



Spring Common Academy End of Term Newsletter February 2025

[An update from Rebecca, Headteacher.....](#)

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the midway point of the Spring Term, I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on the fantastic progress we've made as a school community and share some key updates with you all.

A Warm Welcome to Our Early Years Families

We are delighted to announce the reopening of our Early Years Class. The refreshed facilities have been met with enthusiasm, and it's heartening to see the positive impact on both children and their families. A heartfelt welcome to all our new families joining us this term—we are so pleased to have you as part of our community.

Listening to Our Community

Our Parent and Carer Survey has recently been circulated. Your feedback is invaluable, helping us to enhance our provision and celebrate the areas where we are excelling. We warmly encourage you to share your thoughts. Additionally, our pupils are engaging in their

Pupil Voice Survey, with advocacy support provided where appropriate. Their insights play a vital role in shaping their learning experiences.

School Improvement Focus: The 'Big 3'

Our commitment to continuous improvement is guided by our 'Big 3' priorities:

1. **Strengthening Early Years:** The revitalization of our Early Years environment and curriculum has been a focal point, ensuring our youngest learners receive the best possible start.
2. **Elevating Teaching and Learning:** Staff meetings and lesson visits have centred on enhancing reading experiences and phonics teaching. Thanks to the generous support from family fundraising and a Foyle grant, we've been able to purchase new resources to enrich our library areas.
3. **Supporting Positive Behaviour:** We've expanded our Therapeutic Thinking training, embedding this approach more deeply within our school culture to foster a nurturing and supportive environment for all pupils.

Governance and Leadership

Our Governors' Academy Advisory Group (AAG) continues to play a crucial role as a 'critical friend' to the school. They have reviewed a range of termly reports, offering thoughtful discussions on our priorities. We are pleased to announce the following roles within the AAG:

- **Chair**
- **Vice Chair**
- **Safeguarding Lead**
- **Pupil Premium Lead**
- **Health and Safety Lead**

Their dedication helps ensure we maintain high standards across all areas of school life.

Celebrating Parental Engagement

It has been truly uplifting to welcome so many parents and carers to our recent open afternoon. This term's focus on personal development provided engaging activities across the school:

- **Outdoor Planting** in Early Years and 1J
- **Road Safety** workshops in the Lower School
- **Online Safety** sessions in the Upper School

Thank you to everyone who participated—your involvement enriches our school community and supports our children's learning in meaningful ways.

As we continue through the term, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the dedication of our staff, the enthusiasm of our pupils, and the unwavering support of our families. Together, we are creating an environment where every child can thrive.

Best wishes,

Rebecca

[An update from Leigh, Deputy Headteacher....](#)

This half term has really flown by, with classes getting stuck into new topics with gusto. Our corridor displays are a testament to some of the exciting and creative learning which is going on in lessons, and the highlight of my week is always our whole school assembly where we have the opportunity to celebrate each other's successes.

I know that, despite the cold weather, lots of us are benefiting from the brighter mornings. It has been a pleasure to see pupils across all the age groups continuing to explore our outside areas, particularly our woodland area as part of our Forest School offer. I know that many pupils are looking forward to spring and anticipating the field being dry enough to be accessible again.

Many classes continue to take their learning into the community, which has so many benefits. Lots of parents and carers are rightly worried about their young person's safety in the wider world, and getting out with the support of school staff is a brilliant step towards keeping safe on the journey to adulthood. As ever, I look forward to more offsite activities being planned as the weather becomes more reliable.

Next half-term brings with it lots of exciting opportunities, such as a chance to celebrate the power and pleasure of reading and stories with World Book Day. I can't wait!

Take care! **Leigh**

[An update from Shari, Assistant Headteacher & Safeguarding Lead.....](#)

As we approach the end of the first half of the spring term, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your continued support and dedication to our school community. It's been a busy and exciting term so far and I am incredibly proud of the hard work our students have put in.

Parent and Carer Survey

This half term we invited parents and carers to provide feedback on the school experience so far this year. We have extended the response date to the **23rd February** to offer more time for parents and carers to engage. Information gathered, will help us identify what parents feel the school does well and areas we can aim to strengthen.

Attendance

Spring Common Academy 85.6% Cambridgeshire Special Schools Average 86.5%

So far, 122 students have good or excellent attendance. We will be recognising improved, good and excellent attendance, half termly, in our school assemblies by awarding student certificates.

Congratulations to the following 10 students who have 100% attendance this year:

- Jake
- Phoebe H
- Amelia
- Mylie
- Mason H
- Laila
- Teddy
- Hayden
- Idriss
- Sammy

A huge well done to Lilly A, Ben G and Ethan TD for improved attendance this half term.

As a school we aim to continue to work together with families and carers to increase attendance in school. When children attend school regularly, they engage in learning experiences that help them grow emotionally, socially, and academically.

Parents and carers can support good school attendance by:

- Arriving at school on time. Students arriving after 9:30am miss the morning register. This lowers attendance figures even when a student attends school.

- Create a consistent morning routine to help children feel prepared and comfortable for the school day. Please ask your class teacher if you would like an accessible morning schedule, social story or symbols created for at home.
- Communicate with your child or young person's teacher or support staff about any concerns that might affect attendance or participation. You can request a telephone call with myself as attendance led if you would like to discuss any concerns regarding attendance challenges.
- Encourage students by celebrating regular attendance milestones and providing motivation for days when school might feel challenging.

I would like to wish all of our families a relaxing and enjoyable half-term break. I hope you have the opportunity to spend quality time together and recharge for the exciting weeks ahead. **Shari**

An update from Sam, Assistant Headteacher.....

We have had a fantastic start to the term, and it has been wonderful to see our Early Years students settling in so well. They have adapted beautifully to their new routines, forming friendships, exploring their learning environment, and growing in confidence each day. Our new staff members have also settled in brilliantly, bringing enthusiasm and fresh ideas to our school community.

A huge **thank you** to everyone who joined us for our Parent and Carer Visit Day today. It was fantastic to welcome you into our classrooms and share a glimpse of your child's learning journey. The children were so excited to show you their activities, and we loved seeing you get involved—whether it was joining in with sensory play, exploring outdoor learning, or supporting their creative projects. Your presence and encouragement mean so much to both the students and our staff.

As we move into Spring, we are looking forward to more outdoor and off-site learning experiences. Our students will have opportunities to explore nature, develop their independence, and engage in hands-on activities that bring their learning to life. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

Thank you for your continued support—we truly value our partnership with you in your child's education. If you have any feedback from the Parent and Carer Visit Day or any questions about the upcoming term, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Have a great half term - **Sam**

An update from Amanda, Swimming Teacher.....



Another great term for swimming with lots of certificates given out to pupils that have achieved the next step in swimming.

A special shout out this term for Bryon in 2LC who has worked really hard on his confidence in the water and trusting staff in the pool. Swimming on his back has been hard for Byron. We started off with just walking backwards and looking up at the ceiling, after a couple of months Bryon had built up enough confidence and was ready to start lying back with the support of a trusted adult. As you can see in the photo Bryon has got great body position when on his back with an adult. Well done Bryon, keep up the great work!

A closer look at what our classes have been up to.....

2TS



2TS have been exploring the Asian Rainforest environment linked to our Sensory Story of The King of the Forest, this has included:

- Exploring through sight of the environment - the photos show us looking at the Forest Environment umbrella with the foliage, vines and fairy lights to represent the filtered light of the lower canopy, that is why the lights were dimmed too
- Sounds of the birds and animals of the Asian Rainforest played through the Clever Touch
- Smell of the lower canopy with damp leaves and twigs in a Sensory Sniff bag
- Feel/touch - spray bottle of water and hair dryer on warm setting to represent the hot, humid weather of the lower canopy

- We also had a Tuff Tray of Sensory Experiences to represent the bark, leaves and some of the animals of the Rainforest

Have a fantastic half term break and we look forward to more exciting learning opportunities next half term.

Tabitha and the 2TS team

4DW



Wow! What a busy half Spring Term we have had in class 4DW!

Some of the things we have learned about are; Chinese New Year, worked hard on developing our money skills, used a mosaic technique in our creativity, participated in story telling week by having peers from another class come to peer read with us, created our favourite story characters by using a drawing app on the clever touch board, listened to a sensory story about Scotland and making a variety of different foods in our life skills lessons. We have also enjoyed learning about different emotions, vocabulary used to describe these emotions and listening to stories about emotions.

LB-PD



The first half of Spring term was very exciting for LB-PD!

The pupils explored different ways to travel. They enjoyed their sensory story “My little car” and experienced a variety of sounds and vibrations on the resonance board. The bumpy road was their favourite one. Their journey to Cambridge Junction was a great experience too. They loved the multisensory performance showing a significant level of engagement.

3KW



This half term 3KW have really enjoyed working hard in the life skills suite. We have made tasty dishes such as beans on toast, a traditional Chinese dessert of warm coconut milk and bananas and a Burns Night pudding of Cranachan. The pupils have demonstrated excellent kitchen safety skills and have enjoyed trying new things. We wish you all a very happy half term and cant wait for the rest of the year.

Kirsty & the 3KW team

2SW



We have been really focusing on our phonics work and our reading skills. We have been learning the long "oo" sound in our phonics and we have had lots of fun learning it in different ways. One of our favourite ways is to use the washing line to spell out some words using the letters that have blown away! In our maths we have been working incredibly hard on multiplication and division; including doubling and halving.

Happy half term!

1KI



In 1KI this term our topic has been 'Our World'. We've used this for many aspects of our learning, but we've really enjoyed our themed painting activities! We've looked at volcanoes, recreating one in science before painting our own. We have also had a go at painting rainbows in Attention Autism, they loved making all the colours with the sponge. We even did some 'under the sea' painting using lots of blues and greens to create our own oceans. The class really got stuck into this; we can't wait to see what we can get up to next half term!

3RJ



This term, 3RJ have been learning about the British Isles. So far, we've looked at England and Scotland, and we're excited to learn about Wales and Ireland after the half term. We've really enjoyed using sensory stories to help us explore the key aspects and landmarks of each country, from getting wet in the rain (a spray bottle of water) to spinning the London Eye (a bike wheel with lights on) to trying classic foods (shortbread was a favourite!), 3RJ students have shown great enthusiasm and participation.

2MM



2MM have enjoyed exploring farm and wild animals as a part of our topic story "The king of the forest". Pupils have made some great progress engaging well for their structured TEACCH 1:1 Literacy and Maths as well as developing their social skills engaging in sensory play sharing resources together.

4VC



4VC have had an incredibly busy half term with many visits into the community. We took part in a conference with other young people with additional needs to learn about health services, community safety and who we can get support from as we get older. This was in Brampton.

Another trip took us out to CRC in Huntingdon to help design a health questionnaire for SEND persons aged between 14 and 25yrs old.

We continue to work on our accreditation skills whilst also practising work related skills such as working in the school shop. One of our other skills in preparation for adulthood, is to

continue our formal reading practice on a daily basis and also have opportunities to read for pleasure. We continue to apply our skills in a functional way wherever and whenever we can.

Well done 4VC!

2CR



2CR enjoyed an engaging sensory story where they learned about the fascinating animals that live in the forest. This activity provided a wonderful opportunity for them to practice sequencing events in a story while incorporating Makaton signs to enhance their communication skills.

The sensory aspect of the lesson was particularly valuable, allowing students to satisfy their sensory needs through hands-on exploration of new textures. It was a great chance for them to be flexible, open, and creative. The experience not only enriched their learning but also supported their development in a fun and interactive way.

1IJ



We have had a busy half-term in 1IJ! Aside from our usual curriculum lessons and weekly activities like Ball Pool and Sensory Room, we have also started to prepare our garden area for the springtime. When the weather has allowed, we have enjoyed going out in pairs with grown-ups to weed the planting beds and turn the soil. This has been great for our motor skill development as well as our understanding of the world. We are looking forward to the warmer weather when we can plant some seeds and see them grow!

Have a great half term - Isobelle & the team

UB-ML



Ahoy there me hearties!

UBML are pirates this term - they have awakened their senses in sensology smelling spices and flowers from the West Indies, feeling loofahs and scrubbing brushes on their skin for scrubbing the decks and listening to percussion instruments that make the sounds of a storm at sea. In music they have been playing instruments to the sounds of sea shanty songs and the theme tune from Pirates of the Caribbean. Banging drums, shaking maracas and bells and being pushed this way, that way and over the Irish sea. They have made treasure chests, shells and starfish with play dough. In cooking, they helped make chocolate chip cookies, minus the weevils, coconut loaf cake and mojita tray bake, minus the white rum!

EY-LW



We are delighted that the Early Years classroom at Spring Common is open again and the children have been joining steadily and settling into school life. It has been a pleasure to see

them making progress already. We are looking forward to welcoming more children very soon.

P16TN



This half term in P16TN we have really been focussing on developing our independent living skills. The focus in cooking has been on students learning how to prepare a cold, healthy snack for themselves. They have prepared sandwiches, bagels and pittas with growing independence. Students have also been learning how to safely cut their ingredients with a knife. Alongside the food preparation, P16TN students have been taking it in turns to do the washing and drying up duty! They have also started writing shopping lists and going to the shops to buy the ingredients needed for our life skills lessons. Hopefully, you will soon start to see these skills in practice at home!

Have a lovely half term! **Tilly, Caroline and Bobby**

4SB



This term 4SB have been reading *The Colour Monster* and exploring our emotions. The students have engaged well with the text and have gained confidence in identifying how they are feeling at different points in the day. We have also investigated our hormones in Science focusing on Fright, Flight or Freeze. All students were able to name something that makes them scared.

3DH



This half term in Science, 3DH have been exploring the fascinating topic of **natural disasters**. So far, the pupils have been learning about **hurricanes** and **tsunamis**, gaining an understanding of how these powerful forces of nature occur and their impact on the world.

When studying **hurricanes**, the children had the exciting opportunity to create their own mini hurricanes in a bowl! Using warm water, washing-up liquid, and food dye, they observed how stirring the mixture created a swirling motion—just like the movement of a real hurricane. Through this experiment, we also discussed how hurricanes form over warm ocean waters and how this warmth provides the energy needed for them to grow and intensify.

We look forward to continuing our exploration of natural disasters in the coming weeks.

2LC



In class 2LC we have been looking at our different emotions for "Mental Health Week"! The children have explored them by talking about them, acting them out beautifully and explaining what different emotions they go through. Great work, 2LC!

We have also look at the City Mouse and Country Mouse in literacy. We did some great drawings of mice and came up with some amazing words to describe the characters in the story!

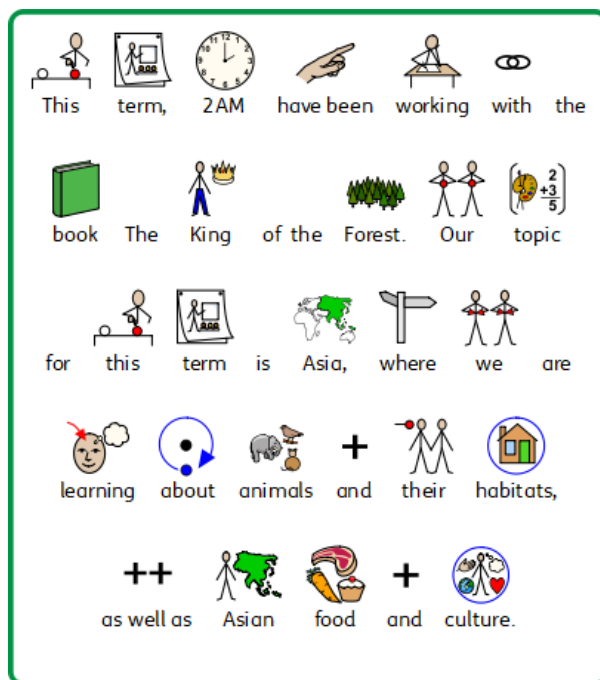
3CW



3CW have been very busy this half term! We have been converting measurements in Maths, playing netball in PE, and have also been enjoying walks into town to buy ingredients to use in our Life Skills sessions every week!

However, our awesome learning has come in Literacy and Topic, where 3CW have been learning about the history of the British Isles. This has involved lots of work around the Roman invasion nearly 2000 years ago, and the amazing things we have from the Romans that we still use and see today!

2AM



2KH



In 2KH we have been working on big and small, tall and short. Some of us have been identifying between big and small objects. Some of us have been putting these in order from biggest to smallest/tallest to shortest. Others have been measuring with cubes. We have all been working really hard and have made some great progress.

P16LC



P16LC was thrilled to attend Frozen's Light performance of 'The Ancient Oak of Baldour' at the Junction in Cambridge. This was a tale of love, loss and all that's between! From captivating music, special effects of wind, rain and smoke, as well as yummy food to have, nothing was left out. The students and staff were blown away by the fully immersive experience and can't wait for the next time!

Easter egg donation requests.....

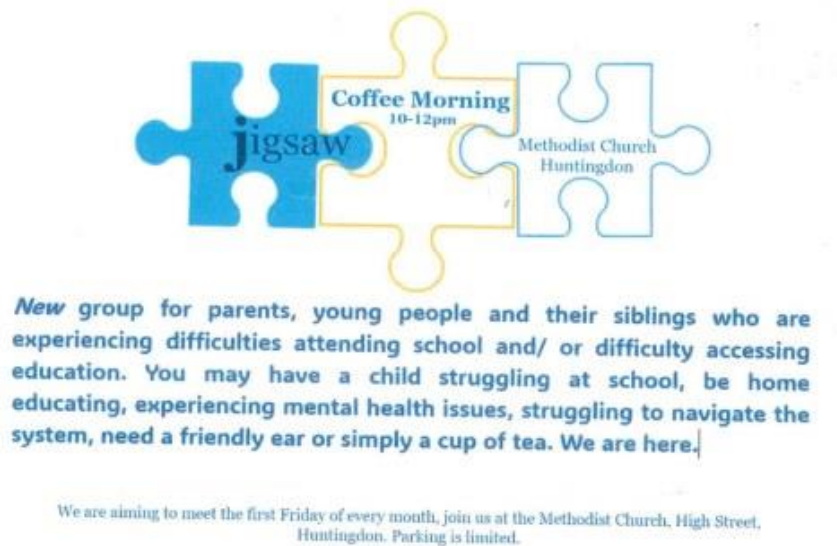


Post-16 are excited to be hosting an Easter raffle and Spring pop-up shop next half term. We look forward to sharing more information after the holidays. In the meantime, we would be very grateful to receive donations of Easter eggs and Easter treats that we can use as raffle

prizes. If you are able to help us with any donations, please can these be sent into school and labelled for the Post-16 Easter raffle. Thank you in advance for your support.

Tilly & class P16TN

Jigsaw coffee morning invite.....



Back to School.....

This is a polite reminder to inform you we have a Staff Training Day on Monday 24th February 2025 so this means **no pupils** will be in school on this day. All pupils will return back to school on **Tuesday 25th February 2025**.

Please see below the term dates for the current and next academic year.

TERM DATES 2024-25



***Autumn Term 2024 (3 September to 20 December)**

Staff training day: Tuesday 3 September
Staff training day: Wednesday 4 September
Autumn term opens: Thursday 5 September
Half term: 28 October – 1 November
Staff training day: Monday 4 November
Autumn term closes: Friday 20 December

Spring Term 2025 (6 January to 4 April)

Spring term opens: Monday 6 January
Half term: 17 - 21 February
Staff training day: Monday 24 February
Spring term closes: Friday 4 April

Summer Term 2025 (22 April to 23 July)

Summer term opens: Tuesday 22 April
Early May Bank Holiday: 5th May
May Half term: 26 May – 30 May
Staff training day: Friday 11 July
Summer term closes: Wednesday 23 July



*Prestley Wood Academy will be opening a new building and shall have a planned, staggered start to Autumn term 2024.

TERM DATES 2025-26



Autumn Term 2025 (1 September to 19 December)

Staff training day: Monday 1 September
Staff training day: Tuesday 2 September
Staff training day: Wednesday 3 September
Autumn term opens: Thursday 4 September
Half term: 27 - 31 October
Staff training day: Monday 3 November
Autumn term closes: Friday 19 December

Spring Term 2026 (5 January to 27 March)

Spring term opens: Monday 5 January
Half term: 16 - 20 February
Staff training day: Monday 23 February
Spring term closes: Friday 27 March

Summer Term 2026 (13 April to 20 July)

Summer term opens: Monday 13 April
Early May Bank Holiday: Monday 4 May
May Half term: 25 May – 29 May
Staff training day: Friday 3 July
Summer term closes: Monday 20 July



Student calendar.....

2025



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1st	2nd
3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th
17th no school	18th no school	19th no school	20th no school	21st no school	22nd weekend	23rd weekend
24th no school	25th back to school	26th	27th	28th	29th weekend	30th weekend

Dates for your diary.....

- Tuesday 25th February - Return to school. Start of Summer term.
- Wednesday 5th March - Parents evening. More information to follow.
- Thursday 6th March - World book day. More information to follow.
- 18th - 21st March - Belgian students visiting Spring Common Academy
- WC 31st March Autism awareness week.
- Spring term closes - Last day of term - Friday 4th April.
- Summer term opens - back to school Tuesday 22nd April.