



We're nearly at the end of the Spring Term and it is finally starting to feel like spring! Let's hope it stays warm for the holiday. It has been a busy term as usual with outings, assemblies and sporting events. Leicester City are still going strong too, which is very exciting and can only be a good thing for the city. The children are all working hard in their lessons and are making really good progress.

Curriculum Enhancements

We have managed to fit quite a few visits into a short term, particularly Year 6. They visited the Richard III exhibition and Leicester Cathedral as part of their topic work and went to the Warning Zone to learn about personal safety and responsibilities. They also attended an awards presentation at the Guildhall as part of the Story of the Parks architecture workshops. The children designed and made models which were then displayed at the Guildhall. The winners were presented with prizes and these designs will be turned into a large scale, temporary structure on Victoria Park during the summer. There was a lovely article in the Leicester Mercury. If you missed it, there is a copy on our website (in 'About Us'). Year 4 visited New Walk museum to see the Egyptian mummies and Year 1 went to the Sikh temple as part of their RE topic. A group of Year 5 children attended a writing workshop at St Cuthbert's Primary School and went to Leicester Tigers to meet an author. They met 'The 2Steves' - (Steve Barlow and Steve Skidmore) and had a very entertaining time. All the children were given a book and haven't stopped reading them since!

The children (and staff!) enjoyed dressing up as their favourite book characters on World Book day and are designing models of these. The Year 5 brass band performed for the first time recently and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Gifted and Talented artists attended a 3D printing workshop at New Walk museum with Steam Print. This was a lovely opportunity to experience new technology.

Sport at Sparkenhoe

The football team are having some success in Division 2 of the league and have won one match. They are still upbeat and working hard in training to improve. Year 1 children loved their PE sessions with the LCFC Community Trust and hopefully there will be further sessions for children in other year groups. Children from Foundation 2, Year 1 and Year 6 have been to Moat to take part in sports sessions. A group of children from Years 5 and 6 took part in a swimming gala which they thoroughly enjoyed despite not winning. Year 5 will be starting dance sessions with a teacher from Moat soon. This will end with a performance at Moat in May with other schools in Highfields. Children in Years 5 and 6 are enjoying the cricket club and working hard to prepare for the tournaments in May.

Assemblies and Performances

The Year 2 Creation Assembly was wonderful, with beautiful costumes, amazing singing and fantastic acting. The children had also created animations which showed off their computing skills. Year 3 will be performing their Easter Assembly in the last week of term and Year 1, the Vaisakhi Assembly in April. We have started thinking about our next outdoor performance in the Summer Term but haven't chosen a theme yet.

Residential visits

In January, the annual Kingswood residential took place which was very successful as usual. The children had a brilliant time and took part in many adventurous activities such as archery, fencing, climbing, zip wire, laser zone and caving. They can't wait to go back.

The re-arranged Paris residential finally went ahead at the beginning of March and it was well worth the wait. The staff and children had an amazing trip and are still buzzing with excitement. It was a very long journey there and back but that all added to the fun. The itinerary was jam packed which meant that everyone slept really well at night. The children had a full day in Paris where they climbed the Eiffel Tower, visited the Louvre and enjoyed a tour of all the sights, followed by tea at the Hard Rock Café and views of Paris at night. The next day was a very early start to travel to Disneyl and for breakfast with the Disney characters. The children then had the whole day in the park where they enjoyed the rides, saw the Disney parade and watched a laser light show. They arrived back at school the following day at 8.30 pm, exhausted but happy. It was a fantastic experience and worth all the hard work and time planning and organising it. We are very grateful to Mrs Patel for this.

These trips cannot happen without the goodwill of the staff and we really do appreciate the staff who give up their time to go on these residential visits. There will be a special assembly in the last week of term and the photos will be on our website very soon (there are a lot to sort through!).

The next residential is the camping trip in May. We have had a fantastic response to this already and unfortunately there are no places left! If you would still like your child to go we will include them on the waiting list if you return the form to Mrs Patel.

Sparkenhoe Values

Thank you to all the parents who returned their feedback about our values. We have taken this into account and revised the values slightly in light of this. The final values decided upon are:

At Sparkenhoe we.....
are kind, tolerant and respectful
are independent
are responsible
challenge ourselves
work together as a team
try and fail rather than fail to try
learn from mistakes
recognise and celebrate hidden talents
help and support each other
learn from different experiences.

These are displayed in the Saxby building and will soon be in the classrooms too. Our recent house competitions were based around our values. Children took part in quizzes where they had to work together as a team; designed and built bridges where they had to learn from mistakes and try and fail rather than fail to try. They took part in sports and games to challenge themselves and learn from different experiences.

Road Safety

There are still quite a lot of cars parked illegally on Sparkenhoe Street at the end of the school day. We would like to remind parents that it is not appropriate to park on yellow lines or half on the pavement. It causes an obstruction to other road users and pedestrians and you could be given a fixed penalty notice. Thank you for your support in these matters.

Visitors

We always enjoy welcoming visitors in school. This term we have had four groups of international students from Saudi Arabia, China, Pakistan and Panama. The purpose of these visits was to gain an insight into the British education system and have a chance to talk to teachers. We have held four PGCE focus days this term where trainee teachers from the University Of Leicester have visited to observe classroom practice. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Parent View Survey

Thank you to everyone who returned the survey last term and for the many positive comments about the school. The results are as follows:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	No answer
My child is happy at school.	119 62.5%	70 37%			1 0.5%	
My child is safe at school.	116 61%	72 38%		1 0.5%	1 0.5%	
My child makes good progress at school.	64 34%	119 62.5%			7 3.5%	
The school gives me valuable information about my child's progress.	66 35%	114 60%	2 1%		6 3%	2 1%
My child is well looked after at school.	100 53%	84 44%	1 0.5%		4 2%	22 11%
The school encourages children to attend school and arrive on time for lessons.	121 64%	63 33%			1 0.5%	5 2.5%
My child receives appropriate homework.	68 36%	95 50%	11 5%	1 0.5%	9 5%	7 3.5%
Children behave at school.	80 42%	94 49.5%	2 1%		10 5%	5 2.5%
The school deals well with bullying.	64 34%	81 43%	1 0.5%		37 19%	7 3.5%
The school is well led and managed.	92 48%	84 44%			7 4%	7 4%
The school responds well to any concerns.	79 41.5%	98 51.5%	1 0.5%		7 4%	6 3%

For those parents who are concerned about homework and information about progress, we would encourage you to speak to your child's teacher. The teachers are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

Parents Workshops

Earlier this term, Foundation Stage held a maths workshop which was extremely well attended. Information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and ideas about how to help at home were shared. This was followed by the opportunity to play maths games and explore activities with the children. We hope this was useful and welcome suggestions for further workshops you would like us to hold. Maths workshops for KS1 and KS2 will be held in the Summer Term.

Attendance

Attendance is currently 95.7% which is excellent considering there was a lot of illness during the Autumn Term. Our target for the year is 96% or better and we are well on the way to achieving this. However, there are still families asking for extended holidays in term time. Our policy states that extended absences will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Most requests are not authorised which leads to unauthorised absences on a child's attendance record and in most cases also results in a fixed penalty notice. We do understand the dilemma that parents face when the prices of tickets go up in the holidays. However, Leicester always breaks up before most other authorities in the summer so ticket prices should still be lower when term finishes on Friday 15th July.

Easter Holiday

School closes for the Easter Holiday at the end of the school day on Thursday 24th March. This is slightly different to the usual holiday pattern and means children have to come to school on Thursday 24th March but not on Friday 25th. School re opens on Monday 11th April and we look forward to seeing you all then.

Governors

The governors of the South Highfields Community Federation are currently advertising for Head of School posts at both Sparkenhoe and Medway. If you have any questions regarding this, please email govs@sparkenhoe.leicester.sch.uk.

Dates for the diary

Thursday 17 th March	Parents' Evening 1	Book online or with your child's teacher
Friday 18 th March	Sports Relief Day	Activities in school
Monday 21 st March	France assembly	Parents will be invited
Tuesday 22 nd March	Parents' Evening 2	Book online or with your child's teacher
Wednesday 23 rd March	Year 3 Easter Assemblies: 10.00 am and 1.30 pm	Parents will be invited
Thursday 24 th March	Year 3 Easter Assembly: 10.00 am	Parents will be invited
Thursday 24 th March	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL	
Monday 11 th April	SCHOOL OPENS	
Wednesday 13 th April	Year 2 Synagogue Visit	
Friday 15 th April	Year 5 group visiting Leicester City FC	Information to follow
Tuesday 19 th April	Year 1 Vaisakhi Assemblies	Parents will be invited
Thursday 21 st April	Year 1 Vaisakhi Assembly	Parents will be invited
Monday 2 nd May	Year 2 assessments start	
Thursday 5 th May	Year 5 Dance Performance at Moat	
Monday 9 th May	Year 6 SATs start	
Wednesday 18 th May	3 Day Camping residential	
Tuesday 24 th May	Girls' Kwik Cricket tournament	
Thursday 26 th May	Mixed Kwik Cricket tournament	
Friday 27 th May	School closes for half term	
Summer Term		
Monday 5 th June	School opens	
Monday 27 th June	Healthy Living Week	Activities in school
Monday 27 th June	Sports Day for Years 4, 5 and 6	Parents will be invited
Wednesday 29 th June	Extra transition day for children going to Moat	
Thursday 30 th June	Secondary school transition day	
Thursday 30 th June	Sports Day for Years 1, 2 and 3	Parents will be invited
Thursday 14 th July	Year 6 Shakespeare evening performance	Parents will be invited
Friday 15 th July	School closes for the summer	
Other dates to be confirmed: Year 5 Islamic Assembly; F2 Sports Day; F2 Graduation; Year group trips		

All dates and times for festival assemblies will be sent out nearer the time. Have a lovely Easter holiday.

We welcome your views and thoughts and are always around if you need to talk to us. If you would like to raise an issue or ask a question to a member of our Governing Body, please email govs@sparkenhoe.leicester.sch.uk. As always, you can make an appointment if you need to speak to a member of staff in private.

Rhian Jones Acting Headteacher