



Covid-19 Update

I will be sending a separate letter out about Boris Johnson's announcement on Monday about 'Living with COVID-19'. This will give detailed information about how this will affect us at school.

Expressive Arts Week

The children really enjoyed our Expressive Arts Week. We are going to display the children's artwork in the shared areas and will be inviting you to come to see what they have created. Please see dates and times on the right.

Monster Phonics

We are so pleased to have introduced our new phonics scheme into school. The children really enjoyed the dressing up launch day and were introduced to the characters from the scheme. I have already had the opportunity to watch the phonics scheme in action in every class and I have been really impressed with the engagement from the children and how they have already learned and are using the actions to support their learning. There is additional information about 'Monster Phonics' in the 'Curriculum' section of our website.

Parent Consultations

Year One parent consultations have taken place this week and FS2 parent consultations will also be taking place during this half term. You will be sent a Parentmail in due course with information about how to sign up for an appointment. This will give you the opportunity to meet with your child's teacher and discuss their progress and targets. These appointments will take place in person, unless you request a telephone call.

Walk to School on Wednesdays

As part of our Healthy Schools initiative and to promote health and well-being, we would encourage as many of you as possible to commit to walking to school at least once a week. Studies have shown that children who walk, bike or scoot to school show much greater concentration in class. Walking to school is a great form of exercise for you and your child. It reduces the risk of obesity and heart disease, improves mood and generally does wonders for your young adventurer's health. It also helps to create good habits for an active lifestyle. Other reasons to consider are that it is fun, it enables you to talk about the world around you on the way to school and the children develop a better awareness of road safety. It is also better for the environment and it reduces the traffic on the roads. I am sure you will agree that these are all extremely good reasons to 'Walk to School on Wednesdays'.

Attendance

Elephants' Class has won the weekly attendance award twice in the past three weeks.



Well done Elephants!

Upcoming Events

28.2.22 – Children's Wellbeing Week

3.3.22 – World Book Day – Wear PJs and bring in your favourite bedtime story.

4.3.22 – Wear clothes that makes you feel good – the brighter the better!

7.3.22 – Tigers' Parent Consultations

8.3.22 – Zebras' Parent Consultations (& Tigers' – 3.00-5.30)

18.3.22 – Comic Relief Day

View Expressive Arts displays:

**23.3.22 – 3.00-3.30
Monkeys, Zebras, Giraffes, Hippos**

**24.3.22 – 3.00-3.30
Tigers, Lions, Elephants**

Contact Us

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Introducing.....Becky and Bertie - our Reading Dog!



I'm Becky, and this is Bertie – and we love coming into school to hear the children read!

Bertie is a Cavapoo – a cross between a Cavalier King Charles and a Poodle – and he was born in 2020. He is very soft, very friendly and rather small; and he loves being with children, and listening to them read.

We come into school every week, and listen to some of the children reading books to us. The children have all sorts of different reading abilities: some of them only come for a few weeks, and some of them are with us for longer – but we always notice big changes in them over their time coming to see us.

How did we come to do it?

It's all done through a special charity, Canine Concern. They connect dog owners with a variety of organisations in the community who love to welcome doggy visitors, because it benefits those communities so much – whether they are schools, care homes, hospitals, or a whole range of other places where a dog can bring lots of joy, calm and support.

My two not-so-little boys used to go to Loughton Manor, and when they left in 2021 I missed being part of this fabulous school's community very much. So when I saw a request for a Canine Concern dog to visit school and listen to some reading every week, I couldn't wait to volunteer!

We applied via the charity, and met our local Canine Concern rep, Penny. She talked to us about what's involved, and most importantly, she had to be sure that the job would suit Bertie well, and not cause him any anxiety - as well as making sure that we would both be being suitable for the school. Luckily, she was happy to recommend us and we started our visits in September 2021.

What happens?

Some of the children lack confidence in their reading, and to begin with they're happiest to show us the pictures and talk about them – but very soon they build up to reading some words to us, and that grows each time we visit. Every child we've met has advanced to reading us a full story in one session, by the time they finish coming to see us!

Some of them are a little bit hesitant about Bertie when they meet him, but they gradually grow more comfortable in his company - letting him sit next to them while they read, and giving him a pat here and there. Bertie is very calm and adapts his behaviour to each child. He learns very quickly which ones love to fuss him, and who prefers to sit quietly, and he remembers that each week.

All of the children love giving Bertie one of his tasty treats at the end of each book – and that's one of his favourite bits too!

We don't just sit and listen to books, either. We were delighted to join the whole of Year 2 on their first school trip after a long lockdown: a walk to Central Library! Bertie absolutely loved being out and about on the lead with all the children, and I was very proud to accompany him on his mission to help them discover some new books.

Loughton Manor is such a nurturing environment, and children are supported in their learning and development in so many different ways, all day long. We are very proud and privileged to be part of that beautiful tapestry of their education, and their precious time at this wonderful infant school.

Parental Questionnaire Feedback

Thank you so much to those of you who completed our parent questionnaire. This has given us extremely useful feedback. We appreciate the positive comments we received, but we always strive to do the best that we can for our children. The main concerns parents had were around not having a clear understanding of what the children are learning and the progress they are making. We send weekly Parentmails to you explaining what your child is learning week by week and there is extremely detailed planning available on our website under the 'Curriculum' section if you would like to find out more.

Communication has definitely been a challenge throughout the Pandemic and we acknowledge this. As a result, we set up year group emails and teachers will respond to these, but bear in mind that these will only be checked when teachers are not in class. We understood the need for you to see your child's work so we invited KS1 parents in for the Book Looks recently – we hope this helped you to see the progress your child is making. In addition, we have moved back to face to face parent consultations as we feel that these are more personal, and also give you an opportunity to look at your child's work and discuss it in greater detail. In addition, we also hope to be in a position to re-introduce parent workshops soon as we understand the importance of these.

Another suggestion, which we are currently looking into, is an electronic system for notifying parents about progress. This has just been introduced in the Foundation Stage and we are exploring if and how this could be used effectively throughout the school, whilst not having a detrimental impact on staff workload and wellbeing.

Daniela Thompson Headteacher