired by this topic and as well as creating drawings of the vessel, they used the Titanic day to research and create a whole wall art display depicting the Titanic and the iceberg on the playground fence. Our information posters were also attached to it later.

The whole school took part in an Assembly led by Dan the Skipping Man – via zoom - they have learnt new skipping techniques and hopefully a love for skipping. Since then they have all been trying out the new tricks and some have mastered the double dutch technique. We are now looking forward to continuing their skipping journey when Dan the Skipping Man visits our school after the Easter holidays. Watch out for the Murrow super skippers!

## Roman Way



Reception were greeted with balloons and bubbles when they returned to school! There were lots of smiles as they enjoyed being back with their friends. They are learning all about people who help us, particularly Doctors and Nurses. They had a great time exploring the Doctor's Surgery in the role play area outside and loved learning all about their bodies and the skeleton. This skeleton jigsaw was a favourite activity.



In the classroom pupils talked and wrote about their lockdown experiences and how they were feeling about coming back. In our PSHE lesson we talked about 'Resilience and facing our worries'. Children also made Mother's day cards and wrote a Mother's Day Poem choosing their style of poem (acrostic, rhyming, descriptive etc).



Puffins class have been learning about Palm Sunday. We made palm leaves and pretended to be the people welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem on his donkey. We thought about what different people were thinking at the time and why this is an important event for Christians.

Year 2 have been consolidating the Maths skills they learned during remote learning, and working on their Spring Term topic 'Castles and Knights'. They worked as a team to build their own castle using the construction kit purchased by the PTA, and named the different parts and features that they had learned in their history lessons. They told and acted out stories in the castles they built. Pupils also built castles using 2D and 3D shapes, naming the shapes they used and describing their properties, and created knights' shields by weaving paper.





## The Round House



All the children, both in school and at home, took part in World Book Day celebrations. Children and staff all dressed up in some great costumes, including Alice in Wonderland, Winnie the Pooh



and The Witches. In school and at home, the children took part in activities including a quiz, an illustration workshop with Rob Biddulph, and lots of sharing of stories. Children could take part in a book quiz trail around Loves Farm - there were pictures clues to find and children had to guess the title of the books. There was also a Masked Reader quiz where children had to guess who was reading behind the mask. The children in Reception explored five books throughout the day including 'The Tiger Who Came To Tea'. They had to write shopping lists for the tea and thoroughly enjoyed their tiger themed tea party role playing.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the snow that fell in January. Year 1 even made some new snow friends! Year 1 also enjoyed reading 'Wombat Stew' and followed their own written instructions to make and taste wombat stew whilst outside. Some of them even liked the bugs and slugs!



Inspired by the poem 'Walking with my Iguana' by Brian Moses, Year 4 used recycled materials to design and create musical instruments to accompany their performance of the poem.



The School Council have met and gathered feedback on remote learning at The Round House. They found that the children particularly liked the lessons on Zoom.

## Thomas Eaton



### **Crazy Hair, Crazy wear!!**

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March, our whole school donned our most crazy clothes and the zaniest lockdown locks to raise money for Red Nose Day. The children really went town on their outfits and a fun day was had by all as well as raising money for this very worthwhile charity.



### **Global Warming**

Kahlo class have been exploring the effects of global warming on our world by creating their own polar regions. They measured the water level before leaving their polar regions overnight. Their findings the following morning on seeing that the ice had completely melted and the water level had risen dramatically has spurred them on into supporting climate change policy.

Our youngest children in Pre School are getting ready for Easter by creating their own colourful **Easter Tree**. They have foraged for the branches and are painting them bright colours in order to create a centre piece, on which they hope the Easter bunny might deliver some Easter goodies!!!



## Winhills



It certainly has been an interesting term at Winhills! I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone at Winhills for all their hard work. Remote learning has been a huge success and this is thanks to everyone engaging so well. It has been lovely seeing on Dojo and Tapestry the hard work that has been posted by the children. We have then been so pleased to welcome all the children back into school in the last few weeks. It is always lovely to see the beaming smiles as they came back into school.



Over the last 3 weeks, the children have come dressed wearing red accessories for Comic Relief armed with a joke. We then had a virtual assembly where we shared some of the best jokes from each class. I loved listening to them all.

Class teachers have really focussed on ensuring that sessions were planned throughout the three weeks around social skills to help the children settle back in. It has been lovely seeing the children out playing in the beautiful (on the whole!) weather with their classes again. It was very quiet without them.

We hope that you all have a relaxing Easter and look forward to seeing you all back on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April.



## Wintringham

We celebrated our first World Book Day in our new school, and had so much fun dressing up as our favourite book characters and completing activities based on the book 'Room on the Broom'. Even our caretaker dressed up as a very colourful parrot! We joined The Round House in a Masked Reader competition, fortunately we knew lots of the teachers and I think we all recognised Simba despite his disguise! We also took part in a book detective scavenger hunt with clues to 6 different books hidden around the local area that everyone could look for and try to solve.



We have continued to develop our outside learning and the children have enjoyed working in small teams to build bridges and shelters. Creating helicopter spinners was a very popular activity. In P.E. we have been following virtual dance lessons from Hunts Schools Sports Partnership led by Miss Blyth. This has inspired the children to create their own routines, which they have thoroughly enjoyed.

Although we are currently a small school, we had a really high percentage of our children in school during lockdown. I am really proud of the learning that took place both in school and at home and the way that the children who have come back into school have reacclimatised so well. Well done Wintringham!

We have now introduced Reading Gladiators (a book club) for some of the children in Year 2. The children have also voted in five pupils to form a School Council. They will be holding their first meeting after Easter.





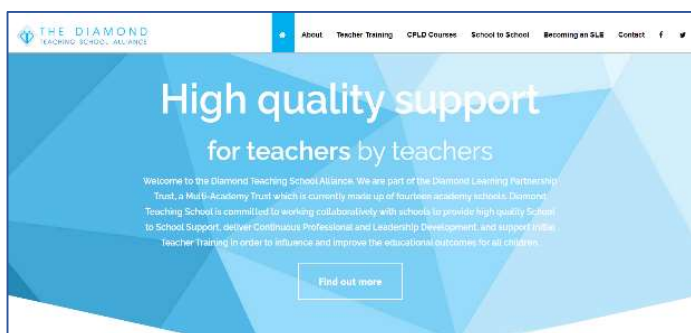


It's not just the pupils who've been learning remotely this term.

Teachers have been joining online training and networking sessions throughout this term. With "You're on mute!" fast becoming our catch phrase, we've been busy delivering wide ranging online training to teachers and teaching assistants from our own schools and others across Cambridgeshire and Bedford.



All teachers from the DLPT trained together over Zoom to discuss the recently released NCETM prioritisation documents for teaching maths, and share how they'll use them in school to support children returning from remote learning. In addition, 733 members of staff



have joined our training courses so far this year. Some of our most popular courses have been 'Building a School That Writes', 'Developing Number Sense in EYFS' and 'Engaging Pupils in Learning Again After Lockdown'. Thank you to all the course leaders who have produced and delivered high quality training this term.

Our trainee teachers should be recognised for their professionalism and resilience this term. They have all adapted to teaching remotely alongside their mentors, and to teaching those children who continued to attend face to face lessons. They have certainly developed skills they would never have had the opportunity to master had schools remained fully open. A huge thank you to mentors who have supported our trainees through a challenging term alongside fulfilling their own teaching duties.

Using our Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs), we have continued to provide school to school support to a number of schools this term, both in the form of online meetings and bespoke online training sessions.

We're really excited to have recruited 7 more teachers within the DLPT to the role of SLE, building capacity within our team so we can share even more great practice, improving outcomes for all the children we work with.

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