

Castle Primary School



December 2024

A message from Steve Morton

We have been full speed ahead with Christmas here at Castle Primary School over the last few weeks. But before we celebrate all things festive, let's remember all the other fantastic experiences and learning opportunities that our children have engaged with earlier in the term.

Our Year 6 peers, Harriet, Thomas, Mia, and Lucy proudly represented our school on the top of Ham Hill on Remembrance Sunday. They spoke with clarity, conviction, and pride as they read the names of the brave soldiers who lost their lives in service to our country. It was a beautiful service well attended, and it was a privilege to be a part of it. Well done to all.



Now on to the main events! Everyone enjoyed our flying visit from Father Christmas and his elf. The children were very patient as we all waited for Father Christmas to refuel his helicopter. The children all gave over their letters and cards, and Father Christmas promised to read them all. A special mention to all the children in our school nativity. Each year it does not fail to fill everyone with the joys of Christmas. The children were brilliant actors, narrators, and storytellers. They really did all shine and gallop! As I write this, we keep our fingers crossed for an outdoor venue for our carols by candlelight. Hearing all the children practise their carols each week has been an absolute delight, and we can't wait to bring them all together for our choral extravaganza!

Finally, it has been heartwarming to work with our Year 6 members of parliament this term. Their courageous advocacy has risen to new heights. A big thank you to Mia, Zachary, Jemima, and Amelia for working hard to arrange the Christmas present swap. Their kindness and community spirit have ensured that lots of children across our school will have extra toys under the tree and that families will not have needed to spend a penny to do so. Our peers have also been getting involved and have coordinated the parent/carer present collection that has enabled all children in our school to choose a gift and wrap it for a family member to open on the big day.

Thank you to all of them and to all of you for supporting our efforts to give back to our families. You are all amazing. Have a well-deserved break, and we look forward to welcoming you all back for 2025 on January 7th.

Merry Christmas, everyone.

The Photo of the Week



Santa Helicopter visit



Cabot
Learning
Federation

This school is part of the Cabot Learning Federation, a Multi Academy Trust in South West England.

Dates for your Diary

6th Jan– Inset Day

7th Jan– First Day back to school

17th-21st Feb– Half term

24th Feb-Trust Collaboration day– School closed to pupils.

Head of school: Steve Morton

Castle Primary School,
Castle Street, Stoke Sub Hamdon,
Somerset, TA14 6RE
01935 822342

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is high priority at Castle Primary School. We take every opportunity to ensure that our pupil's safety is paramount. We want our pupils to be healthy and happy and to develop well, both physically and mentally. The school follows the latest Government Guidance to ensure we are fulfilling our duties in this important area.

Our Designated Lead (DSL) and contact at School is Steve Morton and our Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Laura Liddell.

Our school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy can be found online at:
www.castleprimaryschool.com/759/safeguarding

If you have any concerns about the safety of a child you can either talk to our DSL or DDSLs or you may phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224.

There is lots of online safety advice on our website – please follow [this link](#) to help keep your child safe

Camelot Club

At Castle Primary School we offer thriving wrap-around care in our Camelot Club. The staff, Mrs Middleton, Mrs Newman and Miss Gurney are caring, enthusiastic and professional; the environment is friendly and there is a wide range of interesting activities for children aged 4 to 11 years to enjoy.

Camelot Club breakfast sessions run from 7.45am until 8.45am @ £4.75 where the children enjoy a wholesome breakfast, access a variety of activities and get themselves ready for the day ahead. Children in our Reception through to year 4 are then escorted to their classes while year 5 and 6 pupils take themselves to their classes for a prompt start.

Camelot Club after school provision runs from 15.15 until 17.45. Children can attend short sessions until 16.15, later sessions from 16.15 until 17.45 or full sessions. They are offered a light snack and drink to keep them going until home time. There is plenty to do during these sessions; crafting and lego are always popular, but gardening, outdoor play, playdough and picnics are seasoned favourites too! Children are encouraged to read with an adult and there is plenty of time to get started on homework, with adult support on hand.

After school club has the following sessions:

3.15pm - 4.15pm @ £5
4.15pm - 5.45pm @ £6
3.15pm – 5.45pm @ £7.50

Tax-Free Childcare

You can get up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each of your children to help with the costs of childcare, this can be used towards **Breakfast club** and **Camelot after school club**.

This goes up to £1,000 every 3 months if a child is disabled (up to £4,000 a year).

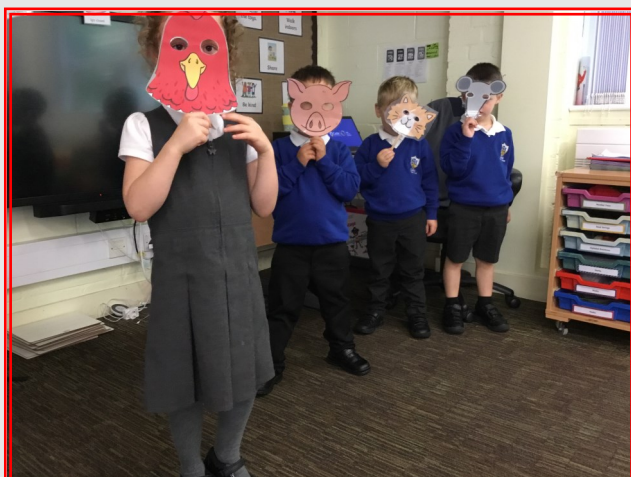
Drogo

This half term has really flown by! Drogo Class started In November by making some Gingerbread Men and carefully counting them out. Unfortunately, one went missing and we had a lot of fun making wanted posters and searching the grounds, but to no avail! Eventually he sent a postcard from London, so we learnt all about our capital city. We are pleased to report that he has now been captured and is watching us prepare for Christmas!

We have spent lots of time practising for the Nativity recently, and we were so proud of everyone this week when they performed "Shine Star, Shine". Everyone was brilliant - so confident and enthusiastic. We hope you enjoyed it as much as the children! Thank you so much for all of the wonderful costumes and support. We've been getting out and about this half term and have enjoyed trips to the local Church, the pantomime in Yeovil and the Big Rec. to meet Santa. On every occasion Drogo Class have made us so proud with their fantastic behaviour and great listening skills - well done everyone!

In other news, the children are making great progress with their Phonics and amaze us every day with their ability to read and write all of the different sounds they have learnt. Keep up the reading over the holidays so all the hard work doesn't get forgotten! In Maths, everyone is loving learning their numbers with the Numberblocks and we have some very confident mathematicians in the class who love to solve problems and enjoy setting themselves challenges.

It's been a great first term, but we know they children are tired and ready for a break. We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year. See you all in January!



Corfe

By the time you read our December newsletter, the children of Corfe would have proudly performed their amazing Christmas play, Shine Star Shine. I am sure you will agree, they were all superstars. We would like to say a massive thank you to Mrs Knobbs for being such a fabulous director and to you for being such a supportive audience and for supplying all the costumes. The children have really enjoyed being part of the show and it provides such a vital part of their education. Music and drama can open so many doors and it is lovely to see everyone excel in their own way. I am sure the songs will be playing in your heads for days. As well as practicing and performing our play, we have been making huge strides in our writing resilience. The story of the Tiger Who Came to Tea has really motivated the class and they have all produced some fantastic, innovated stories. We have also looked at acrostic poetry and information reports about tigers.

In Science we have been considering what a living thing is. We wondered what would happen if a tiger wandered into the ocean and how animals adapt to suit their habitat. We explored micro habitats and what animals live in our school environment. As well as this, we have looked at food chains, how animals adapt to seasons and what we can do, as humans, to protect our planet and the animals and plants that share it with us.

We have had so many wonderful experiences in the lead up to Christmas. Some super letters to Father Christmas were written ahead of his surprise visit via helicopter. To see so many happy and excited faces was a real joy. The pantomime, Jack and the Beanstalk, was a super treat to attend as was our Christingle service with Rev Nick. Along with our Nativity (performed 4 times in one week!), Christmas crafts, jumper days and Carols by candlelight, we are all feeling very festive.

We very much hope you have an enjoyable holiday, and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year.



Totnes

Just as quickly as it started, we have come to the end of the first term of this academic year. The Winter term is the longest of all three terms, and with that, we are able to pack so much into it! The last newsletter took a peek into the first half term, so let's explore what we have been up to over the last 7 weeks.

In Maths, we started out the half term looking at Addition and Subtraction as a foundation to begin looking at Multiplication and Division for the majority of our lessons. Using a selection of blocks, counters and real-world examples, Totnes were able to interactively learn about how we might use multiplication and division on a day-to-day basis, and the most efficient way they can complete these sometimes-tricky equations.

Equally as important is English, where we explored the book '*Arthur and the Golden Rope*' by Joe Todd-Stanton. In this tale, we dove into the setting found in the beautiful scenery that decorates the many pages of the book, learning how both we and the author can use a range of language to immerse ourselves in a fictional (or non-fictional!) universe. The book also gave us an apt opportunity to create our own diary entry from the viewpoint of the titular 'Arthur' – an experience all of Totnes enjoyed greatly.

Our discovery topic for this half term was 'Anglo Saxons'; an exploration of who they were, how they lived and what happened to them. One poignant experience from this unit was giving the students the chance to be archaeologists – digging up various artifacts from the past to give us hints about how some of our ancestors may have lived before they became part of the Earth. Speaking of the Earth, in Science, we observed the various states of matter that make up the world around us. In a number of intriguing experiments, we viewed how the states of matter exist and how they can shift between existence.

To round off the newsletter, we can't discount the fantastic experience students had in samba. Their performance in dancing to the beat demonstrated both confidence and dedication, and the whole learning process was enjoyed thoroughly by all of Totnes throughout. As the term ends and the Winter holiday begins, I wish you all a happy holidays and hope you get some well deserved rest and warmth (hasn't it just gotten freezing recently!!)



Dunster

It has been a busy term in Dunster Class. Over the past term the children have engaged in some brilliant science experiments to investigate the different states of matter. Their experiments included weighing fizzy drinks to measure the mass of the gasses that carbonated them and investigating solids as they melted. We obviously had to use chocolate to best demonstrate this and then eat the results from the experiment after we had recorded it all. We couldn't let it go to waste!

Forest school has focussed on seasonal change, with visits to the woods to note the changes in the woodland floor and the leaf litter. We did also enjoy climbing trees and building dens too.

Our art this term has focussed on still life. We have studied famous artists and their styles when drawing still life objects. We looked at shade and light and tried to make them appear 3 dimensional. We are well on the way to becoming famous artists in our own right!

Over the past few weeks, the children have shone with their resilience and adaptability. Thank you everybody and have a lovely and restful Christmas break.



Tintagel

I simply cannot believe that it is Christmas in a matter of days! This year has flown by! It has been a busy term in Tintagel class, from climbing low ropes on Exmoor to dancing Bollywood style and crunching numbers in arithmetic papers, they've embraced every opportunity and are well and truly in the year 6 swing of things! The children all look incredible in their leaver hoodies – thank you to Mr Churchill for organising them, and to all of you for ordering them, the children are delighted with them, and they all look so snug.

In math's, we have been working hard in our fraction unit. Multiplying, adding and subtracting fractions has been tricky at times, but everyone has worked so hard to concrete their understanding. On Monday's, Tintagel complete a 30-minute arithmetic papers; we work out our class average and we are delighted to have seen a 20% increase in scores – well done guys, you are smashing it!

In English, the children have been busy writing a narrative piece, written about their character who has left their home country and set out on a perilous journey. The story was inspired by The Island by Shaun Tan.

Mrs Whitehead and I just love this time of year, seeing your children enjoying their last Christmas at Castle is very special; it has been hilarious to hear the screams when we find someone's elf in their bag or lunchbox! Just a little reminder, homework drop-in sessions run on Weds and Thurs from 12.20-12.45. Coats and water bottles must be in school every day.

Well, all that is left to say is, Merry Christmas!

Have a lovely break with your wonderful children!

See you in 2025

Mrs Abbott, Mss Gurney and Mrs Whitehead



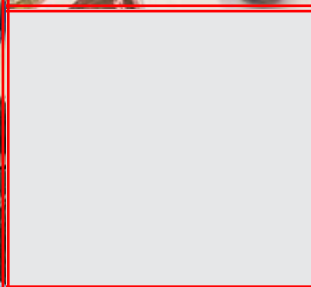
Nursery

We have had a very busy half term enjoying a variety of celebrations alongside our topic People Who Help Us. The children have enjoyed role playing doctors, vets, police officers and firefighters. They have embraced dressing up and mark making within their role play.

Christmas began with the decorating of our Christmas and the home corner being set as the family home at Christmas time. As always with all the lovely creative activities that we do with the children, out comes the glitter! We also have Buddy the Elf getting up to lots of things in the nursery and everyday starts with us finding him and giggling at his antics.

The children loved writing their letters to Father Christmas and they were all so excited to see him and his Elf arrive by helicopter. Very much worth the wait and seeing their little faces. Singing Christmas songs is in full swing, and the children are excited to have the opportunity to perform them along with playing musical instruments and body percussion.

We would like to wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and happy times with family and friends. We look forward to seeing everyone in January 2025.



Castle SEND

PINS



Last Friday we hosted our **second** PINS Parent Group Session. The focus this time was around sensory difficulties and managing challenging behaviour. Thank you to those who attended and to the Somerset Parent Carer Forum for sharing advice and further guidance on the topics.

We recognise that these sessions are not easy for all parents to attend due to work and childcare commitments. With this in mind, we have asked for future sessions to run online. If there are any topics you would like to put forward for discussion, please email the school office so we can ensure these sessions are tailored to the needs of our community. Sessions are open for all parents!

WISE Up Parent Workshops

Being a parent carer of a child or young person with additional needs can bring extra situations which are challenging to know how to handle. To help support parent carers navigate these the Somerset Parent Carer Forum have created a range of workshops based on the subjects from sleep, school avoidance, challenging behaviour, anxiety, ADHD, Autism and lots more. Workshops are both face to face and online. Please follow the link to download the workshop booklet. Workshops are open to all parents; your child does not need to be on the SEND register or have any formal diagnosis.

<https://somerseparentcarerforum.org.uk/home/wise-up-workshops/>



SEND Academy Councilor Update

I'm the SEND Academy Councilor for Castle Primary School. I'm a parent of two children at the school and have been part of the Academy Council for over two years, as a voluntary role. This was formally called the 'Teaching and Learning Committee', and in the days before academies, we were referred to as the 'Governors'. I work as a College Lecturer and I'm an Artist and Photographer. As a parent I enjoy being part of the Academy Council and discovering more about the teaching and learning at Castle.

Last week I met with Mrs Liddell, the Castle Primary School SENCO. We looked at the SEND focus for the year: training and CPD for staff on subject specific scaffolding to support SEND learners and developing the school's provision map for learners. The school are looking at improving parent engagement around SEND, particularly around improving understanding around our SEND systems and processes. I will try and feedback regularly to this newsletter. Looking ahead to next year, I have been invited to support the Trust SEND peer review day in February and planned SEND monitoring cycles.



Carolyn Taylor-Webb



Would you like support with understanding and managing your young persons behaviours of concern?

The Course

- Each weekly session covers a different aspect of understanding and supporting behaviours of concern of children who are autistic and/or have learning disabilities.
- This includes considering sensory and communication needs. Parents and carers start the course by identifying a behaviour, and together we will develop skills using a variety of strategies.
- There is also a focus on parent/carer wellbeing throughout the course.

Further information

- This free course runs for 10 weeks, and the sessions are 2 hours long. Parents need to attend all sessions with the exception of unexpected circumstances i.e. sickness.
- You should live with, or have very frequent contact with your young person.
- The course is for parents/carers of young people with a confirmed diagnosis of Autism and/or learning disability.

Contact Link LD/A for more information

Email: linklda@somersetft.nhs.uk

Phone our Adviceline on:
03003732975
(open Wednesdays 12.30–14.30 and
Fridays 8.00–10.00)



Primary Group starting January 2025



Cabot
Learning
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Our Trust & Academy operate a zero-tolerance stance regarding sexual harassment

a policy which extends to all forms of bullying,
harassment or discrimination in the workplace.

We would like to make all parents and carers
aware that a new mandatory duty to prevent
sexual harassment in the workplace became
effective on the 26 October 2024.

Numerous high-profile cases and campaigns have
highlighted the need for enhanced protection against
sexual harassment at work – and has now been reformed
resulting in a new **Worker Protection (Amendment of
Equality Act 2010) Act 2023**.



The Trust and our Academy have reflected on this important legislation and are now taking further positive, preventative action in this area to respond. This includes:



Staff training



Staff voice
exercises



Reviewing our HR
policy & procedures



Reflecting on any
learning across
the Trust

If we are made aware of any concern, we will always treat these concerns with great importance and act in accordance with our internal procedures. It is our ambition that all of our academies provide a safe, happy and enjoyable space for our colleagues, pupils and visitors.

If you do have a concern of this nature then we have a complaints policy and procedure which you can access via our website.

Attendance Breakdown:

Drogo– 95.80%

Corfe - 93.12%

Totnes - 95.47%

Dunster– 93.20%

Tintagel - 95.65%

School total = 94.64%

Consultation on the Draft Admissions Policies for Castle Primary School 2026/27

Admissions authorities are required to consult on their admission arrangements whenever a change to the arrangements is proposed, or if no changes are proposed, every 7 years. As such the Cabot Learning Federation is consulting on the admissions arrangements for the above school, for students joining from September 2026.

The consultation period will run from 5th December 2024 to 24th January 2025

Castle Primary School is a Primary Academy.

The academy is consulting on various changes including oversubscription criteria and wording to make Policies clear and relevant and aligned with CLF admissions.

A copy of the full draft policy can be found below.

[Admissions Policy](#)

Any comments on or objections to the proposals can be made during the stated period to Elizabeth Tincknell, Head of Governance for the Cabot Learning Federation. The email address for correspondence is Governance@clf.uk or in writing to Elizabeth Tincknell, Federation House, King's Oak Academy, Brook Road, Bristol,