



MARCH/APRIL 2024



News on the Ninth

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Nursery



We have noticed that lots of plants are beginning to grow because it is spring. We have been learning about spring flowers and have learnt the names of some of them. We found lots of daffodils around the school. Some of them had flowered and some are still closed. We learnt that flowers have a stem, petals, and leaves.

Reception



In Reception, we learnt about Chinese New Year and how it is celebrated. We enjoyed creating lucky red decorations and lanterns, finding out about Chinese letters and numerals as well as practising our own dances inspired by Lion dancing.

We used our fine motor skills to safely chop vegetables and cook a stir-fry. We tried using chopsticks to eat with and some of the children discovered new vegetables they liked!



Year 1



As part of our Geography topic the children in Year 1 went on a walk around the local area to look at physical and human features of the environment. The children had a wonderful time discussing the different types of buildings enroute.



Year 2

In Year 2 we have been very busy with our Geography learning where we are focusing on mapping our local environment. We went on a walk to survey the area surrounding our school where we looked out for both human and physical features. We will apply what we saw to our own maps of our local school environment.



We have also enjoyed many different activities during book week, and the children were very enthusiastic during our workshop based on our 3 O'clock book 'Charlie and the Chocolate factory'. Their knowledge of the story enabled the children to dive into different characters' personalities and create freeze frames of the story. Can you spot Charlie Bucket with his golden ticket ?



Year 3

Year 3 had a wonderful time during our visit from the

Science Dome! We explored the topic of light, through amazing displays and demonstrations inside the dome. We loved learning new facts about how we see light, how light can be changed and the effects of light.





Year 4

For our World Book day workshop, we explored some of the events from our class book of Charlotte's web. We took the role of some of the main characters, including the animals, thinking about how we could represent their feelings and expressions in different situations.



Year 5

Year 5 spent a fun-filled day in the Orchard channelling our inner Bear Grylls! Throughout the day, we practised our whittling skills, tied a range of knots which we then used to support building strong shelters using natural resources (which we returned to nature afterwards).

We are continuing to practise our dance for the Campus West Dance Festival on March 27th, we look forward to sharing this with you.



Year 6

In Science, we continued our unit of learning on Evolution and Inheritance. We learnt all about Charles Darwin and began to understand his theory of natural selection. In class, we conducted an investigation to see if we could prove Darwin's theory of natural selection by investigating which finch is best adapted to live on which island in the Galapagos Islands. We looked at different beak shapes and sizes (spoons, chopsticks and

cocktail sticks) and compared them with food sources available (raisins, seeds and marbles). We found out that different beak shapes can only eat certain foods.

In RE, we looked at the Christian belief in the Creation story and compared it with the world today. We designed a piece of art with two halves: one half depicted the story of the Garden of Eden up to the picking of the fruit whereas the second half showed the desecration of the Earth due to human involvement.



In Art, we developed our sketching and drawing skills when trying to recreate the Aztec sun dial. We have now begun designing our own Aztec mask, ready to make it out of clay in the next few weeks.

Celebrating Sporting Success: A Recap of Our Term's Achievements

It's been an exhilarating term filled with sportsmanship, teamwork, and outstanding achievements here at Commonswood. From triumphant victories to inspiring displays of determination, our

students have showcased their talents and dedication across various sporting events. Let's take a moment to celebrate our successes so far and look ahead with anticipation to the exciting competitions on the horizon.

Year 5 Indoor Athletics: Champions Again! Kicking off the term with a bang, our Year 5 athletes soared to victory, clinching the top spot in the indoor athletics competition. Their relentless training and unwavering spirit paid off as they outshone the competition, demonstrating agility, speed, and teamwork every step of the way.

Girls' Football Fixture Night: Teamwork in Action Our girls' football team showcased their skills and camaraderie during the fixture night, displaying impeccable sportsmanship and determination on the field. While the results may not have always gone our way, their passion for the game and commitment to improvement never faltered.

Year 6 Tag Rugby Festival: Undefeated Champions! A triumph for our Year 6 pupils as they dominated the tag rugby festival, emerging victorious in all their games. Their stellar performances and strategic gameplay were a testament to their hard work and dedication both on and off the pitch.

Badminton Excellence: Rising to the Challenge In a highly competitive badminton competition, our players rose to the occasion, delivering outstanding performances and showcasing their skills under pressure. Their resilience and sportsmanship were commendable, earning praise from both peers and opponents alike.

Rapid Fire Cricket: A Thrilling Journey to Second Place Our Year 4 cricketers demonstrated grit and determination in the rapid-fire cricket tournament, finishing an impressive second place. Despite facing tough opposition, they never backed down, displaying excellent technique and teamwork throughout the competition.

Girls District Football: A Proud Third Place Finish Our girls' district football team put their best foot forward and secured a commendable third place in the fiercely contested competition. Their passion for the game and dedication to representing our school with pride were truly inspiring.

U11's Indoor Athletics: Qualifying for the District Finals In a field of fierce competition, our U11 athletes showcased their talent and determination, securing a commendable second place out of 15 schools. Their impressive performance not only earned them a well-deserved spot in the district finals but also highlighted their potential for even greater success.

Commonswood Primary School U11 Indoor Athletics Teams Shine at District Finals

The spirited athletes of Commonswood Primary School showcased their talent and determination at the recent U11 Indoor Athletics District Finals, leaving an indelible mark on the competition. Led by PE teacher, Mr. Marshment, the teams exhibited exceptional sportsmanship and teamwork, earning praise and admiration from spectators and competitors alike.

In a thrilling display of athletic prowess, the boys' team surged to the forefront, clinching the coveted 1st place among eight competing schools. Their outstanding performance secured their passage to the county finals, where they will have the opportunity to vie for further accolades and represent their school on a broader stage.

Not to be outdone, the girls' team delivered a commendable performance, finishing in 4th place. Despite narrowly missing out on qualification for the county finals, their resilience and skill were

evident throughout the competition. The girls' team showcased remarkable talent, coming tantalisingly close to securing a spot in the next stage of the competition.

As we reflect on our achievements thus far, we eagerly anticipate the upcoming events on our sporting calendar. With the boys' district football and district netball competitions on the horizon, our students are gearing up to once again, demonstrate their passion, skill, and sportsmanship on the field.

We are incredibly proud of our pupils sporting achievements and the values of teamwork, dedication, and resilience they embody. Let's continue to cheer each other on, support one another, and strive for excellence in all our sporting endeavours.

PE Kit












































As most of our PE lessons will take place outside, please ensure that your child has tracksuit bottoms and a sweatshirt as part of their weekly PE kit. Tee shirts should be white – no logos, no collars or buttons. Shorts should be navy blue – no logos.





Learning review meetings/parents' evenings

Thank you to all of the parents who attended learning review meetings in February. The response from the quick questionnaire lets us know that all parents feel that they know what children are learning and how to support at home. The teachers really appreciated the little messages of thanks that were sent on questionnaires – these have been passed onto teachers.

Attendance

Congratulations to Cedar class for their attendance last half term!

Beech	 
Birch	      
Cedar	         
Cherry	        
Hawthorn	  
Hazel	        
Magnolia	 
Maple	

Palm	
Pine	
Spruce	
Sycamore	

Anti-Abuse Curriculum

In order to embed the Anti-Abuse Curriculum into our teaching, each half term we are focusing on one theme which we will discuss in our classrooms during snack and discussion time. This half term, we are focusing on **Keeping safe, knowing what is not okay and restoring safety**. Some objectives link closely with our PSHE topics as well as our discussion on the Emotion of the Month. Here are just some of the things we have been discussing across the school:

- I know why it is important to follow instructions and routines.
- I understand that I should tell an adult if I see someone being unkind.
- I know that everyone has the right to feel safe and that people who feel unsafe need to access support.
- I know that racism is commenting on, being unkind to someone or treating them unfairly based on how they look or what they believe.
- I know that doing nothing is a negative step when someone is being hurt, including myself, and that there are always positive steps I can take.
- I know how to say no when I want someone to stop hurtful or upsetting behaviour toward me and others.

At home, why not speak with your child about which adults they trust to speak to when they need support (refer to Helping Hands). Reinforce the teaching of what racism is and that it is never acceptable to treat somebody unfairly based on how they look.

Tuesday 23rd April is St George's Day



Did you know that St. George is not just the patron saint of England, but many other countries too? The children will be learning all about this at our assembly. Children are welcome to celebrate by dressing in red and white for the day.

Change of staffing

We are delighted to be welcoming Miss Hockey back from her maternity leave. She will be teaching Birch Class from 15th April.

Maths Challenge

Some children in Year 5 children have recently taken part in a county maths challenge. The children worked in teams to solve questions over webcam, participating with lots of Hertfordshire schools.

Although our two groups didn't make it to the next round, they did answer 4 rounds of questions including estimating, problem solving and testing their memory skills. The children really enjoyed it and never gave up, such good resilience.

Year 4 and 3 better get ready, their challenges are coming up in the summer term!

Climate Change



One of our assemblies focused on climate change and the importance of us all making small changes to help solve the problem. As a result, the children have decided to commit to avoiding the use of disposable water bottles.

Ducklings

We have received duckling eggs that are currently hatching in the Infant library. The children have been so excited to follow their progress!



Online Safety

March's Online Safety focus is '**Privacy and Security**'. At home, please could you have a discussion with your child regarding this area.

In EYFS and KS1, it could be discussing what is 'private' information and 'adults they can trust'.



In Lower KS2, discussions about keeping passwords to themselves and types of private information which they should not share online.

In Upper KS2, discussing what to do if they think passwords are not secure and 'seeking' consent when popups / terms and conditions appear.

April's theme is '**Copyright and Ownership**'.

In **EYFS and KS1**, discussions can be about work you produce belongs to you and other people's work belongs to them.

In **Lower KS2**, understanding that you can't always copy things of the internet and you need to think whether you have the right to reuse it.

In **Upper KS2**, give examples of content that is permitted to be reused and know how this content can be found, along with how to make references to acknowledge sources used from the internet.

Leading Parent Partnership Award

In our January newsletter, we let you know that we are working towards a parent partnership award, and many of you had taken part in an online survey in December to give your views. A parent working party has added valuable information and you received a letter in January outlining forms of school communication and our ongoing plan to slim these down. Thank you for your positive feedback on this.

Part of the December survey asked parents if you know what your children are learning at school, if you know how your children are doing at school and if you know how to help at home. Since then, we have created curriculum leaflets, which were distributed at parent consultations, to show your child's full curriculum across the term. We will continue to provide these in forthcoming terms. Our mini-survey to check in with you at parent consultations showed that 100% of parents now feel they know this information.

Another part of the December survey asked about policies. The vast majority of the 53 comments given about policies let us know that you know they are on the website and can find them easily. You also commented that if clarification is needed, the school office is happy to help. Most of our policies are Hertfordshire model policies, which we adopt as a maintained school. This means we have little say over the content and wording. Parents are given an opportunity to comment on policies written in-house via parent forums. These have included policies such as Religious Education, Special Needs, Sex and Relationships and Preventing and Dealing with Racist Incidents policies. If you are interested in having your say on school policies, please keep your eye on diary dates for future forum meetings.

Nursery Applications for September 2024

If your child was born between 01/09/2020 – 31/08/2021 they are eligible to start our Nursery in September 2024. Applications for Nursery went live in January 2024. We do have some Stay & Play sessions available for you and your child to come along and spend some time in the Nursery prior to applying. Please contact the school office in order for you to book a place. Places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. Please email the school office to request a Nursery application form admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk

School Dinners

Herts Catering Ltd have informed us that there will be an increase in the cost of KS2 dinners from 1st April 2024. Junior meals will now cost £3.30 per day. The minimum payment for KS2 school dinners on Arbor should be £20.00. Please ensure your child's dinner account has sufficient credit before dinners are ordered on the day or a home packed lunch will need to be brought in.

Isabel Hospice Money Raised



We have raised an amazing **£1,416** for Isabel Hospice which will provide **51 hours of nursing care**. This money was raised over 2 events, the games & puzzle sale and the recent book sale. Thank you to the School Council and all of the parents who supported this.

Friends of Commonswood PTA

Thank you to all of you who attended the PTA Quiz Night on 16th February. The Quiz Night raised an amazing **£639.18** and everyone had an enjoyable evening.

Thanks to the PTA, the teachers who attended and to Mr Moore for his help on the evening.

Pre Loved Uniform Sale

This will be held in the dining room on Thursday 21st March from 3.15pm

Easter Cake Sale

We are asking Reception, Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6 to provide the cakes for our Easter cake sale. This will be held after school in both playgrounds on Tuesday 26th March. Shop brought or home baked cakes are acceptable. Please send cakes into class with your child.



Emotion focus for this half term

Sadness

This half term, we will be learning about 'sadness': how it feels, what causes it and how it might look in someone else.

Please discuss this emotion with your child at home.

An important point for children to understand is that all emotions are temporary. They will not remain forever.

Talking to someone about how you feel and sharing your feelings, can help you to feel happy again. By exploring the reason that you feel sad and making a plan to deal with the source of your sadness can help you to feel more positive. Sometimes, sadness will be covering another emotion too.

The following website offers parent advice and access to free stories that help children to understand and cope with feelings of sadness.

[Helping kids understand and cope with feeling of sadness \(storyberries.com\)](https://storyberries.com)





Author Alice Hemmings

We have had a wonderful week celebrating books and authors! Children's author Alice Hemming who has had over 50 books published in the UK and internationally, visited each class and shared her books with us. We used her work as inspiration to create our own characters and plot for a story. Alice told us all about the publishing process and how her ideas end up on the shelves of bookshops! Her stories include titles such as 'That's My Flower!' and 'A Gold Star for George.' We hope this week has further inspired lots of budding 'Commonswood authors' in the making!

This Month's Reading Recommendations

EYFS

Nursery – Poppy Pickle by Emma Yarlett

Reception – Hey, Water! By Antoinette Portis

Key Stage 1

Year 1 – King of the Classroom by Derrick Barnes and Vanessa Brantley-Newton

Year 2 – Salty Dogs by Matty Long

Lower Key Stage 2

Year 3 – This Bee is not Afraid of Me edited by Fran Long and Isabelle Gallymore

Year 4 –Varjak Paw by SF Said

Upper Key Stage 2

Year 5 – The Violet Veil Mysteries by Sophie Cleverly

Year 6 – A Boy Called Hope by Lara Williamson

Reading books

All our reading books on the school book shelves are carefully selected to be age appropriate and in accordance with reading recommendations. We ask that children only read school reading books while they are in school to ensure they get a suitable diet of grammar, punctuation, style and structure in the texts they read. Every classroom has a library with a good selection, and these are replenished and updated continuously. Books that you buy for your children outside school are obviously to be encouraged to motivate readers and form personal preferences, but these often contain American spellings and written structures not suitable for children to be adopting in their own writing. This is why we ask for school books to be read in school and other books to be read at home. Thank you for supporting this.

Polite Reminders

Please ensure that all emails to the school are sent to the admin email address

admin@scommonswood.herts.sch.uk

Smoking - it is against the law to smoke on any part of the school site, so please avoid doing so here or in the immediate vicinity of our gates where young children can suffer harm from passive smoking.

Dogs – are not permitted on the school site. Please do not tie dogs up outside the school gates as barking dogs can frighten children.

Cycles /scooters - please dismount before entering the school site and leave cycles and scooters securely in the bike sheds. Electric scooters are not permitted on site.

One way system - a voluntary one way traffic system operates in the Commons at the start and end of the school day. If possible, please avoid bringing vehicles into the Commons but if this is essential please keep the school on your left.

Photos - it is not possible to take photographs on the school site whether inside or outside the buildings. This is designed to protect the small number of families affected by domestic violence or child protection concerns. This includes the use of mobile phones which are prohibited on site.

It is parents' responsibility to look after children while on site. Please keep young children with you. They are not permitted to be on the play equipment. Children are not permitted to play on the main entrance railings or climb any fences.



Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel is the UK's largest walking, wheeling, scooting and cycling challenge. Help us to celebrate the 15th year of Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel and make it the biggest one yet by joining us over the next two weeks in encouraging heathy and active journeys to school.

Active travel is a great way to build physical activity into children's daily routine. It helps them arrive to school more relaxed and alert, and is great for their mental wellbeing too. Not only does it impact children's physical and mental wellbeing, but also improves air quality in our neighbourhood and can have significant benefits across the wider world.

	DIARY DATES
March 2024	
11 th – 15 th	Walk, Scoot & Wheel to school week
11 th	12-3pm Boys District Football at Ridgeway
11 th	3pm Dance competition Gordon Craig theatre
12 th	1.45-2.45pm Nursery Stay and Play
18 th – 22 nd	Last week of clubs
19 th	1.45-2.45pm Nursery Stay and Play
20 th	1-4pm District Netball at Stanborough
21 st	3.15pm PTA pre-loved uniform sale
22 nd	Year 1 Field studies trip
26 th	1.45-2.45pm Nursery Stay & Play
26 th	PTA cake sale after school

27 th	3.30-7pm Year 5 Dance Festival at Hawthorne Theatre
27 th	Sea Cadets talking to Year 6
27 th	Year 1 Outdoor learning day
27 th	Last day for Nursery
28 th	End of Term 12.30pm
April 2024	
15 th	INSET DAY children do not attend
16 th	Term commences for children
23 rd	St Georges Day – children wear red & white
23 rd	RE Day
May 2024	
6 th	BANK HOLIDAY
13 th – 16 th	Year 6 SATs
17 th	7.30pm PTA Bingo night
21 st	Nursery to Paradise Wildlife Park trip
22 nd	Year 2 Chiltern Open Air Museum trip
23 rd	3.15pm PTA Doughnut sale
24 th	INSET DAY Children do not attend
27 th May – 31 st May Half Term	
June 2024	
11 th	10-11.30am Mill Green Golf event Year 3
18 th	Reception trip to Aldenham Country Park
24 th	2pm Reception/KS1 Sports day
25 th	10.30am Nursery Sports day
25 th	1.30pm KS2 Sports day
27 th	Contingency day for Rec/KS1 sports
28 th	Contingency day for Nursery/KS2 sports
July 2024	
3 rd	Year 4 Paris Olympic Event
4 th	2pm New to Reception parents meeting
11 th	Secondary transfer day – all children visit their next class
13 th	12-3pm PTA Summer Fete
17 th	3.10-4pm Parents are invited in to view pupil progress in books and visit child's next classroom
18 th	Year 6 performances for parents am and pm
19 th	Year 6 bell ringing
19 th & 22 nd	Whole school multicultural days
22 nd	4-6pm Year 6 BBQ
23 rd	End of Term 12.30pm
3 rd Sept	Term commences for children

Term time holidays

We are unable to authorise term time holidays. Absence can only be authorised if a child is unwell. If however, the number of unauthorised sessions reaches 15 or more within 2 terms, the local authority may issue you with a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice requires parents to pay a fine of £60 within 21 days. If this is not paid within the time limit, the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days.

Term time holidays have a negative impact on friendships and learning. Please avoid taking your child out of school. Term time holidays are not authorised. Absence requests can only be authorised if there are exceptional, unrepeatable circumstances. Section 7 Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child of compulsory age attends school.



Commonswood Primary & Nursery School is a Safeguarding School

We are an Encompass School working with external agencies to support children who are victims of domestic abuse.

'All schools have a clear responsibility placed on them by the Children Act 1989 and by guidance from the Department of Education to safeguard the welfare of all their pupils. In doing so schools are expected to consult with Social Services if they believe there is a possibility that a child may be suffering from abuse or neglect.'

If you have any concerns about children please contact 0300 123 4043.

Mrs G Seymour (Designated Senior Person), Mrs S Manning (Deputy Designated Person), Mr S Burt (Deputy Designated Person for eSafety), Mrs D Lindsay-Hill (Deputy Designated Person), Miss K Dean (Designated Senior Person) Chair of Governors Mrs Julie Noakes