



Mendlesham: visit to the Museum of Zoological Life

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As we approach the end of the Summer Term, we would like to thank all our pupils for their hard work and perseverance and congratulate everyone for all they have achieved this year.

Secondly, in our section highlighting our fantastic volunteer governance teams, the spotlight is on Phil Thirkettle, Trustee and current Chair of the Education and Standards Committee.

Thirdly, it has been another event filled Term at all our schools, with activities and achievements aplenty. Please do take time to read about all the schools in our Trust.

Finally, we hope that you enjoy our Summer Term Newsletter providing a snapshot of the news and activities that have taken place across our Trust and wish you all a very safe, happy and relaxing summer holiday.

Key Messages

Safeguarding during the summer holidays

During the summer break, our school's safeguarding teams only monitor their email address periodically. If a child is in immediate danger, **call 999**. For other serious or urgent issues, contact Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership directly on **0808 800 4005** (freephone) rather than waiting for a reply from the school. Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership website: <https://www.suffolksp.org.uk/concerned>

- Children and young people can contact Childline free and confidentially on **0800 1111**.
- Parents and carers can contact the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**.
- If a child or young person is struggling with their mental health, they can **text YM to 85258** for free, 24/7 crisis support. Parents wanting advice can also contact the YoungMinds Parents Helpline on **0808 802 5544**.

Online Safety: Social Media and Mental Health

From Spring 2027, under-16s will no longer be able to use certain social media. However, an estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are currently consuming; what they're posting; and what interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down a rabbit hole that isn't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which enthralls young people, but we can still help children to be mindful of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK ... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

In the guide on page 8, you'll find tips such as how to hide content, setting daily limits and discussing what children have seen online.

To complement the guide, there are a couple of webinars that Parents can access:

- [Managing the Impact of social media](#) – for primary aged children
- [Managing the Impact of social media](#) – for secondary aged children

You will need to hold a National College account to view this resource, your school will be able to confirm access.



Suffolk Libraries: Reading Quest

[Suffolk Libraries Reading Quest](#)



Get involved in Suffolk Libraries summer reading programme for children, open to all ages and all reading abilities!

Reading Quest is an exciting opportunity to get the whole family involved in reading and making memories this summer!

Children of all ages can sign up at any library and receive their case file from **18 July** onwards. You can sign up at any time during the school holidays to start your journey.

You don't need to read a set number of books – the summer reading programme is designed to

encourage children to enjoy reading at their own pace in a fun, interactive way. Reading for pleasure helps children build self-esteem and improve wellbeing throughout life.

Each time you visit the library, take your case file back to receive a sticker or two to celebrate your reading journey! Collect a case file from the library to get started.

Governance Spotlight:

Phil Thirkettle



Phil is one of our experienced Trustees, with a long history of being involved in education and governance. Here, Phil reflects on what has shaped his life ...

Born into a North Suffolk farming family, Phil studied at Essex University as a mature student. He then worked in Further Education, originally teaching Business Studies and retiring as Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality at West Suffolk College in 2013. He also worked for the Open University as a Social Sciences Tutor and Examiner from 1984 to 2014.

Phil has two children and two grandchildren. He is actively involved in the local politics of his hometown of many years, Diss. He and his family are all season-ticket holders at Norwich City FC and share a love of the outdoors and live music.

‘It has always been, and still is, a privilege to work in Education, doing my utmost to help everyone achieve their ambitions and full potential’.

My sources of joy are ...

- Family and friends, especially my wife who I’ve been with for over 53 years, my two sons and two grandsons
- Being on a ferry to Scotland’s western isles
- Norwich scoring a goal and watching cricket
- The Waveney valley
- Live music and reading
- Working with others with shared values and common goals, where our sum is greater than the individual parts – we are so much better together.

If my career had not been in education, I would have become ... I’ve always been better at taking opportunities that present themselves rather than having a plan. I could have been a farmer but wisely turned my father’s offer down.

When things get tough I ... Carry on one step at a time!

The book I wish everyone would read ... Anything with George Smiley in and anything by James Lee Burke. Years ago, it would have been *Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell, but I’ve mellowed!

The thing that motivates me most of all ... Doing my best and seeing through what I’ve committed too.

I’d like to tell my younger self ... Keep going and you’ll get there [wherever that is] and whatever happens remember the sun always come up - at least for a few million years anyway!

News from our Schools:



Britannia was successful in its recent application to be awarded the Showcase School for Talk for Reading. This is indeed a prestigious step forward, as we are now one of only four primary schools nationally who hold this award. This will involve many primary schools visiting us over the next few years in order to observe good practice within the school related to the teaching of Talk for Reading principles as well as Talk for Writing strategies. It will also allow good

networking opportunities with other schools who teach reading and writing in this way which will help to retain a vibrancy and ambition in Britannia's English planning moving forward.

In May, we took a group to take part in the national Dodgeball finals in Kettering. The team of girls performed superbly and were playing against an incredible pedigree of teams who presented a daunting challenge in terms of their competitiveness. But as ever, Britannia were unbowed and were not intimidated by this experience, instead using it as an opportunity to pick up new skills and game playing techniques acquired from the battlefield.

We made it through to the boys' football cup final in July taking on the Oaks Primary for the prestigious Owain Richards Cup.

Over the Summer we are having some major refurbishment work taking place in our Nursery outdoor area as well as brand new windows being fitted at the front of our school to improve our appearance to passers by!



There has been a celebratory end to the academic year for all at Cedars Park. The school has been awarded the Bronze Young Carers Award; School Games Silver Award and Silver again for the children's work as Junior Road Safety Officers. We also say a huge well done to one of our pupils in Year 6: Daisy was chosen (following a rigorous selection process) to join the Great Britain Karate Squad. Daisy will be representing GB at the European Championships in Barnsley in October, and the Unified World Championships in Italy at the end of October. She will be competing in the Kata part of the competition - which is a set routine of moves, performed with rigour, precision and speed. We couldn't be prouder and wish Daisy the very best of luck!

Resilience is but one of our school values; Daisy, along with all of our wonderful pupils at Cedars Park, has shown she has it in droves! Whether it's been sporting events, school trips or important final assessments, the children amaze us with their 'can do' attitudes and willingness to take on a challenge. We now look forward to an important milestone in the school's journey - our 20th Anniversary! A special picnic is being planned and we can't wait to welcome parents into school to celebrate with us in the new term.

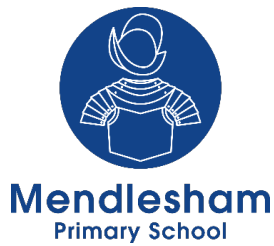


Bacton pupils enjoyed an exciting visit from author and rapper Christian Foley, thanks to the generous support of our PTA, Friends. Through his engaging workshops, infectious enthusiasm and lively performances, Christian inspired children across the school.

Robins and Finches delighted in sharing Oddsocktopus before creating their own magical Oddsocktopus characters. Meanwhile, Kestrels, Owls and Eagles explored the fun of language through tongue twisters and rhymes from Christian's book Babbling Animals, with plenty of laughter along the way.

It was a memorable day that celebrated creativity, reading and the joy of words. Visits like this are an important part of our enrichment offer, helping children see how the skills they develop in school can be used in the wider world. Meeting authors, performers and other professionals brings learning to life, broadens aspirations and helps pupils understand the many different opportunities and careers that may be open to them in the future.





Children enjoyed an exciting scooter and skateboarding session this term, thanks to the generous support of our PTA, FOMSA. Through expert coaching and plenty of encouragement, pupils developed new skills, built confidence and embraced the challenge of trying something different.

Children have also enjoyed a wide range of enrichment opportunities throughout the year. Highlights from this term include Lower Key Stage 2 pupils attending the Food & Farm Fayre, where they learned about local farming, food production and the important role agriculture plays within our community. Elm and Holly classes visited the Museum of Zoological Life as part of their science learning, bringing classroom topics to life through hands-on experiences and fascinating exhibits. Meanwhile, Chestnut and Cherry classes showcased their creativity by producing films for our Film Festival as part of their end-of-year celebrations.



As we come to the end of another fantastic school year, there has been so much to celebrate across our school community. Our Year 6 pupils have enjoyed a memorable final term, including an exciting camp out, a wonderful Prom, and a spectacular performance of *The Wizard of Oz*, which showcased their confidence, creativity, and talent. We were also delighted by the success of our Summer Fair, which brought

families together for a fun-filled day and helped raise valuable funds for the school. Across every phase, our pupils have taken part in Sports Days, demonstrating excellent teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship while enjoying the opportunity to celebrate being active together.

We have also been fortunate to enjoy some unique learning experiences this term. Gemma's farm visit was a huge hit, with children meeting two friendly donkeys, ducks and sheep, creating lasting memories and bringing learning to life. Looking ahead, we are incredibly excited about the arrival of our brand-new swimming pool in September. This fantastic addition will provide wonderful opportunities for pupils to develop their swimming skills and build confidence in the water. We look forward to another exciting year ahead and wish all our families a happy, safe, and relaxing summer break.



It has been an incredibly busy and exciting term at Copleston. We were incredibly proud of the attitudes and dedication of students in Years 11 and 13 throughout their courses and particularly during the exam season, and we said farewell to them in style with the traditional shirt-signings, final assemblies, the annual Y11 football match and two wonderful Prom events. We also met our newest intake of students through successful

induction days for our incoming Year 7 and 12. We have welcomed several visiting speakers for talks and workshops and students have attended a number of external visits and competitions. We celebrated success in sporting events such as the South Suffolk Cup and in other challenges such as the Suffolk Speak Out competition and the UKMT Junior Mathematical Challenge, with three students progressing to the prestigious second round and one achieving a gold award in this! Two former students also visited Buckingham Palace to receive their gold Duke of Edinburgh award.

Our Year 10 students received some superb feedback from their work experience placements, and we are very grateful to all the employers who gave them such a positive insight into employment. Our Sports Day is always a highlight, and



this year was no exception, with students responding positively to the hot weather and fully immersing themselves in all the activities. The inflatables were particularly popular! Our DofE students had several overnight adventures around Suffolk and beyond and our Year 8 students visited France to experience the culture and to practise their language skills. In the last week of this term, three teams of sixth form students will travel to Tanzania, Nepal and Panama on Turing Global Citizenship trips. We held a wonderful week of Celebration Evenings at which

we reflected on so many of the achievements of our fantastic students and at the time of writing, we are still looking forward to our Dance Show and our Musical Soiree. As always, we would like to thank all those who are part of the Copleston community for their support this term.

The Summer Term at Stowupland High School has been busy with a wide range of activities and trips. Students visited the First World War battlefields in Belgium, including sites around Ypres and the Somme, to study the history of the conflict. Other excursions included a trip to Wimbledon and a visit to Bawdsey Manor, where Mulberry Centre students worked on building their confidence and social skills. Additionally, Year 10 Geography students travelled to Felixstowe to complete fieldwork required for their GCSE course.

Academic and professional development remained a priority throughout the term. Year 10 students completed over 160 work experience placements across the county and beyond.

Meanwhile, Year 11 students finished their GCSE examinations and celebrated the end of the year with a superb Prom at Fynn Valley Golf Club. In the Art and Technology departments, 25 Year 9 students worked with a professional artist on the Jubilant project, creating a piece for a Youth Arts Festival in Stowmarket.

Vocational and physical activities also took place across the school. More than 100 students attended a Food and Farming event at Hollow Trees Farm in Semer.

Organised by the Suffolk Agricultural Association, the day allowed students to learn about various careers in the agricultural industry. Back in school, the annual Sports Day was held, with several long-standing records broken in both track and field events across multiple age groups.

The term concluded with the Summer Showcase, which was extended to two nights this year to accommodate all the participating acts. The event featured a variety of theatre, dance, and vocal performances from students across the school. These events capped off a hugely productive term that highlighted the diverse interests and efforts of the entire school community.

Trust Capital Projects

Since the Trust merger and the formation of Oxlip Learning Partnership, the larger Trust now receives an annual capital grant to put to building repairs. This means we are no longer subject to the lottery of applying for funding and can take a more holistic view of what we can do. The Trust prioritises condition, health and safety and reducing the likelihood of school closure.

Capital funds have already supported projects at all seven Trust schools and plans are being drawn up for 2027 ...

Rose Hill Roofing

As part of Trust wide condition surveys, the school roof was highlighted as a priority for repair. Further surveys showed that most of the various roofs needed replacement and that many had minimal insulation.

Over the course of the summer term, roofing works have been taking place at Rose Hill primary School. As well as a new roof, the project also includes:

- A 25-year guarantee - reducing future repair costs
- A minimum of 100mm of insulation - reducing winter gas bills
- Redirecting water from internal to external downpipes - reducing flooding risk

The works are also part of longer-term sustainability initiatives, and this project will enable future installation of solar panels which will in turn support a replumb of all upstairs classrooms to electric heating with built in air conditioning. Four classrooms will see this installed this summer as part of the roofing works.

Most of the works have taken place during term time and as such we are grateful to the entire Rose Hill community for their patience and co-operation during this time. Term time works have allowed the whole roof to be replaced rather than as part of a three- or four-year programme. Monies saved, both from economies of scale and by avoiding the summer holidays, are being reinvested into decoration and other projects at the school.

The East of England Coop have also been key to this project by allowing the contractors to use their land neighbouring the school for access and storage.



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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthralls young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and these notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azim is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



Sources: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-53204695>
<https://www.pewresearch.org/january2018/social-media-algorithms/>

NOS National Online Safety®
 #WakeUpWednesday