



# Running a Million Metres for Mental Health



At the end of this term, staff and learners at Fairlands Middle School laced up their trainers and got running to join the scores of other local runners who have been taking part in the 'Million Metres for Mental Health' challenge, set up by Guy Locke.

The campaign - which started out with just ten runners aiming to run 100km each but has now ballooned to see a huge number of people taking part - seeks to remember those we have so sadly lost from the local community due to their struggles with mental health, and raise funds for the charities Mind, and Trust partner: The Space, to support their vital work in providing help to those who need it most.

To support the campaign, Fairlands ran a non-uniform day which raised £400 for the charity, then after school they all came together to run laps of the school field which added a staggering 1,035,500 metres to the campaign's tally.

This feat, as well as those by other runners taking part in the project has seen (at time of writing) an incredible 7.2 million metres run, and more than £21,000 raised for charity.

We are incredibly proud of everyone at Fairlands for supporting this important cause, and know that their (and all the participant's) efforts will go a long way to supporting vital mental health support in our community

**If you would like to donate to the project, or find out more, visit the 'Million Meters for Mental Health' website [here](#).**

## Saving the Planet ... One Book at a Time!

Children at Axbridge, Cheddar and Wedmore First Schools have received some exciting new additions to their libraries this term, courtesy of the Cheddar Vale Lions Club. The club donated a set of six books from Cornish author, Ellie Jackson's 'Wild Tribe Heroes' series, which are all environmentally themed and follow the lives of six animals as they encounter problems caused by humans. The books seek to introduce children to the importance of looking after the planet, and the problems of climate change in an accessible and age-appropriate way. The Trust is very pleased to have been able to collaborate with the Lions Club to make these fantastic stories available to our children, and hope that they will inspire the next generation to keep up the fight against the climate crisis.





# Chief Executive's Message

We have officially reached the half-way point of the year, and a somewhat blustery end to term three! My thanks must go out to everyone in our community for working with us at such short notice to transition to online learning on the last day of term. As regrettable as it always is to have to shut schools, the ferocity of 'Storm Eunice' undoubtedly warranted it for the safety of everyone who attends our settings. I hope that the weather didn't cause your families too much disruption, and that you are now able to enjoy a less inclement half term!

It's hard to believe how quickly the time has gone this year and that before we know it we'll be thinking about sun and summer holidays! However, no-matter how fast time flies, I am incredibly proud to see all our learners working so hard to make the most of their time in lessons before we begin to approach the summer exam season. As well as this, it's great that so many of our learners are getting involved with extra-curricular activities and expanding their learning beyond the classroom. I had the privilege, for instance, to watch the Kings of Wessex's student production of 'Beauty and the Beast' earlier this term and was blown away by the talent and dedication every learner showed. It was truly a five-star performance!

Looking forward, as a country we are now moving toward 'living with COVID', and as such in schools the rules around COVID regulations are beginning to adapt to accommodate this. Your child's school will write to you directly to outline any changes you need to be aware of, however I encourage you all to continue to take sensible precautions so that we can minimise COVID's spread, and as such absence from school.

In the meantime, however, I wish you all a pleasant and restful half-term break, and an exciting and productive remainder of the year. Dream big! Strive for the best! There are no limits to what you can achieve.

## Discovering Dinosaurs!

Children at Cheddar First School have been looking at Dinosaurs this term and using their learning to inspire some amazing creative writing and independent learning. To help them learn, the children enjoyed a number of activities including being archaeologists for the day and making impressions of fossils.

You can also see below some lovely photos of the children dressing up as their favourite dinosaurs.

One of the most exciting learning opportunities however had to be an amazing visit from the Bristol Dinosaur Project team from the University of Bristol who ran sessions with the children all about the lives of dinosaurs and how we've managed to learn all about these creatures from so long ago. Children were even able to get hands-on with a Tyrannosaurus-Rex's tooth and feel up close to the creatures they've been learning about.

Thank you to the team from the Bristol Dinosaur Project for such an inspiring session – everyone agrees it was roar-some!



## Do you want to contribute to your community?

The Wessex Learning Trust is looking for highly skilled individuals with a variety of experiences to hold our executive leadership teams to account as Trustees on our Board

You will be responsible for:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

**We particularly want to hear from people with experience in Law, HR, Education and Business**

If this sounds like you, **register your interest now** by emailing Executive Assistant, Becki Pearce on

[RPearce@wessexlearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:RPearce@wessexlearningtrust.co.uk)

Don't forget that you can follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn  
Just search @WessexTrust





## Learning to be Sustainable

With the environment being at the forefront of all our minds, the children at Mark First School were very lucky this term to receive a virtual assembly and workshop from staff at the Carymoor Environmental Trust – a local environmental education and conservation charity.

Carymoor ran two sessions for the children – one for KS1 and the other for KS2. In the KS1 session, the children met 'Wigglebert Worm' who taught them all about composting; meanwhile the older children worked with the session leaders to learn more about recycling, and how they help reduce the impact of their rubbish.

Both sessions were incredibly well led and engaged the children in these important issues and have, we hope, encouraged them to work hard to do their bit for the planet.

You can find out more about the Carymoor Environmental Trust [here](#)

## Amazing Masks at East Brent

We've all become accustomed to the concept of 'masks' over the last two years, however the children in the Dragonfly Class at East Brent have reminded us of their other possible incarnation, in the beautiful animal masks they've created (pictured left) this term as part of their rainforest project! We think you'll agree that they're all incredible and show off the children's amazing creativity. Well done to all!

## Getting Hands on with some Incredible Creatures



They say 'never work with children or animals', but at Hugh Sexey Middle School this term they decided to do both as Year 6s were joined by animals and handlers from AnimalsUK as part of their 'Jungle Book' topic.

In an incredible opportunity for the learners, they were given the chance to get up close with everything from a Burmese Python and Cane Toad, to a Meercat, Skunk, Bosc Monitor Lizard, and Tarantula. Despite some initial nerves, all the children demonstrated an incredible 'give it a go' attitude and got to experience these beautiful creatures up close. Some even conquered their fear of spiders to really engage with this amazing session.

As you can see from the photos above, even staff got involved with activities ... with Headteacher Mr. Tatterton (second left) looking particularly unfazed by his newest reptilian friend!

This amazing opportunity will help inspire the learners' writing later in the term as they look to further explore the jungle, its habitat, and its wildlife.

We are incredibly proud of all the children for being so mature and engaged in this brilliant opportunity and hope that it is something they remember for years to come!

Thank you to AnimalsUK for visiting us, you can find out more about them [here](#).



## Reaching for the Skies!

This term Year 2s from Shipham First School visited Middlezoy Aerodrome as part of their 'I Believe I Can Fly' topic. On the trip they got to explore the hangers and huts full of memorabilia, as well as speak to pilots about how flying works and have a tour of the aerodrome. The children got to watch the planes take off and land and even sit in the cockpit of one of the aircraft!

In class, the children have been learning about the history of aviation and pioneers including the Wright Brothers and Amelia Earhart and they got to use their knowledge in their final activity of the day, speaking to Dave Linney - a former RAF pilot - who gave the children the chance to interview him and find out all about his life and career.

Safe to say, all the children loved the experience of visiting the aerodrome, which has definitely created a fair few aspiring aviators of the future.



## Next Steps in Outdoor Learning

Draycott and Rodney Stoke First School have been very lucky this term to receive a grant of £2000 from the Mendip Hills Fund to support the development of a Forest School area within the school grounds. The new area will add another outstanding facility to the school and give children a space to learn new skills and develop a love of nature and the outdoors. The school hopes to have the new facility open soon, with children already well underway with helping to build a mud kitchen!

The school would like to thank the Mendip Hills Fund for their amazing donation and look forward to sharing the new facility with families soon.

You can find out more about the fund [here](#)

TURNING A PAST INTO A FUTURE



## Learning from Experience

This term - as part of their ABSolute curriculum - Year 9s at Nailsea School looked at County Lines with a visit from Isha Rahman from St Giles Trust. Isha shared her personal and 'lived experiences' of county lines and drugs and provided a powerful and thought-provoking session for the learners. St Giles Trust is a charity that uses expertise and real-life experiences to support and empower people, and this session certainly inspired our young people to be aware of the risk of County Lines and it will form a vital part of their citizenship education.

KS2 children at Lymsham School visited a water treatment plant near Bleadon this term where they got to see the process of wastewater being transformed into clean drinking water. Staff showed the children round the site and explained each step of the transformation process along the way. The team also led a number of fun and informative activities and water-based science experiments relating to how our water network works and how to look after our environment. All the children had a fantastic time and were positively 'pumped' about all they had learned!

## In Full Flow...





## Sharing Captivating Stories

Children in Class 1 at Sandford Primary School were treated to a visit by 'The Very Jolly Postman' (aka Harry Cadwallader) this term, who joined the class to run a wonderful session full of acting, storytelling and rhymes. Harry's enthusiasm and amazing way with the children made for an incredibly fun session filled with opportunities to dress up, take part, and learn. The children acted out stories and rhymes like Humpty Dumpty and the Three Little Pigs, as well as play games like 'What's the time Mr. Troll?' Safe to say, Harry had the children engaged from start to finish, saying "can we do that again, the Jolly Postman was so fun!", and provided a fantastic opportunity for all the children involved.



## West-End Worthy Work

Learners at the Kings of Wessex Academy blew audiences away this term with their incredible production of 'Beauty and the Beast'. In the first school production since the pandemic, learners brought to life this enchanting story of love, magic, and sorcery across three nights in the Kings Theatre, and demonstrated their incredible skills in acting, singing, and dancing. A huge congratulations must go out to all the learners who took part and worked so hard over the last few months to put on such a brilliant show, as well as Head of Performing Arts - Ebba Scherer - for her direction and organisation, without which the show would never have happened.

## Charity Number Crunching



This term, children at Winscombe Primary School took part in the NSPCC's 'Number Day' – a day which seeks to engage young people with mathematics, while also raising money for the vital work of the NSPCC.

In the Blue Class, children took part in a range of activities including games, quizzes and maths challenges and had lots of fun using their maths knowledge to tackle new and exciting problems. All the children had a great day, learning new skills and working together to do some brilliant work, and raise lots of money for an important charity.

## Tree-mendous Work!

Children in the aptly named Redwood Class at Axbridge First School worked with Bristol Water at Cheddar Reservoir this term to plant nearly one-hundred new trees on the reservoir site. The new trees were donated for the project and the children really enjoyed working with staff from Bristol Water to plant them and learn about the positive environmental impact their trees will make. We're really proud of the children being involved with this sort of environmental work and hope they will enjoy watching their saplings grow into mighty trees as they themselves grow-up in and around the local area.





## Working on Wellbeing at Weare

This term saw learners at Weare First School take part in the national Children's Mental Health Week campaign which seeks to promote positive mental health and raise awareness of wellbeing issues and how to tackle them.

As part of this, staff at the school ran a number of wellbeing boosting activities for the children including yoga, mindfulness colouring, singing, and class games; and had positive conversations with the children about what to do when we're feeling down and how we can reach out for support from family, teachers and outside agencies.

This is of course an incredibly important topic, and we hope that in taking part in these activities this week the children will feel better prepared to take care of their own mental health, look out for others who may be feeling down, and seek support where they need it.



## Keeping the Wassailing Tradition Alive



Learners at Brent Knoll Primary school have been learning about Wassailing this term as part of their annual celebrations of the Somerset tradition.

In school, learners gathered around their newest apple tree where they learned what Wassailing is about and took part of their own version of the ceremony which included singing a traditional song and making lots of noise while toast the cider were 'fed' to the tree to encourage good growth for the year to come.

In addition to the in-school celebrations, many families joined crowds at Westcroft Cider Farm in Brent Knoll for their own Wassailing ceremony, including an atmospheric torch-lit parade, the firing of guns, singing, and placing of toast and cider around the oldest tree in the orchard.

Many of the children at Brent Knoll were involved in the ceremony, including Darcie (pictured above left) who was chosen as Wassail queen.

We are very pleased to see so many children getting involved in this ancient tradition and hope they will have enjoyed the chance to get so hands-on with their learning!

## An Update from the Leisure Centre

This term has been another exciting and active one at Kings Fitness and Leisure! We've been very happy to host swimming lessons for several of the first and primary schools across the Trust and have seen children making great advancements in their swimming abilities. Instructors have praised children for their listening skills and enthusiasm and have seen fantastic results thanks to their exemplary attitude.

The centre has also been playing host to some amazing fundraising with member Paula Barrow cycling for 12 hours straight on an indoor bike to raise funds for mental health charity 'Mind'. Thanks to this incredible effort she has managed to raise more than £1800 which will help provide vital support to those struggling with their mental health.

We are also very excited to be running both drama and first aid courses for young people from the age of 7 – these will offer children the chance to learn new skills and develop as young people and can be booked by contacting the centre.

We're very much looking forward to seeing what the next term will bring for our centre. If you're interested in joining us you can find out more about memberships and join [here](#).

