



Festive Fun for All



We've reached the end of another year – and what an unprecedented one it's been! Despite everything however, it is now the time to dust off the donkey costume, put up some tinsel, and enjoy the Christmas festivities as best we can in line with the current restrictions.

This means nativity plays, Christmas lunches, festive jumpers, and much, much more. To keep up with all the exciting activities going on in schools we have a bumper issue lined up for you this term, full of photos and stories of what everyone's been up to.

This term isn't of course all about Christmas, and there have been lots of other lovely developments in school which we are keen to share with you; from sailing success, to virtual music making the Wessex Learning Trust once again delivers variety, excitement, and exceptional learning to every child in our care.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter, and before you read on we'd also take this time to wish you and your family all a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe new year from everyone at the Trust! Let's hope 2021 will be a good one.



Left: A special visitor at Cheddar First School on the last day of Term

Name that Dragon!

This term the Wessex Learning Trust introduced a new mascot for its pre-schools – a fine looking dragon (pictured right) designed by former student Jess Blacklock. The only issue was the poor dragon was without a name. Fortunately, children across the Trust rose to the challenge of finding something suitable through a competition which ran in the last few weeks of this term. Safe to say, our learners didn't disappoint, with over



200 entries being received. The winner will be announced in January 2021 and we can't wait to share it with you!

The Trust Joins Instagram



Earlier this term the Trust joined Instagram with a view to providing more opportunities to communicate with parents and share the exciting things that are happening in our schools. The platform joins our pages on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as we continue to strive to be a modern Trust that embraces technology. We would love to see lots of parents joining us online so as to stay up to date with all that is going on. If you are interested, you can follow us [@wessexlearningtrust](https://www.instagram.com/wessexlearningtrust)

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Chief Executive's Message

As we reach the end of what has been the most unconventional of years, I want to take this time to thank all of our staff, learners and parents who have shown such incredible resolve - despite everything that has been thrown in their way. They have kept the wheels of education turning in these hardest of circumstances, adapting to new methods of working and learning, and continuing to maintain the Wessex ethos of an outstanding education for everyone. I am incredibly proud of what we have been able to achieve, and hope that as 2020 draws to a close you will all be able to enjoy some well-earned downtime over the Christmas break.

Looking forward to what will hopefully be a better 2021, I am very excited to be welcoming Nailsea Secondary School to the Wessex family, as they join the Trust on January 1st. This exciting partnership will help to further expand our expertise through collaborations with their staff and opportunities to share knowledge and experience for the benefit of all our children. I also look forward to welcoming Tamara Dexter into the role of Headteacher at Cheddar First School when we return in January, and want to take this chance to thank Suzi Smith for her exceptional work as Acting Headteacher over the last few months.

Going into the new year we will also continue to work hard to provide the exceptional education you would come to expect from the Wessex Learning Trust, and rest assured that whatever 2021 throws at us, we will continue to rise to the challenge.

Stay safe, have a wonderful Christmas, and I shall look forward to seeing you next year!

Students Raise the Roof with Virtual Brass Band



With COVID-19 still meaning that rehearsals for the Cheddar Valley Music Club Brass Band have been unable to go ahead, once again the group's intrepid members (made up mostly of Trust students) decided to keep the music making alive with a second virtual recording, following on from the success of their previous endeavor during the first national lockdown. This time round the band, led by Anne Higgs, decided to bring some Christmas joy with an exciting festive medley including pieces such as Jingle Bells and Away in a Manger. All involved thoroughly enjoyed taking part, and we think you'd agree that the end product is something they should be very proud of! The video also coincides with the music club's 40th anniversary so serves as a fitting celebration of this incredible milestone. You can watch the video [here](#)



An Update from the Leisure Centre



It has been a busy term at Kings Fitness and Leisure, with November seeing the opening of their brand new, state of the art extension. This new facility expands the center to include a further two new fitness studios, a larger beauty suite, a new reception, and renovated office facilities. The extension means that the center will continue to be able to support the needs of its members, as well as to offer new activities in the future.

Further to this, the center has also received two new, touchless water dispensers which will help move the facility towards a plastic free future. Members are encouraged to make use of these facilities by bringing a reusable bottle with them or purchasing one from reception.



Bettine wins Sailor of the Year

In an online awards ceremony earlier this term, Bettine Harris was awarded British Youth Sailor of the year by The British Yachting Awards presented Rob Peake and guest speaker Luke Patience, Olympic silver medallist. Bettine, from Axbridge, is studying for A levels at the Kings of Wessex and started her sailing career at Bristol Corinthian Yacht Club at the age of 7. Cadet dinghy National Champion in 2017, Bettine progressed to the youth boat the 420 dinghy winning the 420 National Champion Women title in 2018. She has represented Britain in America, Italy, Spain and Portugal in top level championships.

Nominated by her RYA coaches for her outstanding hard work and commitment especially in this difficult year, Bettine won the votes of colleagues throughout the sailing community as far afield as New Zealand!

In her acceptance speech Bettine thanked all those who she has sailed with through the years, and thanked Kings Fitness, Somerset's TSSC, "Extremity" and Olympic Sails for their continued support and of course the very people who started it all, Bristol Corinthian YC.

"My plan is to progress to the Olympic 470 class" said Bettine, "I really want to make sailing my life, it is so exciting". The award ceremony is available to view on YouTube [here](#)



The Trust Remembers



On Wednesday 11th November, staff and learners across the Wessex Learning Trust took part in commemorative events to mark Remembrance Day. Across all schools a silence was held at 11 o'clock in order to provide a time to reflect on those who have fought and died in all conflicts, present and historic. Alongside the traditional silence, a range of other activities took place in schools to enable the children to engage and get to grips with the concept of remembrance. These included assemblies, lots of poppy based arts and crafts and poetry. At Fairlands Middle School every pupil was given a poppy to write a personal message of thanks. Messages included thanks to servicemen and women for their sacrifice, poems of remembrance or personal letters to family members that have served. Each year group's poppies were then displayed as a memorial to those who have fallen, and demonstrated the maturity and sincerity with which all students across the Trust engaged with this important subject.

Supporting those in Need



2020 has been a tough year for everyone, and therefore we are incredibly proud of a number of our schools which have run drives for foodbank donations this Term. Kings of Wessex, Cheddar First and Brent Knoll Primary – amongst others – have all run collections

which have seen thousands of items of food making their way to those in need. This sort of community spirit is what we hope to inspire in our children, and we are so pleased to see so many getting involved.

Amazing Experiences at Axbridge



Two children at Axbridge school received some incredible opportunities this term. Clém (far left) got a chance to visit the

Bristol Old Vic where she worked with the theatre's costume designers to work on a dress design for Shakespeare's Titania. This is now in the process of being sewn together something ready to tread the boards! Zoe (near left) won a drawing competition run by Hanson UK which led to her being able to turn on the star above Cheddar Quarry, fulfilling everyone's dream of being able to push a big red button! Well done to both for some exceptional work.

New Pre-School at Mark

This term, Mark First School was excited to open its newly renovated pre-school facility. The building enhances the school's pre-school provision for children from the age of two and provides a new sleep room and decking area for the children to use, backing onto the existing large outdoor space. This extension makes will ensure the pre-school stays the exceptional facility you know and love.



Mapping Out their Success

Father Christmas came early at Lympsham this term, as their FOLS (Friends of Lympsham School) committee donated this huge map of the UK to the school. This exciting addition to the playground will help support the



children's geography curriculum and encourage them to learn more about where they live.

Getting Spotty



In November children across our schools all dressed up spotty for the annual Children in Need day. We are very proud of all the children, who collectively raised over £1000 for this great cause.

Don't Forget!

The deadline for Primary and Middle School admission applications is January 15th. Failure to meet this deadline will result in applications being processed as second round applications which may result in years being oversubscribed, in which case places cannot be guaranteed. For peace of mind get your application in now! #ChooseWessex





Feeling Festive!



Christmas time means all sorts of fun things going on across all our schools. Even though this year we haven't been able to do things quite as we normally would, this hasn't stopped us from enjoying the festivities as best as we can.

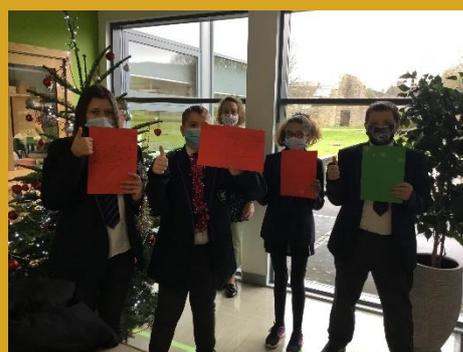
Below we have put together a collection of some of our favorite festive moments from across the schools for you to enjoy!



Above (L to R): Brent Knoll children dressed for their nativity, a beautiful real donkey at Weare, a little addition to Fairlands' sign, and snowmen at Lympsham



Above (L to R): Children showing off their jumpers on Christmas jumper day at Brent Knoll and East Brent, a lovely festive display at Weare



Above (L to R): Children enjoying Christmas lunch at East Brent and Axbridge, Kings students with letters for care home residents, a lovely wreath at Lympsham



Above (L to R): Christmas lunches at Weare, children preparing for their nativity at Mark, and Santa visiting the children at Cheddar!