

Newsletter

CEO MESSAGE

Over the next few issues we will be including some research and information about how we can communicate with children and the language that we use. This first item comes from the SEND Teacher Handbook, a booklet that is so useful and informative. If we incorporate these ideas into our Quality First Teaching it will be of benefit to all children as well as those that have an additional need.

The landscape of education is placing ever greater focus on the value to the community that schools have. We are a central service in the community when few others exist. It is likely that in the future this focus is going to play an increasing role in school accountability and the areas of SEND & family support that we are offering will help us.

You may have seen the headlines surrounding the proposed Ofsted report card for schools. The consultation on this has opened and you can have your say on the suggestions by visiting smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ofsted2025. I would strongly encourage you to do so as both a parent and as a professional working in schools.

There some Soke Ambassador activities planned over the next couple of terms including our, which I'm looking forward to attending. Activities that take place across the trust are shared on the news section of our website so that everyone can feel part of the wider organisation and in the next few months we will be repeating our staff perception survey to see how we have progressed over the last year.

Finally I'm pleased to share that we appointed David Johnson to the role of Headteacher at Werrington. David joins us in September but is keen to have an active handover so we will have opportunities to get to know him over the next few months.

Cathy Carlisle

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Working Together- update from Elaine Crane, Director of Education

I am thrilled to share some exciting developments within our Trust, particularly focusing on our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. As we continue to nurture our collaborative ethos, we are taking significant steps to bring our EYFS teams even closer together across the Trust.

It gives me great pleasure to announce the appointment of two exceptional coordinators for our new EYFS network. Jo Simpson from Werrington Primary School and Chantelle Challis from John Clare Primary School have taken on these crucial roles. Both Jo and Chantelle bring a wealth of experience to their positions and are brimming with enthusiasm to lead this initiative.


To kickstart this exciting venture, we are hosting a face-to-face afternoon on 3rd February, led by Lynda Truman of Early Excellence. This launch event marks the beginning of a comprehensive programme designed to enhance our EYFS practice across the Trust. Over the next four terms, we will be conducting four facilitated network meetings online. These sessions will provide invaluable opportunities for our EYFS teams to connect, share best practices, and collaborate on innovative approaches to early years education. To ensure the success of this network, we have arranged for Lynda to provide mentoring support to our network coordinators. This guidance will be instrumental in shaping the direction and effectiveness of our EYFS network.

A key objective of this initiative is to collectively form the Trust's vision for EYFS practice. By bringing together the expertise and insights from across our schools, we aim to create a robust and forward-thinking approach to early years education that reflects our shared values and aspirations.

This new network group is a testament to our commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration. I am particularly pleased to note that this initiative is fully funded by the Trust, demonstrating our dedication to investing in the development of our EYFS provision.

The formation of this network is a cause for celebration. It represents a significant step forward in our journey to provide the best possible start for our youngest pupils. By fostering closer ties between our EYFS teams, we are not only enhancing our educational offering but also strengthening the foundations of our Trust's collaborative and nurturing ethos.

I look forward to seeing the positive impact this network will have on our EYFS provision and, most importantly, on the experiences and outcomes of our pupils. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected educational community that will benefit generations to come.



Understanding Data Breaches

A data breach is an incident where sensitive, protected, or confidential data has potentially been viewed, stolen, or used by an unauthorised individual. It's crucial for everyone at Soke Education Trust to understand how to identify and report these breaches to maintain the trust and safety of our community.

Key Principles of Data Protection

Here are some basic principles to keep in mind:

Confidentiality: Ensure that personal data is accessed only by authorized individuals.

Integrity: Safeguard data accuracy and completeness.

Availability: Make sure data is accessible to authorized personnel when needed.

Common Data Breach Scenarios

Lost or Stolen Devices: Always secure your devices, especially when off school premises.

Unauthorized Access: Be vigilant about who has access to sensitive information.

Email Mistakes: Double-check email addresses before sending sensitive information.

What to Do in Case of a Data Breach

- **Immediate Action:** If you suspect a data breach, report it to our Data Protection Officer (DPO) immediately.
- **Documentation:** Document what happened, how it was discovered, and any actions taken.
- **Follow-Up:** Work with the DPO to understand the next steps in mitigating the breach.

Quick Quiz



Test your knowledge with a very quick quiz on data breaches!

[Data Breach Quiz](#)

Stay Informed

Remember, staying informed and vigilant is the best way to prevent data breaches. For more detailed guidance, please refer to our Data Breach Procedure.

Thank you for your continued commitment to protecting the personal data of everyone in our Trust community. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please reach out to our DPO jocelyn.sumner@soke.education



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

SET the standard...

Our nominees this half term are:

Abi Kefford - John Clare, Anonymous

Abi is always so positive and enthusiastic. She has done a brilliant job at developing and leading the SEN initiative to invite parents and specialists to an open session which is benefiting the whole trust.

Charlotte McManus - Gunthorpe, Anonymous

Always has a smile that picks up everyones day even after a hard day.



Nominate your colleague!

Scan the QR code and share the fabulous things that happen

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available on the Soke Education
Trust website

News from our Schools

John Clare

We have had a very busy but fantastic start to 2025!

On 13th January, we hosted the first of our SEND Coffee and Catch-ups. This session was organised by Abi Kefford, our SENDCo, to enable parents of children with SEND to network with one another and local organisations. We were very pleased to welcome Gemma Mead, LA Area SENDCo and the SEND Information Hub. We have had some fantastic feedback from the session and have had further requests from families and local agencies/charities to attend the next session. We hope to run these valuable sessions termly: watch out for the date in the summer term and please share with your families - all are welcome!



Our youngest children (reception, year 1 and 2) travelled to the National Space Centre in Leicester on 14th January. This was such an exciting day: the children learnt all about rockets, the planets in our solar system, gravity, and the history of space travel. During the planetarium show, the children explored astronaut training and the challenges humans have overcome in order to learn more about space. The trip has ignited so many questions and a deeper level of thinking from both children and the adults who attended. We were very impressed with the children's behaviour and manners during the trip. Everyone had an excellent day of learning!



Amanda Webb (Teaching Assistant) has also been busy running weekly Forest School sessions for the Buttercross (Reception and Year 1) children. We are looking forward to extending these sessions for all children in school and as part of our Positive Play provision at lunchtimes.

Over the past few weeks, we have also been busy delving into the school archives. This year, on John Clare's birthday (13th July), will be the school's 60th anniversary of being on the current site! Sheryl Myatt (Teacher and Curriculum Lead) has been working with the Helpston History Group to unlock the past! We have found some interesting entries in the school log books, some of which date back to the 1800's and the old school site in the village. The children have been amazed by the beautiful handwritten entries. Sheryl will be sharing her findings and our school's rich history with the children during her assembly times and with our families and community via Facebook.

Finally, we are looking forward to raising the awareness of Children's Mental Health Week and building on the 'Brilliant Schools' initiative that Will Hussey launched in our school last term. The children will be completing some 'Brilliant Me' and 'Brilliant We' challenges, planting seeds and bulbs, participating in additional Forest School sessions and taking part in our 'Designing a Wellbeing Garden competition' - along with School Council's help, we hope to be able to bring some of the children's designs to life!



Wittering

On Thursday 16th January we took our Young Voices Choir, made up of children from Years 5 and 6, to the BP Pulse Live Arena in Birmingham to sing with over 4000 other children from many different schools.

We were sat directly behind the stage and had the most amazing view of the percussion section, which made our experience even more exciting. We saw the percussionist playing so many instruments, including the kettle drums, rain stick, bongos and even a coca cola bottle!

Together with all the schools, we rehearsed the songs we had been practising in our choir sessions. We had to make sure we were listening to and following the conductor to create the most amazing music together. On top of singing so many wonderful songs, we also were taught dance moves, sang with MC Grammar and at the end of the day took part in the most joyous concert for our parents which couldn't help but make everyone smile!



Girls County Football Final

On Friday 31st January, Swavesey Village College hosted the Girls County Football Finals. The children from the eight Primary Schools across the county had the opportunity to play against each other in a round robin tournament. The girls worked well as a team scoring goals and defending well. At the end of the tournament all of the girls were presented with a certificate of attendance. Well done to the girls that took part.



Straw Bear Festival

The AJS Plough Gang dance group performed at the annual Straw Bear Festival in Whittlesey on 11th January 2025.

The group were very proud to dance in the market square in front of hundreds of festival goers, accompanied by a small band of AJS staff musicians on the recorder, clarinet and tuba!

This year, the dancers wore specially made 'rag coats' in school colours. The coats were made by Kristina Buffham, Lisa Stephenson and Sarah Wells who spent hours making them over the Christmas holidays. Thank you!

A huge thank you to Kirsty White, Hayley Cradock and Sarah Combes who supported the children at this event.



Retirement

On Friday 31st January, we said goodbye to Cathy and Chris who retired from their cleaning roles at AJS. Collectively they worked as cleaners for nearly 80 years - an incredible achievement. They will be sorely missed by their colleagues in the cleaning team and by all staff and children who have benefited from their hard work over the past 40-odd years! We wish them both every happiness in their retirement.

Staff Recognition - Jan Woodland - for her dedication and cheerfulness every day braving the traffic on Drybread Road as the AJS Lollipop Lady.



AJS marks Children's Mental Health Week with Seed Planting Activity

To celebrate Children's Mental Health Week, children joined in a fun seed planting activity to represent personal growth and well-being. This year's theme, 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself,' encouraged children to reflect on the importance of looking after their mental health. The aim was to inspire self-care, resilience, and mindfulness, creating a positive and supportive atmosphere for everyone. The seeds will (hopefully!) grow into a wildflower meadow on the school field.

Throughout the week, there were various activities and resources for students and parents to help start important conversations about emotional well-being.

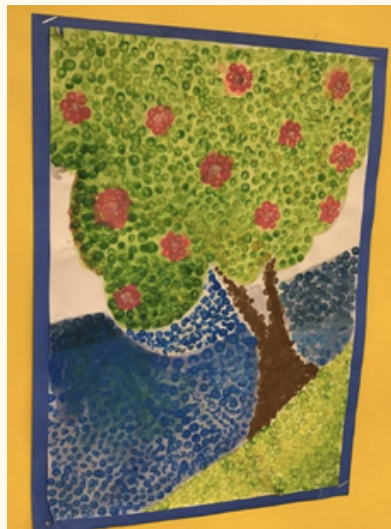
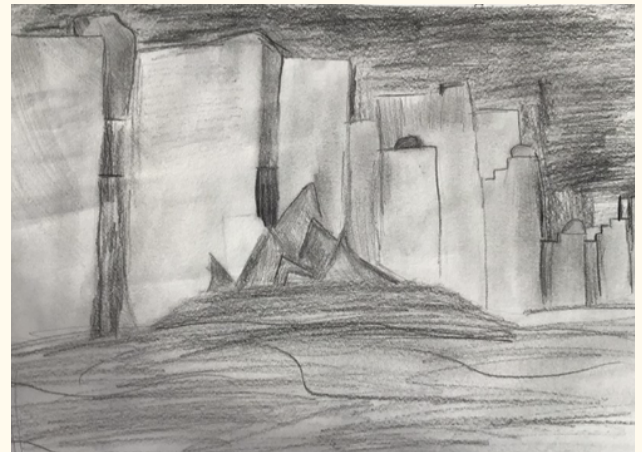
Soke Education Trust are on facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Follow us to see the latest news from our schools.

Gunthorpe

We have been both pleased and enthused by the impact of the CUSP Reading and Writing curriculum approaches across school. The consistent structure of these lessons and the embedded small-steps practice has very much supported our children to access rich, ambitious and diverse texts which will in turn support their writing. We are excited for the next stage of our CUSP journey!

Classes across school are enjoying working from the SET Art curriculum unit plans this academic year. Year 6 in particular showed their artistic skills and talents through their first two units: the first one involved painting, with a focus on pointillism, and in the second the children focused on perspective drawing, where the children created their own cityscapes. We are looking forward to further developing our Art curriculum with staff CPD planned for this term.

Our Key Stage 2 classes proudly showcased their learning to their parents and carers in our recent Celebration of Learning events in school. Further events for Key Stage are to follow shortly!



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

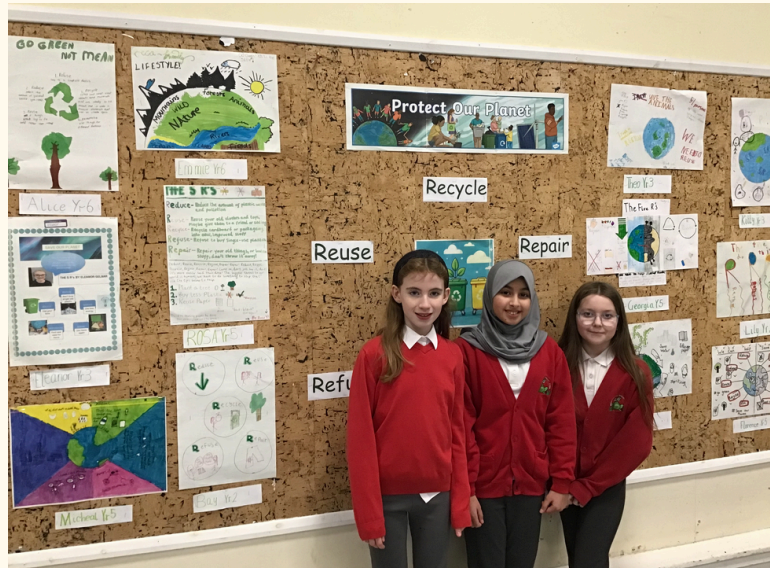
Northborough

Greetings from Northborough,

Our Planet Protectors have been very keen to share their developments:

"We had a visitor from 'Learning Through Landscapes' and showed her around the Orchard and school. She was very impressed with the work we were doing. She also gave us a kit of seeds and weather monitoring equipment to help us grow even more around school and we look forward to this.

We have also been focussing on the 'Five Rs' for Reducing Waste. We have been focussed on 'reduce' and how it can affect people around us. We led a competition which was a huge success and the winners received seeds and a handmade certificate."



We are also extremely proud to share that Andrea Jackson has passed her Post Graduate Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination with distinction.



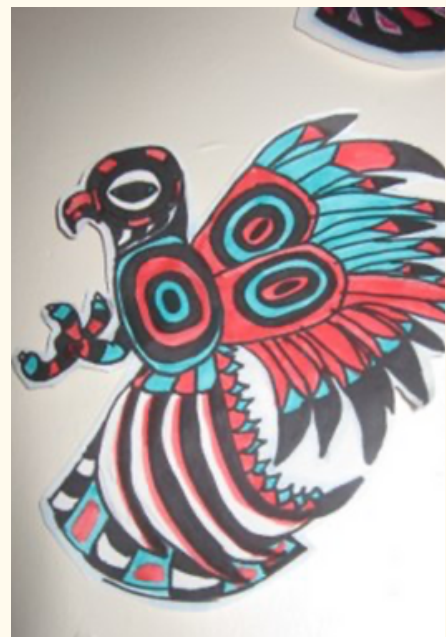
Werrington

Reception have been learning all about Chinese New Year. We listened to the story of the 'Great Race' which taught us all about the different animals of the Chinese Zodiac. We learnt that 2025 is the year of the snake and also that the children were born in either the year of the rat or the pig. We completed lots of scissor skill activities to create Chinese lanterns and twisty snakes!



In science, as part of year 2's topic 'Plants' this term and to bring their learning to life. The children were very excited to bring in their wellies on Tuesday for our 'Welly Walk'. We walked around the school grounds on the lookout for new signs of plant growth. The children were able to see new daffodils coming through as well as new buds on the branches.

Year 6 have been learning about Native American art.



SET Up - Deputy Head Network

At the end of January, we held the second of three sessions for our Deputy Head Teachers, gathering six leaders from across the Trust. These sessions aim to promote growth, collaboration, and innovation among our leadership team, by focusing on leadership skills and strategic thinking, ultimately benefiting our pupils and the wider school community.

A significant part of the session was dedicated to developing a theory of change, specifically addressing a key school improvement priority. This exercise encouraged our leaders to think critically about the necessary steps for meaningful change in their schools. By mapping out this process, they have begun to lay the groundwork for strategies that will positively impact our pupils' education.

Another important aspect of the session was the emphasis on increasing staff capacity, opportunity, and motivation. Our Deputy Head Teachers discussed ways to empower their teams and create an environment where new strategies can be effectively implemented. This approach acknowledges that successful change depends on the engagement of our entire staff.

Looking ahead, the final session will involve our leaders completing an implementation plan. This crucial step will include defining monitoring activities to demonstrate the impact of their chosen strategies. By establishing clear metrics and evaluation methods, we aim to ensure that our efforts lead to tangible improvements in our pupils' educational experiences.

I appreciate the commitment shown by our Deputy Head Teachers. Their participation in these sessions reflects their dedication to improving our schools. The insights and strategies developed during these meetings will contribute to the ongoing growth of Soke Education Trust.

As we continue, I look forward to seeing how these leadership initiatives enhance learning experiences for our pupils.



SET...Coffee & Catch-UP

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

Thursday 6th March 3.30-4.30

