

POLICE VISIT TO THE FEDERATION



Both schools enjoyed a visit from the local Louth policing team. After answering questions about their jobs and the crimes they had to solve, PC Nuttall and PC Ford opened the police van so the children could investigate for themselves what it's like inside the vehicle, and the equipment available to the officers.

I think we may have future crime fighters being taught at our schools! Thanks to Ciara in Year 4 for suggesting we invite the police to school.



MARSHCHAPEL LEARNING

The term began with a visit to Wolds Wildlife Park, specially opened for the Lapwings' class!

What a great day exploring the animals, learning about their homes and what they eat.



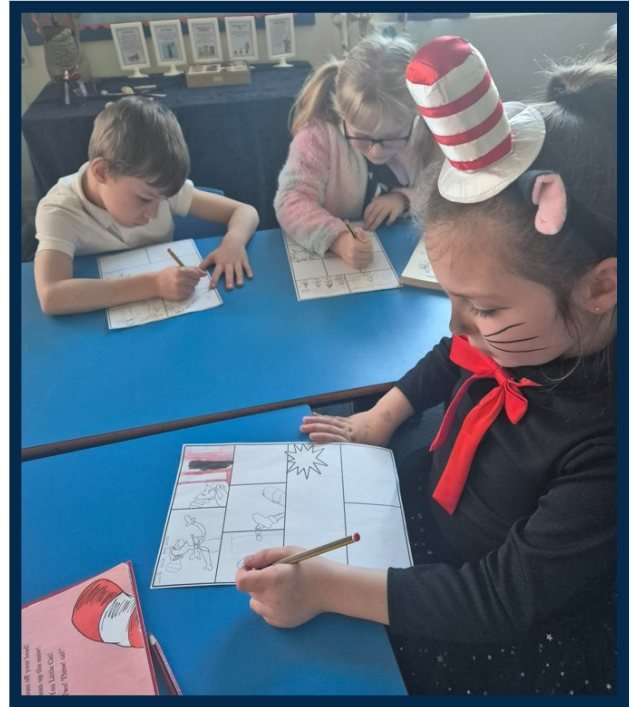
The Lapwings have been busy investigating their new play equipment which was installed on the day Ofsted visited our school! There are so many parts to play with, including construction areas and sensory points too.

All the Skylarks were awarded an emergency first aid certificate this week. They learnt how to perform CPR, how to help someone who is choking and how to contact the emergency services from a locked mobile phone.



GRAINTHORPE'S WORLD BOOK DAY

Grainthorpe pupils had a special visitor to celebrate World Book Day. Keith Butters is a traditional Lincolnshire storyteller. He introduced the children to local dialect, explained the art of storytelling and shared one of his favourite local folk tales entitled 'The Buried Moon'.



WORLD BOOK DAY AT MARSHCHAPEL

The early years children came to school dressed as a Julia Donaldson book character and were surprised to be greeted by *Spinderella*, a human sized bee, the *Monkey Puzzle* butterfly and the *Ladybird* from 'What the *Ladybird* Heard'.

Skylarks chose traditional story characters and were taught by Little Red Riding Hood and one of the three bears...





At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, *Neuroteachers*, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



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FENLAND FEDERATION

JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER



DIARY DATES

WHAT'S COMING UP IN TERMS 4 and 5 2025

Friday 7th March 2025 Science Week begins

Friday 21st March 2025 - Red Nose Day non-uniform, bring a donation for Comic Relief

Wednesday 26th - Friday 28th March 2025 Kestrels residential trip to Dearne Valley

Friday 4th April 2025 10am Easter Celebration at St Mary's Church, Marshchapel - both schools to join for an Easter service. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE

Friday 4th April 2025 Last day of Term 4

Wednesday 23rd April 2025 Term 5 begins

Wednesday 23rd April 2025 Road Safety Day with the Road Safety Partnership - at both schools

Monday 28th April 2025 Heroes of History Workshops for KS1 and KS2

Tuesday 29th April 2025 Healthy Relationships Workshops at Grainthorpe

Thursday 8th May 2025 VE Day Celebrations - come dressed in red, white and or blue

Monday 12th May 2025 to Thursday 15th May 2025 - Year 6 SATs days - special breakfast club laid on for the Year 6 group.

Thursday 22nd May 2025 - Marshchapel children to visit the Marshchapel Arts Exhibition

Friday 24th May 2025 - Last day of Term 5

Monday 2nd June 2025 Term 6 begins

Tuesday 22nd July 2025 - Last school day of the year!

Thursday 4th September 2025 - Term 1 begins

SAFEGUARDING IN OUR COMMUNITY

If you have any safeguarding concerns to do with children please let us know. Our Federation has a designated safeguarding lead professional (DSL), Mrs Turner and deputy DSLs, Mrs Manders and Mrs Clifford.

Please telephone school on 01472 869075 (M) or 01472 869035 (G).

If you have a safeguarding issue to discuss, you can contact Children's Services directly on 01522 782111.