



**Wessex**  
Learning Trust  
We Learn Together!

**Trust Newsletter**

Issue 9

Summer 2021

# Maintaining an Ancient Tradition



Ascension Day at the Kings of Wessex is a longstanding tradition, and rite of passage for its hardworking students. Since 1883, following a short service in the church, Year 13 students have been invited to climb to the top of the local St. Andrews Church tower to sing the Ascension Hymn and look over the village in preparation for their own ascension onto pastures new. Unfortunately, with COVID restrictions still in place, the traditional ceremony was once again unable to take place, leading staff at the school needing to take a creative approach in order to keep the tradition alive.

Therefore, staff produced a short video featuring a service in the church

marking the children's achievements at the school. This was followed by some incredible drone footage from the top of the tower; with the aim being to provide students with a virtual experience of climbing to the top from the comfort of their classrooms.

The video has proved a hit with students and the community and is testimony to what can be done, even when faced with the challenges of COVID. Although the school hopes to return to normal proceedings next year, this – they hope – will prove a suitable supplement for the time being.

You can watch the video (including the amazing drone footage) here:  
<https://youtu.be/9EIYNOThUvs>



# Promoting Healthy Young Minds at Mark



This term children at Mark First School have been taking part in their annual Health Week, focusing on supporting mental health and wellbeing. The school has run a range of activities to encourage the children to stay healthy, including socially distanced Wake and Shake, sponsored walks and runs around the field, learning in their outdoor classroom and mindfulness meditation. More than ever, it is important to support young people's mental health and the Trust is proud to see so much going on at Mark to help this happen.

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Join Kings Fitness and Leisure today and benefit from no joining fee (usually £25), 12 months for the price of 9, and a free 7-day pass by quoting 'Wessex Learning Trust' when you join.





# Chief Executive's Message

It's safe to say that time flies as we approach the end of the penultimate term of the year! It goes without saying that this has been a year like no other, so as the summer break draws ever nearer I must congratulate every parent, learner and member of staff on their ongoing determination and hard work to keep things moving against all odds. You will be rewarded I hope by a long, sunny summer where the word Coronavirus is but a distant memory.

Even as we do approach the end of another academic year however, I want to encourage everyone across the Trust to keep working hard and stay focused right to the very end. Everything we do now will help make the summer even sweeter. This includes keeping up COVID safety measures such as regular hand washing and bi-weekly Lateral Flow Testing, so that even as lockdown restrictions ease we can continue to keep the virus at bay.

With restrictions beginning to ease I'm really pleased to see that children are now being able to engage again with extra-curricular activities. These activities – such as trips, visitors, and peripatetic music lessons – are really important for children's development and help supplement the curriculum, providing children with an even richer school experience. Such activities have been sorely missed over the course of the pandemic so it is a great pleasure to see them starting up again.

Naturally, the end of the year also means assessments loom on the horizon for many of our learners. I know that this year things once again look a little different to what we are used to, but I know that our learners will take the challenge in their stride and work hard to achieve their best. All our staff are there to support you so make the most of their expertise and know that we all want the best for you.

So, as the end of term approaches, I thank everyone for staying strong in these trying times, and wish you a restful, sunny break which will hopefully prepare you for one more amazing term of learning!

## Butterfly Booklet Takes Off!



At Lympsham First School, Jim Bishop (HLTA) has been making the most of his wildlife expertise to raise money for the school by self-publishing a booklet on 'The Butterflies of Lympsham'. Thanks to lockdown, the keen photographer found himself spending more time outside seeing how the village changed from season to season. As time went on Jim "started to write a short article about the butterflies for the local village magazine and before long had several more pages than they could possibly fit in". Faced with this he decided to publish a booklet and "thanks to the generosity of some local businesses was able to cover the costs of getting the booklet printed; it went on sale just before Easter and at the last count had sold over 150 copies already raising over £450 for the school".

Priced at £3 the booklet is available for sale at Lympsham Village Store & Post Office, Brent House Farm Milk Store, Ain't too Proud to Browse (behind Tesco Express in Cheddar) Wick Heritage Workshops & Shop and Dulhorn Farm Holiday Park. It is also available as an e-book at the slightly higher price of £3.62.

You can find out more and buy the book [here](#)

## Nailsea's Green Revolution

Year 7 students at Nailsea School have been taking part this term in the 'Big Ideas Programme' – an enrichment programme that focuses on sustainability to combine STEM activities with enterprise and employability skills.

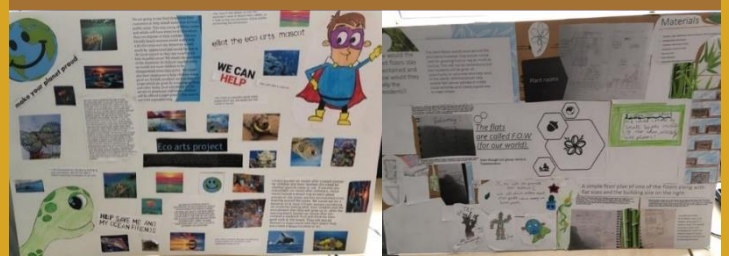
Divided into groups, the children developed ideas to help solve a sustainability issue of their choice, including ocean pollution and global warming. From these, eight groups were selected to further develop their ideas, creating a presentation, business plan, and intro video for submission to the Southern England Regional Finals. Of these eight, three have been selected to go forward to represent Nailsea School. They are:

**The Eco Art Project** – who plan to set up a café which allows children to express themselves by creating art with discarded rubbish.

**Save Our Oceans** – who plan to campaign against single use plastic.

**Tremendous** – who plan to create a flat entirely out of green materials.

Both teams will receive feedback before competing with other schools in the regional final. Nailsea want to thank everyone who took part for engaging so well with the project, and Solutions for the Planet for their enthusiasm and support!







## Opera Company Hit All the Right Notes!

This term the children at East Brent First School were treated to a very special (virtual) visit from Jackdaws Opera. The opera company (consisting of five professional opera singers) 'Zoomed' into school to lead a session with the children which included excerpts from the professionals, question and answer sessions and the opportunity to find out more about opera. The amazing opportunity culminated with the children joining in with a performance through clapping, humming, and dancing. The children were incredibly inspired by the amazing opportunity and left the session with a newfound passion for opera! The school would like to thank Jackdaws for bringing the experience to the school and inspiring the children.



## Moving Tribute to Jordan Banks



The children at Lymsham First School this term led a moving tribute to nine-year-old, Jordan Banks, from Blackpool who sadly died after being struck by lightning earlier in May. Along with their Sports Coach Mr. Craig Scriven, the older children spent some time reflecting on the incident and then making a row of nine footballs in tribute. We are very proud of the children's sensitivity and maturity in discussing this difficult topic and thank Mr. Scriven for organising the tribute.

## Going Crazy for Pyjamarama!

Children across the Trust have been celebrating 'Pyjamarama Day' (Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May) this term - an initiative from the Book Trust where children come into school in their pyjamas in order to help raise money 'so every child can experience the benefits of a bedtime story'.

At Brent Knoll School the children enjoyed the day, listening to stories from staff, taking part in drama, and sharing books with each other; and similarly, at Weare First School there were opportunities throughout the day for children to enjoy reading or being read to.

As well as children having a lot of fun, the day was hugely successful in raising money for the Book Trust who help provide support to less fortunate families so that children can enjoy reading and accessing books - something proven to help children do better at school and improve their confidence.

Well done to everyone who took part - it looks like you had a lot of fun, and the money raised will definitely go on to support a great cause!



Check out these amazing 'stomp' rockets being fired by Year 5s at Hugh Sexseys. The children are investigating forces in their science lessons and enjoying a hands-on, practical demonstration of an imbalanced force!

Don't forget that you can follow the Trust on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn - Just search for @WessexTrust







## Hatching a Plan at Lympsham!

Children at Lympsham First School have been quite literally tweeting this term as the Griffins Class (Year 3) took delivery of an incubator of chicken eggs which over the course of a week hatched out into four beautiful chicks! Once the chicks hatched the children got the opportunity to watch them grow and see how their appearance and behaviour changed over time as they became full-sized chickens. Once the chicks were big enough the children even got to hold them and see them up-close. This experience was truly magical for the children and taught them about the lifecycle of animals and how to be responsible for other creatures; as well as seeming seasonally appropriate as the children returned from their Easter break!



## Fundraising the Fun Way



The children at Shipham First School have been taking part in a sponsored ride/walk this term to raise funds to purchase new resources for Pre-school. This included riding a balance bike, scooter, scuttle bug or walking around the garden track to see how many laps they could do. All the children really enjoyed taking part, and the school has been incredibly impressed by the amount of money raised so far (more than £400!). Staff are incredibly thankful to everyone who donated – every penny will go on to benefit the children and help support their learning at the school.

## An Update from Accelerate

*Accelerate are the onsite, alternative provision at the Kings of Wessex Academy.*



Things are progressing well as our students continue to work on building their sensory garden with a planter built, log shelter erected, and tyres and paint pots up cycled into plant pots; the students have even begun planting with pea shoots and lavender the first in the ground (kindly donated by Finance Officer, Mandy Ladd), as well as some other vegetables. The next stage of the projects is to put up a shed which is being generously supported by the local Rotary club. All the work in the garden helps the students develop practical skills, as well as teamwork and problem solving and will provide another beautiful area for children at Kings to enjoy.

Nailsea school were very lucky this term to receive a visit from the police horses Blaise and Trinity who (alongside their riders) talked with students about careers within the police and the role they play. Students loved seeing the horses and their impeccable coordination and found it an incredibly inspiring visit.



In addition to the garden, the team at Accelerate have received donations of boxing and gym sessions from the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership which they hope to be able to use with the children in the coming weeks. The benefits of physical exercise are well documented, and the team at Kings are really excited to be able to offer their children these fantastic opportunities.

It has therefore been an exciting term for everyone at Accelerate, and they very much look forward to being able to welcome everyone to the grand opening of their garden as soon as restrictions allow.



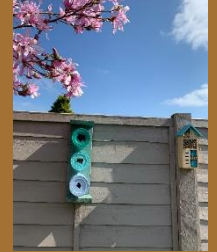
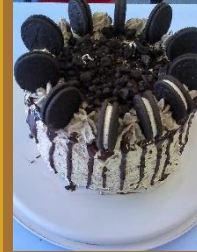


## Getting Active at Axbridge

Thanks to the recent easing of lockdown restrictions, the children at Axbridge First School were very lucky to be able to attend a trip to Charterhouse for an action-packed adventure this term including rock climbing, low ropes, archery, and orienteering.

Year 3 students attend for a one-day trip boosting their teamwork and communication, meanwhile Year 4 children enjoyed a couple of days at the centre where they even got to build their own fire and melt marshmallows!

Year 4 teacher Miss. Kellie Nash said the children "learnt lots about themselves and the learning powers of co-operation and resilience. We all tried things we had never tried before and felt very proud of ourselves".



Check out this incredible creativity from Year 7 and 8 students at Hugh Sexey.

**Top** L-R: Abbie, Ffion.

**Bottom** L-R: Ruby, Phoebe

## It's Easy Being Green!



Children at Shipham CE First School have been encouraging all members of the school community to reduce - reuse - and recycle! The School has signed up to several 'Terracycle' schemes and would love everyone to contribute. They are collecting old pens, toothpaste tubes and brushes, washing detergent containers and inkjet cartridges. If you are passing by the school, drop them off at the recycling facilities outside the front door. These recycling bins are accessible out of school hours and they also collect many other items and contribute to other recycling schemes including Cheddar First School's crisp packet recycling. What are you waiting for!

## An Update from the Leisure Centre

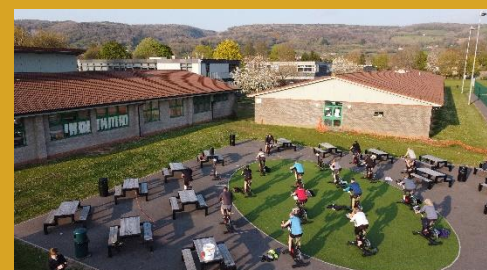
Things are busy at Kings Fitness and Leisure, with the Government's easing of lockdown restrictions meaning they can offer an ever-wider range of opportunities to keep you active!

If you're interested in keeping your children busy over the half term break, Kings Fitness is running a Kids Camp from 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> June which offer multi sports, arts, and crafts for 8-to-13-year-olds for £18 per day. Activities run following COVID safe guidelines and will take place predominantly outside.

In addition to this, the centre is now running Pre-School Gymnastics, Dance, and Judo classes for 3-5-year-olds in their brand-new Studio 2. Classes run during the day on Wednesday to Friday. This is alongside all other regular indoor classes which have once again begun thanks to the recent easing of restrictions. A full timetable can be found on the centre's website. Kings Fitness want to thank members for taking part in their outdoor classes and hope they really enjoyed taking part; they can't wait to welcome you back inside the centre again!

Finally, Deputy Manager Shane Fear will be swimming for 12 hours straight in the Kings Fitness pool on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May to raise money for the charity Mind. Anyone who would like to join him is welcome to book in a slot and support this incredible endeavour. You can find out more and donate at: <https://tinyurl.com/wm8mf7zt>

For more information on all of the above visit [www.kingsfitness.co.uk](http://www.kingsfitness.co.uk)







## Marathon Achievements at Fairlands

While many of us may have taken up Joe Wicks' 'Couch to 5K' over the course of lockdown, Fairlands student Sam has taken that a step further by running an incredible half-marathon (13.1 miles) to raise funds for his gymnastics club. This incredible feat included a 1800ft hill climb and is not the only exceptional achievement for the young athlete who has won many medals and become the National Champion in Tumbling. We're incredibly impressed by this achievement and know that the funds raised will go a long way to supporting his club to continue to help young people in the future. We look forward to seeing Sam's successes continue long into the future!



## Riding a Wave of Success

Following a recent trip to the Dorset Showground, the Hugh Sexey Middle School Equestrian Team (the Mustangs) have been successful in securing a place at the national championships. The five young equestrians competed in a range of disciplines as both a team and individuals. Their success in Dorset will see them competing nationally, but with a number of competitions still to go they have the opportunity to improve their ranking even further!

## Victorians for the Day

The Year 4s at Cheddar First School had the amazing opportunity this term to experience life as Victorians! They came into school in traditional dress and enjoyed authentic lessons including the three 'Rs', drill, and needlework. As you can see from the photo opposite, they really looked the part! Everyone did well getting into the spirit of things and definitely gained a great understanding into life in Victorian times.



## Opening the Door to Inspiration

At Axbridge, children have been working at their story writing skills and creating magical doors as stimuli for their writing. This has led them to create some incredible art and even more amazing writing featuring secret gardens, fairies and dragons!

## A Note from the Editor ...

Thank you once again for reading our Wessex Learning Trust newsletter! I hope that you have enjoyed seeing all the exciting things that our amazing children have been up to. All our schools are working incredibly hard to offer the best they can for your children, and we are incredibly proud of them!

As we finish yet another term, allow me to wish you all a wonderful, restful break. When we return, it's the final push before the summer so make sure you give yourself time to recharge so you can be raring to go in June. I very much look forward to seeing everything you get up to in Term 6 and sharing it with you all - keep up the amazing work!



Pre-Schoolers at Brent Knoll have been enjoying dance lessons with staff from Kings Fitness! Safe to say we think they had fun!