



“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.”

Charles Dickens, Great Expectations

We certainly had a few of those days in March!

Whatever the weather, children (and adults!) can blow hot and cold with each other on an almost daily basis. As adults, we remember childhood to be a happy and carefree time and growing up as an awfully big adventure. Having passed through it ourselves, we also know that children’s adventures can result in hurtful things being said and a collection of bumps and scrapes acquired along the way. Happy, carefree, adventurous? Yes- most certainly! But it is not always easy either. Children need to trust those of us in school who teach, support and care for them every day enough to share their worries. Each day we listen to children, hearing their joys and concerns. No life and no community is without difficulty and occasionally unkindness will arise. Our school is no exception. When it does, our children need to trust us to care, to understand, to listen and to help all of them resolve the issues that upset them. Often this will happen between the children themselves in the presence of an adult, using the strategies we teach them during circle time, collective worship and in PSHCE lessons. It is through such interactions that children learn to solve their difficulties and learn to be responsible for themselves and each other. We don’t expect the children to put up with the “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” but we do teach them to bend when a cold wind blows in because:

“Inside all of us is Hope.

Inside all of us is Fear.

Inside all of us is Adventure.

Inside all of us is... A Wild Thing.”

Where The Wild Things are Maurice Sendak

Science Week

This year’s science week, aimed at getting children excited about science, engineering, maths and medicine through hands-on learning in interactive workshops centred round sound and hearing. A huge thanks to: **Clare Fox, Lisa Ibberson, William Seale, Andrew Ferguson, Kate Naylor and Deepak Venkateshvaran** who gave up their time to help make the week a wonderful and inspiring learning experience for the children. Also, a big thank you must also go to Mrs Cooke, who organised the week’s events.



In addition to all the events and classroom activities organised by Mrs Cooke and our wonderful parents, the children enjoyed visits from the Hearing Dogs, The Raptor Foundation and Mad Science over the course of the week.

World Book Day

What a wonderful time we had celebrating World Book Day and how lucky were we to have our very own visiting author for the day; Many thanks to Helen Moss for joining us.



Thanks also to Mrs Roban for organising a splendid day!

Measuring what we value...

Mrs Roban and Mrs Cooke have put together a collection of writing and photographs and compiled them in wonderful albums which record and celebrate the children's learning during World Book Day and Science Week. Both albums are on display outside the school office. Do take time to stop by and take a look.

Coton's 5 Cs: caring, cooperation, creativity, challenge and courage.

Bikeability!

The year four children undertook their first round of “Bikeability” training during our first week back at school after the Easter Holiday. Bikeability is about gaining practical skills and understanding how to cycle on today’s roads and to give everyone the skills and confidence for all kinds of cycling.



It is wonderful that so many of the children scooter or cycle to school. We have reminded the children that they should dismount from their cycles and scooters in the grounds. We ask that you support us by reminding children not to cycle or ride their scooters on the grass and walkways at the front of the school at the start and end of the day. Please also can you remind your children to park bikes/scooters carefully in the racks provided.

Project Library...

Stage 1 of project library is now well underway! We have had generous donations from parents and hope to be showing off our new non-fiction collection of books very soon. I will update you on that just as soon as we have a confirmed date for their arrival. The PTA held a very successful afternoon tea at the end of the spring term to raise money and the recent Book Fair will allow us to add even more to our coffers! Every little helps, as they say. To this end we would ask that instead of bringing sweets into school on your child’s birthday, they bring in a new book to donate to the library. All age appropriate books (fiction and non-fiction) are very welcome, but look out for the soon-to-be-released PTA “wish list” of books for the new fiction library.

Visit From Heidi Allen MP

You may have seen our local MP in school a few weeks ago. I invited her in to speak to her about a number of matters which concern us, not least the funding crisis which affects all schools, but which particularly impacts a small village school. Between 2015 and 2018 the school has lost £117,395.00. This represents the difference between funding received and the amount needed to protect per pupil funding in real terms. It amounts to a loss of £343 per child. In Cambridgeshire this equates to a loss of a staggering £44.4 MILLION pounds since 2015. 217 out of 229 schools in Cambridgeshire are facing cuts.

Attendance

This Spring Term we have seen some nasty spells of illness affecting many children and staff. The attached letter from Service Director, Jonathan Lewis, provides more of an understanding as to why and how schools are being asked to tackle attendance. For more information on our approach to attendance, take a look at the policy on the school website or come speak to me in the mornings/after school.

Parking

We are very fortunate to be in a village where most families can walk their children to school. If you do have to drop your children off, or pick them up, by car, please be mindful of the following:

- Do not park on double yellow lines or the zig zag school markings. They are there for a reason and parking on them restricts visibility of both pedestrians and motorists.
- Please watch out for children on bikes or scooters.
- Whilst waiting in your car, please turn your engine off. We are constantly reminded of how harmful emissions from cars are to our environment and we need to consider our neighbours around the school.
- Finally, if you are a Blue Badge holder, please make sure it is clearly displayed on your dashboard for others to see and park safely. We only have one disabled parking space, so please only use this space if the Blue Badge holder is with you.

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Online Safety

An increasing number of children are using the app Tik-Tok - we have included a link to a guide for parents, as you may be unaware of any dangers children can get into when sharing videos. <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/esafety-news/tik-tok-app-safety-what-parents-need-to-know/>

With the growing popularity of 'Youtubers', the wish of younger-and-younger children is to become famous. Sadly, they risk putting themselves in danger. Can we please ask that you have a conversation with your children about the apps, games and websites they are using, especially when sharing videos, live streaming and chatting through games? The Internet is a wonderful place where lots of learning can happen, if used safely!

We have appended a handy parent fact sheet to the end of the newsletter.

Family Worker Drop-In

Clare Merrington, our family worker, is available every second Tuesday of the month during term time. She can usually be found outside school from 8.45am and is next due on Tuesday 30th April.

Clare is available for anyone who would like someone to talk to about any aspect of parenting. It can be a quick chat on the doorstep or a longer discussion in private. You can make an appointment via the office, but it is not usually necessary.

PTFA

Our PTFA Committee does a marvellous job, but could do with more willing volunteers. If you have any spare time and are interested in joining, please do contact the school office.

Dates for your Diary

Start of Summer Term: All children back on Tuesday 23rd April

KS2 SATS Week: Monday 13th May - Thursday 16th May

Half term: Monday 27th May to Friday 31st May

Last day of Summer Term: Tuesday 23rd July

And Finally...

I have had the pleasure in recent months to write in support of several children from various EU countries in their request to become British and Irish citizens. That pleasure is tinged with sadness about the circumstances that have made it necessary for them to do so. Two of my three children were born in Leuven, Belgium in the late 1990's when our family lived in Brussels. Perhaps rather blithely we then assumed that one day they, unlike us at the time, would be able to travel across Europe not being stopped at every border crossing or having to explain to the French customs officers on the train heading from Paris to Brussels that the painting we had purchased from a gallery on the isle Saint-Louis was not an old master and agree through gritted teeth with the helpful Belgian customs guards that what we had actually purchased was a bit of old tat and a waste of money. We were strangely delighted when the Belgians won the argument. Not so when, on arrival at La Gard du Midi in Brussels, we were marched off to the nearest ATM to pay the import duty!

I do not know who said this, but I put my trust in the young people we teach who know that:

The past cannot be changed. But the future is yet in your power.

Ishbel Coleman

Headteacher.

Coton's 5 Cs: caring, cooperation, creativity, challenge and courage.

Parents Fact Sheet

Keeping your children safe on-line.

- Know what your children are doing online and who they are talking to.
- Ask them to teach you to use any applications you have never used.
- Keeping the computer in a family room means that you can share your child's online experience - and that they are less likely to act inappropriately (i.e. via webcam).
- Help your children to understand that they should never give out personal details to online friends – personal information includes their messenger ID, email address, mobile number and any pictures of themselves, their family or friends.
- If your child publishes a picture or video online, anyone can change it or share it.
- Remind them that anyone may be looking at their images and one day a future employer could!
- If your child receives spam/junk email & texts, remind them never to believe them, reply to them or use them.
- It's not a good idea for your child to open files that are from people they don't know. They won't know what they contain – it could be a virus, or worse – an inappropriate image or film.
- Help your child to understand that some people lie online and therefore it's better to keep online mates online.
- They should never meet up with any strangers without an adult they trust.
- Always keep communication open for a child to know that it's never too late to tell someone if something makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Teach young people how to block someone online and how to report them if they feel uncomfortable.

Websites:

www.ceop.gov.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.getnetwise.org

<http://parentsonlinesafety.com/>

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<https://parentinfo.org/article/the-6-apps-and-services-that-every-parent-should-know-about>

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