

Cottesmore News

Newsletter - Winter Term 13.09.16



Bouncy castles and brilliant sunshine: the first weekend 'in' of the term meant fun for everyone as pupils and staff enjoyed some super out-of-doors activities. It's the perfect way to let off steam and forge some new friendships as everyone settles into a new school year.

Academic News

The new pupils were welcomed to Cottesmore on Thursday and the school has swiftly settled down into work mode. The children have met their new teachers and are getting to grips with the new curriculum aims for the current year.

At the top end of the school the 6th form have made a strong start and are aware of their pathways to success in scholarships, entrance examinations or Common Entrance. Many have benefitted from Mr Pearson's pre-test club and already hold offers from Eton, Winchester, King's, Radley and Marlborough. The girls are taking their preliminary scholarship entrance tests at Benenden next week and we wish Cece and Amber 'good luck'.

A number of our 6th form pupils have older siblings who have achieved great success in negotiating their own pathways to public school from Cottesmore — and this makes matters a little easier for the current cohort. Or, as Adam said: "If Cameron can do it, I'm certain that I can too!"

Many new children have also had siblings at Cottesmore, making their own adjustment to a new working environment that much easier. The perception of already being a member of the 'Cottesmore family' greatly helps integration and assimilation when joining the school.

Those making the transition from the Pre-prep are adapting to a longer working day and that they now have a series of specialist teachers, all graduates in their own disciplines. As always, there's a great deal of support for our pupils as these transitions are made.

Our new members of staff — Deputy Head Mr James Kerr and Head of Science Mr Hugo Elliott — are slipping seamlessly into their new roles as they return to Cottesmore. Mr Kerr has already noted the

impressive developments that have taken place since he left in 2010 and is delighted to be back here with his young family.

French

The term has started very positively and at the upper end of the school the 6th form wrote their first essays on Thursday afternoon showing great promise, (especially from Matt and Cece) despite the usual 'start of season' errors, e.g. j'ai allé. Everyone resolved to improve, with the 6th and 5th forms duly demolishing a CE reading comprehension at Saturday morning's prep! The signs are good for a repeat of last year's bumper crop of 'A' grades.

The 4th form have embarked on their first oral topic sheet for CE with 4E leading the way in using the conditional tense to outline their ideas for 'an ideal weekend'. Pizza restaurants featured heavily in these creative scenarios — parents may like to note!

At the lower end of the school, the delight in having two 1st forms has enabled their teachers to cross-fertilise ideas for linguistic development in the pre-term INSET sessions. The aim is to blend the beginners with those who have had recent exposure to French in our Pre-prep. The lessons throughout the school feed from the programme of study up to the syllabus for Common Entrance and Common Academic Scholarship. Certain of the top schools, (e.g. Eton), maintain their own scholarship exams which have definite and distinctive characteristics, readily available to the staff via the resources marshalled by Mr Waller, with his overview of academics across the school. The French papers vary from school to school and are described by Mr Hopkins as 'varied and interesting'.

Hobbies and Activities

The ever-popular Hobbies programme began in earnest on Saturday, with a wide range of activities to choose from. Some pupils honed their hockey skills on the astro turf, while a hardy bunch braved the relentless rain for a taste of pioneering. The model for the first session was an 'F' plan: food, foraging and fire. Some scrumped blackberries tasted very sweet indeed!

This week the full break-time activities programme gets under way, in which every child has a mid-morning break of 50 minutes for a burst of something quite different, away from the classroom. These activities include a swim in our pool, a golfing lesson from our professional coach or music lessons on virtually every instrument from ukulele to the harp. Cottesmore is indeed a busy place and the pace will quicken this week, gathering to a brisk momentum!

Above Stairs

Mr Revill has been delighted with the way in which the new boarding staff (Mrs Garside, Ms Ferris and Miss Arnott) and pupils have settled into life at Cottesmore. There is a fantastic, positive atmosphere around the school and he looks forward to the rest of this year.

The Pre-prep

The pep which characterises the Pre-prep has been much in evidence since the start of term and the children have settled in well, making a tremendous start on the comprehensive range of topics which will be covered this term. Here's each class's news this week:

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Reception

The little ones are beginning their 'All About Me' topic, discussing their likes and dislikes, taking turns in conversation. They will be sharing their All About Me booklets from home and beginning their self-portraits. In maths the children will be working with numbers to ten and to twenty, thinking about one more and one less, as well as matching quantities to digits. They will also be concentrating on their pencil control, correcting the grip if necessary, and beginning some handwriting exercises including name writing practice. The children will also be logging on and off in the computer room and learning about the parts of the computer. They are all looking forward to their drama lesson and outdoor learning too.

Year 1

The holiday display board will be finished this week and in creative writing the story of The Little Red Hen will be introduced. In maths there will be plenty of counting up to 100 and counting in tens. Year 1 will be

working on understanding and writing their numbers up to 20 and doing some simple addition to 10 work. In science the children will be learning about Space; the topic will be introduced by looking at different planets. Their art work will include aspects the story of the Little Red Hen and also painting planets.

Year 2

This week Year 2 continues to learn about 'The Great Fire of London', sequencing the events on a time line and in DT lessons making finger puppets of some of the characters involved. In English they will be starting to write a newspaper report about the 'Great Fire'. In maths this week the children are working with numbers up to 100 and ordering 2 digit numbers. In science they are starting to think about the similarities and differences between various animals. They are also looking forward to their first session outside in the 'Forest School'.

Year 3

The 'senior' Pre-prep children have made a great start to year 3. In English the class will focus on finishing their 'perfect summer day' pieces and they will also celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Roald Dahl by learning a little about his life, before beginning to studying 'James and the Giant Peach'. The first science topic is Animals, including Humans. This week the children will consider nutrition and look in particular at the components of a healthy diet. In geography Year 3 will learn to use an atlas, while in RS they will learn that the bible is made up of 66 individual books, finding out a little about the key features of the old and new testaments. Finally in art they will practice their sketching skills by drawing various leaves which they have collected.

Sunday Fundays

There was plenty of sun, as well as fun, on the first Sunday 'in' of the new term and inflatable fun was the order of the day!

In stark contrast to Saturdays autumnal downpour, this first Sunday 'in' of the term was blessed with glorious sunshine, enabling the children to spend plenty of time outside and enjoy the huge 80-foot inflatable obstacle course and giant 'human table football'. The children loved racing their teachers (and each other) through the obstacle course whilst many of our footballers found that being attached to a sliding pole with another player, made football rather more challenging (and amusing!). After lots of free time, the children engaged in team challenges against other Sets.

Other News

The first Open Morning of this academic year will be held on Saturday October 1st from 1000 to 12 noon. As always, a cordial invitation is extended to everyone who is considering their son or daughter's education. It's a marvellous opportunity to see the school at work and discover the vibrant Cottesmore ethos.

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