

Newsletter

CEO MESSAGE

Dear all,

We have accomplished yet another year together, well done everyone for your commitment and hard work.

As we reach the end of the year we are saying goodbye to several colleagues and in particular our Governance Professional, George Hayes and Rachel Simmons, Headteacher at Werrington Primary. We wish everyone who is moving on to new opportunities all the very best.

A reminder that the 1st of September is a training day for Teachers however the 2nd September is a day when all staff return but school is closed to children. Each school has their own day of training and activities planned so that we are prepared for children returning to school on the 3rd September.

We are pleased to have been successful in achieving more CIF funding and Connect The Classroom funds and work will be starting at Wittering, Northborough and Gunthorpe. We are investing in the OPAL project at Werrington and work will begin in the Autumn term to enhance and develop their school grounds to support outdoor play and learning for all children.

Finally, I am pleased to share that we saw an improvement in our EYFS, Phonic and KS2 results in many schools in our Trust. The impact of the CUSP curriculum on our reading and writing outcomes has been really positive, especially where schools have been using the scheme all year. Well done everyone!

I hope you all have a wonderful and restful holiday and look forward to all the brilliant things that are planned for next year.

Cathy Carlisle

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The Big Four

Although school results are improving in our schools, across the East of England they are still lower than in other areas of the country.

We need to continue to improve outcomes for our children so that they consistently enable children to be prepared for the next stage of education by achieving the national targets.

Our Trust and school priorities align with those set by the DfE to improve outcomes for children in this area so that they can achieve as well as other children nationally.

Priority 1 - Improve attainment in Reading, Writing & Maths

Priority 2 - Provide inclusive mainstream education

Priority 3 - Ensure Reception year education is high quality

Priority 4 - Improve attendance for all children especially those who face disadvantage

In every school the objectives will link to these overarching themes and will be shared with all job families in September so that everyone can continue to support the children in our schools.



Trust Results

KS2

School	2024	2025
National	61%	62%
AJS	57%	65%
GPS	37%	43%
JCPS	90%	91%
NPs	47%	74%
WePS	65%	56%
WiPs	44%	57%

EYFS

School	2024	2025
National	67%	68.5%
AJS	71%	62%
GPS	50%	59%
JCPS	65%	79%
NPS	81%	71%
WePS	66%	63%
WiPs	45%	76%

Phonics

School	2024	2025
National	80%	81%
AJS	84%	82%
GPS	71%	80%
JCPS	79%	75%
NPS	91%	90%
WePS	88%	72%
WiPs	64%	64%



Investing in Our Youngest Learners: Building Strong Foundations for Future Success

I recently had the privilege of attending the Reception-Year-Quality RISE conference for the East of England, and I'm excited to share some key insights that reinforce our commitment to providing exceptional early years education here at Soke Education Trust.

The conference highlighted several crucial messages about the importance of early years education, particularly around inclusion, high quality interactions, and creating vocabulary-rich environments in our EYFS settings. Speakers noted a focus on Characteristics of Learning and the use of evidence-based approaches such as the Education Endowment Foundation's SHReC, as priorities for establishing in the Autumn term. These principles align perfectly with our educational philosophy and practice, and it's wonderful to see our approach validated at a regional level. One significant development on the horizon is the Government's ambitious target of achieving 75% Good Level of Development by 2028. This represents a substantial commitment to raising standards in early years education across the country. Additionally, we can look forward to a new writing framework being published this summer, which will include valuable, additional guidance for assessing against the EYFS writing goal.

The conference emphasised the critical importance of developing fine motor skills that lead to good pencil grip, ensuring our pupils are well-prepared for their transition into Year 1. This focus on physical development as a foundation for academic success is something we take very seriously in our settings and we have already invested heavily in this area, with CPD around this planned for next term.

All of these insights reflect the exceptional work our EYFS practitioners are already doing every day. I'm incredibly proud of how our teams prioritise high-quality interactions, stories, rhymes and songs, and shared reading experiences. These fundamental activities are not only very much enjoyed by our pupils and adults alike, but they form the bedrock of successful learning and development.

Our EYFS network continues next year, with Chantelle and Jo planning visits to all reception-year settings in the Autumn term, so they can guide and coordinate the group with everyone's objectives in mind. We will also be using NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention) across the Trust and the new baseline assessment from Early Excellence that will enable a shared language and really useful information about starting points to guide planning and provision for the rest of the year.



Our commitment to excellence in early years education remains unwavering, and I look forward to continuing to support our outstanding practitioners in delivering the very best outcomes for our pupils.

For more on the SHReC approach, visit <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/the-shrec-approach> For more on NELI, visit: <https://www.teachneli.org/>

For more on The Early Excellence Baseline Assessment, visit <https://earlyexcellence.com/eexrec/>

Elaine Crane
Director of Education





SET the standard...

Our nominees this half term are:

Marianne Young - Gunthorpe, Anonymous

Marianne is amazing! She is so calming and understanding of the children's needs. Marianne had made our OPAL project fantastic and she is a pleasure to work with.

Zoe Whitwell - Alderman Jacobs, Anonymous

She has worked really hard this year, both in pre-school and Forest School and has also gone over and above to create a remembrance garden for Bethan - a member of staff who recently passed away - in the Forest School area.

Hannah Breslin - John Clare, Anonymous

For coordinating the production of a fabulous musical for Key Stage 2 - it was phenomenal!



Alison Cook - John Clare, Anonymous

Always going the extra mile to help everyone. Thank you!

Nominate your colleague!



Scan the QR code and share the fabulous things that happen



Our newsletter and blog are now
available on the Soke Education
Trust website

News from our Schools

Northborough

Children from across the school enjoyed representing Northborough at the Peterborough country dancing festival.



Year 3 joined schools across Peterborough to showcase their learning of a variety of instruments over the year. We performed 'Three little birds' by Bob Marley on the ukuleles!



Alderman Jacobs

I am excited to share the highlights from our annual Science Week at AJS, which took place last week. We truly kicked things off to a flying start thanks to our special guest, Alan the Birdman, who captivated us all with some remarkable birds of prey. The children, from pre-school to Year 6, were spellbound as they watched Sybil the Harris hawk, Basil the Barbary falcon, Shadow the bald eagle, and Sparky the barn owl soar just inches above their heads! Alan shared fascinating insights into the dietary habits of these magnificent creatures, as well as how they are specially adapted for their roles in nature. A particularly fun fact was that birds of prey lose their feathers in pairs to maintain balanced flight! Thankfully, while there were plenty of swoops and dives, we were fortunate that no one was landed on—although the climbing frame did bear some signs of a small amount of bird droppings!

One of our key focuses during Science Week was encouraging the children to ask scientific questions, and it was delightful to see this initiative embraced across the school. Each class had the chance to generate a plethora of queries centred around Jelly Babies. For instance, Year 1 wondered, "If we leave a jelly baby in water for a long time, will it change its shape?" Meanwhile, Year 4 sought to understand, "How would a jelly baby react with different liquids?" Year 5 took a more adventurous approach by asking how far they could launch their jelly babies!

Throughout the week, the beloved jelly babies became the stars of various experiments. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) explored different liquids, Year 5 tested their homemade catapults, and Year 3 was tasked with designing parachutes to save their jelly babies from a fall! We were thrilled to invite parents to join us for these scientific endeavours, and I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for your enthusiastic participation.

Overall, Science Week was a resounding success, with every child fully engaging in discovery and inquiry. It provided ample opportunities for our students to explore the world around them and pose an array of intriguing questions. Well done, AJS, on yet another successful initiative!



John Clare

The summer term in all schools is a busy and wonderful time, and this has certainly been the case at John Clare with many trips and experiences delivered to strengthen our learning offer!

We began with Year 5 visiting Rail World in Peterborough to participate in their Eco Event. The children took part in many different activities, including pond-dipping, learning about bee-keeping and completing a nature trail.



In early June, we took the whole of KS2 to London to watch 'Wicked the Musical' - this was a brilliant experience for our children, many of whom had never visited the West End before. Before the visit, we were really lucky to have a visit from a parent who works within film and theatre makeup. Jo has worked on the film and stage productions of Wicked and brought in some of the masks used in the show and the makeup used to paint Elpheba.



Buttercross Class (reception and year 1) visited The Bramble Patch in Bourne for an amazing day full of outdoor learning, linked to their 'Once Upon a Time' topic. The children helped the Little Red Hen bake some bread, built a bridge for the Three Billy Goats Gruff and found Cinderella's lost slipper using maps, compasses and reading directions!



Year 6 had 3 brilliant days at Hilltop Outdoor Centre, near Sheringham. They took part in all things adventurous and made some fantastic memories with each other to end their journey at John Clare.



For the first time ever, we offered a residential experience for our children in year 4. Fenland Adventure brought the school field to life with lots of adventurous activities, including go-cart building, archery, climbing and many more. The children also slept overnight on the school field in bell-tents and had an absolutely amazing time.



Finally, our staff team continues to be brilliant. On 1st July, we ran the Race for Life at Burghley park in memory of our dear friend and colleague, Rachel. Rachel worked at John Clare for many years as part of our office team and is hugely missed. As a staff team, we raised over £1500 for Cancer Research UK and we know that Rachel would have been incredibly proud.



As we approach the end of this academic year, we would like to wish our colleagues across the Trust a very happy and restful summer. We look forward to working with you all again next year!

Gunthorpe

Exciting Enrichment at Gunthorpe!

It has been a term full of engaging and memorable enrichment opportunities here at Gunthorpe. Children from across school have been able to take part in a number of trips and visits to enhance our curriculum.

These have included:

A visit from the 'Wonderdome' Planetarium for Key Stage 2, allowing the children to explore the wonders of the universe!

A Romans Day with History Off The Page for our Year 4 children, immersing themselves in an ancient time period and trying out a range of crafts and activities.

Our Year 6 residential visit to PGL Caythorpe Court that was a great success, with the children embracing new challenges and pushing themselves out of their comfort zones.

Our Year 5 children hugely enjoyed their visit to the Cambridge Science Centre, using a range of skills to complete science-based challenges.

Our EYFS and Year 1 children are also excited to be visiting Hamerton Zoo Park before the summer holidays.



Wittering

Successful Year 6!!

Our utterly marvellous Year 6 children have been having the time of their lives, rounding off their Wittering Primary journey!

Following on from their immense efforts in their SATs tests, they then embarked upon work towards The Cresset's dance showcase, 'Fun in the Sun'. After weeks of practice with some fabulous choreography from one of our amazing TA's, Mr Dummigan, their moment had arrived, and they were unbelievably brilliant! Their energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the performance was superb and watching them on stage was a joy.

They then went on to test their comfort zones at their Year 6 residential. They spent four days in a very warm Sheringham, Norfolk. They stayed at Hilltop and had an action packed few days including: caving, climbing, biking, jumping off the Airfan tower, investigating coastal erosion at the beach, team building activities, crates and archery. This was topped off with evening activities including rounders, mad hatters tag and an evening walk to the beach for ice cream! It was wonderful to witness the children's determination, their desire to push themselves and their continuous support and encouragement for each other.





...and the fun doesn't stop there!

They will be performing 'Star Warts' to the school and their families during their last full week. Judging by their rehearsals, their singing and performance skills are on par with their immense dance skills, we're all in for a treat! They finish off with an activity evening and their final leavers assembly and we couldn't be prouder of the exceptional children we are sending on to their next phase of their adventures in education!

