

Newsletter 15:

Spring Term 2022



**A Message from Susannah Connell,  
CEO, The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust**

In my Easter message last year I was reflecting on the year that had passed since Covid 19 had arrived in the UK, and expressed the hope that we would all be able to emerge from the pandemic stronger than before. I do believe that we are stronger, but we have still faced a challenging academic year so far. Which is why I strongly believe that everyone in The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust should feel proud of what they have achieved this term. Although it has been difficult at times, I hope that we can focus on what we have accomplished together, and know that we have met this continued challenge with determination, support and optimism. We will continue to see this challenge out and come through it implementing the many positives learnt from the whole experience.

Many of our much-missed activities are now possible again, and it has been such a pleasure to hear from pupils and teachers this term about things they are able to enjoy again - swimming lessons, exciting trips out of school, singing and making music together. Perhaps the next few months up to July will be more and more predictable and we can look forward to parents joining us for concerts, sports days and many other exciting events.

With thanks as ever to parents, staff, LGB and Board members for the support you give all the pupils in our schools, I would like to wish you all a happy and restful Easter break.

Kind regards,

Susannah Connell, CEO

# Braybrook



It has been a busy and successful term at Braybrook Primary Academy. The children have approached their learning positively and enthusiastically, and been so welcoming of their new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

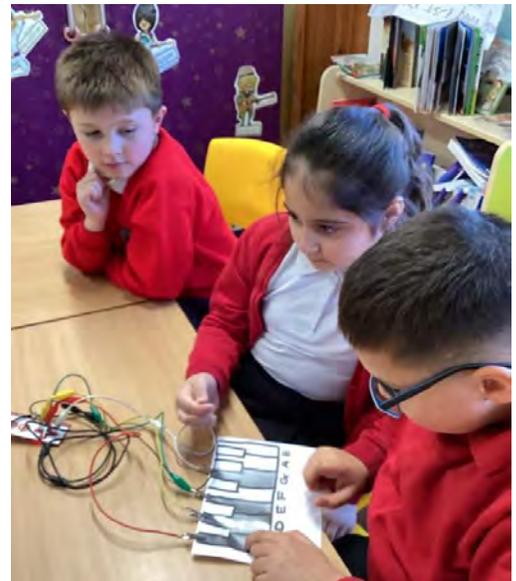


In addition to working hard on phonics and maths skills, Reception have been learning to sew, both by hand and with their new sewing machine. They have shown the characteristics of effective learning by hand stitching their initials and extended their learning to making bags with their initials on to keep their resources. They have even designed and created their own puppets to use in storytelling.

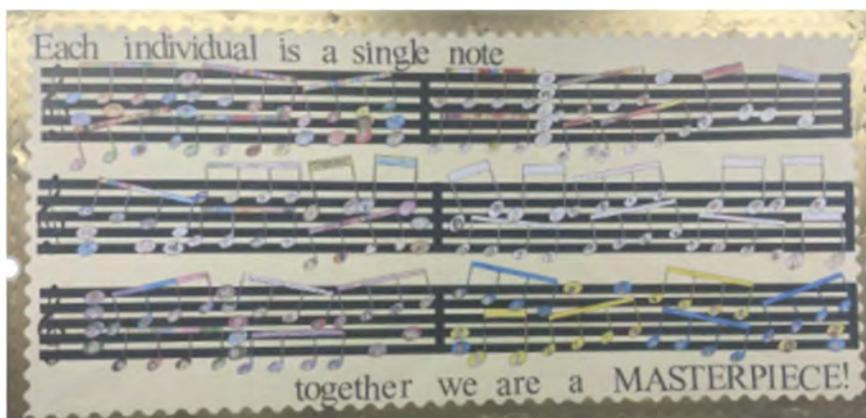
As part of our World Book Day celebrations, the children dressed as book characters and created their favourite story in a jar. As part of our ongoing focus on developing a love of reading, both years 1 and 2 had trips to Orton library, where Alice read a story to the children and explained how the library works. The children were then able to select a book to look at and create a poster based on their choice which will now be displayed in the library. Pop along and see if you can identify their book choices!

Raising aspirations and careers is a focus area for Braybrook and as part of this upper KS2 participated in a virtual visit with

Paralympian Megan Shackleton. Megan's sporting ambitions were originally focused on being a swimmer until she fractured her spine, this left her in a wheelchair at the age of nine. Aged 12 she started to play table tennis and at age 14 she made her international debut. Forward to 2020 and Tokyo where she won a bronze medal alongside her veteran team partner Sue Bailey. The children thoroughly enjoyed hearing about Megan's inspirational journey to success.



Year 3 and 4 were delighted to spend two days with Mr. E. from the Conductive Music team. They learned to create their own video game using Scratch to code before making their own electronic music theme tune. This STEAM project enabled them to apply their knowledge of electrical circuits and resulted in the creation of a game where they designed a person who lit up when the circuit was completed.



Finally, we are delighted to have created a dedicated music room with a wealth of exciting instruments where children receive music tuition and can compose their own pieces.

# Glebelands



The Spring Term at Glebelands Primary Academy has felt like one long game of 'last man standing' at times. For two years we played hide and seek with COVID and we were good, but it sadly found most of us this term. Did it win? Most definitely not! In spite of losing 213 TA days, 96 Teacher days and 2181 pupil days in the spring term, we have done loads of things. The children, their teachers and all of our support staff have worked incredibly hard in very difficult circumstances.

Years Four and Six have both enjoyed successful residential visits. Year Four went to Burwell House and Year Six to Caythorpe Court in Lincolnshire. We had really missed that time away together. So many valuable experiences are gained on residential visits. EYFS were excited to go out on their first coach trip to Ely. They had a lovely time together. Year Five made it to the Space Centre and back.



We have also had some exciting things happening to inspire learners on the school site. It is always wonderful to see awe and wonder on the faces of the children.

Fifty children have also benefited from one-to-one maths tuition in partnership with Third Space Learning. It has been great to see the children working in such an enthusiastic way with their tutors and gaining confidence in their skills.

Having music fully back on our agenda has made our school feel much more like the place we remember. It is so lovely to hear singing, recorders, ukuleles, keyboards and percussion once again.

As we enjoy our learning it has also been good to stop and think of others - there are many things happening in the world that remind us to keep everything in perspective. As a school, we worked with our friends who also attend the Polish School in Huntingdon to collect things that might help those people escaping troubled times in Ukraine. At this time we have found ourselves particularly grateful for peace and joy in the life we have. Learning opportunities play a huge part in this.

We look forward to even more excitement during the summer term. As we reflect on our Learning Journeys for this year, I am sure we will be delighted to see the progress that has been made over the course of the year. We have definitely worked hard for our treats on our Spring Term rewards days.



# Great Staughton



Wow what a fabulous term we have had!



On 3<sup>rd</sup> March we celebrated World Book Day. Each child dressed up as a character from a Roald Dahl book and were all gifted a Roald Dahl book from our PTA, to continue to inspire the love of reading. We started the day with a costume parade, and then we got to spend time with our houses, where we shared our books. We also wrote our own stories and read them to the class. All of our children looked amazing!

As a school, we chose to support the people caught up in the Ukraine conflict. We decided to collect blankets, nappies and sanitary products at school to send to a Polish school in Huntingdon (to then be sent onto the Ukrainian refugees in Poland). Our families were so generous in their donations; we were extremely proud of how we all came together as a community.



During British Science Week, the children had a great time watching experiments and activities from Professor Bubbleworks. We all had the opportunity to join in, either during the assembly or workshop. We had a great time defying gravity with hairdryers and leaf blowers and playing around with bubbles. Our children were also lucky to have a fascinating assembly about the Galapagos islands, after our Chair of Governors' recent trip, and an amazing presentation from one of our parents on microbiology.



During this term we also had a fantastic Forest School topic day. We had lots of fun, learnt some new skills and created some incredible items. In small groups, our older children built a round house, then used vegetables to dye material to cover it. They created water vessels with clay, jugs, bowls, cups and vases, and once dried they had fun testing them. Everyone then used their artistic skills to create a wonderful piece of cave art that captured the whole day.

Our younger children explored the 'earth area' where they learnt all about life cycles and had a go at completing different animals' life cycles. They then moved on to the 'space area' where they spent some time talking about space and created their own space art with giant chalk. They then explored the 'Antarctic area' where they learnt about penguins and tried to free some animals trapped in ice. There was also a 'desert area' where they dug in the sand to find artefacts.



## Kimbolton

We have had a really busy term with class trips taking place again! Ash class have enriched their humanities project 'Exciting Explorers' with a day out exploring planet Earth, Space, the Desert, Antarctica and the North Pole! The children learnt about life cycles, made discoveries in the sand and ice, created and followed maps and made lots of new friends.

Oak class learnt some new skills and created some incredible items with their topic 'Stone Age to Iron Age'. In small groups they built a round house, then used vegetables to dye materials to cover it. They created water vessels with clay, jugs, bowls, cups and vases. Everyone then used their artistic skills to create a wonderful piece of cave art that captured the whole day. Finally, after some pancake day treats they finished the day making Stone Age stone hammers, bows and arrows.

World War II was the topic for Rowan class and they had a tremendous day learning about what life was like in the 1940's at Duxford Imperial War Museum.



We kick-started British Science Week in style with a visit from Professor Bubbleworks! We were also very lucky to have our Chair of Governors in school to share her recent trip to the Galapagos Islands with us, which was absolutely fascinating! Thank you so much Su' Thompson!



Careers Week began with an awesome rock concert followed by an NHS nurse who spoke to us about working on the SCBU ward at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Mrs Traynor came to talk about her careers, including secondary French school teacher, working in a prison, in a registry office and at the immigration and nationality directorate. It was wonderful to discuss the different qualities you need in all these roles and the children asked some really thoughtful questions such as 'Did you ever experience any prejudice as a woman?', 'How did you find changing jobs?', and 'What was your favourite job and why?'.



To celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World Book Day our PTA purchased every child a book. Puddleducks Nursery and Ash class received a Julia Donaldson book, Oak class something by Roald Dahl and Rowan class a book from Michael Morpurgo's collection. Then the children came to school dressed as a character from their chosen book. So a huge thank you to our PTA for this significant contribution.



# King James Academy Royston



As a reward for the children earlier this term, a group of Year 10 pupils organised a stall selling sweets to the children in Year 5 and 6 to raise money for Garden House Hospice. Events like this underline how fortunate we are at King James to be able to make links across the school in this way. Many thanks to the team who organised this event, to the Truly Trusted pupils who helped and to you all for supporting! I know the children enjoyed this treat.



JUICY CONCLUSIONS

To enhance their science learning, years 5 and 8 had a visit to the planetarium which was set up in the drama studio on Senior Site. Each group had a trip around the universe and a chance to ask questions. This experience was described as 'awesome', 'exciting' and 'really interesting'. This activity was supported by a contribution from Johnson Matthey to STEM activities across the whole school.



## Leverington



This year was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Book Day and at Leverington we celebrated the special event over two days. Children were asked to create a story in a jar or box as their home learning challenge and we had lots of lovely creations to display! To bring books alive, each class spent two days reading a variety of inspiring texts and brought them to life with a variety of reading, writing and art activities. Here are some of our displays in school that celebrate the work created.



We celebrated Science Week in school this year, around the theme of 'Growth'. To launch the week, Mr Copeman shared a wonderful experiment making elephant's toothpaste! This had the children enthused to take part in a variety of activities throughout the week, such as looking at optical illusions, creating animals that would live and survive on Mars, making viruses and antibodies from origami and making and exploring stretchy slime! Each class also had a famous scientist to focus on and research, such as Mary Anning, Stephen Hawking and Isaac Newton.

It has been wonderful for all classes to be able to get out and about again this term. Years 4 and 5 have enjoyed their swimming lessons and Class 6 took a step into their future on a Careers Convention at our local secondary school. To launch their English writing unit, Class 4 had a wonderful day out at Cadbury's World. This inspired them to make their own chocolate bar before writing a persuasive advert to sell it to their friends.

Reception and Class 1 have been looking after eggs this term. The children were so excited to watch the chicks hatch (we even caught this on camera too!) and then had to look after them until they were returned to their new homes. This helped them with their learning around animals, growth and life cycles. They also had a fantastic time on their first school trip to Church Farm. After the excitement of the first bus journey for many of them, the highlights of the day were getting to feed the lambs and having a trip around the farm on the tractor with Farmer Dave.



# Middlefield



Mental health and well-being is high on the agenda at Middlefield for children, staff and parents. We are in the process of creating our 'Snug'. This is an area where the children can chat and share how they are feeling. Having our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant has really supported the children over the last year in particular. Mr. Witton, our amazing caretaker, has even built us a fireplace to make it feel homely!



Our School Council and Eco Committee have been very pro-active this term. They organised a 'Green Day' to raise funds for the pond dipping equipment and a wormery. The day involved the children going into different classes to take part in a range of green activities from seed bombs to planting seeds. There was a huge focus on the three R's – Reduce, Re-use, Recycle. The children brought in toys and books for a book swap to fit in with 're-use'. A great day was had by all!

Year 5 and 6 welcomed David and the Tally Ho Project into school, to link with their topic of World War 2. It was truly inspiring. David could not believe how knowledgeable our children were.

*'The children were just incredible and the day actually left a lasting impression on me. Some of the insights that were being shared by the students during the classroom sessions were so heartening, in particular the quote of leaving a legacy of a 'healed world'. Amazing.'*

The quality of work from this topic has been top notch! The children have loved it.



World Book Day ended up being a sleepy affair! The children came to school in their pyjamas and with their favourite bedtime stories. Pippa, our school dog, got involved too!

We were really lucky to have the author Phil Boyd come in to read his book 'The Flamingo Boy' to the children. Our PTA organised a 'Design a book character out of a potato' activity. They were truly amazing – one made Stick Man out of a sweet potato! This raised £220.66 for our school.

Middlefield's unique selling point is our outdoor learning. We are a school full of compost champions! The children have been having 'hands on' sessions in our composting area. The children worked in teams to sieve the compost so that it could be used for sowing more seeds, and to see what mini-beasts they could discover.



# Murrow and Gorefield



What a busy but exciting term we have had! We have explored some amazing topics this term as well as enjoying some amazing experience days as well!

For World Book Day this year we focused on the work of the author Roald Dahl. We kicked off the day with an assembly to learn about his life and we found out lots of things we didn't know about him. Each child was given a wooden spoon to create a character from one of Roald Dahl's books. These were absolutely fabulous and we were so excited to see the children using them to become storytellers throughout the day. At random times during World Book Day, an alarm was sounded which signalled 'Reading Aloud' time for the entire school!



We were invaded by villains this term to inspire our creative writing day. We used an amazing book written by Clotilde Perrin entitled 'Inside the Villains'. Using the book, we explored the characteristics of well-known villains from traditional stories, and this contributed to our very own creative writing throughout the day.

At Murrow, we held a recycling event for the local community, in partnership with the Murrow Street Pride group. Everyone was invited to bring along unwanted goods to the school which could then be sold on to others or recycled. It was great to see so many community members there and the children enjoyed running the event too.

We have been thinking about the terrible crisis happening in Ukraine currently and the children wanted to make a positive contribution towards this to help. Therefore, we held a non-uniform day to raise money, and collect items to send to the families affected by the devastating events. We are so incredibly proud of all the children and families for their contributions - Thank you!



## Roman Way



Our Nursery children were very excited when the digger came to Nursery to empty out the old sand and replace it with fresh new sand. Nursery had lots of lovely toy donations, which included some diggers. These toy diggers were put to good use as the children pretended they were builders.



Nursery have been super cooks, and made delicious pizzas. The children were able to select their own toppings, and we are sure they all enjoyed eating them when they got home.

Children in Otters Class (Reception) did some acting out of the story they were reading - **No Dinner!** by Jessica Souhami. One child was the wolf, and one was the little old woman who had just met the wolf in the forest.



Key Stage 1 have been learning about Mary Seacole and medicine. Using their chopping skills as well as a pestle and mortar, children created their own medicines from natural plants and herbs, just as Mary Seacole did.

The children enjoyed a day at King James Academy where they took part in a speed stacking tournament. The teachers were very impressed with their speed stacking skills.



Our Key Stage 2 children have been learning about Europe this term. Whilst studying Italy they used their Design and Technology skills to design, plan and prepare their salads, producing a very varied shopping list. They thoroughly enjoyed eating the salads after all the hard work, and later went on to evaluate them.

## The Round House



The whole school enjoyed taking part in the 'Egg Drop Challenge' for **British Science Week** where the children needed to drop an egg from the greatest height possible without it breaking. Every year group came up with some brilliant scientific solutions using recyclable materials including padded crash mats, landing the egg into water, and creating a slide.

Some of the children in Year 5 displayed their artwork in our Round House Art Gallery in the Courtyard. All the other year groups enjoyed visiting the gallery and appreciating their brilliant artwork!



The children in Year 3 are now looking after tropical fish in school as part of Maidenhead Aquatics' Fish Keeper Fry programme. They have learnt how to keep the water clean and techniques to remove ammonia and nitrites, how fish breathe and how to feed them correctly. They have also decorated the tank with plants and tested the water.

Years 3 and 4 recorded their performance of Project Planet for the parents to watch over the Easter holidays. Project Planet tells the story of school children who want to rewild some unused farmland but the scarecrows are determined to spoil their plans. The children all performed brilliantly.



The whole school celebrated NSPCC Number Day by completing Maths challenges in the morning and focusing on PSHE in the afternoon. The children all took part in a range of Maths investigations, where they worked in teams and showed fantastic perseverance. The children participated in the Crystal Maze, which is a mixture of maths activities where the children worked together to win crystals. In the afternoon there were PSHE lessons, followed by a challenge. An example of a challenge was when the children made a paper aeroplane in pairs, however, each person could only use one hand to make the planes. Overall, they had a wonderful day and thoroughly enjoyed the activities.

# Thomas Eaton



Spring term at Thomas Eaton has flown by with many exciting things happening in school. One of the highlights being that after two years we were able to take our Year 5 children swimming! This was incredibly exciting for the children, and they enjoyed every minute of it.

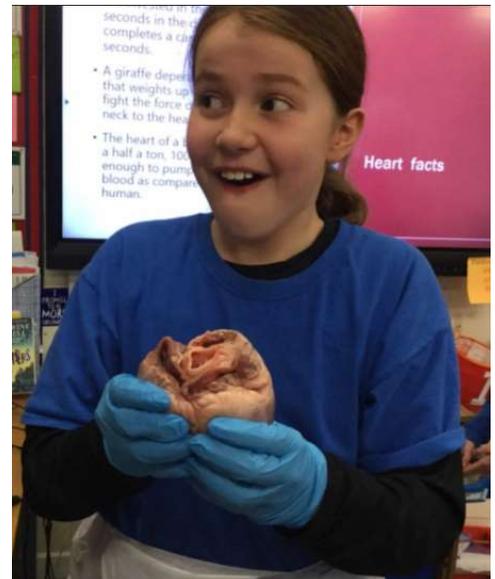
Wellbeing was focused on across the school during class assemblies for Children's Mental Health week. There were lots of discussions about how to keep our minds healthy, which linked to our Zones of Regulation that we have displayed around school. In Fitzgerald, they focused on wellbeing and mental growth by working in teams to support one another.

Instead of dressing up for **World Book Day**, we decided to challenge the children to create wooden spoon book characters. We were amazed by the response we had to our challenge as we had so many incredible masterpieces come into school.



Our **Rock Steady Music** launch day was a huge success and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Children and staff fully immersed themselves in the day by coming to school in their best rock clothes. The day was great fun and loads of children have signed up to join a band, which will give them the opportunity to learn a new skill by learning to play the keyboard, electric guitar, drums or being the lead vocalist!

Our Year 6 children have been studying the text **Pig Heart Boy** which linked really well to their Science unit about the circulatory system. The children were very excited when they were given the opportunity to look at the real thing, some children were even brave enough to handle them!





The children at Winhills have had a very busy spring term. In EYFS, the children started the term by prepping their outside environment for the spring. Not only did they plant seeds and cuttings, they made eco-bricks to use as an extra level of defence to protect our chickens. The children were shocked to learn how much plastic waste could not be recycled and could end up poisoning the habitats of the animals they have loved learning about, so the children gathered this plastic and used it to make the bricks.

Years 1, 2 and 3 started their Anglo-Saxon and Viking topic with an experience day in the life of a Viking. The children were challenged with tasks such as making candles, creating gargoyles to warn away enemies and making potions to heal the injured. After a significant amount of battle training, the children were ready to attack and defend using shields, spears and bow and arrows, and they finished their day with an archaeological dig.



In Years 4, 5 and 6, the children have enjoyed their studies on The Battle of Britain, which included a visit to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. The visit gave the children a chance to come face to face with vehicles and artefacts from the Second World War, and they even had the chance to speak with survivors of the war. This was followed by our 'History Off The Page' day where the children spent the day as evacuees, experiencing what life would have been like during The Blitz.

In Year 6, the children travelled to Cambridge to participate in a Science day organised by the Lindemann Trust, which featured a number of guest speakers on topics such as brain waves, using laser microscopes and genetics. The children thoroughly enjoyed the visit and were lucky enough to be taken on a tour of the old Magdalene College too. On the way home, they enjoyed stopping at the American Cemetery in Madingley to find out more about how the Second World War impacted our local area.

It has been wonderful to see the children representing the school in sports tournaments again, with the football team in action this term. The team took part in the quarter final in the Dickenson cup and represented the school with pride. Towards the end of term, a team of children took part in the DLPT 'Rising Stars' event. The school also enjoyed fundraising for both Comic Relief and Purple Day during this term, with events and fundraising competitions arranged by our School Council.



Four children from Year 3 participated in the school's first ever KS2 sports event - a **Panathlon** at St Ives Indoor Centre. The children participated in a series of sporting challenges to earn points. They finished second and qualified for the final, where they once again showed great determination and enthusiasm and were placed 8<sup>th</sup> in the whole County!

During **Science Week**, the children in Pre-school and Reception explored magnetic items, colour mixing, shadows and even friction using car ramps. The older children had to work in teams to stop an egg from cracking by designing a protective layer around the egg using recyclable materials. The egg was then dropped from 2.5 meters high! We had a few cracked eggs but the children worked really well together and thought hard about the appropriate materials to use.



Some children in Year 3 participated in a gymnastics competition at Huntingdon Gymnastics Club. They took part in a series of floor routines as well as the vault. They were also lucky enough to watch some potential Team GB gymnasts practice. It was a great afternoon and the children showed great determination and resilience to complete all the routines.



The whole school got involved in the **NSPCC Number Day**. The children took part in a series of problem-solving activities as well as some outdoor Maths, making 2D shapes and finding perimeters. For World Book Day, the children all dressed up as book characters and looked fantastic. During the day the children were able to swap books and read with children from the other classes.

We celebrated the Lunar New Year across the school and pre-school in January. We were lucky to have one of our parents come into school to talk to the children about the celebrations, and the children made lots of traditional decorations that would be used to celebrate the day.



Once again, the Pre-school has grown this term. We have recruited a new member of staff and will welcome even more children after the Easter holidays. They have been very busy all term and particularly enjoyed making their own pancakes to eat and some non-edible pancakes to toss.

- ◇ Continuous Professional & Leadership Development
- ◇ Initial Teacher Training
- ◇ School to School Support



We remain committed to the training of all staff, so it has been fantastic to be able to welcome nearly 400 participants from DLPT schools and schools in the locality to our training courses this term. Delivering our training courses online continues to be very effective and has helped us become paperless. To support workload, we also record a large number of these courses, meaning teachers and schools can access our training and resources at a time that suits them. We were delighted to be able to host our first in-person training events this term and have already planned more for the summer term to complement our online offer. Thank you to everyone who has written and facilitated courses this term.

During the recent staff training day, all DLPT teachers spent the morning together with Mitch Hudson from Grammarsaurus. This was to further develop our teaching of grammar. Our Early Career Teachers and their mentors attended a regional conference this term as part of the national Early Career Professional Development Programme. This focused on promoting progress in every lesson and improving literacy, with mentors reflecting on ways to engage with research and support teachers dealing with challenge.



It's been an exciting term for our trainees. They familiarised themselves quickly with a new school and have increased the time they are teaching the class. Thank you to mentors for all the invaluable support and advice you have given this term. Our trainees are also starting to apply for jobs, with some already being offered positions.

We continue to recruit trainee teachers for next academic year and future trainees can still apply for places. If you would like to find out more, check into our website [www.diamondepl.org](http://www.diamondepl.org).



Discover, exclusively for DLPT staff, is a valuable source of information, research and resources relevant to everyday practice in our schools. Having launched last term, the number of users is gradually increasing as staff dip into the content.



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