



THE STOPSLEY NEWS AND MEDIA TEAM PRESENTS...

THE STOPSLEY SOURCE

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Kung Fu Panda 4 Review

Kung Fu Panda 4 saw its UK release on the 28th of March, and from the 17th to the 21st of April this year, I had the opportunity to watch the entirety of the Kung Fu Panda tetralogy. Kung Fu Panda is a series that needs no introduction; earning approximately \$2 billion across the franchise with a star cast of Jack Black, Dustin Hoffman, and even real martial arts masters like Jackie Chan, this is certainly an acclaimed franchise that any subsequent sequels have to measure up to. So, does Kung Fu Panda 4 live up to expectations? Let's just say I have a few critiques of this movie.

But, for the positives first: the animators and voice actors have done their best to do justice to the franchise.

The effects are stunning, the characters move smoothly and the character and set design holds up. The Chameleon, in particular, is the most complex rig in Dreamworks history, having a total of 8,130 controls, 3,000 more than Toothless from How To Train Your Dragon (there is a critique I have of the animation, but we'll get to that later). The score also never fails to impress in this series, with Hans Zimmer once again taking the reins alongside Steve Mazzaro to bring a wonderful soundtrack that perfectly fits the characters on screen—not to mention the goofy charm of Jack Black singing a Britney Spears cover in the end credits.

However, not everything is perfect. I'll try to be as spoiler-free as possible, but this first one is one that I feel needs to be addressed.

If you watched the trailer, you may have noticed their absence—the Furious Five, Po's warrior companions, aren't in Kung Fu Panda 4 (though they do have non-speaking roles in the end credits). The director stated in an official interview that they wanted to introduce more characters and expand the franchise. The topic of budget never came up, but the voice actors for the Furious Five, like Seth Rogan and Jackie Chan, don't come very cheap. These are both very solid reasons, but the Furious Five have been such an integral part of Po's journey in the past three movies that it feels strange that they aren't in the fourth.

I mentioned earlier that there was a nitpick I had with the animation, and that is that this time around, the movie seems like it's trying harder to be an action movie in that there are more cuts and dramatic pauses. There's nothing inherently wrong with more fast-paced action sequences, in fact I quite like them, but the Kung Fu Panda series' combat has been defined up to this point by smooth kicks and punches that lead the camera. This is a very small critique that most who haven't seen the previous movies can ignore, but a critique nonetheless.

However, my biggest criticism of the movie is one that is hard to ignore while watching: it has a hard time establishing itself. Not just the characters, but also the story and its fundamental concepts. Time that could be allocated to expanding on these things is often taken up by jokes, scenes dragging on, and the B plot (which I won't spoil). Having just one of them could be fine, but the combination of all three makes the film feel slow, yet fast at the same time, dragging scenes on, but forgetting to fully explain the things it wants us to be invested in.

Now, for my last thoughts. Should you watch the previous trilogy? Definitely, especially the first two; they're all currently available to rent or buy on Prime video (I also got to watch the third on Netflix, but that will leave by April 30th).

As for Kung Fu Panda 4, it isn't a bad movie by any means, it just doesn't quite get on the same level as the previous ones. So, if you've watched the previous three and are dying for more, go ahead. It might also be an even better experience if you haven't watched the previous trilogy and therefore have lower expectations. But if you don't get the chance to watch it in cinemas, don't feel too bad.

My final rating? I give Kung Fu Panda Four 3.5 stars; a little low, you may think, but if you didn't have to compare it to its predecessors, it would get four stars easily.

- Katey O., Year 9

Earth Day

Occurring on the 22nd of April every year, Earth Day is perhaps one of the lesser-known observation days, which is a shame; while it doesn't include free presents like Christmas, it highlights an important subject that, especially in this day and age, is shaping our world more and more every day. This article aims to bring some awareness to one of our secretly most important days.

The man who invented Earth Day was American politician Gaylord Nelson. He was disappointed with how oblivious the public was to the true dangers of factories constantly pumping out smoke into the atmosphere, and how the US government did nothing to resolve it. Things came to a breaking point in January of 1969, when thousands witnessed the effects of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California, causing the death of over 3,000 birds.

This would be what inspired Nelson to organise the first Earth Day, which would reach 20 million Americans in various cities, 10% of the population at the time.

Nelson's plan to raise awareness of environmental issues worked, and in December 1970, the US Congress authorised the creation of the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Earth Day has been different from other observation days from its very inception, for it was created not for celebration, but as a sign of protest. Put simply by the official Earth Day website, "It's not a day, it's a movement." Its original goal was not just to celebrate the beauty of our planet or something similar, but to bring awareness about the effects of pollution on the environment. It has a very important message that can be applied to our current day situation.

With that being said, if you want to do something special even after Earth Day has ended, you could do things like make a birdfeeder, start a garden, or do more trivial things like trying to save energy or carrying reusable shopping bags.

I hope you find some way to contribute towards this movement that seeks to create awareness on protecting our planet, not just on Earth Day, but every day.

- Katey O., Year 9



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Term Dates

Bank holiday - 6th may

Half term - 27th to 31st may

Whole school returns - Monday 3rd june

Chess Tournament at Queen Elizabeth School

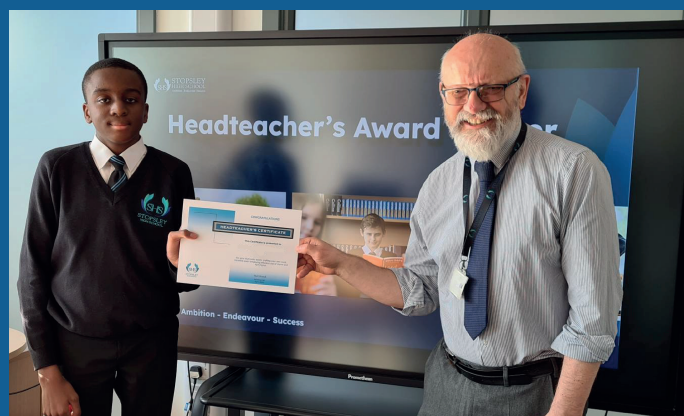
On Wednesday 24th April, a group of eight students from Stopsley High School went on an exciting trip to Queen Elizabeth School to participate in an inter-schools chess tournament. The different schools taking part were QES, Chalk Hills Academy, and Stopsley High School, and each brought a team of eight, ranging from different year groups who each brought their own unique play style to the tournament.

All participants put in a valiant effort, but sadly we did not take home the trophy this time. However, Arthur G in year 8 and Ignacy S in Year 9 managed to get into the quarter finals, and Priyan L in Year 9 got second place in the second bracket. Almost the whole team made it past the group stage, outperforming Chalk Hills Academy.

The final matches were intense, with the atmosphere full of suspense. Ultimately, the winner of the main tournament was a Year 10 student from the host school, QES.

Chalk Hills and Stopsley have to accept defeat for now, but there is always next September, which is when the organising teachers from each school are hopeful that the next tournament will take place. The Stopsley students are motivated to train harder for the future competitions and reclaim our title as champions; we'll be ready to make a strong comeback and will continue to represent Stopsley High School with confidence next year.

- Priyan L., Year 9



Headteacher's Award

Congratulations to Katey in Year 9 on receiving his Headteacher's Award.



Dear all,

Another week filled not just with learning but also enrichment beyond the curriculum for students. The PE department oversaw a trip to the University of Bedfordshire promoting Girls in Leadership on Monday. Understanding what it means to be a leader and to be developing those skills now will ensure that our students are equipped to be leaders of the future when they leave us.

On Wednesday Mrs Ramsay took our Year 8 Brilliant Club cohort on their graduation trip to Cambridge University. They all enjoyed learning about the history of the University and touring the campus.

Miss Wrigley also accompanied our Chess Team to Queen Elizabeth School. As you will recall we were delighted to be crowned champion last year due to the cool, calm, strategies employed by our students. Whilst we were unsuccessful in retaining our crown so much can be learnt from our defeats that the students are ready and raring for the next tournament.

Mr Quirke, Mrs Chiverton, Mr Swain, Mr Wise and Mrs Loveday accompanied our Year 11 GCSE Geographers on their field work investigation which provided students with the opportunity to put the skills and theories discussed in lessons into practice.

I am particularly excited today as I write this as I am eagerly awaiting my opportunity to taste test the entries for the Great Stopsley Bake Off. It is always rewarding to see how students and staff alike pull out all the stops to support worthwhile causes and this is definitely one. We are raising money to support the Keech Hospice Shortstail.

Have a wonderful weekend all,

Ms Hand

