

The logo for SOKE Education Trust, featuring the text 'SOKE EDUCATION TRUST' in white, uppercase letters on a red, brush-stroke style background. The background of the entire page is white with colorful, hand-drawn scribbles in blue, purple, orange, and green, including arrows and asterisks.

SOKE
EDUCATION
TRUST

Newsletter

CEO MESSAGE

The festive season is in full swing across our schools and I have really enjoyed being able to attend some of your end of term celebrations to see the children sing and perform.

At this time of year, I used to give out reminders about online safety and staying away from train lines - now my gentle reminder is to fully enjoy any school festive celebrations whilst remembering that tiktok has enough creators and doesn't need any of our staff becoming one with a goldfish bowl of cocktail in hand!

I know that this time of year is not always easy for everyone, however. If you are in need of any support please remember our confidential helpline is available 24/7 for any issue and help can be reached on 0800 612 8345.

This term we have gathered together for training activities, writing moderation and just a chance to catch-up, I am really proud of the things we are accomplishing together and the occasions when we can see our values being lived. Sometimes we need honest communication with each other but that doesn't mean it can't be kind or respectful. Working collaboratively means we can share the best of all that we do, but do so without negative competition. Whether you are new to teaching & learning or an experienced practitioner, new projects like the Walk Thrus is inspiring to be part of and great for refreshing our views on education. Being able to meet staff from our schools at our coffee and catch-up sessions means we all get to share ideas and thoughts. Lots of people suggested this in our last staff survey so do come along, we would love to meet you.

I wish everyone a lovely, restful holiday break and look forward to a new term and the exciting things that it brings. Merry Christmas.

Cathy Carlisle

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CEO message

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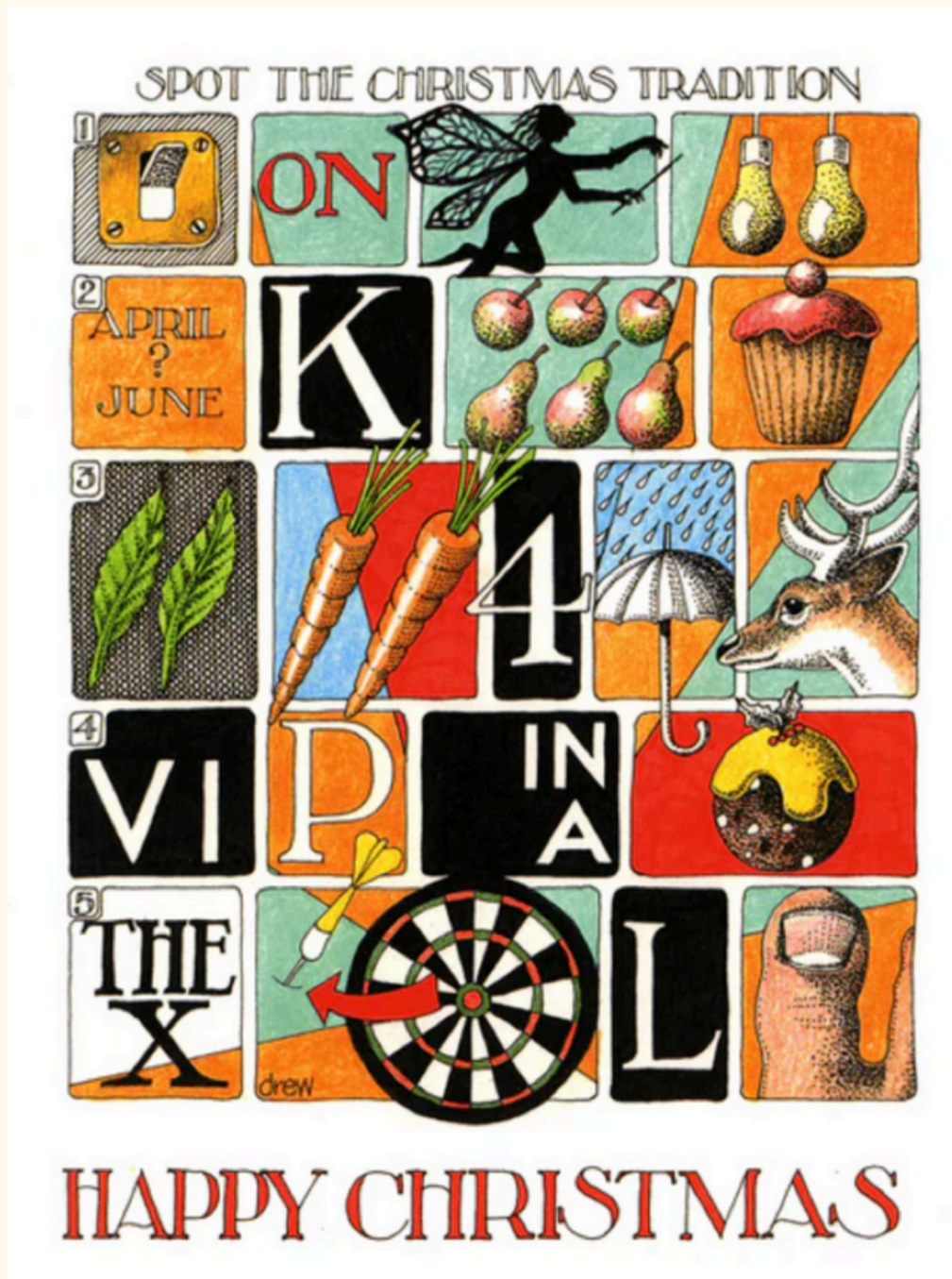
Shout Outs

Working Together

News from our Schools

Christmas Quiz

Say what you see and identify the Christmas traditions!



Soke Education Trust are on facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Follow us to see the latest news from our schools.

Wellbeing

Blue Light Card

Teachers and support staff working in education are now eligible for discounts and rewards with a Blue Light Card.

Extending Blue Light Card benefits to Teachers and supporting staff aligns with their mission to support essential community workers.


For £4.99 you can access and enjoy thousands of discounts online and in-store for 2 years. You will need to verify your employment with either your work email address or by uploading an official work ID or payslip that includes your name and school.

You can visit www.bluelightcard.co.uk to sign up.

You can still use your Wider Wallet log in to obtain different discounts and special offers too.



Our newsletter and blog are now available on the Soke Education Trust website



Cyber Security

Behind the scenes our IT support services implement an ongoing effort to ensure the safety and security of our digital environment. As we become more reliant on digital tools, understanding how to protect our school community from cyber threats is crucial.

1. Understanding Cyber Security

Cyber security involves protecting our school's devices, services, and networks from theft or damage. It is essential for everyone in our community to be aware of potential threats and know how to mitigate them.

Key Terms to Know:

- **Phishing:** Emails that seem legitimate but aim to steal your personal information.
- **Ransomware:** Malicious software that restricts access to your data until a ransom is paid.
- **Firewall:** A security system that controls the incoming and outgoing network traffic.

2. Common Cyber Threats

- **Phishing Emails:** Be cautious of unexpected emails that ask for personal information. Always verify the sender's address.
- **Weak Passwords:** Use strong, unique passwords for different accounts. Consider using a password manager.
- **Unsecured Networks:** Avoid using public Wi-Fi to access sensitive information.

3. Protecting Our Schools

Here are some steps we are taking to enhance our cyber security:

- **Regular Training:** We conduct annual training sessions for staff to update them on the latest cyber threats.
- **Software Updates:** All school systems and software are regularly updated to protect against vulnerabilities.
- **Data Backups:** We perform daily backups of critical data to ensure it is safe and recoverable.

4. How You Can Help

- **Stay Informed:** Keep up with the latest cyber security news and trends. [The National Cyber Security Centre](#) has many resources for schools to support awareness.
- **Report Suspicions:** If you notice anything unusual, report it immediately to our IT support service and COFO.
- **Educate Pupils:** Encourage discussions about the importance of cyber security.

Thank you for your continued support in making our schools a safe and secure learning environment. Together, we can protect our community from cyber threats.

SET the standard...

Our nominees this half term are:

Carolynne Rockliffe - Gunthorpe - Anonymous

Nothing is too much trouble for her no matter how busy she is always willing to help with anything.

Sarah Nicolson - John Clare - Anonymous

I'm always in a good mood when I know I'm going to be working with Sarah, she's so very organised.

Sarah Phillips - Alderman Jacobs - Anonymous

Sarah offers consistent support in multiple areas of the school, through speech and language referrals, admin support, organising school trips, lunchtime support and having that friendly smile to greet children with additional needs in the morning to feel safe and secure to come into school. She consistently works hard and will help anyone out when she can all with a smile on her face.

Jo West - Werrington - Anonymous

Jo is forward thinking, uses her initiative and does everything that is asked in a very thorough way all while being lovely and friendly. She is such an asset.

Abi Kefford - John Clare - Anonymous

For going above and beyond and being proactive and collaborative in organising the upcoming SEND coffee and catch-up

Claire Culhane - Werrington - Anonymous

An overwhelming act of kindness to all staff!

Keep sending in your nominations so that we can share the great work that happens across our Trust. Remember you can nominate a colleague by scanning the QR code and completing the short form and also find it on your Trust Noticeboard.



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Working Together- update from Elaine Crane, Director of Education

As we reflect on the recent months, I am thrilled to share some significant developments within our Trust. In November, we launched our first senior leadership course, with the first of 3 sessions that form our SET UP DHT programme, bringing together senior leaders from across our schools. This gathering was a dynamic exchange of ideas and a collective step towards enhancing our leadership capabilities.

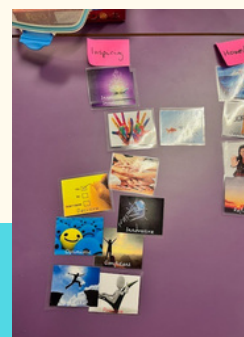
The session focused on exploring vital leadership traits and the Education Endowment Foundation's guidance for Implementation Planning, particularly Recommendation 1, which emphasises the critical importance of engaging and uniting staff around common goals. This aligns with our commitment to effectively communicate our vision and the rationale behind our improvement priorities.

What made this session particularly reflective was the way we wove our Trust's core values into the discussion of leadership traits. It was inspiring to see how our values of collaboration, nurturing, honesty, inspiration, and professionalism came alive through the characteristics identified as essential for effective leadership.

Colleagues engaged in thoughtful discussions, mapping out traits that exemplify each of our values. For collaboration, we highlighted qualities such as being a team player, effectively communicating vision, and demonstrating flexibility. Nurturing leaders were seen as reassuring, good listeners, and understanding. Inspiring leaders were characterised as creative, courageous, and innovative, while honest leadership was linked to emotional intelligence and reflectiveness. Professionalism was associated with resilience, being a role model, and approachability.

This exercise was not merely theoretical; it was a practical exploration of how these traits manifest in our daily roles and contribute to the success of our schools and the progress of our pupils.

Looking ahead to our next meeting in January, we are excited to focus on Recommendation 3, viewing implementation as an ongoing process. Our goal is to ensure that our initiatives and improvements are sustainable in the long term, reaffirming our unwavering commitment to continuous improvement and providing the best possible education for our pupils.



News from our Schools

John Clare

This half-term, we welcomed 10 Teacher Trainees from Anglia Ruskin University to observe our phonics sessions. The students visited our reception and key stage 1 children over 2 sessions and were able to see teaching and learning in progress. Following each session, they met with Chantelle Challis for a Q&A session, which enabled the students to develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge, and give them confidence to be able to teach a phonics lesson during their first school placement starting in May 2025.

We received some fantastic feedback from the students: "Visiting John Clare has been the highlight of the last two weeks of our intensive training and practice sessions and so I would like to thank you for allowing us to observe your lessons and share with you how much I have learnt from this as the scheme you follow was new to me and very different from others I have watched. I witnessed so many strategies for teaching and assessment in phonics that I hadn't seen in action or thought of, and I know I will adapt and magpie some of the strategies you used into my own teaching. I'm still completely stunned at the amount of information teachers have flying around in their head all at one time and I got to see this in action when observing you bringing the children into the classroom, setting them up for the day, during your phonics lesson and during your continual assessment of their progress. Visiting your school was such a valuable experience for myself, and I hope to come across your lovely school again in the future."





This half-term, we also enjoyed a visit from Will Hussey from The Art of Brilliance. Being a small school, Will was able to work with all three of our classes in Key Stage 2. Our children had lots of fun during the engaging sessions and are inspired to be brilliant and achieve their personal bests.

On 2nd December, our Year 6 children had a fantastic day in London. The children loved travelling by train, the underground and walking along South Bank to see the Globe theatre, Winchester Palace and Tower Bridge. They also enjoyed lunch in Pizza Express and explored the Tower of London where they saw the Crown Jewels!

As Christmas approaches, bringing with it nativity plays, carol concerts and glitter, we would like to send all of our colleagues across the Trust, festive wishes and a very happy New Year!



Wittering Primary School

Half Term Highlights!

This term at Wittering, we have taken part in lots of new and exciting reading opportunities! We have begun our weekly Phonics Friday sessions for our Reception parents. Parents/Carers came into school and watched a quick phonics lesson before engaging in phonics-based activities with their child(ren).



We also held our first Reading Parent Pop-In session. These were incredibly well attended! It was wonderful seeing our parents participating in a teacher led session followed by spending some time on activities with their children.

Finally, we are excited to launch our new reading rooms. We have updated our reading schemes in Key Stage 1 and 2 with so many amazing new books, including diverse, funny and traditional, fiction and non-fiction books.



Gunthorpe

Nene Park Trust - School in Residence

We are delighted to have had our application accepted to become a Nene Park Trust 'School in Residence' for this forthcoming academic year!

A group of our Year 3 children recently very much enjoyed their first visit to Ferry Meadows, getting to know the park and education centre and exploring the fantastic nursery growing area (where they will have their own dedicated growing beds). The children also made seed balls to bring back to school for springtime planting in our new 'no-mow' areas and tried their hand at making willow archways. Soon the children will be able to use their skills to create willow structures back at school using our own willow!

We very much look forward to taking part in the wonderful activities planned across the rest of this year and are grateful to the Nene Park Trust for this opportunity.




A summary from trustee committee meetings are now in the News section on our website.

Alderman Jacobs


We were really excited to be part of the Big Tree Planting Event, lead by Jenny and Sarah H. Over the course of a week, Reception children were joined by staff and parents and planted 100 trees around the school field - one day we will have quite a forest!

Across school we've been focused on the theme of 'Choose respect' as part of anti-bullying week. We also had a meeting of our 'Diversity & Belonging' working party who have been looking at our policies and curriculum to stamp out racism.

As part of this theme we all enjoyed taking part in Odd Socks Tuesday, earlier this term.



A summary from trustee committee meetings are now in the News section on our website.



SET...Coffee & Catch-UP

**Our next session will be at
Werrington Primary. Come along for
a chat, drink and a look round the
school.**

date tbc



Just for fun...

<p>ABCDEFGHIJ KLMNOPQ RSTUVWX YZ</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Y Y MEN Y</p> <p>2</p>	<p>MISTLETOE XXX</p> <p>3</p>	<p>CHRISTMAS CHRISTMAS → CHRISTMAS</p> <p>4</p>
<p>DONKEY → DONKEY</p> <p>5</p>	<p>CE CE CE ↓ CE π π</p> <p>6</p>	<p>MANAWAYGER</p> <p>7</p>	<p>LEFT TURKEY</p> <p>8</p>
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<p>XMAS</p> <p>13</p>	<p>GOOD DAY SPRING HI THERE SUMMER HEY AUTUMN HELLO WINTER</p> <p>14</p>	<p>PPP </p> <p>15</p>	<p>BLANPIGPIGKETS</p> <p>16</p>
<p>D NER</p> <p>17</p>	<p>DECOR = 8/10</p> <p>18</p>	<p>VORDERMAN DANVERS SMILLIE KING</p> <p>19</p>	<p>PRESENCE PRESENTS</p> <p>20</p>

Keep an eye on the Trust noticeboard for information, changes and quick links