

Alderman Jacobs School (Academy Trust)

Spring Term 1 2023 Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2023. It feels late to be saying this but Happy New Year!

In our first whole school assembly this year we spoke about the Roman god Janus (who January is named after) who had two faces, one looking back and one forward. Children were able to reflect on the past year and make plans for this one. I feel like last year was a real return to everything we love about school life and we have been very pleased to be able to put our plans into place at our usual pace.

One of the targets I have set myself is to make the newsletter as informative as possible so you will see a new section reflecting on attendance this time. In the last newsletter I added sections for a 'safeguarding snippet' and a Teaching and Learning update. I hope these bite sized pieces of information are useful - safeguarding, attendance and the quality of education are all really important to us and these sections will be a feature of every newsletter this year.

I hope this new year has begun well for you and that the year brings everything you hope for.

Best wishes, as always,
Elaine Crane
Acting Headteacher



Contact Details

Please remember to keep your contact details up to date with the school office. It is important that we can get hold of you should your child become unwell during the school day. To amend your contact details please call or email the school office.

Pre-School Applications 2023-2024

We are now accepting applications for the 2023-2024 school year. If you are interested in a place for your child, please complete an application pack. These can be collected from the school office, or found on our website under the pre-school tab.

We take children in the term after they turn 3 years old and accept Universal and Extended funding.

If you would like any further details, please contact Mrs M Neal in the school office.

Pupil Achievements

Seren S qualified for county swimming championships, achieved Bronze in front crawl with second fastest heat time in the country.

Maddison J moved up to stage 7 swimming and achieved a 100m certificate.

Lola-May M cut 20cm off her hair and is donating it to the Little Princess Trust.

Caitlin D won her dance competition and going to The United Dance Organisation.

Well done everyone!



Attendance

up to 01/02/2023 ~ 93.86 %

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Safeguarding Snippet (Spring 1)

Continuing the theme of online safety from the last newsletter, this term I wanted to remind you of the age rating and the symbols you will find on computer games. These are really important indicators of the suitability of a game for your child.

Unfortunately, not all online platforms have such easy-to-recognise indicators and it can be hard to tell if a website or other platform is suitable for your child so it is also important to look into these and try them fully for yourself to be sure they are appropriate and safe.

These are the symbols found on computer games:



Online gaming can be lots of fun but it is useful to talk to your child about ways this may not be fun, for instance if they feel like they cannot stop playing or get too competitive with other people. Online gaming can cause children to get into trouble if it impacts on family life or can cause friendship issues as it can be easier to fall out online than in person.

Talking to your child about how they feel - good and bad - about gaming, means that they are more likely to say when something does go wrong or if anything worries them about playing online. Children can worry that if they tell their parents this, they may stop them playing the games altogether so it may be useful to remind them that you are there to help and support them to play safely.

Childline has a really useful page for parents and children about online gaming and how to keep this fun. It is primarily aimed at children themselves but gives useful ideas for parents and prompts for discussion.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/online-gaming/>

Parent Feedback

Thank you to everyone who completed the parent feedback survey about reading from our last newsletter. Your feedback is extremely valuable in supporting us to make positive changes in our school. Here are a few changes that have been implemented as a result of your feedback.

- We will be providing an overview of what reading looks like in each key stage to provide more information for parents about children's reading experience in school each day.
- Teachers will be building in more time for children to spend reading in class reading corners and in the library.
- We will be organising more read aloud events and shared reading events across year groups.

This half term we would like to gather your feedback on Parents' Evenings. Please click the link below to leave your feedback.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19x4Mz26IGhKiND91U3f2akPvsrhLZ7zULUjIEk_hTBM/edit

Attendance Matters

I shared our attendance bears, Annie and Reggie in my last newsletter - these are a lovely way to celebrate and encourage good attendance at our school. So far, the bears have visited Japan, France, Jamaica and Norway. Good attendance is so important and we always want to support parents and children with anything that affects this. School days are busy - missed sessions really hinder pupils' learning and access to all of the wonderful opportunities and support we provide.

We make every effort to contact you if we have noticed absences to be frequent so we can help to overcome any barriers - if your child's class teacher calls about this, it really is to be supportive. Alternatively, Mr Isley may call or email - he has dedicated time to monitor and support attendance as it is so important to us. Do contact us, firstly by speaking to your child's class teacher, if you too have any attendance concerns we can help with.

Our attendance policy can be found on our school website at <https://www.aldermanjacobs.cambs.sch.uk/page/?title=Policies&pid=29>

Children are required, by law, to attend school for 190 days a year. At Alderman Jacobs School, we aim for attendance of at least 95%.

Yearly Attendance	Days Absent	Lessons Missed
95%	9.5	47.5
90%	19	95
85%	28.5	142.5
80%	38	190
75%	47.5	237.5
70%	57	285
65%	66.5	332.5



Attend, Achieve, Succeed!

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

AJS will be taking part in Children's Mental Health Awareness week on 6th to 12th February with the theme of 'Let's connect'. We will be having the Mental Health Support Team with us from 8.30 until 9.30 for drop ins with some information leaflets. They will be located near the front office. The children will be partaking in activities within school also.

If you would like any activities to complete at home along the theme of 'Let's Connect'

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/families/>

One activity you could try at home is to draw a picture about your day and discuss this with each other.

Please remember if you need any support or guidance in this area then to get in touch with a member of staff.

Tuck Shop

The Enterprise Team has reopened the Tuck Shop for this term and each item remains at the same price of 60p. Each child can buy up to one snack and/or one drink. Please send in your child with change as we will not be able to accept pound notes.

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Teaching and Learning update

In our recent training day, we looked at more strategies to engage pupils in speaking and active listening. This supports our aim to increase oracy skills across school. Oracy is the ability to express yourself clearly and communicate with others effectively through spoken language.

Children across school are already really good at not only answering questions in class, but also in going on to explain why they came to that answer or opinion. When we talk to children about their learning they show broad vocabularies and the ability to explain what they have learned. However, some pupils are inevitably a bit quieter than others or find answering questions in class more daunting and we want everyone to find their voice and grow in confidence so we have looked at strategies to support these pupils in particular.

Miss Christian has been trialling the strategies of 'No Hands Up' and 'Answer Free Zones' for a while now and seen very good success with these methods in encouraging everyone to have a go at speaking. Miss Christian uses these symbols on the smart board to indicate the strategies to pupils:

The No Hands Up symbol shows children that they should use thinking time when a question is asked. This enables them to think without the pressure of others already seeming to have the answer, lets them think through their answer as they know they have time and helps them prepare what they want to say, even if they can only say part of the solution or understand part of a concept. Their teacher can then ask individuals what they think and support them to share their thoughts.



This example of an answer Free Zone indicates to children that the teacher is not looking for an answer but for an explanation of the strategy that the child would use to work out the answer:



RECAP: Show how you would find the missing angles.
What mathematical knowledge did you use?
Challenge: What types of triangles are these?
What types of angles do they have?

The diagrams show three different triangles. The first is a triangle with angles labeled 60°, 40°, and a°. The second is a right-angled triangle with vertices A, B, and C, where angle A is 40°, angle B is a right angle, and angle C is labeled with a question mark. The third is a triangle with angles labeled 50°, d°, and e°.

Since using these strategies, Miss Christian has found that:

- there are more hands up when the no hands up symbol is not used than before
- there is more focus on/understanding of steps towards solving problem
- children show more confidence within class discussions
- all children understand the symbols as they are very clear
- she is confident that she is assessing what pupils really know and understand as they are more confident to say

We are looking forward to seeing how this impacts learners across school this term.

Oracy is a vital skill to enable children to be successful learners, both now and in the future. Voice 21 is the UK's oracy education charity and they state that, 'Spoken language skills are one of the strongest predictors of a child's future life chances but too many children are not given the opportunity to develop these crucial skills.' For more information about oracy, the Voice 21 website can be found at: <https://voice21.org/>

Straw Bear festival 2023

It was great to participate in the Straw Bear Parade again this year after the enforced break. Even a torrential downpour did little to dampen the spirits as a number of children from School participated, including Eve R as the 'Little Bear' and George and Henry I supporting the pulling of the plough.



Forest School

We have been continuing to develop our Forest School area and have recently had Yorkshire Willow visit us for a workshop to create a willow dome and tunnel. The children who attend Forest School had hands-on experience learning different skills and creating this new feature.



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Diary Dates

School Term Dates 2022/23

Half Term ~ Mon 13th Feb ~ Friday 17th Feb

Spring Term Closes ~ Fri 31st March

Summer Term Opens ~ Mon 17th April

Bank Holiday ~ Mon 1st May

Bank Holiday ~ Mon 8th May

Half Term ~ Mon 29th May ~ Fri 2nd June

Summer Term Closes ~ Tue 18th July

Autumn Term opens ~ Tue 5th Sept

Half Term ~ Mon 23rd ~ Friday 27th Oct

Autumn Term Closes ~ Wed 20th Dec

February

Wed 8th ~ Early Years Vision Screening

Friday 10th ~ Year 6 Maths Cafe

Tues 21st ~ Pancake Day Menu

March

Thurs 2nd ~ World Book Day

Mon 13th ~ Science Week

Wed 15th ~ Y4/5/6 Theatre Trip

Fri 17th ~ Comic Relief

Tues 21st ~ Y2 Woburn Trip

Tues 28th ~ Y1 Maths Cafe

Wed 29th - Fri 31st ~ Y5 Grafham Trip

Thurs 30th ~ Year 3 Maths Cafe

Professional Days

School will be closed to pupils on the following days:-

2022/23

Wed 19th July 2023

Friday 1st September 2023

Monday 4th September 2023

Friday 20th October 2023

Community Information

We are sent many communications about nearby and local activities, opportunities and support for our families. This information will be added to the About Us - Community Links page on our website and updated regularly. The page can be found here [Community Links](#). Please do take a look to see if there is anything to interest you and your family.

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