

Newsletter 11:

Autumn Term 2020

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

Our last newsletter of the year is all about celebrating the amazing things we've achieved TOGETHER. However different we are, there's one thing I'm sure we'd all agree on – that our children are our world.

“Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will” – Mahatma Gandhi. I have seen this in every school, in the pupils, the staff and the parents and I thank you all for everything you have done.

To the staff in all the schools and their families who have supported them through the pandemic; parents and children will not see everything that goes on in the background of our schools to ensure that they stay open, but I know they, as do I, appreciate your efforts. You have had to change everything you do in school, develop new ways of working to ensure that your school is as safe as it can be. However, even though things have had to be changed or adapted radically, you will not allow anything to defeat you. You are constantly radiating support, reassurance and positivity. You do this because you truly believe that our children can do amazing things and it's our job to help make this potential a reality. You understand that with an outstanding education, every child has the freedom to choose their own future. Nothing has made me prouder than to work with you all and I thank each and every one of you for all you are doing.

Kind regards



Susannah Connell, CEO

Braybrook



Our EYFS children have been enjoying two magnificent new additions to their outdoor learning provision during this term. Amber class enjoyed the whole process of watching their brand new walk-in sandpit and wonderful wormery being installed. They even got to fill the sandpit themselves! They started by using spoons and realised that maybe buckets and spades would be a better idea! They have been watching their worms at work in their new home with fascination and wonder. This new equipment will be enjoyed by our EYFS children for many years to come.

Year 5 were celebrating one of their extraordinary class members during November. Out of 350,000 pupils in the UK, Shu Wei, from Diamond Class, came in 6th place in the TT Rockstars' Battle. We are so incredibly proud of his fantastic achievement. We are told that he was only taking a break to eat his tea when he got home. Thankfully, the competition stopped at 7.30pm, so he did manage to get some much-needed sleep over the week! Shu Wei has inspired his class and younger children in our school to aspire to great things; he has shown us the power of times tables! He tells us that he is going for 1st place next year. Well done, Shu Wei!



Our Year One and Year Two classes had an alien invasion earlier in the term! There was a crash landing outside Emerald and Topaz classrooms one weekend, which greeted the children on Monday morning. They spent the week investigating the crash - they took samples from the crash site and analysed the debris, gloop and footprints. This has continued to inspire their imaginative learning throughout the half term, which has resulted in some beautiful artwork and writing. It has certainly fired up some wild imaginations!

Glebelands



All of our Glebelands People, adults and children alike, have adapted remarkably well to things being a little different. Parent meetings by Teams, a virtual Christmas Fayre, children meeting for lessons whilst in isolation - all unheard of before 2020, but with some newly sharpened IT skills, now taken in our stride. Huge thanks go to everyone for making the term a success!



The children have coped remarkably well with their return to full-time schooling. Where learning was secure prior to lockdown children had to rediscover the polish, shine and pace that being out of school had affected. Those children who had not got quite as far

in their learning prior to lockdown have worked really hard to ensure they are meeting the expectations of the teachers in their new year groups. In a very short time-span, the vast majority of the children had settled well into their new routines and now, as we approach Christmas, they all appear to be enjoying their learning and regaining their physical fitness. Both the children and the staff are working really hard.



Everyone at Glebelands is aware that life is hard for some families in our area right now, so we were delighted to be able to contribute generous donations to the Foodbank at Harvest time, the Poppy Appeal and Children in Need in November. The children are sensitive to the needs of others and our families are always generous in their support for good causes. As we approach Christmas, we will be glad to share in the Ely Cathedral Christingle Service. We will then enjoy a Christmas lunch and Reward Day, something wholeheartedly deserved by our children this term.



Gorefield



What a busy term we have all had at Gorefield - so many exciting events and achievements and not a few challenges! Gorefield joined the DLPT on September 1st 2020 with 3 out of our 4 class teachers new in post and a new Executive Headteacher and Co-Head.



One of our key focusses has been developing the outside and our children have all spent time outside over the weeks contributing to improvements. This has included planting some 60 saplings, courtesy of the Woodland Trust.



We have also had lots of visits from animals which all the children have enjoyed. This has included Winston who belongs to our SENCO, Mrs Hemsall, Zoe and Lily who belong to Mrs Hewitt, one of our TAs and Floss who belongs to Mrs Tanner our cleaner and Mid-Day Supervisor. Some of the children have also benefitted from spending time with Solo the horse.



We were very excited to have the Blue Peter team here filming and our children were featured in an episode. This is because 10 children had completed activities towards their Blue Peter Sports badges and the Blue Peter Team wanted to film them being presented with their badges by the show's Lindsey Russell.

As we move towards the end of term Christmas break, the children have all been involved in making decorations for their bubbles. The snow came at an appropriate time and snowmen were duly built.

Great Staughton



Whilst things are very different at the moment we have still started this school year with some amazing activities for our children at Great Staughton.



In November each class bubble wrapped up warm for a wonderful day of outdoor activities. During the day the children enjoyed working in small teams building free standing 3D shapes out of sticks, using chalk on the playground to have fun with their phonics and using conkers, leaves, stones and sticks to help with their maths. To top the day off we had a fire pit, where all the class bubbles took it in turns to sit round the fire, whilst drinking hot chocolate and eating s'mores! The day was greatly enjoyed by all, including the teachers!!



Later in November we celebrated Children in Need with a jammed packed day of fun.

Everyone in the whole school wore silly socks, which was such a funny sight to see. During the day we had various fun activities that the children took part in, including having a danceathon, where the children danced in each of their class bubbles in the playground to numerous party songs. The children loved this and it was so nice to see the children having so much fun outside. To finish off the day all the children took part in the annual duck race sweepstake, which was very tense in places but very exciting to watch. It was such an amazing day and we raised a total of £137.40.



Kimbolton



Year 1 children have had a fantastic half term of **Balanceability** sessions with Mrs Marriott from Hunts SSP in which they have developed their balance bike skills. The children have made great progress over the half term and have enjoyed practising their skills!

On Monday 28th September KPA celebrated European Day of Languages, with each class choosing a different language to focus on.



On Wednesday 11th November the whole school stood on the playground to observe two minutes silence for Remembrance Day. As it was a still and clear day, the bugle and the cannon from Kimbolton Castle could clearly be heard. We were proud to have raised a staggering £174.35 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.



Years 5 and 6 participated in Bikeability from 9th to 12th November under the auspices of Outspoken Training, an accredited provider of Bikeability cycle training, recognized by the Department of Transport. Our pupils were very keen and fortunate to be able to do this at a time when so many other activities have by necessity been curtailed. The training develops skills for cycling on single-lane roads with simple junctions and moderate traffic, so after one session of training in the playground, the other three days were spent on the roads in Kimbolton.

The same week, KPA supported **BBC Children in Need Day** by coming to school wearing crazy socks or odd socks. There were also many pairs of Pudsey ears to be seen! Each class watched the Annual Duck Race after lunch and there was much excitement as the winners emerged. We are very pleased to announce that we raised an amazing £148.70.

King James Academy Royston



In September, we welcomed 181 new Year 5 pupils to King James (left) and supported the transition for all pupils, following the changed approach to school life from March 2020. Year 5 have settled into new routines and readily shared what they would tell Year 4 pupils about life at KJAR:



"The teachers are really kind and it's easy to make friends." "Year 5 is fun!"

All year groups have adapted to new routines, including mask-wearing for Years 7 -11. Whilst the changes are notable, pupils have responded positively and some pupils have proactively made requests to help adapt to working in new bubble areas: in using the 'KJAR Sponsored Walk' funds, Year 9 pupils requested some football goals in their new COVID lunch area to enable some space to run off their energy during break and lunch time. The fundraising activity was designed to support being active and outdoors, so this was a great suggestion from pupils.



Children in Need provided a fundraising opportunity for Key Stage 2 pupils who were asked to bring in small change to cover a large painted Pudsey. With competition rife as to whether Year 5 or 6 would raise the most money, over £400 was raised in total!

Christmas celebrations started in earnest with Key Stage 2 decorating their classrooms, followed by the launch of the KJAR Advent Calendar with staff video clips and festive messages. Pupils across the whole school (Key Stages 2-4) are currently celebrating the '12 Days of Christmas' – an opportunity to celebrate and recognise pupils' positive Attitude to Learning scores in over 75% of their subjects. Pupils have the opportunity to win a prize on each day leading up to the Christmas break. Our end of term will see a virtual 'Christmas Celebration' shared across the school community.



Leverington

We have had a fantastic first term back at Leverington. All children and staff were excited to be back together and everyone settled incredibly well into the new routines within their bubbles. They have worked so hard and produced some amazing work to be proud of!

Year 2

As part of their English work of learning how to write instructions, the children in Year 2 were sent a letter and a delicious 'Gruffalo crumble' from the characters of the well-loved story. They tasted the crumble before making their own versions and then writing instructions on how to do it.

Unexpected snow day!

On Friday 4th December we were unexpectedly greeted with a flurry of the white stuff, much to the excitement of the children! We made the most of it and the children enjoyed having lots of fun in the snow with their friends!



Year 6

Year 6 have been inspired by the incredible text 'Shackleton's Journey'. As part of their English unit, they all took on the role of one of the crew members and have engaged with the text through drama, writing and art. They explored different media to create art in the style of William Grill before using Batik to create these fantastic representations of the images within the text.



Middlefield

The children learned all about why we commemorate Remembrance Day. They learned about the sacrifices made by brave people, who risked or gave their lives in war, so that we may live in peace. Each class made their own poppies out of a range of material such as felt, paper and water bottles and helped to make this striking display at the front of the school. On November the 11th, the whole school also held a minute's silence on Zoom to show their respect. We even made it onto the front page of the Hunts Post!



Our children were super busy fund raising for Children in Need. We combined this special day with National Maths Day. The children and staff had great fun dressing up, they could either wear spots for Children in Need or become robots for Maths Day, just like their Numbot and TT Rockstar characters. We raised an amazing **£240.38** for the charity!



Earlier in the term, Year 3 and 4 arranged their very own Egyptian Day. The children were immersed in everything Egyptian and even learnt how to dance like Egyptians. The children really enjoyed learning all about mummification and they even mummified a cuddly toy!

Murrow



We have had a very busy term here at Murrow. We were so pleased to welcome back all our children and families after the summer break and it was incredibly heartwarming to see how excited and enthusiastic the children were about getting back into their learning.

We began the year with a whole-school focus on the book 'Here We Are' by Oliver Jeffers. Across the school children enjoyed a variety of learning experiences linked to the text and we saw some beautiful, creative writing from each class. We also welcomed our new Reception children into Zebra Class. They settled quickly and soon became familiar with the routine of 'big school'.

For Children in Need we took part in a week of activities within our bubbles. The various activities helped us to think about our mental health and well-being as well as thinking of others too.

As a school, we honoured Remembrance Day by writing poems. We looked at the famous poem 'In Flanders Fields' by John McCrae in and talked about its significance. Each class then focused on a particular style of poetry before drafting and finally writing their own Remembrance poems. On Wednesday 11th November, children from Class 4 walked to the memorial in the village where they placed a wreath which they had made, to represent Murrow Primary Academy.



We have enjoyed a whole-school Christmas dinner and jumper day and although it was a little different this year, we still had an amazing time!

The children and staff of Murrow Primary Academy would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Roman Way



Key Stage 1

In Year 2, we had a fun morning doing a variety of outdoor learning when learning about the book 'Here We Are' by Oliver Jeffers.

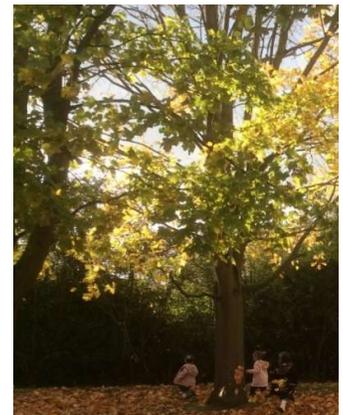


Key Stage 2

Puffins class enjoyed getting fit whilst learning about place value in 3 and 4 digit numbers. The children had to run to different areas of the field to collect base 10 equipment to build numbers. As an extra challenge, sometimes they were not allowed to collect tens or maybe hundreds and instead they had to think of alternatives, such as ten ones instead of a ten stick, or ten tens in place of a hundred.

Early Years Foundation Stage

On a lovely sunny but cold day we all went on an autumn walk to our school field. The children had been learning about their senses and used these to explore the outside area. They collected leaves, pine cones, sycamore seeds and looked for other signs of autumn. The children loved crunching through the leaves and some even enjoyed lying in them!



The Round House



Year 6 tuned in to a webinar hosted by author Robin Stevens who talked about her inspirations for writing and how she became a published author. The Round House was even given a shout out during the webinar!

As part of their Castle topic, Year 1 received a Zoom call from Rapunzel from her castle. The children had prepared written questions for her and were thrilled to speak to the real Rapunzel.

They have also made clay gargoyles which can be seen on trees around the school.



This year, the whole school decided they would make their Christmas decorations more sustainable by using items that can't be recycled to turn them into something new, or by using materials that can be recycled. Parents sent in cardboard boxes, buttons, ribbon, old CDs etc. and the results were fantastic!

Our Reception children have settled well into school life this term. They have been busy working on their Food and Space topics. They looked at milk, yoghurt, hummus and banana to see what happens when it isn't kept in the fridge. They were not impressed with the sights and smells of the food that had gone off!



Our KS2 TT Rockstar class knock-out Tournament was hotly contested this term, with Warblers becoming the class champions. In the individual tournament, children with the top 32 speeds competed in the live streamed Zoom final, with the winner (by 1 point) answering 72 questions in only 60 seconds! The children thoroughly enjoyed it and their times tables have definitely improved.

Thomas Eaton



At the start of this academic year we refreshed our School's core values. Our RESPECT code has become our Rainbow of Respect and the children joined together to refresh our symbols. Each week we celebrate these core values in our Bubble assemblies and the children are always excited to receive awards which they can add to their individual target stars displayed in the school hall.



Our youngest children have been learning about families and the memories associated with them, whilst further up the school the children have been really excited in finding out about the Stone Age. Our oldest children have loved learning about the Victorians and enjoyed a full day of being in role as a Victorian.

As a whole school we have embarked on The Write Stuff approach in order to improve our children's attainment and progress in writing. The children have engaged well with the use of the Writing lenses and their resulting work definitely shows progress and makes for a compelling read. Our central display celebrates our successful writers' work and enables all the children to read each others' work whilst they wait for their dinner!



Our children are always very supportive of others in our community. This year they decided that they wanted to give some of our key workers a hamper to thank them for all their hard work. They selected the Police, ICU at Hinchbrooke hospital, Doddington GP surgery and Askham House. All the staff who received the children's hampers were extremely touched by their thoughtfulness and generosity.

Winhills



It has been lovely to welcome all the children back during Autumn Term and have a real buzz around Winhills again. The children certainly have come back with smiles on their faces and pleased to see everyone. Although different, we have ensured that the children have had a fantastic Autumn Term. The children have been busy learning across all of the subjects, from fantastic experiments in Science to some inspirational pieces in their Literacy.

On 11th November we remembered the sacrifices that people have made over the years in war to ensure that we are able to live in peace. Across the school, the children learnt about why we remember. Year 6 used the short animation by Aidan Gibbons called 'The Piano' to write some moving pieces remembering the wars.



We have embraced Christmas across Winhills and are doing lots of things to try and



make it a memorable one for all our children. For the '14 School Days of Christmas' the children complete a fun Christmas inspired activity at the end of each school day. The children also enjoyed Christmas accessory day with a wonderful array of accessories and jumpers, to help raise money for 'Save the Children', and the PTA funded a Pantomime screening of Cinderella for the children to enjoy. The school thought it was important to spread some Christmas joy so have made some Christmas goodies to send to some of our local care homes to raise their spirits. We hope that everyone has a wonderful Christmas and we look forward to seeing them all in January.

Wintringham

In November, following several delays due to Covid-19, Wintringham Primary Academy finally moved into its fantastic new school building. It is huge and is on two floors, however the children are currently only occupying two classrooms! Everyone has quickly settled in and it already feels like home. There is plenty of space outside and the children have enjoyed playing on the playground markings and equipment, and there is a central grove for our outdoor learning, which is fun. Unfortunately we have not yet been able to invite parents, carers and visitors in to see the school in person, but hope that we will be able to do this later in the new year. In the meantime, Mrs Bryden's virtual tour can be viewed [here](#) and via [our website](#).



Outside the children recently worked in teams to create foxes out of sticks, and chalk Christmas trees decorated with conkers, pine cones and other natural materials as part of their outdoor learning.

As part of the Reception children's food topic, the children enjoyed experimenting with pouring warm water over skittles and predicted that the colour would come off the skittles to make rainbows on the plates. The results were very pretty.

KS1 have been familiarising themselves with the outdoor area through a photo scavenger hunt, creating clay faces and making a piece of artwork with natural resources and a flour handprint.

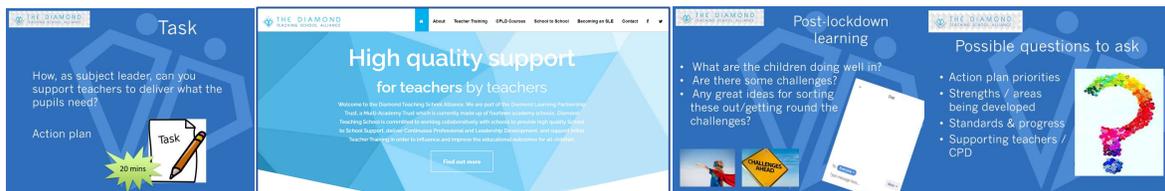
The children attended their first whole school assembly to wish the lights on this month and were able to hang their homemade decorations on their tree. They have produced some fabulous decorations for their classroom and are really enjoying all the Christmas activities.





The Teaching School has continued to provide a full service to schools, teachers and trainees this term.

We upskilled rapidly over the summer so we could take our entire programme of courses and training online while face to face sessions have not been possible. We made sure that each training session still incorporates valuable discussion and networking opportunities by using breakout rooms and chat functions, providing an effective as possible online experience. Courses have ranged from subject leadership development, TA training and Local Governing Body training, to network meetings for Science leaders, Year 2 and Year 6 teachers. We have already delivered courses to 357 teachers and school staff across Cambridgeshire and Bedford. Thank you to all the course leaders who have adapted their practice and delivered high quality training this term.



Schools in Bedford Borough are receiving bespoke consultancy support from the Teaching School to improve outcomes for all pupils. Our SLEs and senior leaders commit additional time to support these schools as well as their own, which is very much appreciated.

Our trainee teachers have successfully completed their first training placement and are excited to move to a second school and take on more teaching responsibility next term. A huge thank you to their mentors who have developed each trainee's confidence and modelled a range of teaching and class management strategies. The Teaching School has started interviewing applicants who will start training in September 2021 and have already confirmed one trainee position. The application round remains open until July 2021 and more information about teacher training can be found on our website.

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Handmade decorations at
Wintringham Primary Academy

*Wishing you a
Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year
from everyone at the
Diamond Learning
Partnership Trust!*