

Combs Ford Primary School Families' Update

Edition #04

February 2024

Dear Families,

The highlight of January has to be our 40th Anniversary celebrations. The children had a fantastic week working in mixed-age groups and taking part in 12 different activities. They got creative making 40th anniversary party hats, beautiful colourful bunting, writing poetry, and decorating individual tiles which we'll put together as a permanent display. They learnt about, and experienced, the history of board games, playground games, technology, vehicles, music and dance. The children also took part in a history walk around Combs Ford and visited the old school site. The week wasn't all about the past – the children built insect hotels and bird boxes, made seed balls and bird feeders, and putting them up around the site to attract more native wildlife. Everyone took part in the fiendishly difficult "Who's That?!" – trying to work out the member of staff from their primary school photos. All will be revealed in this afternoon's whole school assembly!

Friday saw the whole school on the playground making a huge number 40 which was photographed by Mr Palmer's drone. In the afternoon each year groups had its own 40th Birthday Party and after school we welcomed former and current members of the school for tea and cakes.

I'd like to say a big, "Thank you!" to all the staff for making such a memorable week for the children.

As I write, our Young Voices choir is heading to the O2 where they will join one of the largest children's choir concerts in the world! I'll update you about their adventures in next month's Families' Update.

On the last day of this half term (Friday 16th February) we will have our regular non-uniform day to support this year's chosen charity: [The Rainbow Trust](#).

We thank you for your continued support and are always happy to receive feedback on what you think we're doing well and what you think we need to improve. You can do this by talking to your child's class teacher or TA, speaking to the Senior Leaders on duty before school, or by phoning (01449 613 112) or emailing (admin@combsford.suffolk.sch.uk) the school.

Kathryn Day (Headteacher)

Looking Back...

Vets' Visit to EYFS

Early Years had a lovely visit from Jenni and Phoebe – the veterinary nurses from Stowe Veterinary Group. They got to meet a tortoise and some guinea pigs.



Year 3 – Volcanoes!

Year 3 had an explosive start to the new year by making their own volcanoes! They created their structures, painted them and then exploded them on the playground using a mixture of bicarbonate of soda, vinegar, washing up liquid, water and food colouring.

You can find videos of their exploits on the school's Facebook Page.

If you'd like to try making your own you can find instructions on the Natural History Museum's [How to Make a Volcano](#) website.





News

Bin the Butt!

We have received complaints from our neighbours about cigarette butts being dropped around the boundaries of the school site.

As a school, we support the Bin the [Butt](#) campaign, especially as their research has shown that cigarette butts can take years to breakdown. Worse still they never fully biodegrade and are toxic to the marine environment because cigarette filters are comprised of thousands of chemical ingredients, including arsenic, lead and nicotine, all of which can leak into marine environments. According to studies, just one cigarette butt per litre of water is highly toxic to fish.

Please be considerate – smoking and vaping are not allowed in Combs Ford Primary School buildings, grounds, car parks, or in vehicles parked in the school car park.

Measles

You may have seen news of a measles outbreak in parts of the country. Measles is an infection that spreads very easily and can cause serious problems in some people. Having the MMR vaccine is the best way to prevent it.

You can find out more about [Measles](#) on the NHS website.

Pixie and Dolly – The School Dogs

Over the past 5 months, Pixie and Dolly have become established members of the school staff and really enjoy being in school. They both love treats and Pixie especially loves a belly snuggle! They now have their own web page – [School Dogs](#) – which gives you some information about them and a link to their risk assessment.



Senior Leadership Team (SLT) – Available Before School

There is usually a member of the SLT (Miss Day, Mrs Tanner, Miss Fuller or Mrs Brooks) on the school playground before school to give you the opportunity to speak to someone if you need to.

We are aiming to also have a member of SLT at the front of the school as well from this week.

Safer Internet Day 2024

Safer Internet Day 2024 is on Tuesday 6th February. We will be marking this in school with activities and an assembly. The theme is “Inspiring Change? Making a difference, managing influence and navigating change online.” The UK Safer Internet Centre has created a range of pages to help you talk about these issues and ideas with your child, no matter how much time you have and in an age-appropriate way which you can find on their [Parents and Carers](#) page.

There’s also information to support you on the school’s [Online Safety](#) web page. [Vodafone’s Digital Parenting Website](#) is also full of useful information.

Each app your child uses will have an age rating – you can find out what these are by searching sites like the [NSPCC](#). Most of the well-known social media sites have a minimum age of 13+ years, but you should check the age rating of individual apps to make sure. WhatsApp, for example, has an age rating of 16+. We recommend that children should not have their own Social Media accounts until they reach the minimum age.



Volunteer Readers

We are looking for volunteer readers to hear our children read. You will need to be available on the same afternoon every week and, to comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education, will need to provide two references and agree to undergo criminal record checking (DBS).

Please contact the school office if you’re interested or speak to Miss Day, Mrs Oakley or Miss V.

Attendance Reminder

190 DAYS 100%	183 DAYS 96%	179 DAYS 94%	175 DAYS 92%	More than 18 days absence less than 90%
Very best chance of success	Off to a flying start	Less chance of success	Harder to make progress	Persistent Absentee (Not fair on your child)

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year = less than 30 hours of learning lost

Excellent attendance! These children will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Children will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

95%: 10 days absence a year = 50 hours of learning lost

These children are less likely to achieve their target grades and will start to find it difficult to maintain a habit of attending school regularly. Children who take a 2 week term-time holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

90%: 19 days absence a year = 95 hours of learning lost

The Government classes children in this group as “Persistent Absentees”, and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work and achieve their target grades. Parents of children in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by Suffolk County Council, including the issuing of Penalty Notices and Fines.

More Information

You can find out more about attendance at Combs Ford Primary School on the [Attendance](#) web page and in the [Attendance Policy](#).

Looking Forward...

There's a full calendar of events below, but here are some of the highlights for this month.

<p>World Book Day – Book Swap Shop!</p> <p>This year World Book Day is on 7th March and the theme is 'Read Your Way'.</p> <p>As a school we are planning a whole host of activities and we will write to you again closer to the time with more details. Don't panic – we've decided not to dress up this year!</p> <p>We would like to create a Book Swap Shop in school on the day to give the children the chance to take home a preloved book. If you would like to take part all you need to do is send into school a book during the week beginning 12th February – this will give us time to sort through the books. We ask that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The book is one that your child no longer reads. • The book is one that you're happy to give away. • The book is in a condition that you would be happy to receive. 	<p>Phonics Screening Check Information Sessions</p> <p>In Year One all children across the country have to undertake a Phonics Screening Check in June.</p> <p>Phonics is the foundation for your child becoming a confident reader. By being a confident reader, it will enable them to develop a love of reading for pleasure and will mean that they are able to access the school curriculum fully as they progress through their school years.</p> <p>In order to explain more about this and how you can support your child, Mrs Oakley is holding two information sessions on 7th February – one at 09:00 and the other at 17:30 in the Main Hall. Please through the external side door that leads straight into the main hall and sign in.</p> <p>It would be great to see as many of you there as possible.</p>
<p>Competitions</p> <p>Mrs Ashton has planned a calendar of competitions for the children to take part in during February, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 3 and 4 Basketball Festival (after school on Tuesday 6th February) • Under 11 Basketball Competition (after school on Wednesday 14th February) 	<p>Accelerated Reader</p> <p>We are rolling our Accelerated Reader to our Key Stage 2 children. You can find out more about it by attending one of our drop-ins with Miss V and Mrs Freeman. The next one is for Year 3 and 4 families on Tuesday 6th February at 09:00 in the IT Suite.</p> <p>There is a link to information and the log-in page on the school website: Homework Online Learning Platforms.</p>
<p>Design and Technology Week is coming – look forward to some amazing creations from your children!</p>	<p>Clubs</p> <p>Below are the clubs that are running throughout February. If you have any questions, please contact the school office.</p> <p>Tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 5 and 6 Rhythmic Gymnastics Club (08:30 with Mrs Ashton) • Year 4 Micro:bit Coding Club – after school on a Tuesday with Mrs Freeman. • EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 Dance Club – after school on a Tuesday with Gipping Valley and Thurston School Sports Partnership. <p>Wednesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music for Schools musical instrument tuition takes place on a Wednesday during school hours. • Everyone Active Multi-Sports Club – after school on Wednesday by invitation only. <p>Thursday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Stage 2 Choir – 08:00 on a Thursday with Mrs Tanner and Mr Cole. • Rock Steady Music School takes place on a Thursday during school hours. <p>Friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Stage 2 Dodgeball Club – after school on a Friday with Gipping Valley and Thurston School Sports Partnership.
<p>Bikeability – Year 5</p> <p>Year 5 will be offered Bikeability training in the week after February Half Term – details will follow.</p>	
<p>Whitwell 2024</p> <p>There is a meeting for Year 3 Families on Monday 5th February at 18:00 in the Main Hall to discuss the Year 4 Whitwell visit in September 2024.</p> 	

February Calendar of Events

The calendar is as up-to-date as possible but additional events may be added as the month progresses which will be emailed out to you. If there are any events or activities that you would like more information about please talk to your child's teacher or contact the school office.

				Thursday 01 Feb	Friday 02 Feb
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Stage 2 Choir (08:00 with Mrs Tanner and Mr Cole) Rock Steady Music School Sports Leader Meeting (Mrs Ashton) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole School Celebration Assembly (Mr Wesley) Key Stage 2 Dodgeball Club (After School with Gipping Valley and Thurston School Sports Partnership)
Monday 05 Feb	Tuesday 06 Feb	Wednesday 07 Feb	Thursday 08 Feb	Friday 09 Feb	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 5 Elephants Swimming Whole School assembly – Safer Internet Day (Miss Day) Whitwell Meeting for Year 3 Families (18:00 in the Main Hall) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years 5 and 6 Rhythmic Gymnastics Club (08:30 with Mrs Ashton) Year 3 and 4 Accelerated Reader Families' Drop-In (09:00 in the IT Suite) Year 4 Coding Club with Mrs Freeman (15:30) EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 Dance Club (After School with Gipping Valley and Thurston School Sports Partnership) Year 3 and 4 Basketball Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 5 Bears Swimming Phonics Screening Check Information Session (09:00 and 17:30 with Mrs Oakley in the Main Hall) Music for Schools – Music Tuition Singing Assembly Sports Leader Meeting (15:00 with Mrs Ashton) Everyone Active – Multi-Sports Club (Invitation Only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Stage 2 Choir (08:00 with Mrs Tanner and Mr Cole) Rock Steady Music School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole School Celebration Assembly (Mr Wesley) Key Stage 2 Dodgeball Club (After School with Gipping Valley and Thurston School Sports Partnership) 	
Monday 12 Feb	Tuesday 13 Feb	Wednesday 14 Feb	Thursday 15 Feb	Friday 16 Feb	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and Technology (DT) Week Year 5 Elephants Swimming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and Technology (DT) Week Years 5 and 6 Rhythmic Gymnastics Club (08:30 with Mrs Ashton) Year 4 Coding Club with Mrs Freeman (15:30) EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 Dance Club (After School with Gipping Valley and Thurston School Sports Partnership) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and Technology (DT) Week Year 5 Bears Swimming Music for Schools – Music Tuition School Council Meeting (15:00 with Mrs Oakley in the Library) Singing Assembly Everyone Active – Multi-Sports Club (Invitation Only) Under 11 Basketball Competition with Mrs Ashton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and Technology (DT) Week Key Stage 2 Choir (08:00 with Mrs Tanner and Mr Cole) Rock Steady Music School Sports Leader Meeting (15:00 with Mrs Ashton) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and Technology (DT) Week Non-Uniform Day in Support of The Rainbow Trust Whole School Celebration Assembly (Mr Wesley) Key Stage 2 Dodgeball Club (After School with Gipping Valley and Thurston School Sports Partnership) 	
Monday 19 Feb	Tuesday 16 Jan	Wednesday 17 Jan	Thursday 18 Jan	Friday 19 Jan	
School Closed for February Half Term Holiday	School Closed for February Half Term Holiday	School Closed for February Half Term Holiday	School Closed for February Half Term Holiday	School Closed for February Half Term Holiday	
Monday 26 Feb	Tuesday 27 Feb	Wednesday 28 Feb	Thursday 29 Feb		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 5 Bikeability Year 5 Elephants Swimming Whole School Assembly: Jigsaw #4 – Healthy Me (Mrs Tanner) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 5 Bikeability Years 5 and 6 Rhythmic Gymnastics Club (08:30 with Mrs Ashton) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 5 Bikeability Year 5 Bears Swimming Music for Schools – Music Tuition Singing Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 5 Bikeability Key Stage 2 Choir (08:00 with Mrs Tanner and Mr Cole) Rock Steady Music School 		