



*"I came that you may have life, life in all its fullness" (John 10:10)*

Thursday 3rd April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

### Shining Brightly:

School has been bustling with activities with lots of learning and fun opportunities over the term. Here are some of the highlights of how our wonderful pupils have been shining like stars!



### World Book Week

Spring is coming and World Book Day arrived but here at Ashton Keynes we love World Book Day so much we have made it into a World Book Week with plenty of activities and learning to encourage all children to pick up a good book and have a read!

On the Tuesday we had a series of workshop sessions for all Year groups based on Pinocchio. Each class learnt a dance to go with a specific part of the story. At the end of the day, each class shared their part with the rest of the school and we watched the story of Pinocchio unfold through dance.

On Wednesday, one of our lovely reception parents, Abi, shared her dance skills with the whole school. Abi taught each class a dance to the music of Lion King 'I just can't wait to be King'. They explored how to create the movements of different animals and characters. As well as this, the children got to look at some of the Lion King props used in Abi's dance school. The children loved the whole day, as did the staff!

Thursday was Nursery Rhyme Day and with the sun shining we had a lot of fun with an outside Nursery Rhyme quiz and colouring competition.



We love any excuse to dress up and World Book day is no exception! Finally, on Friday, we had our chance to show off our favourite book characters or to wear our own clothes. The costumes were superb; there are clearly some very creative parents and carers out there, many recycling what they already had which is brilliant as an affordable school!

### New playground equipment

Having finished the new Key Stage 1 playground earlier this year we are thrilled to be getting going on our next step - adventure area for Key Stage 2 children to engage in active play. Designed with School Council's ideas and funded by FOAKS from their many fund-raising events including Bonfire Night. It is now built and we are all very happy and excited! Thank you for making this possible!





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## Young Voices

On 26<sup>th</sup> February 33 children from our school had a brilliant experience singing as part of a choir 5500 strong at Birmingham's BP Pulse Arena in front of an audience of 7000 people, including a lot

of our parents! This amazing event allowed the children to sing with a variety of celebrities including Strictly's Tommy Blaize. A fantastic time was had by all! The children sang their hearts out (and so did the staff) and we all danced our socks off too - it was so brilliant! It was a very long day but we all absolutely loved it! A huge thank you to the staff who kindly gave their time after hours

(and their best dance moves) to ensure the children had this incredible experience. Our light up stars and Mrs. Saville' incredibly bright neon pink coat ensured our parents and carers in the audience could spot our school from a mile off!



## Messy Church (all things creative)

Reverend Shirley came smiling into school on Monday and her heart was full of gratitude. She was beaming whilst telling me about the highly successful Messy Church session on Sunday, which was so well attended at Church. She was, as always, so impressed with our children, their engagement and leadership and of course their respectful behaviour, this always makes me so proud too. I am delighted to hear such a good time was had by all. We will let you know when there is another Messy Church taking place.

We had a beautiful Easter Service at Holy Cross Church on a sunny Tuesday afternoon, it was just perfect. We used this time to think about what we are thankful for and it was incredibly special and peaceful.



## Message from School Council

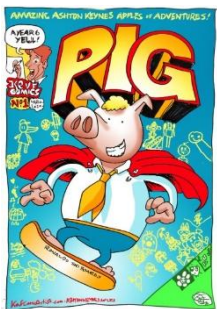
Thank you for taking part in Odd socks day for National Down Syndrome day and Comic relief 2025, buying red noses and dressing down, everyone really enjoyed the day. School council

## Graphic Artist Success

We were delighted to welcome the return of the brilliant graphic artist Kev F Sutherland and his Comic Art Masterclass

to our school. Kev has for many years been an artist drawing for the likes of Beano and Marvell and previously his visit 2 years ago really ignited a spark in our pupils so we had to get him back again!

He inspired the whole school (staff and children!) in his assembly and proved to us all that everybody can draw! Year 5 and 6 had comic book workshops with Kev throughout the rest of the day where they made comics and each had a caricature drawn. Kev even stayed after school to draw caricatures of children and parents to raise money for Red Nose Day. We look forward to welcoming Kev back to our school in the future.







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**World Autism Awareness Day** In school we took some time to think about this and what it means for our school community. We reminded ourselves of why the umbrellas hang from the ceiling in our hall. They are to celebrate neurodiversity and remind us that we are all different and unique and our brains are incredible and this is important in our school.

Highlights from our classes:

## Year R

Class R have had a fun packed couple of terms filled with lots of new learning and exploring. We began by surrounding ourselves with all things wintry and icy cold. The children loved making their very own ice mountain which led our interest into life in Antarctica.

Our learning then turned to traditional tales and the mysterious disappearance of our gingerbread man! Last heard he was walking the mountains of Wales!

The children had great fun retelling the story and then creating their own stories with a unique twist. The Little Red Hen was equally as popular a story and the children loved following a recipe and baking (and eating!) their own bread!

Gaining an insight into the past by learning about castles has been great

fun. We have created our own castles, learnt about life in castles and enjoyed playing with and constructing castle role play. We then delved even further into the past and entered the Jurassic period where we immersed ourselves in all things dinosaur!

And of course, we have been continuing to make great progress in learning to read and write. One way we do this is through our daily phonics lessons and this term we gave our parents the opportunity to join us for a taster lesson. It was lovely to share and celebrate our progress in reading with so many parents and carers.

## Year 1

Since January, Class 1 have been enjoying their learning experiences and have all made amazing progress. We loved sharing our books with our parents when they came for our Stay and Share session.

Our Art days with Mrs. Dyminski were fantastic. We used watercolour paints and black pens to create leopard faces. This linked with our learning about Kenya which was inspired by the book, 'Lila and the secret of rain.' Twice a week we have PE and we practise and develop the skills we need to play different sports. A PE teacher from Kingshill School came to share a sport called curling with us. It was great fun pushing the stones around the hall and trying to get it into the centre of the target.





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In DT this term we found out about how vehicles move using wheels and axles. Creating our very own moving vehicles helped us understand how the mechanism works. Some of our vehicles were a bit wobbly!

Over the term Class 1 have also enjoyed a Yoga session, a cricket taster, Forest school, World Book day workshops and Easter celebrations in Holy Cross Church.

Our term has been rounded off brilliantly by celebrating our learning in our class assembly. We all enjoyed the experience and loved giving you all a glimpse of what we've been up to.



## Year 2



We have read two books with a space theme: Man on the Moon (a Day in the Life of Bob) and Look Up!

We enjoyed a trip to We the Curious in Bristol to learn more about space. The children took part in a space workshop where they had lots of fun building and launching rockets as well as learning lots about what it's like being an astronaut. They also visited the planetarium for a fantastic tour of space and the solar system. The children enjoyed exploring the exhibits – there was so much to see and do!

Recently they have researched the life of astronaut Mae Jemison and written impressive biographies about her. They have also written guides to watching meteor showers and non-chronological reports about what astronauts wear in space and what they eat. They are officially space experts!



The children have been using iPads in computing. They used Scratch Junior to make simple quizzes where the background and sprites changed and most recently have composed music using Chrome Music Lab.



## Year 3

### Ancient Egypt Day



Class 3 were very excited for this day to finally arrive. We were joined by Ali Ball, an Egyptologist, who provided the most engaging day based on all our learning on Ancient Egypt. The children had a go looking at real artefacts, trying on replicas, learning ancient numeracy, mummification, pharaohs, hieroglyphics and we ended our day by making heart scarabs. Ali was very impressed with our knowledge. It was an incredible day and hopefully a day they will all remember!

### Taster sport sessions

Class 3 enjoyed taster sessions in both cricket and curling. They all tried so hard, with some having no prior experience playing these sports. We even had some land on the target in curling!







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## World Book Day

We had a week packed full of activities leading up to World Book Day. This included a Pinocchio and Lion King dance workshop, which were incredible. We ended our week dressing up as a character from a book, and we were very impressed with Class 3's outfits.

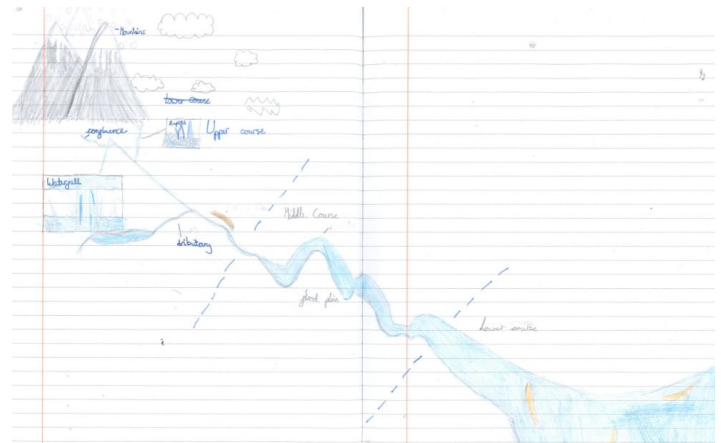
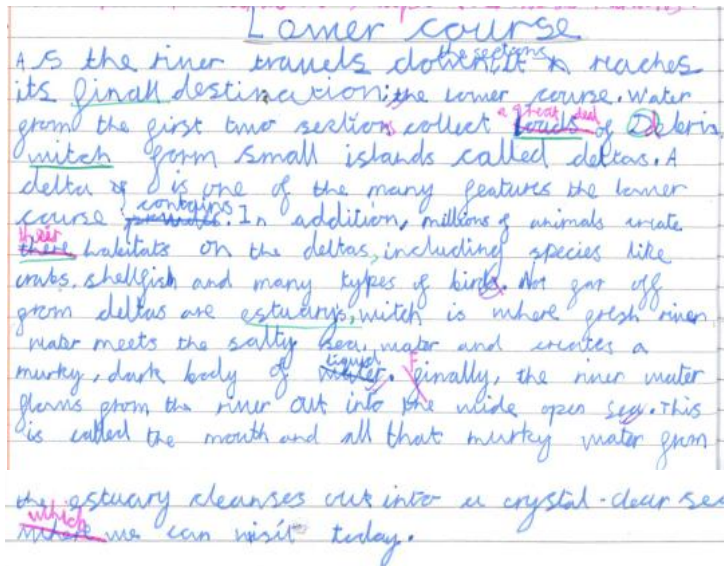
## Art Days

We have had another 2 Art days this term with Mrs Dyminski. This time we were focusing on Pointillism, by looking at the works of Georges Seurat and Paul Signac. We also looked closely at daffodils to create observational drawings. I think you'll agree these pieces of work look excellent.

## Year 4

What a fantastic term we have had in Class 4. In English, we have been inspired by two texts. The first of which was The Bluest of Blues, which inspired the children to research inspirational Victorian women and write biographies detailing their lives and achievements. The second has been Rhythm of the Rain, which follows a river's journey from source to sea. This tied in nicely with their geography unit all about rivers and has inspired two incredible pieces of writing: a letter to Thames Water persuading them to do more to protect our local rivers and an explanation text about rivers. Now the weather is picking up, we are looking forward to getting an opportunity to explore our local river in the village and go on a feature spotting mission.

The children have been working so hard on their presentation and it is really paying off. We have had some beautiful pieces of work across all of our books. The children have been applying their descriptive language to their Geographical factual writing, which is impressive:



We have officially finished all of our number units in Maths and the children are now fraction and decimal experts. They have learned all about tenths and hundredths and have been applying this knowledge in a range of ways including in calculating money. A very important life skill!

We have had some fantastic Forest School sessions and the children have been busy planting seeds ready for Spring and are looking forward to watching them grow.

Once again, the children have proven how thoughtful they are through our RE units. Exploring different opinions from around the world including learning the terms theist, atheist and agnostic and asking some of the big questions that surround the creation of the world. They have been kind and considerate of others while discussing their own beliefs



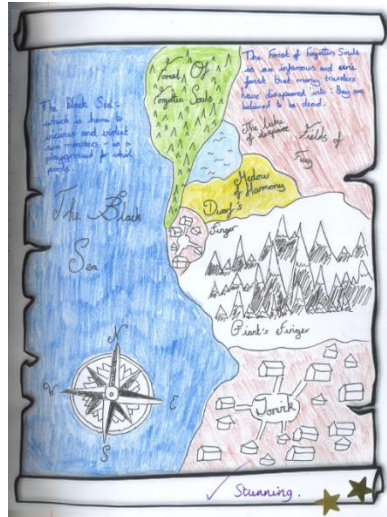
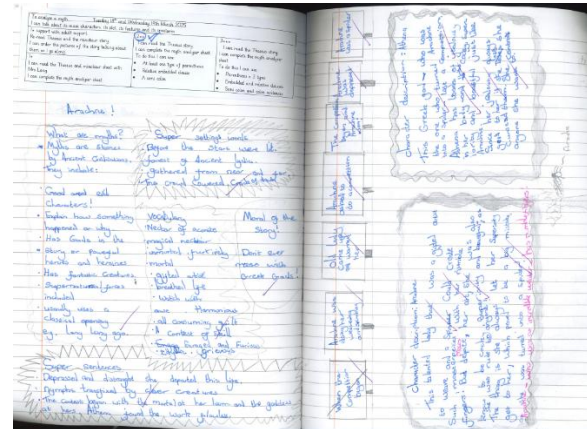
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and showed excellent maturity. As we near Easter, they have also delved further in to the Christianity unit and enjoyed a visit from Reverend Shirley who answered lots of their questions about Holy Communion at Holy Cross Church.

## Year 5

In English we have been reading Beowulf and using the ideas from that story to create our own myths. We started off with having a go at rewriting our own version of the Ancient Greek myth of Arachne. Then we analyzed the structure of other myths. Here are our myth analysers.

We used these to help us understand the structure of myths and then write our own complete with maps of our fantasy worlds.



Year 5 loved our comic workshop with Sutherland. We learnt how to create detailed comic stories and draw our images. It was inspirational! We especially loved the portraits he drew of each of us.

Key



## Year 6

Class 6 have had another great term. The children have been working incredibly hard in all areas of their learning. In English, we have been reading Kensuke's Kingdom by Michael Morpurgo which the children have absolutely loved. On his family voyage, the Peggy Sue – the family yacht - encounters a terrible storm and Michael and his dog Stella Artois are thrown overboard. The pair eventually get washed up on an island known as Kensuke's Kingdom. We designed our own holiday brochures for the island, thinking carefully about possible tourist attractions and our geographical





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knowledge of the Coral Sea and Australia. After reading more of the book, and finding out about a crazy wild man 'Kensuke', his strict island rules and an obvious lack of five-star amenities, we wrote some online customer reviews.

In Geography, we have been learning about Scandinavia and the different climate zones. We have learnt about the different biomes found in Scandinavia and the different human and physical features of Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

The student work includes several pages of handwritten notes and diagrams. Key topics covered include:

- Climate:** Notes on the temperate climate of Denmark, the cold climate of Sweden, and the cold climate of Norway.
- Biomes:** Descriptions of deciduous forests in Denmark, coniferous forests in Sweden, and tundra in Norway.
- Physical Features:** Maps and descriptions of the North Sea, Baltic Sea, and various rivers and lakes.
- Human Features:** Notes on the population, language, and culture of the three countries.

In History this term we have been learning about Ancient Greece. We researched the Battle of Marathon and the clever tactics implanted by the Athenians to defeat the Persians. We then wrote newspaper reports to retell the battle. Have a read below:

The student work shows two newspaper reports. The first is titled "The Athenian Times" and the second is titled "ATHENIAN NEWS". Both reports describe the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC, highlighting the Athenian victory over the Persian army. The reports include headlines, subheadings, and body text, as well as small illustrations and maps.

## Mock Trials

A huge well done to the group of year 6 pupils took part in the Mock Trials at Cirencester Baptist Church. The event, sponsored by the Cirencester Rotary Club, is designed to give children a true taste of what a courtroom is really like and allows them to compete against another school to win the case! Previous to this, all of Year 6 experienced an excellent visit from the Magistrates to further learn about Democracy and the Rule of Law. Then a team of pupils prepared and attended a mock trial against another local school. The children performed admirably and it was evident on the day that they had spent lots of time rehearsing and learning their lines. Although we didn't win our trial, we performed exceptionally well and could only use the evidence that was available to us in the script. We had some great feedback from parents and carers:

Just wanted to say a massive thank you, for going above and beyond to get Ashton Keynes involved in the Mock Trials process.





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*They were all so incredible, and I was brimming with pride. It could have been a daunting experience, but all our kids involved, rose to the challenge! They were clear, loud, confident and concise!  
What a great experience it was for all, and it is these experiences that grow our children.*

### **Easter Competition Entries- Thank you!**

A huge thank you to all children who took part in our FOAKS Easter art competition. All of the entries were brilliant, super thoughtful and it was really hard to judge- they were all winners in my eyes. All children get a special Easter bunny sticker. The KS1 and KS2 winners were announced in Heroes and Heroines, but I had help judging as it was too difficult to choose.

### **Goodbye to Mrs. Drew**

We have been so blessed to have Mrs. Drew on the staff team for over a year now. She has been a real asset to the team, super flexible working with any class and helping us in times when we have had staff illness. She has now relocated back down to the South West and the school bought her a special ornate bird feeder for her new garden, which she loves. I am sure you will join me in thanking her and wishing her every happiness.

### **25<sup>th</sup> Celebration of Ashton Keynes Millennium Green**

Our children helped to plant the bluebell bulbs and now there is a special chance to see them in bloom. On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2-4pm, there will be a guided walk at 2pm and 3pm through the woodland starting from Bradstone Pavillion. All free and dogs on lead welcome. They are even serving tea and coffee for free. So, if you are available, do please pop down and enjoy!

### **AK Music Festival and AKPS FOAKS Fete – SAVE THE DATES!**

For your diaries, our school are hosting two special events in June and July. AK village music festival is running from Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June and over the weekend (on AK grounds) and FOAKS AKPS fete on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July. More information to follow, for now please save the dates. Both will be excellent musical and fun community events to look forward to.

May I take this opportunity, on behalf of the school team, to wish you all a restful Easter and thank you all for your continued support. I love this school and I am incredibly proud and thankful to be Headteacher. I hope the sun shines for us all and we can return rested and ready for a fabulous Summer term. We look forward to welcoming you all back to school on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 8.45am.

Best wishes,

*Mrs Saville*

*All dates for the year are on the calendar on the school website on [www.akps.org.uk](http://www.akps.org.uk) to help you plan ahead. All newsletters and annual overviews have been sent to parents and carers but can also be found on class pages of our website.*