

# LINK ACADEMY TRUST EASTER 2024 NEWSLETTER



## *A Happy Easter to All*

FROM NICKY DUNFORD  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Parents and Carers,

The sun has come out just as I am starting to write this after what seems like months of grey rain! Let's hope spring gets a move on and we can start to really get out and about. Although looking at what has happened in our schools this term it would seem that the dreary weather has not stopped anything, in fact it feels as if we are now back into the 'normal' Link Academy groove and shaking off the pandemic impact!

It has been a busy term in other ways as well as we welcome Littleham CofE primary school into the Trust on 1st April. This school has been working with us since the start of the year and will be part of the East Devon Hub that will be established and operating in this part of Devon in the same way as the Link currently functions. We are excited about this development as we continue to focus on supporting small schools to operate effectively within their communities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Central Support Team that the Deputy CEO, Matt Matthew oversees. They work behind the scenes managing finance, dealing with all personnel actions as well as the wellbeing of all our staff, catering, cleaning and all the estates and maintenance work, and health and safety including compliance.

I know the finance team - Louisa, Michelle, Caroline and Kylie have been flat out as we get next years budgets in and have to try and make the money stretch to do all we want it to! They also have a big job to do when integrating new schools to ensure all the individual budgets are viable with what each school wants to achieve. 'Super' Sue our HR Operations Manager does an amazing job of maintaining all personnel records, completing the ever-growing payroll and still manages to ensure the wellbeing of staff is at the forefront of all we aim to do. Linda, as Kitchen Manager has a very important job - keeping us, staff and pupils, all well fed and does an amazing job of this, we are finally preparing the meals for all but 2 schools and we are working towards all schools.

The Estates maintenance work is brilliantly undertaken by Will and his white van full of tools who spends the week going around to ensure our sites are safe and tidy. Since he has been going around to all schools, we have had a much more effective service that sorts out issues before they become a problem- Will is invaluable! Our Estates work is now led by Claire from Yeoford- she keeps all the compliance work up to date as well as planning Will's schedule and has agreed to support some of the aspects of the Building Projects. They are an amazing team that allow our Academy Heads to focus on their work and the provision of excellent education for the pupils. A Massive Easter thank you!!!!

Last year we had an excellent, successful round of Condition Improvement Fund bids that saw 5 major projects completed across the Trust amounting to £1.2 million, so we really thought that this year we would not be considered for anymore. To the contrary, we have been approved for a new roof at Harbertonford and Fire Safety/ Electrical upgrades at Wolborough and Widecombe in the Moor which amount to £860,000 worth of improvements! Our schools continue to improve in their condition and the effectiveness of the learning environments, and we are really proud of this.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a great Easter break, and thank you for all the support you have given our schools. Please read all the amazing things that are happening in our schools- they are such a credit to the Trust and provide the pupils and families with such creative learning opportunities in every single school.

Happy Easter Everyone!

Nicky



## Bearnes Primary School



It's been a busy term full of encouraging change here at Bearnes. As always, the children have shown resilience and embraced every new opportunity with enthusiasm and determination. In January, we began our collaboration with Wolborough Primary School. This partnership has enabled us to share resources, knowledge, opportunities and best practice and it is already having a positive impact for our children, families and staff. We have continued our work with the Restoring Stover Project. All classes have visited the Courtenay Centre to help clear the outdoor space after the winter and prepare the area ready for planting. This involvement will continue over the summer and the children will be taking care and watering the tree saplings until they're strong enough to be replanted at Stover Country Park. We have re-established our link with the Avenue Church this term. All classes have taken part in an Easter story crafting session at the church, hosted by Reverend Gill and her trusty team of volunteers. The children were also treated to a little chocolate surprise!

Our World Explorer Days this term have seen us "visit" Nigeria and Thailand. All classes participated in a variety of activities such as; dancing, food tasting and art. Science Week was also a huge success with the children enjoying lots of wonderful experiments, all relating to the 'time' theme. Rainbow making, timers, DNA extraction and challenges with ice - the children all put their scientific minds to the test! This half term, all classes have participated in weekly martial arts sessions with Richard Kelly. The sessions are aimed at building confidence, fitness, discipline and self-control and the children have thoroughly enjoyed each session he has delivered. From everyone here at Bearnes, we hope you have a wonderful Easter.

## Broadhempston Primary School



The term has been incredibly busy with class assemblies allowing the children to share their learning with parents. It's great to see such confidence from EYFS sharing their learning about space (and launching rockets) all the way up to Year 5/6 taking us back to the war years and yes ... they did sing The White Cliffs of Dover! There were potions and a lot of commotion during Science Week thanks to Ruth from Devon Science. After a whole school assembly and the exciting elephants' toothpaste, each class had their own workshops investigating the wows and wonders of chemistry - the slime was a firm favourite! Forest School continues to feature every 6 weeks and has a significant impact on our children's ability to problem solve, work collaboratively, learn about the natural environment, use tools safely and most importantly have fun! Our Eco Committee is aiming for the Green Flag award again this year and in conjunction with Super Kind, the children organised a 'bring and buy' sale raising £235 for the charity Action for Hunger. They are also driving forward with environmental care days regularly borrowing

school litter picking equipment to keep their local environment clean and tidy. Mrs Cleverley also ensured they joined the Big Plastic Count and we were shocked at how much plastic cannot be recycled ... the mission begins to rid our lunch boxes of plastic! Pupil voice continues to make a big difference to the projects we undertake. The term will end with an Easter Egg Hunt in the Community Orchard and an Easter Garden display in the church. Phew!



## Cheriton Bishop Primary School



What a busy term we have had at our school. The children have been working extremely hard and have been enjoying their new topics. There was a multi skills event for Key stage 1 and hockey and netball tournament along with a local swimming gala for Key stage 2. The pupils tried their best in all the events and some surprised themselves with what they achieved. The whole school including preschool had a visit from Animals 2U South West and the children learned about habitats, life cycles and animal care - Flo the Ferret was a big hit! World Book Day was full of excitement as we held a readathon - children from across the school did continuous reading for the whole school day. The children had some great costumes, well done everyone.

The year 5 and 6 learned some key life skills during Bikeability and can now negotiate cycling on the road safely. The Preschool say a fond farewell to Jill Mercer from Pre School who has spent many years dedicating herself to the preschool children of Cheriton Bishop. We wish her well in

her next step. We had a very positive Parents Forum and the term ended with an Easter Service with children from across the school singing and acting out the Easter story. Have a great Easter break everyone!

## Diptford CofE Primary School



We cannot believe that we have come to the end of the Spring term already and what a busy time it has been as we start to settle into our wonderful new building. Classes have enjoyed visiting Ireland and Wales during our World Explorer Days, taken part in the NSPCC workshops exploring how to keep safe and enjoyed a range of different reading themed activities during World Book Day. Many of our pupils have also enjoyed attending Trust wide sporting events such as the hockey tournament at Paignton Academy and the badminton and inclusion games at Keviccs with more events planned for every pupil in the Summer term. Next term, we have many enrichment opportunities planned including a drumming workshop for the whole school, residential for key stage two, the end of year school performance and outdoor and adventurous trips for each class. We are also looking forward to the redevelopment of our forest school area with plans for the new outdoor shelter to be ready for the children to enjoy early next term. A huge thank you to our FODS for raising the

funds to support us with this project. Thank you to all who were able to join us at our traditional Easter Service on Wednesday where our pupils really shone; it was a wonderful way to finish the term. May you have a wonderful Easter break.



## Drake's CofE Primary School



We had a fabulous start to the term as we received our SIAMs, from our inspection before Christmas. The report is full of wonderful comments:

*'Pupils are confident and articulate',  
'It has a strong and loving ethos with older pupils constantly caring for and looking out for their younger peers. Parents rightly value the way in which the safety and happiness of their children is the highest priority of the staff. This is because of the commitment of leaders and teachers to their Christian vision and values.'*

The children's Ethos group have been tidying the school grounds along with the village and were given litter pickers by the local Lion's Club. They were also involved in setting competitions for Red Nose Day and World Book Day. Every Thursday, (moving to Tuesday after Easter) the school holds a Parent and Toddler group from 9:30 to 11:00am. The children get to take part in a range of activities including; messy play, riding bikes, role play and much more. Come along for some fun, play and a warm welcome.

The term ended with a fabulous Easter Service followed by our traditional Easter bonnet parade supported and judged by Budleigh Lions Club. We hope you all have a fabulous Easter break.

## Harbertonford CofE Primary School



Thanks to support from our PTFA we have had some fabulous music opportunities this term including another drumming day and a visit from Kip spent composing. They have been busy raising more funds with a highly successful bingo night and a village quiz. We'd like to thank them for all they do to enrich our curriculum. All the classes have cooked this term, with Falcons making quiches for this term's community tea. All the visitors were very complimentary and several of the children tried quiche for the first time. Eagles recently had the opportunity to take part in a visit and workshop run by the Totnes renewable Energy Society that linked really well with our Global Citizenship day back in February when the whole school explored ideas about affordable, clean energy. Rev. David continues to support our Collective Worship every week, one of the most memorable ones this term being retelling the Easter story using road signs. The Open the Book team have been focusing on stories from the New Testament- the children really look forward to the opportunity to take

part in the dramatisations. We have ended the term with an art morning exploring peace in response to some of the events that are taking place in the world at the moment. We hope to be able to display some of the beautiful pieces the children have created for parents to enjoy after our Easter Service. Everyone at Harbertonford wishes you a restful and enjoyable Easter break.



## Hennock Primary School



Spring term has seen Hennock School get out and about in the community. Willows class visited one of our local farms where they fed lambs and met many different farm animals. Birch class prepared and served food at the regular Soup and Puds lunch at the Village Hall. They also chatted to the attendees and learnt lots about how life used to be at the school. They liked the idea of the swimming pool which used to be in the playground, but not so much when they learned that it was the children's job to clean it out. We have also had a lot of visitors in school this term. We had a representative from Cultural Champions in Exeter who ran workshops with all our classes exploring the life of a Hindu family in Devon. The Dogs Trust also ran workshops with each class. During Science Week we had a series of parents come in to school to talk to us about their life in science. This term has also featured a fair amount of dressing up, for World Book Day, Viking Day and Ancient Greece Day. Sporting events have once again been a highlight of the term including the recent Moorland Hockey Festival. As ever our PTFA have been very active, and we will finish this term with the annual PTFA Easter Fair.

## Ilington CofE Primary School



It's been a busy Spring Term at Ilington, the children have done lots of enjoyable learning on topics including earthquakes, Arctic animals, the Trojans and the heart, where Owlacombe even did some dissection! They have taken part in a number of sports events and activities with one of the main highlights having been Owlacombe taking part in the Body Language dance festival at South Dartmoor Community College. During the course of the day, the children took part in a singing workshop to prepare for the finale, an art activity to decorate the hall and a technical rehearsal on the stage. They then did two performances, both of which were brilliant. The buzz that the children got from performing on stage to a real audience was palpable.

In music, Kip was back in school for the first half term and the children focussed on composing, they chose instruments that they wanted to use and were really proud of their compositions.

Middlecott went on a trip to Grimspound and Merrivale, here they were able to imagine what life might have been like for people living in the Bronze age.

Finally, as a lovely end to the term, this week we have installed a hedgehog house to our field. We hope that this will soon attract a hedgehog or two, Honeywell and Foxgloves were very excited for this to be part of their outdoor learning and we are sure that they will keep a close eye on our new addition and let us know of any prickly activity!



## Landscape CofE Primary School



The term has been super busy – opportunities and experiences have been many, from cooking pizzas at Occombe to visiting a mosque, and in science week setting Mr A on fire (in a safe way!); there has been much to learn! We were thrilled to be able to introduce forest school days at the Broadhempston Community Woodland this term. Working alongside the Outdoors Group, we have enabled some great experiential, hands on learning. Our Global Neighbours project continues with whole school actions in place – from song machine supporting community markets to the Big Plastic Count which aims to generate a national picture of plastic waste to demonstrate the scale of the problem. Our Ethos Group have also met with a representative from Christian Engineers in Development - a charity that offers professional engineering support to people in rural areas of the developing world with the main focus of providing clean drinking water. Carrying ten litres of water a few steps was hard enough. We imagined lifting the container on our heads and walking a considerable distance

barefoot across rough terrain in blazing heat. The children have shared their learning with the rest of the school and have created an action plan to support this charity. The term has been brought to a close with our annual Mothering Friday service – to celebrate all those who ‘Mother’ us with heart-warming stories and songs, and this week we will hold our Easter in a day celebration – offering fun and learning to all. Busy, but great!

## Littleham CofE Primary School



While we officially join the Link Academy Trust on the 1st of April (no joke!), our management partnership has meant Littleham have already got a flavour of what to expect when we join fully. There have been many highlights this term. Littleham's first 'Love My School Day' was a real success and that was well supported by Nicky, Matt and particularly Will with his array of tools! World Book Day was also brilliant - particularly 'The Mad Hatter's Tea Party', which was very well attended from across the Littleham community. The PTFA have been working absolute wonders raising much needed funds. These funds combined with the successful applications by the school to numerous charities will mean the pupils can have a replacement trim trail, further upgrades to other outdoor spaces and the library. If I was to pick one highlight, however, it would be the visit of Acting Bishop of Exeter: Jackie Searle. Since September, the school has worked hard at developing a new vision and it was fantastic to listen to the children talk so clearly about how our vision of growing greatness from small beginnings links

to The Parable of the Mustard Seed. I know I can speak for the Littleham team when I say that we look forward to working with the Link from the Summer term. I hope everyone has a good Easter break.



## Morchar Bishop CofE Primary School



We have had an amazing term at Morchar Bishop! There have been lots of incredible experiences for the children, from sporting events to family services at St Mary's Church. We have had a particular focus on reading and the development of our school environments to support children in developing a love of books. The biggest of these being the redevelopment of our library space. We have had brand new, purpose built bookshelves fitted, freestanding tree shelves and a hand built tree made using old books as the trunk to create a real wow factor as you climb the stairs to the library. Our Friends Of Morchar Bishop School (FOMBS) group have made a significant financial contribution of over £2500 to this project and we are all extremely grateful for all of their hard work and ongoing support. To officially open the new library, we welcomed Exeter City Club Captain, Pierce Sweeney to cut the ribbon. It was a fantastic event and the children were really inspired by Pierce which has really helped to reinforce how important reading is for our children. The open event was followed by a day of celebration where the

children dressed as their favourite book character to mark World Book Day. It was great to see the children so passionate about their favourite books, authors and series. We are looking forward to continuing to see the signs of Spring around our school grounds as we head towards an action packed Summer term!

## Moretonhampstead Primary School



It's been a busy term at Moretonhampstead school with lots going on in the classrooms and out and about! We have been learning more about how to keep ourselves safe. The whole school took part in the NSPCC 'Speak out and stay safe' programme and we also enjoyed a visit from the Dog's Trust. We also took part in Internet Safety day. Little Tots have been going on regular welly walks, visits have included a trip 'Green Shoes' to find out how shoes are made. It is great for our youngest children to get to know their community really well.

The school had a 'Ground's Work Day'. This was a community event attended by our families and community volunteers such as 'Men in Sheds'. Our raised beds were rebuilt, areas tidied (lots of strimming, weeding, painting and power washing) and there was also plenty of tea and cake. Many thanks to all involved.

Our Y3/4 children enjoyed a day at 'Spirit of Adventure' near Dartmouth. On the day they enjoyed a woodland walk, making pizzas which we cooked in a woodfire oven and a very exciting high level zip wire! There was also lots

of time to play and enjoy the outdoors. World Book Day was a great event, promoting the joy of reading. We also had lots of fun with a parade of costumes and an after school disco organised by our FOMS group! Many thanks to them.

At the time of writing, our Year 6 children have headed off to Skern Lodge for their residential, our year 5s are taking part in Bikeability and everyone else is preparing for our Easter assembly. A very exciting and busy end to the term!



## Otterton CofE Primary School



What a fantastic Spring term we have had at Otterton CofE Primary School. There have been so many highlights and lots of achievements celebrated along the way. The Year 5 and 6 children were invited to sing a commissioned song for the opening ceremony of the Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP). This is an ongoing project that Otterton school have been involved with at various points along the way, so to listen to the children perform was a real joy. Otters Class, as part of their science learning on animals, have visited the sheep and alpacas at Pynes Farm. They enjoyed learning about these fantastic animals and then spotted various wildlife and habitats on the walk back to school. This linked with some farming live lessons, made for some wonderful learning opportunities for our key stage one children. World Book Day this term, brought with it interesting costumes, fantastic book choices and another well supported book swap! The children have shown support by fundraising on Red Nose Day and by holding a 'go yellow day' for Marie Curie. Heron class had a wonderful

afternoon pretending to live under the Shang Dynasty as part of their history learning. They dressed up in traditional clothes and sampled Chinese food! Otterton pupil ethos group have continued to strive as agents of change, with our vision of 'Growing Stronger Together' at the forefront of their efforts. They emphasise that even small changes can make a difference when carried out together, taking it in turns to take on Village litter picks with our newly donated litter pickers. We were thrilled to have bird boxes, a hedgehog house and a bee hotel donated by the Otter Valley Association. These are in place and we're eagerly awaiting some new tenants.

## Sparkwell Primary School



This week classes have made a visit to the village church where the vicar talked to them about Easter and why it is important to Christians. The children asked some very interesting questions and listened respectfully. All classes are enjoying looking for early signs of Spring in Forest School sessions, especially the arrival of wild garlic as this means making our own garlic butter to go on toast we made over the fire. Yum! We have been enjoying developing further collaboration with our local Nursery, in science week our subject ambassadors went to do some simple science sessions with the children. On World Book Day some of our Year 5 went to read stories and they are joining our Reception class for forest school sessions and EYFS are going there to share stories and time to play. We have worked with musicians Kip and Elfyn on a project to compose and perform our own songs for science week and we enjoyed sharing these with each other and our parents. Lastly, we enjoyed sharing perspectives on different ways our brains might work in neurodiversity week and

welcomed several parents who were willing to come in and talk about their ADHD/Autism/Dyslexia.



## Stoke Gabriel Primary School



Throughout the Spring term we have taken part in some brilliant events to enhance our learning and we have also been busy planning a busy schedule for the Summer term! We celebrated World Book Day with a variety of activities and some brilliant costumes from everyone! We took part in paired reading across the school and during our whole school assembly we used our oracy skills to discuss a number of questions about book characters and settings. We used stem sentences to form our answers and to present our views. This half term our International Day took a different angle, and we had the opportunity to explore what is meant by the term 'world views' and have considered our own world view. All of these ideas are now showcased in the corridor and this has inspired some brilliant discussions. During British Science Week we explored the theme of 'smashing stereotypes' and we have been looking at a range of inspiring scientists and the diversity of people and careers in science. We will be learning about a difference scientist each month to continue this theme.

Our school council have been incredibly busy and planned a successful Red Nose Day and raised £185 for Comic Relief- well done. A huge thank you to FOSS for organising the return of the Wassail celebration which raised a staggering £2,400 for the school. We hope you all enjoy your Easter break!

## Tedburn St Mary Primary School



The Spring term has seen lots amazing learning going on in all classes with the children enjoying some super opportunities to support their work in class. Our World Explorer days have been great, with the children visiting China and South Africa and learning about what life is like in these countries and their traditions and culture. As well as this the children have had lots of opportunity to represent the school at Sporting events, including KS1 Multi skills at QE and Hockey at Crediton, with our Y3/4 coming out as winners. Willow class loved their visit to the farm and Y5/6 all successfully passed their bikeability. Our Values champions awards have been introduced this term and lots of children picked out for demonstrating our school values. Lots of fun has been had along the way this term too, with World Book Day, Red Nose day, with all the children dressing up as teachers and our Easter celebrations. We thank our FOTSMS who have helped develop our reading for pleasure library in each class, who now have some amazing books to choose from. Have a lovely Easter break and we look forward to the summer being just as exciting!



## Widcombe-in-the-Moor Primary School



Spring has sprung in Widcombe! The daffodils are now brightening our mood with their golden glow and the children in Reception, along with our new starters, are preparing to visit our local Blackaton Farm to experience the birth of a spring lamb as part of our 'Five Star Pledge'. A treasured and unforgettable moment! We've continued to learn outdoors in our forest school setting where children have been making bird feeders for around school, have become soil detectives and have mastered the art of identifying winter trees. Upper Dart completed another one of our pledges this half-term as they performed a polished dance performance on stage at South Dartmoor - what a show it was! Along with Lower Dart, they were inspired by seeing the Symphony Orchestra in The Great Hall at Exeter University.

There has been a two-wheeled theme to this half term as year 5 completed their Bikeability training and are now safer cycling on the roads, we teamed together with Decoy BMX Club to provide our children with weekly coaching sessions

on their impressive track and we have taken delivery of our new balance bikes just in time for Cherry Brook's stride to ride sessions in the summer term. World book day at Widcombe was celebrated in style as the children shared their love of reading, made an incredible effort with their costumes and thoroughly enjoyed the top titles scavenger hunt. What a packed term of learning we've had. Summer term, here we come!

## Wolborough CofE Primary School



There's been a buzz of excitement for our children in Reception and Nursery who have had the delightful task of helping to hatch some beautiful ducklings. They have been mesmerised by the lovely little creatures (the children enjoyed meeting the ducklings too). Meanwhile, Year 6 embarked on a unique collaboration with a local photographer for a community exhibition. This initiative provided students with an amazing opportunity to explore the art of photography and showcase their creativity to the community. The exhibition, led by photographer Chris Chapman, was displayed at the Newton Abbot Museum. Early on in the term the whole school had great fun watching and running in our annual pancake races. We were delighted to welcome some children, staff and parents from Bearnese school who came and joined us. For World Book Day staff members brought the magic of books to life by transforming into beloved book characters for "The Masked Reader." The entertaining event had the children guessing the identities of the disguised staff, adding an

element of fun and mystery to the school day. In the realm of sports, our talented gymnasts shone at the Dartmoor SSP Gymnastics competition. All of the children were brilliant and two of our team clinched spots in the finals, with the opportunity to represent our school at the Devon County final - a fantastic achievement showcasing their hard work and dedication. The school's dance club wowed audiences with a spectacular performance themed "Under the Sea" at the Let's Dance 2024 event. The enthusiasm and passion of the young dancers were evident in every move; it was absolutely joyful!



## Yeoford Primary School



This term at Yeoford Primary, we welcomed our local MP, Mel Stride, following the triumph of one of our students in his Christmas Card design competition. Our school came alive with the presence of exotic animals, including mesmerizing lizards and daring snakes, providing our students with a hands-on opportunity to explore the wonders of the animal kingdom. A captivating trip to the Air Arm Museum ignited curiosity and fascination among our students, linking with their WW2 topic, as they delved into the history and innovation of aviation. Storyteller Day was a highlight, where imaginations soared and tales came to life, focussing on the art of storytelling with our students. We've been incredibly sporty this term with a badminton tournament and multi-skills sports event, where our students showcased their prowess and camaraderie. Equally, we experienced a thrilling triumph as our students stole top three sports in various events at the Swimming Gala, proving their mettle against larger neighbouring schools and bringing glory to Yeoford Primary.

The importance of safeguarding was emphasized through NSPCC workshops, empowering our students with knowledge and awareness. Exploring the treasures of history, our students embarked on a memorable trip to Torquay Museum, where they unearthed ancient artifacts and marvelled at the stories of the past, making links to their Ancient Egyptians topic. Science Day sparked curiosity and wonder, with students holding various experiments and investigations. World Book Day was a joyous celebration of literature, as our students immersed themselves in the enchanting worlds of their favourite books through different workshops and a visit from the local 'Bookery'. Sportsmanship prevailed once again during netball and hockey tournaments, where our students displayed skill, determination, and teamwork. Adventure awaited Year 5 and Year 6 students at Beam House during their residential trip, where memories were made, challenges were conquered, and friendships were forged. This term has been truly jam-packed with both fun and learning; next term is shaping up to be more of the same!

