

# Castle Primary School



February 2025

## A message from Steve Morton

Welcome to this term's Castle newsletter. We hope you enjoy all the articles about each class and all the exciting things that we have achieved over the past 7 weeks. It seems only a few days ago that we were returning from our winter break. The scaffolding has become part of our landscape, but the project is on schedule and despite all the extreme weather events of the past 2 months, we are still more watertight than we have been in quite a while. Thank you for your patience and support as we navigate a smaller playground. We can't wait to share with you our newly refreshed inside spaces, post leaks, as the next term unfolds.



As a school community, we strive to instil in our children our school values. One of which is the sense of Courageous Advocacy that goes beyond just participating in charity events. We could not be prouder of Logan and Reuben from Dunster Class in their efforts to raise awareness and donations for Autism Awareness Week. The first 'Great Castle Lego Build Off' has been a resounding success. The children have shared their creativity and design skills with us and all the entrants should be very proud of their submissions. Judging was tricky and we hope that the winners enjoy their prizes. I can't wait to see what our next event will be.

Thank you to all the Mystery Readers who were able to join us last week. The children absolutely loved trying to guess who was going to walk through their classroom door at the end of the day to share a story with them. Rapturous applause and gasps of excitement ensued as they realised who their readers were. We would love to hold the event more frequently. So, if you are keen, willing, and able to join us to read a story to a class for 10 minutes, let us know.

Thank you all for your support over the past term. Please have a restful break and we look forward to welcoming you all back on Tuesday 25th February.

## The Photo of the Week



Mystery Reader afternoon– Drogo



Cabot  
Learning  
Federation

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

## Dates for your Diary

11th February– Safer internet day

11th February– Year 6 Tank Museum trip

13th February– Dunster's Bakes for Bits and Bobs 3.15pm

14th February– Last day of term

24th February– INSET DAY

25th February– First day of term 4

5th March– SATS information session for parents 6pm

6th March– World Book Day

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](http://www.castleprimaryschool.com/759/safeguarding)

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

There is lots of online safety advice on our website, please click on the link to find out more.

[Safeguarding - Castle Primary School](#)

## 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).



## Castle SEND

### Pupil Voice

This week we have been chatting to pupils about what helps them most at school, and what could help them even further. As always, pupils were keen to share their thoughts, and their comments have helped us to consider our next steps for SEND. Below is a summary of their reflections:

#### What's working well?

- Children felt that the adults in their classes know what they find difficult
- Children shared that they enjoyed school and talked about Discovery, Art, Forest School and After School Club as being their favourite lessons
- Children could talk about the strategies and support that help them to learn
- Children could talk about the progress they were making and shared pride in their achievements

#### What could be even better?

- Children wanted to show adults when they felt confident to work independently and have more opportunities to do this.
- Children felt that they needed more ways to share how they are feeling as they recognised how their mental health could impact their learning.

Some mature and insightful reflections!



## PINS Project

On Friday 14th Feb 9-10:30 we have our final PINS Parent Group Session. This session is online as we know some parents were unable to attend in person but felt they may be able to join online. If there is a particular focus you are interested in, please let us know and we can share that with the team. Please follow the link below to join. Two weeks ago, we had a behaviour audit as part of the project offer. During the day we had a behaviour specialist observing behaviour across the school. The feedback was positive and praised our flexible approach that promotes individuality and belief in safe inclusivity. Following on from this, we have a whole school staff CPD session in March to further develop practice across the school.

[Join Teams Meeting 9-10:30 14<sup>th</sup> February](#)

Meeting ID: 365 661 276 312

Passcode: Qn7QB6XG



## SEND Academy Councillor Update



Carolyn Taylor-Webb

This week I met with Mrs Liddell to give my thoughts on the school's new SEND provision map which outlines the SEND provision available for learners at the school. I heard about developments in the tracking and monitoring of interventions across the school and progress towards the school's Teaching and Learning Framework. I was also lucky enough to be involved in a Pupil Panel to gain an insight into how learners feel they are supported best and what would help them even further. The children were very keen to share their thoughts and felt that adults at school knew what they found difficult. They also reflected well on the strategies and supports that help them to learn best. It was particularly interesting to hear them discuss how else they felt they could be supported in school. This pupil voice is then shared with staff to inform planning and provision so that the voice of pupils is at the heart of school development.



### WISE UP WORKSHOPS

Empowering Parent  
Carers to succeed

## Parenting styles that support Neurodiverse children.

**Tuesday 11th February @ 18:30**

**Tuesday 4th March @ 18:30**

**Tuesday 1st April @ 18:30**

We are pleased to be teaming up with Cathrine Everness from Beacon neuro connect to bring you this 3-part workshop

These sessions around Neurodiversity will help you better understand and support neurodivergent members of your family:

- Understanding and navigating neurodiversity
- Managing burnout, masking, and sensory issues
- Supporting children who are struggling in school

We will look at practical tools and approaches to support family life when you have a neurodiverse child.

These sessions are FREE to attend and open to all parent carers in Somerset who have a child with additional needs and/or a disability (no diagnosis is needed)

These workshops are free to attend to book your place please go to:  
<https://somerseparentcarerforum.org.uk> or call 01458 259384



## Inclusive SEND Circus Show

**Saturday 5th April @ 11:00 AM**

We are thrilled to have teamed up with JAY MILLER'S Circus to bring you a fully inclusive SEND show! This performance will be as close as possible to the main shows but with adaptations to ensure it is accessible, enjoyable, and welcoming for our families.

**Who can attend:** This special event is open to all families in Somerset with a child who has additional needs and or disabilities.

**Ticket Information:** We have subsidised the cost of tickets to just £5 per person to make this experience accessible to all.

If you have any questions about the show, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We look forward to welcoming you for a magical, inclusive circus experience 🎪

To book a place please visit:  
<https://somerseparentcarerforum.org.uk/home/events/family-events/>



### Attendance Breakdown:

Drogo– 94.48%

Corfe - 94.30%

Totnes - 94.95%

Dunster– 93.57%

Tintagel - 95.14%

School total = 94.55%

### Drogo

Drogo Class have had a brilliant few weeks since they came back to school in January. We started the new term by finding out about the New Year and making some New Year wishes with our wands. Everyone had some great ideas and we have no doubt that the children will all achieve their resolutions by the end of 2025!

Our new story got off to a brilliant start when the Year Six children acted it out for us. We then took part in a bridge building challenge before learning the story and making a story map. Everyone loved going outside to act out The Three Billy Goats Gruff with their friends and retelling the story using the puppets. Then we changed the characters and made up new reasons to cross the bridge. We took turns to tell the new versions to our friends - hopefully they came home and performed them for you too!

We have ended the term by learning all about the Chinese New Year. It's always fun to try new foods and learn about different cultures! 2025 is the Year of the Snake and we had a great afternoon seeing who could make the longest snake using lots of different resources!

The children have now learnt all of the sounds in phonics and we are consolidating these over the next few weeks and then starting to learn how to read longer words. It's so important to read regularly at home and we now expect everyone to read at least four times a week. We hope you are also enjoying the story books that are sent home each week to share.

Forest school has been a huge success and the children are loving the opportunity to explore the field and play with the loose parts. It's great to see everyone having so much fun and we will continue these regularly for the rest of the year - maybe the sun will make an appearance!

We hope you all have a lovely half term and look forward to seeing everyone after the break.



## Corfe

The post-Christmas blues didn't seem to apply to Corfe Class on the 7th January when they all came back into school raring to go. It was lovely to see everyone looking so happy and confident. They had also seemed to have grown so much taller over the holidays.

The last 5 weeks have been busy. The story of the Elves and the shoemaker has been our stimulus for English sessions. Year 1 have suddenly realised they are amazing writers and are really enjoying the creative side of the process. They are becoming real masters at phonics and we have been really impressed with the progress they are all making. Year 2 are also really starting to shine as writers. They are realising they can even turn the page and keep going!

We can't reiterate enough how important it is that you listen to your child read as well as share books with them. The Castle Reading Ambassadors offer a lovely buddy reading programme with some of the Corfe children. Their delight of having some 1:1 time to share a book, is very noticeable. This week has been National Storytelling Week. It really showed how much the children absolutely love listening to a story. A huge thank you to the parents who gave up their time to be secret readers. What an absolute thrill for the children to see their family member in the chair normally reserved for the teacher! Remember the door to Corfe Class is always open on a Monday after school if you would like to use it to hear your child read or share some of our lovely classroom books together.

Science has focused on materials. Miss Milford, our lovely student teacher, has been doing some practical lessons which the children have really engaged with. We know that material is the matter from which an object is made. We have also found out the properties of materials and developed our vocabulary with words such as absorbent and transparent. We had fun investigating a problem Father Christmas has had for years! All the wrapping paper in his sack keeps getting damaged so we needed to find out the best wrapping paper for the job.

History is always such a fascinating and exciting subject and it is lovely to hear about children going home and telling their families about what they have been learning. We have been comparing the significant and inspiring lives of Emily Davison and Rosa Parks, imagining what inequality must feel like and re-enacting what these remarkable women did to change the world. We are all looking forward to our 'significant people' day on Monday 10th February and meeting many other faces from History. Previous years have seen Henry Ford, Isambard Kingdom Brunel and the lightbulb man (Thomas Edison) walk through the door. Please do let me know if you need any further guidance with this.





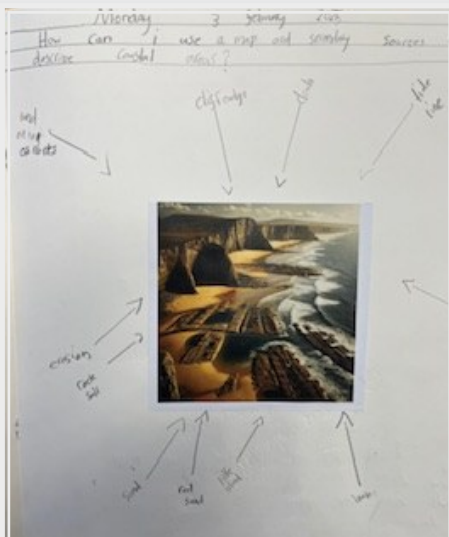
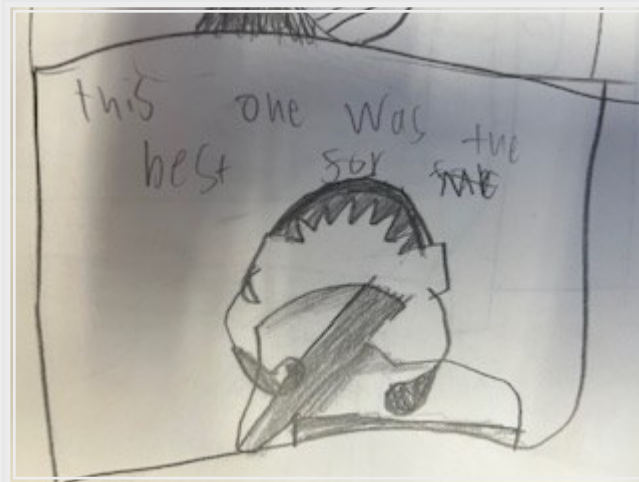
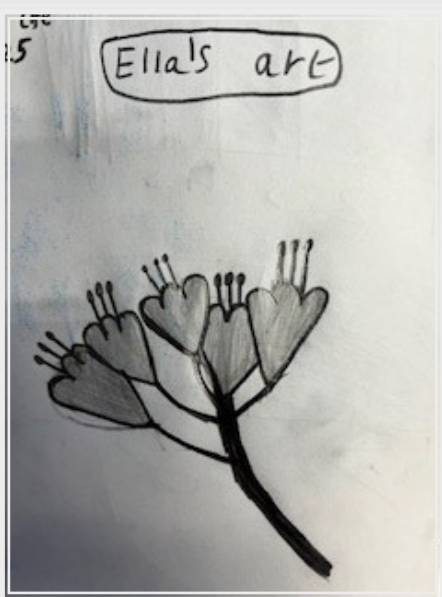
## Totnes

It has been a rather busy term in Totnes. We have really enjoyed becoming geographers and learning about rivers and coastlines. We have identified the physical features and man-made features that make up our coasts and have researched local coastal towns. This has linked really nicely with our English work over the term. We have written non-chronological reports about rivers and are now much more confident to explain the features of the text type and write our own reports. I see a few budding journalists in the future!

In computing we have been learning how to become meteorologists, monitoring the rainfall, temperature and wind speed. We have used this data, along with our learning about how to use PowerPoint as a presentation tool, to create our own weather reports that include us as the presenters. We look forward to sharing our TV debuts with you next term.

In Art we have been learning how to sketch still life objects. We have studied the artist Paul Cezan's paintings and have been working on our own styles based on his. We have been learning which materials are best to draw and shade with. How to hold our pencil to shade and how this effects the finished object. We have even dabbled in 3-D images. We will share our sketch books with you as we work towards our final work next term.

Have a lovely half term break and we look forward to seeing you all next term.



## Dunster

We have enjoyed a great start to 2025 in Dunster Class.

In Maths, we have been working on Position & Direction, getting to grips with coordinates. We have also been working on developing our knowledge of Fractions. Though we've found this unit a little 'fractionous' at times (!), the children have worked really hard and have come on in leaps and bounds in a few short weeks. Whether it's finding equivalent fractions, converting improper fractions to mixed numbers, or adding and subtracting fractions, the children have approached each new challenge with the right attitude, which has been fab.

In Reading, we have been supplementing our learning about the Vikings with some interesting guided texts. We have looked at Norse mythology, the story of Beowulf, and learnt about what the Vikings did in Somerset, as well as about the Saxon King Alfred the Great and his famous hideout in the Levels. More recently, we have learnt about the Legend of Nian to celebrate Chinese New Year, and had some oracy discussions for Children's Mental Health Week. We also welcomed our Mystery Readers – a huge thank you to Mrs Cornelius and our very own Mrs Oliver for volunteering to be the surprise guests this week. In English, we started off looking at non-fiction by focusing on non-chronological reports, otherwise known as information texts. The children really enjoyed finding out about different monsters and creatures from Norse mythology, and used the story of Beowulf to inspire their final piece: a factsheet about our own fictional species to which Grendel belongs, the 'Gothindo'. In the second part of the term, we have turned our attention back to narrative, using the traditional tale of the Three Little Vikings as our inspiration. We will be working on making the story more exciting to read, adding in features of suspense writing to have the reader hanging on the edge of their seat!



The children have really enjoyed becoming historians in our Discovery session this term, learning all about the Saxons and Vikings. We have covered a range of topics within this, ranging from learning what Danegeld was, to creating a board game of Viking facts, to learning about a famous Viking poo in York! It's been great, and we are looking forward to rounding off this great topic with our trip to the Saxon village at Wildwood Devon in March. The term has had many highlights, not least performing the haka in World Dance, becoming World Record Breakers and achieving great successes in our 40-40 times table challenges. We have also enjoyed several trips to Jubilee Woods in Forest School, and started coding and programming Micro:bits in DT and Computing.

Please remember Spelling homework is due in every Friday (at the latest), and ongoing practice on TTRS and Spelling Shed is always a positive use of any screen time at home. The children are getting better at remembering to bring their Reading Records in every Monday to be checked, but please do remind them to record at least 4 home reads every week. Thank you! Dunster Class have worked incredibly hard during Term 3, and they will certainly have earned the rest of the upcoming February break... well done, everyone!

### Team Dunster





## Tintagel



Since January, Tintagel Class has been incredibly busy with a variety of exciting activities and learning experiences!

**Dance Sessions:** Every Monday, we have been learning to dance the Haka with Miss Ackerly. The children have shown great enthusiasm and energy in mastering this powerful dance.

**Literacy:** In our English sessions, we have been exploring "The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden." The children have been learning how to create a real sense of atmosphere in their writing. It is wonderful to see their writing skills and confidence grow. Many of our budding authors have been eagerly reading their work out to the school during assemblies.

**Discovery:** Our current unit on World War Two has captivated the children's interest. They have been deeply engaged in learning about this significant period in history. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has sent in war memorabilia. It has been incredible to learn about your family members' experiences.

**Upcoming Trip:** Next week, we are off to the Tank Museum! The children are very excited about this trip. Please ensure you have given permission for the trip on ParentMail.

**Arithmetic Practice:** As you know, every Monday, Tintagel Class sit a 30-minute arithmetic paper to make exam-style questions less daunting. The progress has been remarkable. In September, our class average was 31.8%, and now, we are comfortably in the 60% bracket. Well done to everyone!

Thank you for your continued support. As always, please contact me on Seesaw if you need anything. I will read your message, even if I don't reply immediately.

Many thanks,

**Mrs. Abbott and Mrs. Whitehead**



## Nursery



Welcome to January 2025. The children have all returned to nursery very happy and settled and we have welcomed new children into our family.

This half term we have been doing a topic on Animals. Our adventures have taken us wide and far and we have visited Antarctica, we had to rescue animals stuck in ice,

the jungle, the desert, and the farm. We have been discussing pets that we have at home and how we look after them.

We had a day discovering all about Australia Day and the animals that live down under.

The children enjoyed jumping up and down and saying good night to Australia. We then visited China and celebrated the Chinese New Year; the year of the snake and we enjoyed having noodles for our snack. We are well travelled.

The children are enthusiastic bird watchers and enjoying being outside listening to the bird song. We are making bird food to encourage more birds into our garden

alongside the squirrels. This is a lovely introduction to being outside in nature and after half term we are very excited to be introducing forest school once a week. Wellies at the ready.



We are very excited to inform you that Guinness World Records has approved our record attempt for the Largest Poetry Lesson. Congratulations to years 5 and 6 who joined around 500 other schools to make this happen!



**OFFICIAL  
ATTEMPT**



**GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ Title Attempt for Largest Poetry Lesson  
(Multiple Venues)**

I want to say a huge, HUGE thank you for EVERYTHING you did to take part in this attempt to break the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ title for Largest Poetry Lesson (Multiple Venues). Whether that was using the teaching resources in class, submitting ideas, voting during the live lesson on Zoom, or watching the lesson on YouTube Live. I could not have done this without you.

Literally.

Trying to break the record for the world's Largest Poetry Lesson would be a total failure if it was just me talking to myself!

Every single person that took part counts – and that includes YOU.

So thank you.

## THANK YOU!

Now that you've taken part in this and helped create a poem that is published on the Children's Poetry Archive and will be published across the UK (including on radio, newspapers and magazines), I hope that you know that:

You are a **POET**.

And I hope that you go on to write and read lots more poems in the future.

Whatever is going on in your life, poetry can be a really useful way of exploring how you feel and what you think, connecting with others, making them laugh – and, in the case of our poem, encouraging others pause and reflect on what's really important in life.

I'm REALLY proud of our poem and I hope you are too.

Thank you.

Laura Mucha

In partnership with

