



Copthill School

Tales from the Spring Term

2026





From the Principal



The scale of enthusiasm and attainment always amazes me

After what seemed a long and damp first half of term, Spring suddenly arrived and with it a wealth of exciting school events, many of which are highlighted in this newsletter.

As always, at this time of term my thoughts start to turn towards planning developments and exciting new initiatives for next academic year. Over the last year we have also been putting together a submission for a Learning Outside the Classroom award, providing national recognition of the quality of our learning provision.

In collating the evidence from every year group and subject, it has highlighted the incredible range of opportunities and learning experiences that all our pupils receive throughout the school year. There are obviously the special events such as sport tours, trips abroad, camps and theme days.

However, more importantly, the daily opportunities which take place outside, whatever the weather, with carefully planned sessions providing memorable learning experiences. The evidence demonstrates not just the imaginative planning by teachers, but the positive feedback from pupils, which consistently highlights their enthusiasm, engagement and attainment.

These opportunities are so embedded into all areas of Copthill life that it is only by carrying out this exercise that the true scale and quality really becomes evident. In my excitement, I wanted to pass this on and offer my sincere thanks to all our amazing staff for creating these opportunities!

Summer term is on its way and with it even more experiences both indoors and out! In the meantime we wish you all a Happy Easter.

Jonathan Teesdale
Principal





From the Headteacher



The Copthill learning journey

This review, as always, will offer an insight into the breadth of experiences and opportunities enjoyed by our children across all the years of a Copthill education. I often tend to focus on the culmination of those years and the next steps of our Year 6 children because this is when the knowledge, skills and attitudes they have learned and developed as Copthill Learners are ready to help them blossom in a wider world.

However, we must never forget something so important and that is where the seeds are planted and the Copthill learning journey begins.

That beginning lies in our Nursery and Pre-School. It is here that the roots for everything we celebrate are carefully and thoughtfully nourished. Our school began in 1969 around a kitchen table as a Nursery. Mrs Teesdale Snr's belief in the importance of early childhood education remains at the very heart of who we are today.

The earliest years at Copthill are intentionally designed to be an adventure - a place where curiosity is sparked, independence is gently encouraged and learning is woven seamlessly into play. Whether children are visiting farm animals, painting, building or exploring the outdoors in their wellies, they are learning how to listen, share, care, imagine, persevere and collaborate - the building blocks of both education and life.

What makes this stage so powerful is not just what children learn, but how they learn it. In a calm, thoughtfully prepared environment, Copthill's wonderful team of Early Years staff encourage them to think, to question and to make sense of the world in their own way. This early nurturing of independence and imagination helps children to develop confidence in their own ideas - a quality that is so important as they move through the school and beyond.

By the time pupils reach Upper School, we see the impact of these early experiences. The creativity in their writing, the empathy in their historical studies, the resilience shown on residential trips and the confidence with which they speak and lead - these are not developed overnight or by osmosis.

They are the result of years of careful nurturing, where children have been encouraged to be curious, to take risks and to find joy in learning. Our aim has always been to develop not just academic success, but young people who are independent thinkers, creative problem solvers and responsible members of their community.

This is all perhaps best captured in the words of those who have experienced a Copthill education themselves. I have received two emails in the past week that have made me smile and also make me feel so proud that I have the privilege to lead this unique school.

One former parent reflects: *Copthill has given [my daughter] all the foundational skills, qualities and attitudes to navigate not only the challenges in life but the gift of curiosity, the confidence to be independent in her thoughts whilst still being respectful and responsible.*

And from a former pupil: *I would like to thank you and the wonderful staff at Copthill for nurturing my love of STEM as it has helped me to win the science essay prize two years running!*

A Copthill education, right from the earliest years, is focused on promoting a love of learning, a sense of self and a readiness to embrace the future. Thank you for trusting us to take your child on their Copthill journey.

Helen Schofield
Headteacher





Upper School



Upper School Spring Term Review - Holding Onto Childhood, Reaching Towards the Future

Whilst I always insist that education is about preparing our children for the future - not just theirs but all our futures - childhood is also something that should be treasured and preserved in its own right. To that end, our Upper School pupils have spent the spring term learning, exploring, thinking, questioning, playing and laughing together - often all at once. Beneath the excitement and energy lies something important - the steady growth of skills, character and confidence that will guide them long beyond their childhood years.

Year 6's journey through America's past was rich and memorable. Native American Day was a particular highlight, where the children stepped into a different way of life through craft, dance, hunting activities, and storytelling. There was a real sense of respect and curiosity as they explored traditions and cultures so different from their own. This grew into a wider understanding of America itself - from independence and national landmarks to mastering all 50 states and investigating the continent's diverse biomes, rivers, and mountain ranges. The children began to see how the environment, geography, and history are all deeply connected - an understanding that feels increasingly important in today's world.

Year 5 have approached their learning with imagination and empathy, particularly through their study of the Titanic. What stood out was not just what they learned, but how they engaged with it - debating moral dilemmas, researching real individuals, crafting powerful news reports and working together in rescue-style challenges. These experiences encouraged them to think critically, collaborate and place themselves in the shoes of others. As the term draws to a close, their curiosity has quite literally reached new heights as they begin exploring the story of space travel in their Mission Control topic.

In English, Year 6 have explored the art of storytelling in a completely different way, analysing how writers create tension and suspense in horror writing before applying these techniques themselves. Their writing has shown increasing control, creativity, and confidence. Equally memorable were the African tales shared around the fire - a moment where childhood, imagination and ancient storytelling traditions came together in the most natural and powerful way. Year 5 children have also flourished creatively, producing thoughtful Titanic reports and imaginative non-chronological writing on Pandora.

Mathematics this term has been full of discovery, as pupils explored fractions, decimals, percentages, ratios and algebra in ways that felt purposeful and alive. Whether solving problems or mixing their own mocktails to understand proportion and equivalence, the children have seen how maths connects to the real world. These experiences are helping to build not just competence, but confidence - encouraging them to approach challenges with curiosity rather than hesitation.

As part of our Upper School electives programme, the children have taken part in a broad range of activities to develop their future skills. These have included: automotive engineering, computing, cooking, farming, jewellery making, performance skills, photography, sports leadership and young entrepreneurs. All the electives have provided valuable, enjoyable and profitable (in all senses of the word!) learning experiences.

Beyond the classroom, our children have also been developing essential life skills. Year 6's visit to the Warning Zone offered practical guidance on staying safe in an increasingly complex world. These are the kinds of experiences that quietly build independence, awareness and responsibility.

Year 5's Saxon Tour provided a different kind of challenge, pushing them beyond their comfort zones both physically and socially. Competing against new schools and tackling outdoor adventures such as ghyll scrambling and the climbs at Brimham Rocks, they demonstrated resilience, teamwork, and determination - all while still finding moments of laughter and shared achievement.

For Year 6 children, most secondary school destinations have been decided. As they look ahead to their next step, we are reminded that success is not defined by a destination, but by the character and confidence they carry with them. At the same time, excitement is already building as they prepare for their upcoming production of Finding Nemo, where their creativity and teamwork will take centre stage.

It has been a privilege to watch our children embrace everything this term has offered. They have shown that it is entirely possible to hold onto the joy, curiosity, and spirit of childhood while developing the skills needed for the future.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We wish you all a restful Easter break, and look forward to another term of growth, discovery and childhood well-lived.

Upper School Team

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Our Spring Term 2026 photos

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Middle School



From lambs to monsters in the woods...

As we move into the final stretch of the school year, we are all hoping the weather will continue to warm up and bring a welcome change to our days. Not long ago, mornings felt dark and afternoons far too short, but now there's a real sense of lightness and energy around Middle School. It has been lovely to see how this seasonal shift has positively impacted the children. There's a noticeable boost in their confidence, happiness, and overall engagement as we head towards the summer term.

In Year 3, our GOAL theme has led to some brilliant hands-on learning. The children have created impressive fraction walls, shadow puppets, fraction 'hoops' showing their understanding of adding fractions to make a whole and even witnessing lambs being born as part of the children's outdoor learning! Their enthusiasm has been infectious, and we're excited to see how this continues to grow in the coming weeks.

We've also enjoyed some fantastic cross-curricular experiences. Our immersive Celt Day made great use of the outdoor environment, and even as we battled near zero temperatures, there was one unforgettable highlight. Above the fort we found "Emperor Nero" and his sidekick, launching water balloons while racing around on a quad bike, much to everyone's amusement! Meanwhile, Year 4 brought the Beowulf saga to life in the woods, using drama and storytelling to deepen their understanding and spark creativity in their writing.

Learning has flowed seamlessly between the classroom and outdoors whenever possible. From the excitement of discovering new ideas in our 'Lightning Speed' topic to the creativity shown in Independent Explorer homework, where children crafted their own roundhouses, it has been wonderful to see such curiosity and effort. A big thank you goes to our parents and grandparents for their continued support in helping bring these projects to life.

Year 4 has also been incredibly busy with their animation topic, "That's All Folks!" Their creativity and enthusiasm have been a joy to witness. Alongside this, they continue to grow as role models within the school, showing kindness, responsibility, and leadership - particularly in the way they support and guide Year 3 pupils. It's fantastic to see them embrace these roles with such maturity.

Finally, as we wrap up the term, on behalf of all staff and children in Middle School, I would like to say a heartfelt farewell to Elly Bressington. Thank you for everything you have done to keep our classrooms tidy and organised, we will truly miss your cheery face around Middle School!

So, as the Year 4 topic says... that's all folks for another term! We look forward to the summer term and all the excitement it will bring as we approach the end of another wonderful year.

Happy Easter from all the Middle School team!

Anne Teesdale

Middle School Lead

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Lower School



Raindrops, Blossoms and Springtime Adventures!

What a delightful season we are enjoying! As the days grow longer and sunnier, our Lower School children have been embracing the magic of Spring with wide-eyed curiosity. The appearance of blossom-scented trees and colourful spring flowers has sparked creativity and exploration across all year groups. We have been observing seasonal changes and exploring the fascinating life cycles of plants and animals.

A particularly heartwarming highlight has been the arrival of our lambs. The children have been thrilled to watch them leap and play in the fields - a true celebration of new life and the wonders of Spring. It has been wonderful to take spontaneous trips to the flock, learning about animal care and the responsibilities of husbandry. The joy of seeing children engage so eagerly with these gentle creatures is truly unforgettable.

This term has been full of shared experiences and events that bring our school together. Science Week saw children tackling curious questions like why boats float and how to design their own watercraft. Reception produced inventive designs that stayed afloat even with marbles on board. Year 1 researched and created colourful, detailed dinosaur projects, including habitat models that demonstrated not only their understanding of prehistoric life but also their creativity and attention to detail. Year 2 experimented with paper-making techniques to craft their own paper for their 'tea-riffic' Mother's Day cards - no doubt treasured at home!

House Singing was another joyous occasion, allowing children to sing alongside older pupils and celebrate their collective efforts. The enthusiasm and encouragement displayed by all truly exemplified the spirit of our school community.

Outdoor learning continues to thrive in Reception, with children spending much of each day exploring and investigating the changing seasons. Our topics this term have been equally exciting. The "Under the Sea" theme inspired imagination and curiosity about marine life, with sensory tuff trays, underwater play areas and library research bringing the ocean to life. The "Happy to Be Me!" topic encouraged reflection on individuality, diversity and culture through stories and creative activities. The "New Life" topic allowed children to observe lambs, nests and the life cycle of chickens, supported by engaging stories such as "Chicken Licken" and "Brenda's Boring Egg."

Ranulph Fiennes inspired Year 1 during their exciting "Record Breakers" topic. The children explored the trials and tribulations of his life and discovered his incredible adventures. They embraced their inner explorers, using design and engineering skills to create moving expedition vehicles with wheels and axles and approached challenges with determination, problem solving and creativity. It was wonderful to see the children buzzing with curiosity as they learned more about the world around them, before stepping back into a world of imagination through their "Happily Ever After" topic. Here, the children created moving story books, ventured into the forbidden forest in search of magical ingredients and carefully selected and mixed them to make their own fizzing potions. They watched in delight as their creations bubbled and foamed. Their creativity and enthusiasm shone through every activity, bringing learning to life through the magic of fairy tales.

Year 2 began the term with an inspiring visit to the Space Centre in Leicester, complementing their "Famous People" topic. They learned about astronauts such as Neil Armstrong and Tim Peake and explored leadership by comparing King Charles III with King George VI. Each child created a portrait and wrote a clever riddle about their chosen figure, which now decorate the Year 2 corridor for all to admire. They are currently investigating the "Inter-Nation Media Station", exploring historical and modern methods of communication, from smoke signals to Morse code. Children spent time reporting the mysterious incident of a missing watermelon. The school was filled with missing posters and newspaper articles were carefully written. I am relieved to say that thankfully it was recovered from the school polytunnel where it clearly had decided to retreat to warmer climes!

A heartfelt thank you goes to our devoted Lower School staff for their incredible dedication in crafting these rich, hands-on learning experiences. Your continued support as parents is invaluable - it truly makes a difference in the children's learning and happiness.

Wishing you all a joyful and restorative Easter break!

Judy Dimbleby

Lower School Leader

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Early Years



Little learners, big adventures this term

Spring brings a sense of wonder for young children, from the excitement of new life emerging to spotting the first bright flowers in bloom. This season creates rich opportunities for learning, as the changes happening all around help children build their understanding of the world while encouraging curiosity, exploration, and discovery.

We have thoroughly enjoyed marking the end of our second term with a joyful and engaging few weeks. Spring- and Easter-inspired Tuff Trays, stories, water play filled with colourful flowers, and activities focused on life cycles have all contributed to a warm and memorable close to the term.

Of course, the highlight of this topic has been our first hand experiences of visiting the newly born baby lambs at our farm. A truly magical and memorable experience for all of our children.

It's hard to believe that this term began back in the chilly days of January, as the weeks have flown by and nature has transformed with the warmer weather. Regardless of the season, our youngest Copthill learners continue to benefit from daily outdoor experiences, and outdoor learning has remained an important part of daily life in the Early Years. Our topic 'Animal Crackers' encouraged children to explore wildlife outdoors, building owl nests, using binoculars for birdwatching, and developing a love of nature even in the colder months.

Inside the classroom, the children explored a variety of animal habitats and characteristics, from safari animals to creatures living in colder climates. Their curiosity grew as they engaged with stories and tuff trays designed to introduce different types of wildlife. We then shifted our focus closer to home, looking at both pets and farm animals.

This interest in animals led naturally into our exploration of Chinese New Year. Celebrating Lunar New Year in early years is always a highlight, offering a wonderful chance to introduce new cultures and traditions. The Pre-School children enjoyed learning the story of The Great Race and discovered how the festival is celebrated through cleaning and decorating homes, enjoying traditional foods such as dumplings and rice, and watching fireworks.

In Nursery, Valentine's Day was also celebrated with enthusiasm, as the classroom was filled with love-themed activities, tuff trays, and sensory play.

After half term, we began a new topic: 'Once Upon a Time'. Sharing traditional tales sparked imagination and creativity, transporting children into magical worlds while helping them understand the structure and language of storytelling. Familiar stories gave them the confidence to retell narratives and build important foundations for literacy.

This theme led to many exciting activities, including planting beans after reading 'Jack and the Beanstalk', baking gingerbread men, creating magical potions, exploring fairy worlds, and enjoying the story of Zog as we learned about knights and dragons.

Alongside these topics, the children have continued developing key communication and phonological skills. Nursery children focused on listening skills through music sessions, exploring instrumental, environmental, and body percussion sounds. Pre-School children began following the Ruth Miskin phonics programme, learning new sounds each week. This has been an important step in preparing them for Reception, and we have been delighted with their enthusiasm.

In mathematics, Nursery children have been building early skills in counting, recognising numbers and shapes, and comparing measures through everyday activities in play. Pre-School children have taken part in more structured sessions, learning concepts such as subitising, using ten frames, understanding more and less, and recognising 2D shapes, while also revisiting key skills like counting and pattern recognition.

As we reflect on such a busy and rewarding term, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to our dedicated staff for their creativity, energy, and commitment, and to our parents for their continued support. We wish everyone a happy and restful Easter break and look forward to welcoming you back for the final term, as we embrace the warmer days and prepare the children for their next exciting steps.

Beth Hanham and Georgia Elderkin

Early Years

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Sport



Spring Term Review 2026

What a phenomenal term it has been for sport at Copthill. Packed with adventure, achievement, and unforgettable moments!

On the competitive front, our boys' hockey team made history by retaining the National Cup title for the very first time. An extraordinary accomplishment for Copthill, achieved at an Olympic venue no less! These are truly memories that will live on for years to come.

Meanwhile, our netball girls delivered an outstanding performance, winning regionals and progressing all the way to the National quarter finals. Their only loss came against the eventual champions, making their achievement all the more impressive.

Back at school, house matches in both netball and hockey brought fantastic energy and participation, with our Year 3 pupils especially enjoying their first taste of competitive sport, an exciting milestone for them all.

Our Year 5 and 6 children have embraced a block of archery and shooting this term, broadening their horizons and experiencing the wide variety of activities that Copthill has to offer.

In the Lower School, it has been wonderful to see pupils making the most of the improving weather while developing key foundation skills across a range of sports. PE lessons for Year 4 and below have focused on orienteering, from map-reading and teddy hunts to giving and following routes, and even tackling star orienteering challenges, Great fun combined with valuable learning.

Our Year 5 pupils rounded off the term in style with the Saxons Sports Tour to Yorkshire. This year marked an exciting milestone with our first stay in the brand-new smart dormitories, alongside the ever-thrilling exploration of Fox Ghyll, gorge walking that certainly tested bravery and teamwork! Continuing a much-loved tradition, we scrambled our way across Brimham Rocks, successfully tracking down the famous Smartie Tube, the Cheese Press, and, of course, the legendary Dog Wee Alley!

Looking ahead, the summer term promises even more excitement as we turn our focus to cricket and athletics in preparation for Sports Days. The calendar is already jam-packed, and we're hoping for plenty of glorious British sunshine to match the enthusiasm of our pupils!

Gemma Alcoran
Head of Sport

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Music



Music Department Review Spring Term 2026

This term has seen our class wide instrumental projects get underway. With our Year 2 String Project being launched once again by Libby Summers from Stamford Strings. Our children enjoyed learning how a violin is made and learnt how to take care of stringed instruments. With a performance from our older string players the new cohort were inspired to see where they might be in a year or so's time and were super excited to get started! The class project culminated with a performance from the whole year group on cello and violin showing their newly learnt skills. The project now moves on to group lessons next term for those children who wish to pursue playing violin, viola or cello.

In Year 3 we have had fun this term learning flute as well as recorder and have enjoyed a performance by our Jazz Band and soloists as part of our Wind Project. Next term children are able to explore learning a brass or woodwind instrument through the group lessons scheme. We can't wait to see how many budding musicians will take up the challenge to learn a new instrument with our fabulous teachers Mr Steve Walton (brass) and Mrs Maggie MacCormack (woodwind).

Our Year 6 string players were excited to be undertaking a chamber performance at Stamford Strings Shop before completing an instrument care workshop. These musicians now have all the knowledge they need to take care of their instruments and will be well prepared for continuing their music journey after Copthill.

Our programme of extra curricular ensembles goes from strength to strength with rehearsals taking place on every day of the school week from Chorale to Rock Band with all instruments in between. Our friends from Uffington School join our woodwind section of the Orchestra to rehearse each week and we enjoyed a joint Easter Recital in the Church. With performances from 3 of our music groups. Chorale sang Stainer's 'God So Loved the World' with elegance and our Recorder Ensemble entertained us with 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' in 4 parts with descant, treble and bass plus descant solo. This group has been working together since September and are now able to play without adult support, a real achievement. Our Year 6 chamber trio played Pachelbel's Canon with refinement. This lovely recital came to a close with us all singing our hearts out together with 'Lord of the Dance'.

Our meet the teacher sessions this term have given parents the opportunity to pop in to their child's lesson and check in with the teachers to discuss progress and future steps. During the same week parents were invited to a meeting to find out more about supporting their young musicians at home. This communication is key in creating the best approach to learning for our musicians.

Uppingham Music Day was a great event where our musicians rehearsed and performed with other Prep School musicians and gave a super concert at the end of the day.

As our Music Department continues to bloom we now hold separate department informal concerts and this term was the turn of both Strings and Singing, 15 string players entertained us with a superb concert of solos, duets and a trio with violin, viola and cello players. Our performers played brilliantly which is testament to Ms Llewellyn's fabulous input to this department. Mrs MacCormack's singers treated us to a wonderful concert. They did her and themselves proud! These mini concerts are such an important part of our programme of events giving our children a lovely supportive atmosphere to take their first steps in performing.

Copthill Chorale went on tour once again to Uppingham Chapel to sing evensong and were presented with a special badge during the service to show their hard work and commitment to the chorister programme. Our singers wear their badge on their blazers with pride.

We were delighted to welcome Mr George Gardiner to the Music Department as our new Drum Teacher. He comes to us with extensive performance experience from vast stadia to muddy Glastonbury! We know he'll feel at home with a pair of wellies at Copthill! Our drummers have really taken to his calm and encouraging teaching style. We look forward to seeing the development of this area of the department. We thank Mr McGurk for stepping in to teach whilst we waited to make just the right appointment to join our team.

The whole assembly hall was filled for our Easter Assembly showcasing many music ensemble performances. Beginning with our Orchestra performing an upbeat 'Sunshine After Rain' we then had performances from our Woodwind Ensemble, Chorale, Strings and Gospel Choir and the whole school joining together to sing our favourite Easter songs. What a joyous occasion!

We are delighted that once again our music scholarship candidates were 100% successful in all applications for secondary school music scholarships. Congratulations!

The finale of our term on the last day was our eagerly anticipated House Singing Competition. This year's theme was 'The Seven Seas' with each house performing their own interpretation of the Simon and Garfunkel classic 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' for round 1 we then moved into their own choice song for round 2. As this goes to press the winner has yet to be judged, but we are thrilled that Mr David Revels, Head of Singing at Uppingham School, has the very difficult task of judging the 2026 House Music Competition. High Standards across the board! What an amazing end to a busy musical term.

Happy Easter!

Suzanne Over
Head of Music

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See you next term!

