



A joined up approach to enjoying STEM Week

Our Primary pupils had a fantastic STEM week with year groups from across the school working together on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

The theme for the week was 'Space' but we also incorporated many different aspects of STEM, and had a wide range of visitors who made the week even more exciting. We were incredibly lucky to have access to a mobile planetarium for all the pupils from Nursery to Year 6 to enjoy.

In addition pupils learnt about Space throughout the curriculum. This included; crater investigations and investigating balloon rockets, art work inspired by Van Gogh's Starry Night, research about planets, learning about the constellations, creating Mars Landers and rockets, exploring fiction and non-fiction books about space, learning about famous astronauts and scientists, and much more.

Secondary pupils have had a number of STEM events recently. Year 8 STEM ambassadors delivered workshops to



Pupils working together on one of the many activities that took place during STEM week.

our own primary school pupils and primary school pupils at the University of Bedfordshire, on the topic of space exploration and travel in both cases.

Year 9 and 10 pupils went to Luton to see engineering in action. The day included workshops and lectures designed to inspire pupils to pursue engineering in the future. We also held an event earlier in the year along with the Engineering Development Foundation which introduced pupils to coding and robotics. Pupils have also taken part in an after school computing and technology club.

We believe that by inspiring our pupils in STEM, it will help to increase their creativity, problem solving skills and curiosity for learning and the world around them as well as reinforcing their knowledge in science, technology and maths.

CALLING ALL EXAM INVIGILATORS!

The school is currently seeking applicants for the role of exam invigilator to start this summer for the Year 10 examinations so that these colleagues are then trained and ready to start in Year 11. The role is ideally suited to someone who has a few hours in the day to spare on a regular basis at key examination times.

If you or anyone you know are interested in becoming a school exam invigilator then please get in touch with Ms Deb Taylor on 01234 303403 or email dtaylor@castlnewnham.school for more details regarding hours and rates of pay.





Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the spring edition of our federation newsletter. The staff and pupils across Castle Newnham have been really busy since Christmas both in and out of the classroom.

We hope you have enjoyed the curriculum newsletters which focus on the knowledge being taught in the various phases and subject areas.

Outside of classroom learning, pupils have also enjoyed a vast array of sporting and arts endeavours as well as a very successful STEM week, a renewed focus on mental health and wellbeing and, of course, our fabulous production of 'We Will Rock You'. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated staff for the effort they put into providing all of the above and to our families for supporting so enthusiastically.

It has been really wonderful this term to meet so many parents, whether at the many very well attended parents' evenings or at the parent engagement group meetings such as the one which took place recently to talk about and share views on transition through the federation.

This is also the time of year when we are busy making new appointments for September as the federation grows in size to almost its full capacity in 2019-2020. We are really delighted that, in spite of well-publicised challenges in teacher recruitment nationally, we still have so many excellent colleagues at various stages of their career wanting to come and join us.

So far this year we have recruited the following new staff:

Finance:

Aleksandra Chachaj – finance assistant from the summer term.

Primary:

Emma Pellant - Yr 5/6 teacher from September
Charlotte Eaton - additional primary teacher from September.

Secondary:

Laurie Girard – Modern Foreign Language teacher (covering maternity leave from May).
Nicole Millard – Modern Foreign Language teacher from September.
Saima Afzal – Science teacher from September.
Tom Rooney – English teacher from September.
Sarah Fekke - Mathematics teacher from September.
Jonathan Mills currently Head of PE will be Assistant Vice Principal for Secondary Teaching and Learning from the 1st April (an internal promotion).

I'm sure parents will want to join me in offering every good wish to Mrs Mohammadi, teaching assistant on the South site, Mrs Williams (modern languages and EAL) and Mrs Kerridge (Assistant Headteacher and SENDCo) who will all be on maternity leave at some point in the summer term. Mrs Williams' classes will be covered by Miss Girard as above and Mrs Kerridge by Mrs Reuben who already works in our special needs department and is well known to many parents. Also best wishes to Mr Drinkwater who will be taking paternity leave in the summer when his second baby arrives.

We will be saying a fond farewell to our wonderful German student Anna, who has been helping in the modern foreign languages department for the past 5 months and huge warm welcome to Sebastian who will be taking over from Anna for the summer term. A full list of staff changes will be updated at the end of the academic year.

As well as staffing we are also finalising building works with the following planned for this academic year:

- the outdoor classroom on the South Site (works to take place during the Easter holiday)

- the sixth classroom to complete the primary block on the North Site (works to begin in July ready for September handover)
- refurbishment of the secondary buildings to include new windows in the tower block and the creation of a pupil reception area (works taking place during the summer holiday).

We are very grateful to the PTA for their hard work in fundraising to fund the outdoor classroom on the south site and also to part fund what is now our third minibus in the federation which opens up lots more opportunities for transporting pupils for local visits.

With lots to look forward to in the summer term, including several residential visits, more Duke of Edinburgh Award activity, various sports days and an awards evening and a performing arts event we wish all our families a very happy Easter holiday

Mrs Ruth Wilkes
Federation Principal



We are in the process of moving from ParentPay to ParentMail as our primary source of communication and online payments. ParentMail offers many more services such as the ability to book parents' evening appointments online, complete forms, give consent/permissions for school trips and top up dinner money (Secondary only).

All of our Secondary parents should have received an email and/or text message with a link to register for this service. Please ensure you follow the link and register as soon as possible as you will not be able to access any of the services unless you are registered. If you have not received the link, please check your email spam or junk boxes first before contacting the school to notify us of a problem.

The majority of our Primary parents are already registered with ParentMail however we would appeal to



MEET JON MILLS...

I have been the Head of PE here at Castle Newnham for more than four years and have thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

As a former staff governor of the federation I am thrilled to take on a new role as a senior leader to help guide the school in the next stages of its incredible journey. In my new role, I will be responsible for the areas of practice and pedagogy - the nuts and bolts of how our pupils learn from our fantastic staff which is vitally important as it involves creating the best situation for learning for all.

My interest in practice and pedagogy started since teaching at Harrowden Middle and Sharnbrook Upper schools and I subsequently completed an MA in Pedagogy of PE and Sport.

I'm looking forward to making an impact in an area I'm really passionate about.

all parents who haven't yet registered to do so as soon as possible.

Once registered, if you have an Android or Apple smart-phone, we highly recommend you download the ParentMail App so you can book appointments on your phone as soon as the appointment booking goes live! To do this, simply search for "ParentMail" in your App store.

We'd like to encourage ALL parents to download the ParentMail App as there are a number of benefits both to you and for our school:

- **It's free for parents to download**
- **All school messages will be sent securely**
- **No need to search through a busy email inbox for important messages**
- **Read and respond to school messages at work, at home or on the go**
- **Every message sent arrives as an instant alert on your mobile.**

If you have any issues or queries with the process please contact the school office as soon as possible.

PRIMARY UPDATE

In the primary year groups, we've had a fantastic term. The children continue to amaze us with their ability to take on new things and soak up learning. The highlights of this term have been:

- Arts Week celebrating all aspects of the arts
 - Staff meetings on curriculum development to ensure consistency across the whole of Primary
 - World Book Day celebrating the joy of books and reading - with some amazing costumes as well
 - Mental Health & Wellbeing work for adults and children, including sharing our feelings with Casey Caterpillar, and work on resilience
 - Raising money for very worthwhile charities e.g. Red Nose Day
 - Fund raising in partnership with our PTA to fund a minibus and outdoor classroom (hopefully being installed over the Easter holidays)
 - Look out for Martha Habershon running the London Marathon on behalf of Castle Newnham
- Thank you to all parents, friends and volunteers who continue to support a dedicated set of staff working together to develop our children as individuals.

PARENTS' EVENING UPDATE

The primary parents' evenings have gone very well this term and well attended. We were also delighted with the turnout at the recent Year 10 parents' evenings; 95% of our Year 10 parents came to support their children. The partnership between home and school is even more critical at this time in your child's educational journey.

The feedback from the evening was excellent and welcomed by our amazing staff. Examples included:

- o One of the most impressive parents' evenings. All staff were very approachable. Good advice for the future
- o Fantastic supportive school and teachers. Would recommend to others
- o Didn't feel rushed, good to hear a consistent strategy for consolidating learning
- o Excellent delivery. Approachable staff. Good advice on exam technique. Informative and not rushed
- o All teachers were very informative, answered all my questions. Spoke more in depth regarding revision and where to find information. Overall a great evening
- o Very constructive parents' evening. Report is very reflective of my son's progress at present.

Participate in 4SIXTEEN Theatre Company's next production: 'The Addams Family'.
Auditions will take place in September 2019.
Performances in February 2020.

Castle Newnham School's award-winning
4SIXTEEN Theatre Company
proudly presents
by kind permission of Theatrical Rights Worldwide



The ADDAMS Family

THE MUSICAL COMEDY

4SIXTEEN Theatre Company is Castle Newnham School's in-house theatre and dance company. The company was awarded the prestigious BEST YOUTH PRODUCTION award for The Lion King by the National Operatic and Dramatic Association in 2016. The company has also been nominated for the same award for The Railway Children (2017), Singin' in the Rain (2018) and A Midsummer Night's Dream (2018). The theatre company recently performed We Will Rock You to four sell out audiences in February 2019.

Queen rocking Castle Newnham

Castle Newnham School's award-winning 4SIXTEEN Theatre Company performed to sell out audiences in early February with their latest production - Queen's hit musical 'We Will Rock You'. This was the school's most ambitious production yet with innovative approaches to staging, set design and lighting. On each of the four sell-out nights' audiences were awe-struck by the standards of acting, dancing and some exceptional singing voices.

Federation Principal, Ruth Wilkes says, 'Pupils themselves were heavily involved in all aspects of the production, including the choreography. Each year our 4SIXTEEN theatre production seems to exceed the high standards set by the previous one and this has been clearly assisted by the great addition to our school facilities of a bespoke studio/theatre and music rooms. Our pupils, parents and staff really value the performing arts as part of a culturally-rounded education.'

The Performing Arts department are also planning to offer LAMDA examinations from September to primary and secondary pupils, as well as starting auditions for our next secondary production, The Addams Family which will take place in the autumn term.