



Celebrating the Joy of Reading!



If you visited one of our schools earlier this term, you may have been presented with a sight that was a little out of the ordinary! Instead of learners in immaculate uniform, on Thursday 3rd March, you would have instead seen a parade of incredible book characters that had been brought to life as our schools celebrated World Book Day 2022!

Children at Shipham First School had a wonderful day themed around the idea of a 'Book at Bedtime' and enjoyed pyjamas, hot chocolate and biscuits as they engaged with some favourite stories. Activities included writing author biographies, creating bookmarks, taking part in book scavenger hunts, and older children reading stories to the younger children. Meanwhile at Draycott and Rodney Stoke First School they spread their literary celebrations across the week, with children in the Skylarks Class enjoying having a mystery reader in their class each day including a parent who read a story in Romanian, the PE and Forest School Teachers and a mermaid! Elsewhere in the school, children had sessions with authors Axel Scheffler and Nick Sharratt, and had a go at writing their own stories and producing their own books (with beautiful front covers).

At Kings of Wessex staff got in on the dressing up action and showed off some spectacular costumes! For instance, the art department went full 'Alice in Wonderland' and the Science department dressed up as Mr. Men. Beyond dressing up, learners also researched some newly released books and voted as to which they would most like the school to buy to add to the library. At Winscombe Primary School, as well as dressing up the children buddied with other classes in the school to share stories and books together. They also took part in a Where's Wally hunt around the school and several activities based around quotes from the book 'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse' by Charlie Mackesy.

Finally, at Hugh Sexey Middle School there was no shortage of activities to get involved with. As well as dressing up, children were able to enjoy everything from a library book and MC Grammar Rap quiz, to designing a menu for their favourite villain or superhero or drawing an alternative book cover which incorporated themselves into the design.

Here at the Trust, we recognise that reading is one of the most important skills children can develop as they grow up, so we are immensely proud to support the annual World Book Day initiative - particularly in its 25th year. Commenting on the day's events, Chief Executive Gavin Ball said: "I am immensely proud to see so many of our children and schools getting involved with World Book Day. It is always a magical time to be in and around schools, and I sincerely hope that once again the activities children have taken part in will encourage them to develop a love of reading that will last a lifetime."

We hope that seeing all our learners getting involved with reading will have inspired you to pick up a new book yourself! You can find out more about World Book Day, and discover some new books to try on their website [here](#)



Top: Children in costume at East Brent.
Bottom: Staff at the Kings of Wessex

Tel: 01934 745363

Email: office@wessexlearningtrust.co.uk
Station Road, Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3AQ
wessexlearningtrust.co.uk

Social Media: @WessexTrust



Chief Executive's Message

It's hard to believe it, but there are now only two terms left of this academic year! Despite the term flying by once again however, there has been no shortage of amazing things going on across our schools.

I am particularly proud of the efforts of our schools and learners to raise money for charity. Across the Trust we have been fundraising for a range of charities including Red Nose Day, the Red Cross Ukraine Appeal, Mind and many others. The drive to care and support others is a value we seek to instil in our learners, so it is great to see so many of our young people getting involved with these amazing fundraising events.

Naturally, we are now at that time of the year where exams and assessments are on the horizon, and I do encourage you all to use your time effectively and to start your revision now – you will find it really pays off in the long run. I am very excited to see that a number of learners will be coming into school over the Easter break to take part in revision sessions with their teachers and thank staff for organising these brilliant opportunities.

Whether you have exams this summer or not please do ensure that you take time this Easter to re-charge and reset so that you can be working at your very best when we return at the end of April. Although time is flying by, there is still a lot of learning to be done over the remainder of the year so make sure that you are able to fire on all cylinders and make the most of everything that comes your way.

Looking towards the Easter break therefore, may I wish you all a restful and enjoyable time with your families. I hope you can make the most of the sunnier spring weather and come back to school raring to go on Monday 25th April!

Going Green at Shipham

At Shipham First School this term, children have been working hard to turn the school green! This has started with the school council working towards gaining 'Eco School' status. To do this, the children have chosen some focus areas for improving their environmental impact – including creating some new anti-litter posters, going litter picking locally and hosting cycle/walk to school weeks.

To support their environmental efforts, the school was lucky to receive a grant from the Somerset Community Fund to purchase ten sets of litter pickers with gloves and hi-vis jackets which learners can 'hire out' to go litter picking around their homes. The fund will also create a small library for borrowing books, maps, and information about the local area to encourage children and families to enjoy the beautiful environment we have around us.

In school, the children have been hard at work planting trees and wildflowers, building a willow classroom and creating a new pond for Onion the school duck! All these efforts will help to diversify and improve the school's outdoor environment and provide homes and resources for the local wildlife.

Finally, the school has been increasing the range of recycling facilities available in the school grounds to include a PPE bin. This joins the pen, toothpaste tube, ink cartridge and detergent bottle recycling points the school already has in place to enable the school and families to be even greener.

All of these amazing environmental initiatives will help to make a big difference to the school's carbon footprint, and we hope help engage the children with the importance of taking climate action. We can't wait to hear what other steps the school will take in the coming terms!



Top: Building the willow classroom
Bottom: Onion enjoying the new pond!

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Songs of Success!

A number of learners from Years 2, 3 and 4 at Wedmore First School took part in the Highbridge Festival of Performing Arts this term, performing a fantastic medley of World War II songs. The children, with the support of their music teacher Mrs. Johnson, worked incredibly hard to prepare for their performance and were rewarded with gold certificates and some lovely comments from judge Timothy Barrett! It's fantastic to see music alive and well in our schools, and we can't wait to hear what the children perform next year.



Taking a Day for the Planet

Children in Fairlands Middle School's Eco Club took part in 'Low Energy Day' this term in support of 'Earth Hour'. This saw learners switching lights out across the school and monitoring energy use to see what difference they could make. They found that their actions reduced the school's energy use by a staggering 22% and this encouraged many of the learners to run their own experiments at home. Additionally, the children ran a bake sale that raised £157 to support future eco projects within the school. It's fantastic to see so many learners engaging with the climate crisis and doing their bit to support positive change.

Saying 'NO' to Hunger

This term at Cheddar First School, children and staff have been saying 'no' to hunger by doing a sponsored run for the Trussell Trust. The children each ran or walked a kilometre a day around the school field for a week to help raise vital funds to support Britain's food bank network. Some staff also took on the challenge of running a 5k at the weekend to further support the cause. At the end of the week, the whole school came out onto the field to say 'no' to hunger together on the school field - complete with drone shots to accompany! We're incredibly proud of everyone at the school for supporting such an important cause and hope they all enjoyed being part of such an exciting project!



Watch a video of the children coming together on the field [here](#)

Tree-mendous Work at Nailsea!



This term the Nailsea School Eco-Committee and a host of other volunteers got their hands dirty to plant over 60 new trees on the south-east perimeter of the school site. The Committee had applied for a 'free trees for schools' pack from the Woodland Trust as part of their efforts to improve the biodiversity of the school site. The pack included ten each of Silver Birch, Rowan and Wild Cherry as well as a mixture of native hedgerow species. The event was a truly community occasion involving students in Years 7 to 13, teaching, pastoral and admin staff, as well as local residents from neighbouring properties. The students said they: "Looked forward to watching the long-term changes in the landscape and hope that the addition of 60 new trees will benefit future generations of both people and wildlife".

In other Nailsea news ... the school saw a record increase in Year 7 applications for September 2022 this year - which has led to North Somerset Council asking the school to raise its Published Admission Number to 220. This is great news for the school as it guarantees a large and vibrant cohort joining our family next academic year, as well as being testament to the fantastic work that staff at Nailsea continue to do to make it a high performing and welcoming school that children and families want to attend. Congratulations!



Thank you for the Music!



For the first time since COVID, the Music Department at the Kings of Wessex Academy was able to host its annual Chamber Music Festival! The festival is a celebration of small group music making and offered some wonderful opportunities for collaboration between learners from across year groups. The two-day event saw learners putting on performances to each other and expert adjudicator, Howard Sayer, who gave feedback on the performances and selected a number of acts for the evening performance later in the week. The acts selected demonstrated the incredible breadth of musicmaking at the academy, ranging from Mozart's 'Turkish March' to Chuck Rio's 'Tequila' and Hozier's 'Take me to Church', and made for an exceptional show for parents and the community. A huge thanks must go out to Head of Music, Ms. Sarah Righton for her tireless work in organising this fantastic opportunity for the learners, and to Howard Sayer for supporting the festival and providing brilliant feedback.

Eggs-traordinary Events

Spring has officially sprung at East Brent First School this term, where the children have been witnessing the birth of new life by hatching their own chicks! The children were very lucky to receive an incubator full of eggs for their classroom. Over the course of a few days the eggs hatched out into gorgeous fluffy chicks! Throughout the process the children were able to learn all about how chicks grow and enter the world, and why we see so much new life in the Spring. The whole experience was truly magical, and the children can't wait to see how their chicks grow up into chickens!



Dancing their Socks off!

This term, Winscombe and Sandford Primary Schools were working incredibly hard to prepare to take part in the annual 'Dance Your Socks Off' show at the Weston playhouse - organised by Churchill Academy. The show saw six schools performing a range of dances on the theme of 'how we can



Above: The children celebrating their outstanding performances!

change the world' to a packed playhouse audience. Both schools put on incredible performances - with Winscombe being 'Crazy Scientists' and Sandford 'Robots and Machines'. We think you'll agree - they all looked great, and a huge thank you must go out to the staff who worked hard to get the children ready. Everyone at the show agrees that the children did a fantastic job and truly did 'dance their socks off!'

Charging Back in Time ...

Earlier this term, children in the Griffins Class at Lymsham First School went back in time to experience life in the Iron Age! To help them learn what life was like for people 2000 years ago they took part in a number of activities. These included grinding their own flour, putting on woad war paint, learning to charge into battle, weaving willow structures to turn into their huts, making pots from clay and learning the story of Boudicca.

The experience truly brought the Iron Age to life for the children and helped them contextualise and develop the learning they'd been doing in the classroom. Needless to say, they also had a huge amount of fun and are sure to remember what they got up to for a very long time to come!





Rugby Success at Rosslyn Park

The Kings of Wessex girls', under fifteen rugby team travelled to Rosslyn Park in London this term to compete in National Schools Sevens competition, a prestigious inter-school rugby tournament that saw the team competing against the likes of Clifton College and other schools from across the country.

The incredible team played seven matches in total, winning all bar one of them, with their success seeing them compete in the final against Ivy Bridge School. In the final they put on an exceptional performance, with each player demonstrating the incredible skills they've been spending years developing throughout their time at school.

The final saw the team playing strongly from the very start and maintaining determination throughout, despite Ivy Bridge taking the upper hand. In the end, Kings scored 5 to Ivy Bridge's 24, which although meant they lost the match, still meant the team came second overall, being crowned runners up in the competition. This was an incredible and note-worthy feat considering the scale of the opponents they faced, and merited worthwhile celebration among the team, and their peers when they returned to school. We are incredibly proud of the team's achievements and know they can't wait to return next year to defend their crown!

Really Having 'a Hoot' at Weare!

Many of our schools took part in British Science Week this term, which saw children enjoying a range of amazing activities related to the various scientific disciplines. Weare First School was no exception, with their week focusing on the theme of 'growth'. As such the children were visited by the Orchard Manager at Thatcher's Cider - who talked about the history and science behind growing apples. They also went on a trip to Tanyard Strawberry Farm to learn about the complexities of commercial strawberry growing. Children conducted experiments including growing crystals and seeds and received visits from a number of parents and who talked about the various different scientific fields the children could one day go into.

However, the pièce de résistance had to be a visit from a bird of prey centre (courtesy of a grant from the British Science Association) which gave children the chance to get up-close-and-personal with some incredible and beautiful birds. The children learned about their growth, saw them fly around the hall, and even got to hold the animals, which - as you can tell from the pictures - was an exciting and unique experience!

We hope that all these incredible activities will have sparked an interest in science for all the children at Weare and will encourage them to pursue the subject throughout the rest of their education and beyond.



The Return of the Easter Parade!

At Mark First School, just before school finished for the Easter holidays, the children were able to take part in the return of the Easter Bonnet Parade! This annual (bar COVID) tradition sees each child make their own Easter Bonnet and parade them around the playground to parents and staff, with the best in each class winning a chocolate prize. This year the children had all put so much effort into producing their hats that choosing a winner was tough. Regardless of winning however, everyone had a lot of fun producing their hats and getting 'back to normal' with this lovely Easter tradition.

The parade proved the perfect end to a brilliant term at the school and got everyone in the Easter spirit ready for the holidays! Well done to all involved.





Keeping it Local!



Children in the Redwood Class at Axbridge First School were learning all about their local area this term as they went on a trip to King John's Hunting Lodge – a National Trust property in Axbridge Square. They were shown round by guides, John and Pauline, and were able to discover facts about Axbridge's Roman and Victorian past. All the children were fascinated by the stories John and Pauline had to tell, and the objects that were on display. They certainly came away with a newfound understanding of their local area.

Keeping Traditions Alive



This term, Brent Knoll Primary School were very kindly gifted a brand-new maypole for their country dancing club. This has proved an excellent resource for the dancers to practice with in anticipation of their upcoming performances. As you can see from the photo above, the pole and colourful ribbons make a feast for the eyes, and we can't wait to see it in action for real when the school hosts an area country dance festival in June. It's great to see our schools keeping these traditional art forms alive and a big thanks must go to the family who donated this brilliant resource.

Living like Romans

At Draycott and Rodney Stoke First School, children got a very special visit from a Roman Soldier this term, who taught them all about marching, battle formations, equipment, and Roman names. Safe to say, the children loved the experience and were a force to be reckoned with in their testudo formation!



An Update from the Leisure Centre

This term at Kings Fitness and Leisure, things have been busy as ever with lots of exciting events and opportunities going on across the centre.

For instance, we've run a number of sessions for our staff to keep their National Pool Lifeguard qualifications up to date through monthly training sessions in our pool (pictured right). This involves working through a number of water-based scenarios and first aid skills, so that they always know how to respond should an incident occur. These sessions ensure you are always in safe hands when you visit the centre, whichever facility you are using.

Looking towards the Easter holidays, we have a number of activities planned – including our Sports and Craft Club which will run throughout the Easter break, and an egg-citing Easter egg hunt where you have the chance to win prizes including a month's free membership, and bouncy castle party, and – of course – an Easter egg!

We are also very excited to have announced our Zoom Class Reunion in April where members who joined us for online fitness classes during lockdown can come together, in person, to enjoy a fun fitness session and a real catch up – we can't wait to see lots of familiar faces once again!

As always, if you want to join us for any of the amazing activities we have on offer, feel free to pop into the centre or find out more about membership options on our website [here](#)



Above: Staff taking part in refresher lifeguarding training earlier this term