



Ancient Egypt Comes to Kingham



Yesterday, Year 3 students enjoyed a fantastic hands-on Ancient Egyptian workshop led by visiting historians *Portals to the Past*. While we value the learning that school trips can bring, and would love to take our students all the way to Egypt, we were delighted to bring Egypt to Kingham instead!

Students had the exciting opportunity to explore life in ancient Egypt through engaging activities, storytelling, and interactive learning. They discovered fascinating facts about mummification, pharaohs, hieroglyphics, and daily life along the River Nile. Many pupils also had the chance to handle replica artefacts, bringing history to life in a memorable and immersive way.

Kingham Book Week – Coming Soon!

Get ready, Kingham readers... something exciting is on the horizon! From Monday 2 March to Friday 6 March, we will be celebrating Book Week, with a special whole-school dress-up day on Thursday 5 March. During the week, the school will be buzzing with stories, imagination and creativity as we come together to celebrate our love of reading. There will be book-themed activities in classrooms, fun reading challenges, and lots of bookish surprises along the way!

Extreme Reading Challenge

One highlight to start thinking about is our *Extreme Reading Challenge*! Where is the most unusual place you could read a book? In a blanket fort? Up a tree (safely!)? In the garden dressed as a superhero? We'd love to see your most imaginative reading photos so start planning your creative ideas now! If you would like to take part, please start sending your photographs with your child's name and year group to: events@kingham.oxon.sch.uk. You've got until Tuesday 3 March to get these in. The most imaginative entries will be displayed at the front of school and may even win a prize!

Book Character Dress-Up

Children are invited to dress up as their favourite book character on Thursday 5 March. Costumes can be simple, homemade and fun - there's no need to buy anything new! Start thinking about who you might like to be: a brave hero, a magical creature, or perhaps a character from a comic or poem.

More details about all the exciting activities, competitions, and book swaps will be shared very soon. Watch this space!

Children's Mental Health Week – Next Week

We're sorry for the short notice, as this has crept up a little unexpectedly this year, but next week we will be taking part in Children's Mental Health Week. This year's theme is 'This is My Place', which focuses on helping children feel that they belong, are valued, and are safe to be themselves.

Throughout the week, pupils will take part in age-appropriate discussions and activities that explore feelings, kindness, inclusion, and what helps them feel happy, connected and secure. On Friday, we will be holding our annual "Dress to Express" day. Children are invited to wear anything that helps them feel comfortable, confident, or that expresses who they are, for example, favourite colours, cosy clothes, cultural dress, or something creative. Please note that children do NOT need to bring in any money for this - this is not a fundraising day. We are looking forward to a positive and thoughtful week that supports our pupils' wellbeing and celebrates what makes each of them unique and special.



Interhouse Kurling – Next Week

Next week, students (Y1-6) will be taking part in our *New Age Kurling* House tournament! Kurling (with a 'k') is based on the Winter Olympic sport of curling, but adapted so it can be played safely indoors on any smooth, flat surface rather than on ice. The tournament will take place on different days for each year group (please see the diary for details). Children will need to bring in their PE kit and may also wear a t-shirt in their house colour if they wish. Get ready to slide into action, and may the best house win!



Internet Safety Day

On Tuesday next week, our school will be taking part in Safer Internet Day. Students will take part in age-appropriate lessons and activities that help them think about how to stay safe online, how to be kind and respectful when using technology, and how to make sensible choices when using devices, apps and the internet.

Safer Internet Day is an important opportunity to support children in developing positive digital habits and understanding how to use technology safely and responsibly.

Top Ten Times Tables Rockstars (TTRS)

Congratulations to the following students for their hard work on TTRS over the last 7 days – 50 house points each.

Annabelle	STAGS	Imogen	STAGS
Rory	ROBINS	Olivia	OWLS
Amos	OWLS	Felix	STAGS
Grace	STAGS	Toby	OTTERS
Sadie	OWLS	Mylo	STAGS

Value of the Month: Curiosity

Curiosity:

is asking questions about what I see, hear and read
is being keen to learn and find out about the world

is listening to all points of view and developing my own views and solutions

Head's Blog: Are we Over Labelling our Children?

It is vital that young people who are neurodiverse, or who are experiencing significant mental health difficulties, receive the support, treatment and diagnoses they need. In our school, we work hard to be genuinely inclusive. But I wonder whether our system's growing reliance on labels and diagnoses always supports children, or whether, in some cases, it may hold them back. Traits and behaviours that were once accepted as part of growing up are increasingly being labelled as conditions or disorders, while underlying causes are overlooked. As child psychiatrist Sami Timimi argues in *Searching for Normal*, children are "being medicalised for behaviours that might be explained as entirely normal in other parts of the world."

Having personal experience of neurodivergence in my family, I know that obtaining a diagnosis can be life-changing and reassuring for families and their children, but is it happening too often? I am increasingly concerned about how readily our society interprets children's behaviour through the lens of diagnosis, as 'labels' can, unintentionally, absolve the adults around a child of responsibility and lower our expectations.

Many experiences we are quick to interpret as disorders have always been part of growing up. It has always been normal for children to feel distressed before an exam or when a family member is unwell. There have always been shy children and confident ones, those who find separation difficult, and those who struggle to concentrate. So why does it feel as though we are witnessing a surge in mental health conditions among the young? Improved diagnosis certainly explains part of the rise. Greater awareness has also helped many children who might previously have been misunderstood, and these are positive steps forward. While children with neurodevelopmental and mental health conditions deserve understanding and timely support, our growing reliance on labels risks steering our focus in an unhelpful direction. Increasingly, we find ourselves asking, "What disorder might explain this?" instead of asking, "What is this child experiencing, and how can we help?"

EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) is a heartbreaking and increasingly common condition in schools. National data shows that pupils who are regularly absent from school has more than doubled in recent years, with children avoiding school due to anxiety reported by nearly 30% of secondary pupils in a recent UK survey (Stem4.org). For children, EBSA can become genuinely debilitating, and families often feel at their wits' end. Many headteachers report that when a child struggles to separate from a parent, the first response is often to pursue a diagnosis or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), rather than initially addressing the difficulty through practical, evidence-based strategies.

Perhaps the most profound change is how we respond to unhappiness. When a child is upset or worried our instinct is increasingly to see that as something requiring treatment, therapy or intervention. When we treat every worry as a crisis, children can start to see ordinary difficulties as dangerous, and then their instinct is to avoid them rather than work through them. Many of the difficulties children face are uncomfortable, but not dangerous, and psychologists consistently agree that when we rush to shield children from every distress, we can unintentionally increase their anxiety rather than reduce it.

The people best placed to help children are their parents. Calm responses and consistent expectations, mixed with an understanding of practical strategies, can often shape outcomes more powerfully than a diagnostic label. Yet once a diagnosis enters the picture, even confident parents can begin to doubt their instincts and risk becoming passive recipients of 'expert' guidance rather than active agents of change.

None of this is to suggest that children with significant needs should not be supported, simply that diagnoses and labels are not always a helpful starting point. When difficulties are framed primarily as 'conditions', the consequences can be subtle but powerful: parents may feel less capable, teachers may lower expectations, and children may feel they are somehow flawed.

I absolutely support the diagnosis of specific needs, and in some cases, it is not just helpful, it is essential. I also support medical treatment where it is needed: I have seen medication transform the life chances of children with severe attention and hyperactivity difficulties. Diagnoses can be reassuring ("it's not just bad behaviour") and thus lift parental guilt and reduce

stigma. But the label is not the cure, and nor should it define and become the explanation for everything.

So what might this mean for parents? I would always advise parents to be mindful of how diagnosed and undiagnosed conditions are discussed at home. At school we often see children interpret the corresponding labels as meaning, "I can't help it," which chips away at self-belief and is seldom true. In some cases, this can understandably lead parents to lower expectations, which, despite their best intentions, may not help their child in the long run.

My concern, then, is not really the diagnosis itself - it is our growing assumption that diagnosis is the only answer. When we over-label children, the cost may be measured in lowered expectations, reduced resilience, and the message some children absorb, that they might be defined by their difficulties rather than their potential. Of course, some children need specialist support, and diagnosis can open vital doors. But if labels become our first or only response, we risk narrowing what we expect of children, and what they expect of themselves.

Read more Headteacher Blogs here: school-matters.org/link

Diary Dates

Wb Mon 9 Feb	Children's Mental Health Week
Tues 10 Feb	Year 6 visit to Ashmolean Museum
Tues 10 Feb	Infants Interhouse Kurling
Wed 11 Feb	Year 2 trip to Cotswold Wildlife Park
Weds 11 Feb	Upper Juniors Interhouse Kurling
Thurs 12 Feb	Year 5 and 6 trip to Gloucester
Thurs 12 Feb	Lower Juniors Interhouse Kurling
Fri 13 Feb	Dress to Express Day
Fri 13 Feb	Year 4 Class Assembly
Fri 13 Feb	Last Day of Half Term
Mon 23 Feb	First day back
Tues 24 Feb	Oxford Opera working in Nursery Class
Weds 25 Feb	Build Children's Resilience Meeting 9am
Mon 2 Mar	Kingham Book Week
Wed 4 Mar	CNPS Year 1 Dance Festival
Thurs 5 Mar	Book Day (dress up as book character)
Tues 10 Mar	Year 4 Viking Workshop
Tues 10 Mar	Oxford Opera working in Nursery Class
Tues 10 Mar	KPSA Movie Night
Thurs 12 Mar	Reception trip to Science Oxford
Mon 16 Mar	Year 5 Bikeability Training all week
Tues 17 Mar	U11s Sports Tournament at Kingham Hill pm
Tues 17 Mar	Oxford Opera working in Nursery Class
Weds 18 Mar	Parents Evening 3:30pm – 7pm
Thurs 19 Mar	Parents Evening 3:30pm – 6pm
Fri 20 Mar	Red Nose Day
Fri 20 Mar	Reception Class Assembly 2:45pm
Weds 25 Mar	Year 2/3 CNPS Multi-Skills Festival
Fri 27 Mar	Last Day of Term - School closes at 2pm
Mon 13 Apr	First day back

PARENT WORKSHOP

BUILDING CHILDREN'S RESILIENCE

With Educational Psychologist Dr Jo Barham and Headteacher Nicholas Prockter

Weds 25th February 2026

9 am to 10:30 am

Join us, over coffee and cake, to find out practical strategies to manage anxiety, foster independence and build long term courage and capability in our children

The workshop will focus on helping children to build the emotional 'muscles' needed to navigate daily challenges. With over 50 years' experience between the presenters, this is a workshop not to be missed