

# Newsletter

## News from Mr Edwards-Grundy

This week in Collective Worship we started to think about the Christian season of Lent, which began last week, after we had all enjoyed eating pancakes!

We had great fun watching two children racing the length of the hall. One of the children was wearing just their PE kit, they were all dressed ready for sport. The other child was carrying all sorts of bags and boxes, they were wearing their coat and smart shoes. Both children had the same race to run and the children cheered equally hard for both children, but the child wearing trainers and their PE kit easily won the race. In fact, not only did the child with coats and bags lose the race, they were exhausted by the end of it too. Their race definitely looked much harder work than it did for the child wearing their sports kit.

The season of Lent is a time for putting things down so that we can focus on the things that really matter.

Many people give up chocolate, or alcohol, or biscuits for Lent. During Lent, many Christians choose not only to give up something, but to take up something. They may decide to give some time to a charitable cause, or spend more time in prayer.

Whatever people do, Lent is a time for stripping away some of the extra things in life that can slow us down.

We read the story 'Boxes and Balls' all about the Wemmicks. In the story someone in the village gets a box, and then a ball. Other Wemmicks admire his box and ball, making them want to get their own. It is not long before everyone in the village is collecting boxes and balls. People start competing over the size and quantity of boxes and balls that they have, they are so focused on their boxes and balls that they don't notice how difficult it is to do the ordinary things of life. People give up all sorts of things that are important to them, just to get more boxes and balls so that they are like everyone else.

It is a salutary story, in which it is all too easy to recognise ourselves. We can be so focused on being like everyone else, that we don't see the important things that we are sacrificing.

For Christians, this season of Lent is time to put down boxes and balls, whatever they may look like in our lives, because as the children showed during Collective Worship, they just slow us down. Christians believe that it is not possible to focus on the things that really matter if we are distracted by trying to be like everyone else, acquiring 'stuff' and giving our attention to the noise of the world around us. Lent reminds us to focus on the things that really matter.

Well done to the children who this week, by demonstrating our Values, have shown what it is to ignore the boxes and balls and to give their time and energy to the things that really make a difference to our community.



## Congratulations – a clean sweep!

This week our Year 6 boys played the last of their group matches against other partnership schools. They played at home, against The Batt. It was a very exciting and tense game, with both sides performing well and showing great skill. When the final whistle blew, The Blake School team were victorious, winning 4 – 2.

The team is now waiting to hear which school they will play in the next round...



## A fantastic performance

On Saturday, Mrs Raven took 30+ choir members to the Chipping Norton Music Festival. The children sang with great enthusiasm and the adjudicator praised their sound and happy faces. Our thanks to Mrs Raven for all her hard work preparing the children so well for the performance. Thanks also to all the parents who came and supported their children on the day. It was a lovely morning.



## Eco council and School council

This morning the Eco-Council and the School Council had a joint meeting. Mrs Castree, Mrs D and Mrs Gillitt were overwhelmed to hear the thoughtful, responsible and imaginative ways that the children came up with as to how we can improve our playground.

The children also visited the new woodland planted by Cogges in the carpark area - the children had



some fantastic ideas of how they can help protect and care for this new woodland.

They also had lots of ideas for ways in which you, the grown-ups, can help!

More information coming soon.

# News from Around the School

Our children in Year 3 enjoyed a fantastic day learning all about Ancient Egypt. The children enjoyed a day of interactive learning and they certainly looked the part! It looked like a lot of fun!



# Smartphone Survey, The Blake School

Thank you to all those who took some time to complete the survey, we had **77 individual parent responses** and here are some key findings from the results...

**44% of respondent parents** agreed a simple phone is a good first step if others in their peer group did too.

**61% of respondent parents** would be interested in additional support, shared workshops and further learning to continue to discussion\*

**Over 70% of respondent parents** aim to delay giving their children a smartphone until Year 7 or older. Of that, **43%** aim to delay until Year 9 or over.

Top three concerns attributable to excessive smartphone use were **excessive screen time, decreased interest in hobbies and impacted sleep.**

**57% of respondent parents** would be interested in joining a voluntary **parent pact** at our school to delay smartphones until the end of Year 9

## What's next?

For further information and resources, please head to [Smartphone Free Childhood](#)

The [Parent Pact](#) is an online tool that helps parents agree to delay with others in your community - check out how the movement is growing across Oxfordshire [here](#).

\*A 'Navigating the Digital Era' parent focused workshop will be run at The Blake in the summer.



**Cokethorpe SCHOOL**

## Parent Workshop

6.00pm, Tuesday 18 March 2025

### Smart Phones

'Navigating the Digital Era: Research-Informed Solutions for Healthy Smartphone Use in Children and Teens'

Cokethorpe School is running a parent workshop for any parents who would like to find out more about how to help their children navigate the digital era.

You need to sign up for a ticket [here](#), but the event is free to attend. It is not suitable for your children to attend with you.

Sorting out things that have happened online takes a lot of teacher time. We would like to remind you that all primary school aged children are too young to access social media apps – removing them from their phones can save a lot of tears and friendship issues.

## Parents' evening appointments

Appointments for parents' evenings have gone live today. Please use your e-schools log in to book an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher(s). Most of the appointments are on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March and Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April, but please do check when you book as some teachers have chosen different days.

Since the last parents' evenings we have moved over to a new Management Information System in school and we are aware of a few teething issues. If you experience any problems, please do contact the school office who will be able to help you.

*Loving, learning and flourishing in community*