



Newsletter

Spring Term 2025

Message from the Headteacher—Jenni

Spring term is always a shorter one and seems to go very fast, but it's still been an exciting one in school. We are set to build a new block with 3 new classrooms in as part of Derbyshire County Council's capital spending on special school places. We are delayed in starting due to waiting for the Department for Education to sign off the plans, so are looking at a plan B for September to ensure the new pupils and staff have classroom spaces to use. The expansion is so needed though and we look forward to giving more pupils the opportunity to come to our amazing school.

Dovedale

Dovedale have been working on the topics "London Life" in Spring 1 and "In the Past-Dinosaurs" during Spring term 2. We have been learning about everyday materials their uses and electricity in science. Where we have looked at how materials change and what different material are good for, as well as looking into electrical safely, items that use electricity and toys the light up and move. During humanities we have been looking at different countries and the Royal Family in our country.



During maths in Spring 1 we have been focusing on number and place value, including work on patterns, counting and sequencing numbers, during calculations lessons we have worked on the pupil's ability to count amounts with increasing independence and in statistics we have looked at common attributes and similarities/differences and shown these findings in simple graphs. In Spring 2 we have also introduced work about properties of shapes and capacity.

RE has been looking at the Luna New Year in Spring term 1 when we investigated the different traditions related to the Chinese New Year including the dragon dance, fireworks and tasted some of the foods eaten during this celebration. RE in Spring term 2 has focused on Easter Celebrations, how Christians celebrate and the stories behind the different celebrations.



Dovedale continued

Beyond Bennerley is always a favourite lesson in Dovedale and pupils have come on so well with their skills out in the community. Spring term has focused on the learning outcomes of the topic, money. We have looked at many different shops and what they sell, as well as comparing different shops and where we must go to buy certain items. Dovedale pupils have developed some great money handling skills, ability to follow a variety of shopping lists, as well as developing their patience waiting in all different shops.



In English this term, we have enjoyed exploring sensory stories for the topics 'London Life' and 'In the Past' using different objects and textures. We have also been working hard on our fine motor skills to help us with our writing and have been mark making shapes, patterns and letter shapes. This term, we have also enjoyed carrying out TAC PAC and peer massage sessions with our teachers to support us with our engagement targets.

In RSE and PSHE this term, we have learning about how to recognise and name our feelings. We have been learning about what zone we might be in when we feel poorly and enjoyed carrying out our doctors role play to learn about how doctors can help us to feel better. We have also been practising how to be kind friends through activities and games that involve turn taking and sharing.

During our Creative subjects this term, we have been creating different portraits of faces. We started off looking at our own faces in mirrors and identifying our different facial features. We practised making face collages using a range of craft materials. Finally, we ended our learning using our cooking skills to create faces on pizzas with different ingredients and shapes.



Newstead

During our English lessons, we have enjoyed reading a range of books including 'Monster's Love Colours' and 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear' as part of our 'Colourful World' topic, and 'That's Not My Dragon' and 'Never Touch a Dragon' during our 'Knights and Dragons' topic. We have explored mark-making using a variety of sensory materials, and have been matching symbols to different colours and characters.



In Maths, we have continued exploring numbers and number rhymes. We practised counting drum beats and jumps, helping us learn that many things can be counted, not just objects. We have also enjoyed singing nursery rhymes together with our friends. In addition, we have been developing our understanding of shape by matching 2D shapes to create pictures and tracing different shapes using a range of materials.



During our 'Our Colourful World' topic in Art, we explored colours and experimented with colour mixing using our hands to create new colours. We also explored painting with a variety of materials, including spray bottles and shaving foam mixed with paint. In our 'Knights and Dragons' topic, we used wooden building blocks to copy designs and create our own castles. We



then designed our own wooden castles and used paint to decorate them.



Our topic for Spring 1 was 'Our colourful world' in which we explored colours, rainbows through a variety of textures. We explored colourful foods such as strawberries, raspberries, oranges and blueberries through our senses. Over the half term we found the confidence to try new foods. This half term our topic is 'Knights and Dragons' are exploring castles, mythical creatures and what items are found in a woodland area.



During Spring 1 Newstead's PE topic was gymnastics. We enjoyed having weekly sessions at Erewash Gymnastics Club. Over the duration of the half term the pupils grew in confidence to try new things. Our favourite things were bouncing on the trampoline and jumping off the vault into the big foam pit. This half term our topic has changed to dance, which we are having lots of fun listening to our favourite songs and exploring how our bodies move using hand apparatus such as ribbons and pom poms.

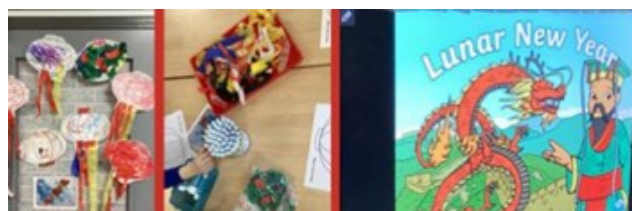


Newstead are continuing to get out in the community this half term by visiting local parks and woodland areas to work towards our outcomes of 'Showing enjoyment during a pleasurable experience' and 'Keeping ourselves safe in the community'. We have also had a greater focus on independence this half term with our pupils making their own toast during breakfast time, supporting with zipping up and hanging up their coats as well as beginning to open packets in their lunchboxes.



Duffield

This term Duffield has enjoyed our topics 'All about London' and 'In the Past'. We've learnt lots about the United Kingdom, its customs and royalty in both topics. We enjoyed trying different foods and customs from the different countries of the United Kingdom. We really enjoyed acting out elements of the 'Princess and the Pea' story, wearing the crowns that we had made in our active hands and art sessions. We had fun at our Valentine's disco and on our Valentine's day in school; we thought about ways of keeping our hearts and minds healthy. In RE we learnt about the Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations and the Christian Easter celebrations. We have tried lots of different foods and customs around these religions and at Easter we enjoyed Easter egg hunts and egg and spoon races. We hope you all enjoy a fun Easter together and we'll see you in the summer term.



Message from the Governors

The governing board is keen to keep everyone updated with the changes it has undergone in recent weeks. Firstly, we offer a very warm welcome to our new governor, Reme Ho, who brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience in business and careers and will be a great asset to our school. Hopefully you will meet him in school over the coming weeks. Siobhan Cunningham is now a co-opted governor and Maria Marson will undertake the role of Chair of Governors on an interim basis.

It has been a very busy time in school, the governors are so impressed by just how engaged you have all been in producing lots of outstanding work. We are also thrilled to see our Makaton and i-venger ambassadors inspiring everyone in school. With Easter approaching, we wish our pupils, families and staff a wonderful Easter break.

Hardwick

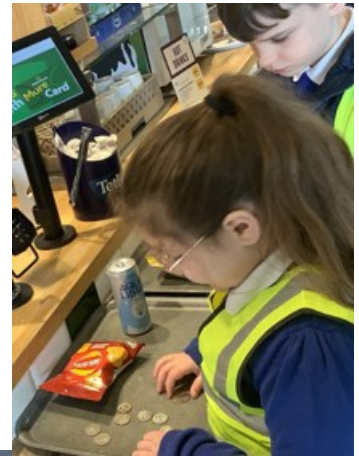
Harwick pupils have thoroughly enjoyed diving into the *London Life* topic. They were particularly fascinated by learning about the Great Fire of London, exploring how it began, how it spread, and how the city was rebuilt. The children loved comparing life in London then and now, showing great curiosity and enthusiasm.

In PE, pupils have been developing their skills in target games, with a strong focus on improving their throwing techniques and striking accuracy. One of the highlights of the term was trying out golf, which quickly became a favourite among many pupils. They showed great focus and determination as they practised putting and aimed for different targets.

RSE this term has centred on Online Safety, helping pupils develop a clearer understanding of suitable content and how to stay safe when using technology. They spent time exploring the PEGI rating system and thinking carefully about age-appropriate games and media. Safer Internet Day was a great success, with pupils taking part in a carousel of activities that encouraged thoughtful discussion and hands-on learning.



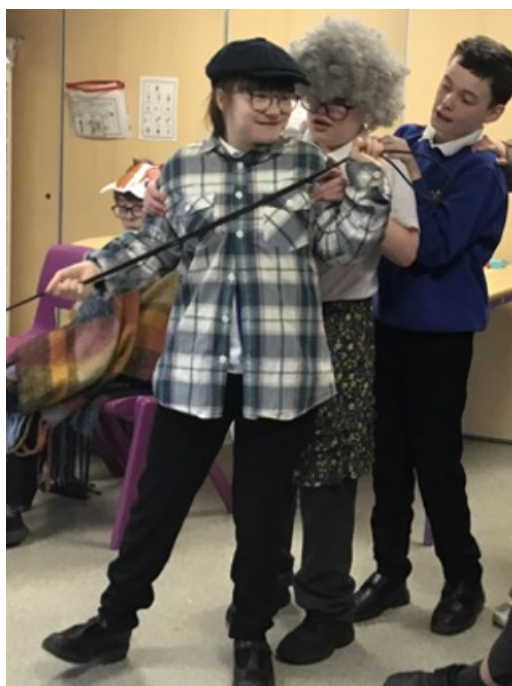
Beyond Bennerley has offered pupils valuable real-world experiences linked to money skills, supporting them to use and understand money with growing confidence. Visits to the local area including shops, cafés, and even travelling by service bus, helped pupils practise their skills in meaningful ways. A particular favourite was the café at South Wingfield Station, where pupils enjoyed ordering their own snack while interacting politely and independently with staff and watching the passing trains.



Shipley

This term our topic has been **"In the Past."** In English, pupils have enjoyed exploring traditional tales such as *The Gingerbread Man* and *The Enormous Turnip*. Using colourful semantics, children have been supported to build, read and understand simple sentences with increasing confidence.

We have had lots of fun dressing up and acting out the stories, which helped pupils develop communication, engagement and social interaction skills. Pupils also worked on sequencing events, using visuals and practical activities to retell each story in the correct order. Through these activities, we explored important morals from the stories, including **respect** and **teamwork**. It has been wonderful to see everyone's enthusiasm and growing confidence throughout the term.



Shipley 2 pupils have been enjoying lots of active hands activities. They have been working hard to develop their shoulder stability, two-handed coordination and fine motor skills through a variety of engaging tasks. Everyone has shown great focus and enthusiasm, and it has been wonderful to see how much fun they have been having while learning and developing these important skills.



Haddon

We have enjoyed our key texts 'Tabby McTat', 'The Queen's Hat', 'Town Mouse and Country Mouse', 'The Growing Story' and 'The Ever Changing Earth' – very interesting texts with beautiful illustrations that have really captured the students' imaginations! The students have been working hard at creating adventure stories, non-fiction books about history and geography, as well as exploring biographies when writing about their lives!

In maths the children have continued to work on addition and subtractions, with a focus on numbers to 20, using a variety of different resources and mental maths skills to add up to 20. The children have been also exploring 2D and 3D shapes, measuring mass and volume, time and using computers to input data for our statistics work.

In our topics lessons we have continued to focus on learning about human and physical geography and the definitions of what they are, as well as making town and village maps. Alongside this the children have been planning, making and reviewing Art and D&T projects - making bridges out of different materials, creating sculptures out of clay (and food!). The children have also taken a step back in time learning about nursery rhymes. The children have also explored significant historical events – the Great Fire of London and The Queen's Coronation.

We have visited Denby Pottery to 'Play with Clay', South Wingfield Station to see the trains going by and enjoy a snack, as well as Hardwick Hall to experience a grand historical location in the countryside. Alongside this we have continued our local Beyond Bennerley visits to the local community and beyond. From next half term the children will be taking part in Forest Schools—more information to follow. We are so very proud of the children as they continue to develop their friendships and push themselves in their lessons – well done Haddon!



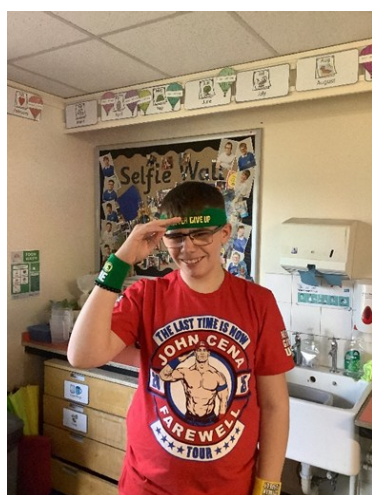
Elvaston

Elvaston Class have gone above and beyond during the spring term, and we are incredibly proud of the progress they have made as the term has unfolded. The classroom remains full of positive energy, strong friendships, and a wonderful sense of community. It has been lovely to see the children building on their hard work, listening carefully, and making thoughtful choices each day.

Throughout the term, our learning has been brought to life through exciting topics, trips, and practical activities. In Science, we have explored light and shadows through different experiments and have also been learning about the human body. Our 'Graffiti' topic has been a real highlight; the children loved reading *Scribble Boy* and experimenting with different graffiti mediums. They created their own graffiti tags and worked together to produce a large class graffiti piece using spray bottles on a big white bedsheet. In Maths, we have been learning about number, measurement, and shape through lots of practical activities.

In PSHE, the children have been exploring emotions and feelings using the Zones of Regulation, learning how emotions can feel in our bodies and how they can sometimes "bubble over" and affect our actions. Some members of the class have also enjoyed recent trips to the Derbyshire County Cricket Ground to take part in table cricket competitions. We also took a trip on the public bus to Ilkeston, where the children bought their own bus ticket and enjoyed choosing a pastry from Stacey's Bakery, helping to build their independence and real-life skills.

Alongside this, the class have been working hard on their fine motor skills through the Active Hands programme and have produced some fantastic writing in English, showing great progress in letter formation, punctuation, and handwriting. We also enjoyed celebrating World Book Day, visiting a local charity shop that was giving away books. The children were polite, grateful, and wonderful advocates of the Bennerley Attitudes. We look forward to what the summer term holds for Elvaston Class!



Wollaton

Our topic this term is "The Roman Empire" and we have been learning some interesting things about this ancient culture.

Wollaton enjoyed a story outside for World Book Day, we also had some great fancy dress costumes!



Wollaton have been doing some Bikeability with Joe from Erewash Sports Partnership



Becky has been working with Wollaton in Forest School at Wollaton Park and Shipley Park this term. So far, we have been identifying different fungus (some have some cool names like 'dead man's toe'); pupils really enjoyed finding all the different variations. Wollaton have also made wood cookies in by sawing logs and using a hand drill, they turned them into necklaces and spinners.



Spring term at Forest School

Rufford have accessed some of their Forest School sessions at Allestree Woods on the site being developed by the Wildlife Trust. Rufford pupils have been lucky enough to base their learning in different setting around the park in both the woodland and around the lake wetland.

In the woodland environments they have developed their skills and knowledge about the different trees, plants, fungi and creatures there and then compared this to the differing wetland environment. They have also taken part in building dens and taken part in a, "in nature" wellbeing session run by the Wildlife Trust.

During their time around the wetland environment, pupils discussed and researched the different species living there, including the variety of

waterfowl and the different fish and freshwater creatures that are in the lake. We also compared this environment to the woodland and how the creatures living in each differ.

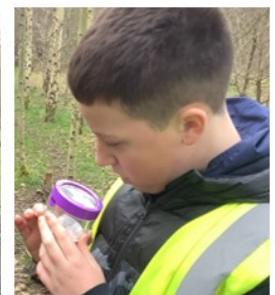


During their sessions in school Rufford choose to focus their learning around fire lighting and campfire cooking. The pupils have skilfully built on their previous fire lighting skills and knowledge, to be able to plan and cook some great food.

Derwent Class have been enjoying their Forest School sessions this year, both at the Young People's Forest near Shipley Park and within our own school grounds.

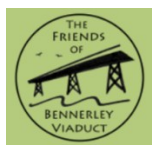
During January and February, the class made a variety of bird feeders to help support wildlife through the winter months. We also enjoyed nature walks, creating art and playing hide-and-seek in the woods. In the coldest weather, we lit a campfire for some outdoor cooking. Pupils explored aspects of fire safety, practised striking the fire steels and prepared food to cook and eat around the fire.

With the arrival of spring, Derwent Class have continued their visits to the Young People's Forest. Each session begins with group time in the woodland circle, where we share a drink and snack while relaxing and listening to the birds. We have explored the woods for signs of the changing seasons, searched for small creatures, built shelters from branches, and practised using tools safely. It has been lovely to see the pupils grow in confidence as they explore the natural environment and work together with support on their Forest School adventures.

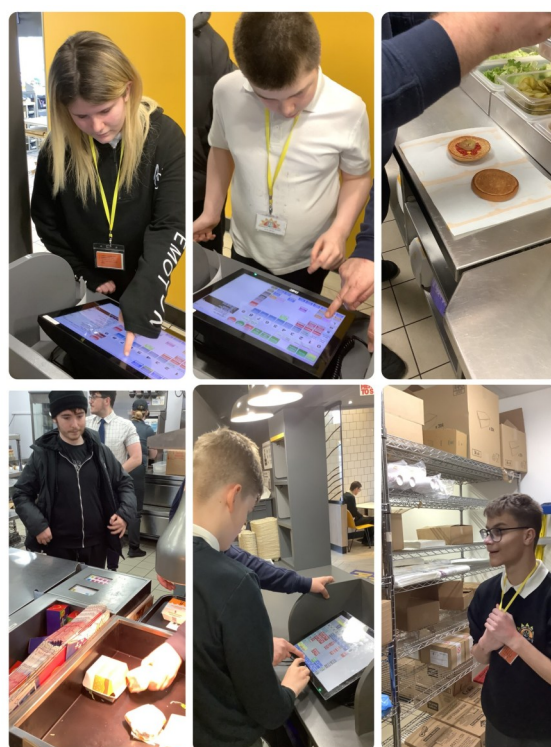


Careers and Life Beyond Bennerley

Our KS4 pupils have been exploring the world of work and developing vital life skills through a range of exciting careers activities. Pupils have engaged in volunteering with both The Woodlands Trust at Shipley Park and the Friends of Bennerley Viaduct, giving them hands-on experience in supporting the local community and the environment.



In school, pupils prepared for the world of work through the McDonald's Taste for Work Challenge. They practised their communication skills by writing Drive Thru scripts, before heading to McDonald's in keston to see real-life work in action and even got the chance to make a burger themselves!



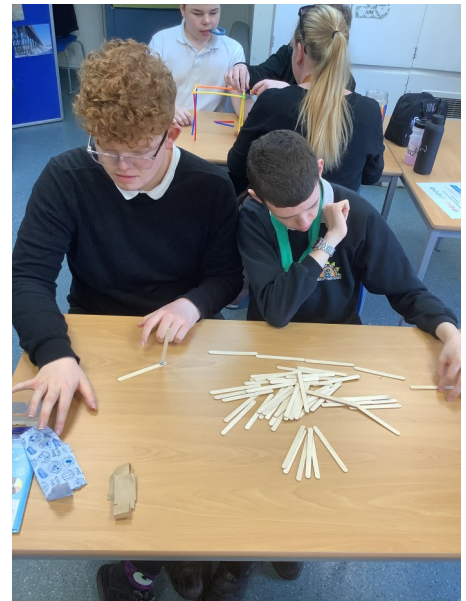
Pupils have also taken part in a Labour Market Information workshop with the DWP, learning about employment opportunities available in the local area and the skills needed to succeed. These experiences are helping our pupils build confidence, understand the world of work, and prepare for life Beyond Bennerley Fields.



Chatsworth Class Explore the Bennerley Viaduct!

This term, Chatsworth class have been embarking on an exciting, cross-curricular project exploring the iconic Bennerley Viaduct. Through this project, pupils have discovered the history, science, and design behind this local landmark, developing both their knowledge and practical skills along the way. In history, pupils investigated the construction of the viaduct, learning about the industrial revolution and the role the railway played in connecting communities. They explored old photographs and maps, comparing past and present to understand how the viaduct has shaped life in our area.

In science, pupils conducted water testing, comparing the water from the nearby canal and river. Maths sessions allowed pupils to apply measurements, counting, and shape sorting. Finally, in Design & Technology, the class used their learning to design and build their own mini viaduct models, testing them to see which designs were strongest and most stable. Throughout the project, pupils have demonstrated curiosity, creativity, and excellent teamwork, bringing history and engineering to life in the classroom.



Derwent

It has been a busy and engaging term in Derwent, filled with hands-on learning, community experiences and exciting adventures. We are delighted to share some of the highlights from this term.

This term we have focused on developing life skills through real-world learning. Pupils have practised:

- Using money during café and shop visits
- Reading menus, signs and labels
- Greeting others and ordering drinks and snacks
- Following simple instructions and routines

These experiences help pupils build confidence and independence beyond the classroom.

Our English text this term was the imaginative story How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth.

To bring the story to life, we visited Matlock Farm Park, where pupils explored the farm, searched for clues and met animals. The trip sparked curiosity, imagination and fantastic engagement.

Each week pupils visited a local horse yard where they carried out real-life job tasks such as:

- Sweeping
- Filling hay nets
- Carrying water
- Helping with stable care

These experiences support confidence, responsibility and independence.

Boxing Interventions

Pupils took part in boxing sessions to support:

- Gross motor skills
- Coordination and balance
- Turn-taking and teamwork
- Emotional regulation

These sessions have been highly engaging and have helped pupils build confidence and resilience.



Rufford

This half term at Rufford has been packed with exciting experiences and opportunities for our students!

Some of our highlights include energetic boxercise sessions with P.E Joe and fantastic climbing sessions at Alter Rock Derby. We've also had lots of fun in our science lessons, exploring the differences between solids, liquids and gases through hands-on activities.

Students were given a unique opportunity to take part in a Q&A session with local MP Adam Thompson, where they asked thoughtful questions and learned more about local leadership.

In preparation for our upcoming Enterprise project, everyone has been busy practising and perfecting their baking skills.

We also spent time giving back to the community with a litter-picking activity.

As part of our careers programme, students had the honour of going behind the scenes at our local McDonald's, learning how the restaurant operates — and they even enjoyed a tasty meal at the end!

A fantastic half term full of learning, teamwork and new experiences. We're proud of all our students!



Key dates for the year:

- **Parents'/Carers' evening:** Tue 12th May 2026
- **For holiday dates see the school website:** <https://www.bennerleyfields.derbyshire.sch.uk/term-dates-and-times/>
- **Inset days remaining:** Tue 5th May 2026