



Newsletter

Autumn Term 2025

Message from the Headteacher—Jenni

It's been a fabulous term and our new starters have settled in well and have made such great progress since they arrived.

We are busy getting ready for a wonderful range of Christmas activities, my favourite being the staff panto that some staff and one governor are busy rehearsing for to perform for the children—I love drama and I write and direct it, and this year's is Aladdin—oh yes it is!

January is an exciting time where we start building three new classrooms (near the canal side of school) which are due to open in September 2026. The disruption will hopefully be as minimal as it can be, as access to this will be from Bennerley Avenue and down the side of the school field.

Message from the Governors

Since the new term, all governors have been in school completing a learning walk, having link meetings with staff and attending the committee meetings. We are so impressed with all the hard work that you have been doing in school, keep up the fantastic work!

Siobhan, our Chair of Governors, is coming to the end of her term as Chair. We would like to thank her for all her hard work in this role over the last 4 years. Siobhan will remain on the Local Governing Committee as a Parent Governor. Maria, our Vice Chair will take over the role for a short period while we recruit a new Chair.

We send our thanks to Jenni and the staff for their continuing support and commitment. We hope you enjoy all the festive activities that are planned for the coming weeks, including the Pantomime 'Aladdin'

So here's wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

SEND Market Place Event and Family Group Sessions

Our SEND Market Place Event last month was a huge success and families who came were able to speak to a range of SEND Providers and advisory services.

We also have a couple of events planned for parents/carers for January:

- 14th January 2026 9.30am: Coffee Morning
- 27th January 2026 1.30pm: Number Mastery Session



If you wish to attend, please book through the school shop on Arbor so we know numbers.

Dovedale

Dovedale have had a wonderful Autumn term, they have been working hard on their learning in their work stations and developing their independent work skills too. During Maths this term, we have been doing lots of work on number and place value and calculations, practising their number and counting skills as well as positional language and money skills.

We have been putting our Maths money skills into practice during our Friday community visits.

During English, we have enjoyed looking at stories and texts linked to our topics 'Whatever the Weather' and 'Down in the Woods.' We have explored sensory stories, developed our mark making through different sensory experiences and practiced lots of fine motor activities linked to our topics. We have also enjoyed our peer massage sessions where we experience positive touch and work on our individual engagement targets.

During science, we have looked at light and seasonal changes and plants, living things and their habitats. In Geography this term has focused on weather and human and physical features of environments. We have been able to use Forest School to put our Science and Geography learning into real-life situations during Autumn 2.

During our Beyond Bennerley trips on a Friday, we have also been focusing on time management and our ability to create and follow the visual structure of the trip, as well as making/following our shopping lists and paying using our math skills.

During our Creative subjects this term, we have created some weather artwork linked with our topics, thinking carefully about the colours and shapes we used. In Design Technology this term, we have been collecting nature items for our fairy houses we have been constructing and enjoying creating mixtures as part of our food technology work. We have also enjoyed making bird feeders in our forest school sessions to create woodland creatures for the birds in forest school to enjoy.

In PHSE, we have been learning how to keep safe and how to say no to things we don't like. We tried different foods and said no to the foods we didn't enjoy. In RSE, we have also been learning about how to keep safe and have spoken about safe strangers in school and people who are safe to help us outside of school.

RE during the Autumn term has been looking at Christian celebrations, including baptisms and the Christmas story, as well as exploring the feeling of belonging.



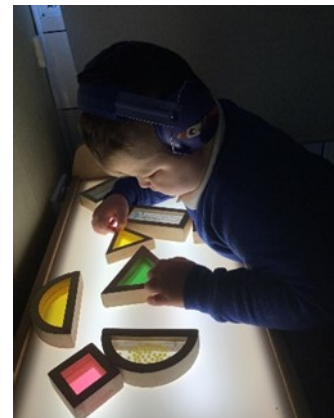
Newstead

During our English lessons, we have enjoyed reading a range of books including Cook It! Imagine if fruits... for our 'Healthy Choices' topic, and It Was a Dark, Cold Night and Owl Babies for our 'Hibernation' topic. We have particularly loved our sensory stories, where we explored different items linked to the texts. Newstead were fantastic at following instructions to make wrap pizzas – which we then enjoyed for our snack! We have matched symbols to items from the stories, exploring different objects and characters. In our writing lessons, we have used a range of tools to make marks, including painting owl pictures and tracing line patterns.

In Maths, we have been exploring numbers and number rhymes. We have been practising pointing to objects while counting, matching numerals to quantities, and joining in with singing nursery rhymes with our friends. We have also been developing our money skills by role-playing shops, where we used coins to buy items we wanted for our snack.

As part of how my world works Newstead have enjoyed using their senses to explore new foods. We made fruit kebabs with a mixture of our favourite and new fruits, we then tried various Chinese foods, explored sweet and sour as well as trying food with a range textures. We have explored the terms hot and cold by feel with ice and hot water bottles as well as through taste by trying hot chocolate and ice lollies! Within our topic 'Hibernation' we are exploring light and dark and have enjoyed making our own binoculars to become explorers.

Within PE Newstead have had the opportunity to visit Breadsall Park to practice and embed our fundamental skills. We have enjoyed climbing, balancing, jumping and working together with our peers pushing the swings. The class team are incredibly proud of how responsible they have been on the school minibus and out in the community. We are looking forward to our trip to Lea Green soft play to transfer all of our new skills.



Duffield

Duffield have had the most fantastic start to this school year.

We thoroughly enjoyed our Whatever the Weather topic in Autumn Term 1. We enjoyed learning all about lots of different weathers that we experience through the seasons in the UK. We made some lovely weather related art work and we read and experienced some brilliant weather stories. We have enjoyed doing gymnastics in PE throughout Autumn and enjoyed our trips out of school to do gymnastics.

We experienced many Autumn wider world events when we had lots of Halloween fun and we remembered the many losses of Remembrance Day by respectfully staying quiet for 1 minute. We learnt about how Christians celebrate Christmas and what it means to them.

In Autumn 2 we enjoyed our Down in the Woods topic and the build up to Christmas. We enjoyed acting out our Down in the Woods stories especially when we toasted and ate marshmallows over a campfire – Mmmmmm! We have enjoyed dancing to our Gingerbread song together with our gingerbread dolls. We have cooked some healthy food recipes and learnt about the food groups and we even made some reindeer and wildlife food.

Throughout the term and throughout our school days we have all been learning to think of others, take turns and show respect for each other, we have had some fabulous fun times together, and we can't wait to carry on with our learning journey in the New Year!



Shipleigh

Shipleigh Class have had a fabulous term filled with exciting PHSE learning. This half term, pupils explored the theme of safety and the importance of trusted adults in the community.

As part of their learning, the children followed a shopping list around Tesco, practising how to ask for help from people who support us in everyday life. They also learned to recognise the difference between public and private places, helping them understand how to stay safe when out in the community.

Well done, Shipleigh Class, for your brilliant learning!



Hardwick

It has been another action packed half term in hardworking Hardwick. During our maths lessons, pupils have been exploring number and place value as well as addition and subtraction, showing fantastic progress in both accuracy and confidence when solving problems. We've also enjoyed Active Maths sessions with Erewash School Sports Partnership. This has allowed pupils to apply their maths skills in fun, energetic games, combining physical activity with problem solving.

Our PHSE and RSE lessons have focused on personal safety, helping pupils understand important safety rules, the concept of privacy, and what safe touch means. A range of active learning activities have supported pupils in building confidence and awareness in everyday situations.

Our PE topic this half term has been gymnastics. Pupils have been developing their skills by travelling in different pathways and exploring jumps and balances using a range of apparatus. This also included a visit to Erewash Valley Gymnastics Club, where everyone had the chance to try out professional equipment and challenge themselves in a safe, supportive environment. During Beyond Bennerley lessons, pupils have had lots of opportunities to visit a range of places in the local community. We have visited Green's Windmill, where pupils discovered how wind power works and learned about its importance in history. The highlight was baking our own bread. We also visited the Ritz cinema to watch 'Paddington in Peru' and enjoyed exploring the books at Heanor library.



Haddon

This half term Haddon have continued to work hard and have lots of fun!

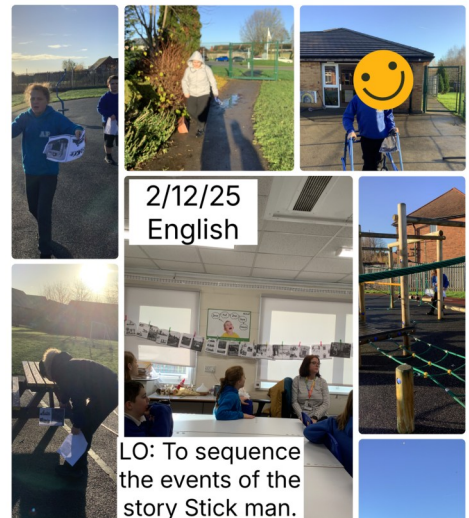
We have enjoyed our key texts *Mouse's Woods*, *The Woods* and *Stickman* - lots of adventures and fun in those stories! The students have been working hard at using colourful semantics to help them read and write sentences based on these stories. The children rewrote *Mouse's Woods*, wrote an alternative ending to *The Woods* and then wrote out character descriptions from *Stickman*, all using colourful semantics.

In maths the children have continued to work on addition and subtractions, as well as exploring the concept of money and positioning and shapes. The children have worked extremely hard in all areas using a variety of resources to support their learning and also working hard on their mental maths skills.

In our topics lessons we have focused on learning about human and physical geography and the definitions of what they are. Alongside this the children have been planning, making and reviewing Art and D&T projects - making food resources for woodland animals and making fairy houses using natural elements, partly inspired by the work Andy Goldsworthy.

We have visited Green's Windmill to explore their science museum and learn about how the windmill made bread for the local area, all whilst learning how to make bread! We also had another visit to the Erewash Valley Gymnastics Club, which the children all thoroughly enjoyed!

Phew! We have definitely done a lot this half term!



Wollaton

Wollaton class have had a great first term.

We have been listening to different genres of music and linking this to our Zones of Regulations emotion work. We discussed how emotions can be expressed through the volume and tempo of music.



Wollaton have also been shopping at Morrison's and using functional maths skills in the café. Some pupils were recognising and using coins and notes, some were working out their change and checking receipts.



Elvaston

What a fantastic start to the school year it has been for Elvaston Class. The children have settled brilliantly since September, and we are incredibly proud of how quickly they have embraced our routines and expectations. The classroom is full of positive energy, lovely new friendships, and a real sense of community. It has been wonderful to see such hard work, good listening, and thoughtful choices from everyone each day. We have enjoyed several exciting trips this term that have helped bring our learning to life. During our visit to Morrisons Café, the children practised handling money and making their own purchases. Our trip to Victoria Park was another highlight; we explored safety signs, information signs and road signs as part of our learning about the local environment and of course we also made time for a lovely play on the park, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. We also loved our recent cinema trip, where we watched *Now You See Me, Now You Don't*—a fantastic experience for all.

There has been a great buzz in class as we have been practising for our Christmas performance, and the children are excited to share their hard work during the final week of term. They have also been eagerly collecting Dojo points, working hard to earn rewards to spend in our Dojo Shop. In D&T and during our Christmas-themed RE Day, the children have been wonderfully brave and open-minded, trying lots of new foods—even some they didn't think they would like! We are so proud of everyone for giving things a go. Overall, we are delighted with the brilliant start the children have made this year. The sense of teamwork, kindness, and community already blossoming in Elvaston Class is truly lovely to see, and we are very proud of each and every child. We are very excited for what the rest of the year will bring.



Autumn term at Forest School

At Forest School this term, Shipley, Newstead, Duffield and Dovedale have been having sessions with Becky, and Hardwick have had sessions with Fiona.

All pupils have been working on their independence and extending their own learning and interests from the taught skills activities that they have taken part in each week. Shipley and Duffield have been doing lots of tool work and finishing their term of sessions with fire building, lighting and roasting marshmallows on the campfire.



Newstead and Dovedale have developed their independence and knowledge of the core site activities well. Showing resilience and determination to follow their own learning interests in nature, as well as taking part in focus skill sessions, learning and achieving new things with tools and woodland equipment as well as a love for nature and the great outdoors. They have also been caring for the creatures on our School Forest School site. By finding and identifying them, feeding them and building them habitats for the winter months.



Hardwick Class have had a fantastic autumn term at Forest School, developing greater independence, making their own choices and growing in their awareness of personal safety outdoors. They have practised a range of practical skills, using hammers and nails, bowsaws and peelers with growing independence and supporting one another as they worked.

There has been creativity in their imaginative play, especially when engaged independently in rich social interaction and teamwork to set up their own Forest School shops selling everything from sweets to fishing rods!

In November, Hardwick have been learning about campfire safety at the fire circle and practised using a fire steel to help light the fire. A highlight has been making popcorn and toasting s'mores

over the campfire and drinking hot chocolate together in the fire circle on cold autumn days. We are very proud of how the children have embraced challenges with enthusiasm, cooperation and growing confidence in the natural environment.



Chatsworth

Chatsworth Students Honour Remembrance Day with Pride and Respect

Students from Chatsworth took part in a series of thoughtful and meaningful activities to mark Remembrance Day, demonstrating maturity, compassion, and a deep sense of respect throughout.

In the lead-up to the day, students worked together to design and create their own Remembrance wreath. Their creativity and teamwork shone through as they produced a beautiful tribute, which has now been entered into a local competition. We are eagerly awaiting the results, and regardless of the outcome, we are incredibly proud of the effort and care they put into their work.

On a dedicated Remembrance visit to the Ilkeston Marketplace Cenotaph, our students attended a commemorative event and were honoured to lay our handmade wreath as part of the service. Standing alongside members of the community, they paid tribute to those who gave their lives in service. Their conduct was impeccable, and they showed sincere respect throughout the proceedings.

As part of their learning, students also visited the Commonwealth war graves, where they spent time discovering more about the real people behind the names and stories of the wars. This experience gave them a deeper understanding of the sacrifices made and helped bring history to life in a profoundly personal way.

We could not be prouder of how our students conducted themselves throughout all these activities. Their behaviour, engagement and empathy were exemplary, and they truly embodied the spirit of remembrance.

Work Experience Success

Over the past five weeks, Chatsworth class have taken part in an inspiring work experience programme at Marriott's Breadsall Priory Hotel and Country Club.

From housekeeping to hospitality, they have rolled up their sleeves, embraced responsibility and shown incredible commitment to developing their workplace skills. The progress they have made has not only boosted their confidence but also given them valuable experiences to showcase on their CVs.

We are so proud of what they have achieved.



Derwent

We have had a fantastic start to the school year! The children in Derwent Class have settled in beautifully, formed wonderful friendships, and embraced every opportunity to learn and grow. Here are some of the highlights from our Autumn term:

English In English, we have been studying two exciting books: 'The Invisible' and 'The Stone Age Boy'. Within these lessons, students have practiced reading aloud, acted out scenes from the books, dressed up as characters and explored how characters feel and discussed emotions and empathy. These activities have helped bring the stories to life and deepen understanding.



Maths In Maths, we've covered a variety of topics in practical and engaging ways, often taking learning outdoors. This approach helps students see how mathematical concepts apply to real-life situations, making lessons more interactive and meaningful.

Post-16 Trips This term, Derwent Class visited Stanton Vale and Alfreton Park to explore possible future Post-16 settings. These visits gave the students a great insight into the opportunities available to them after school.



Bluebells Farm During Autumn 1, the class completed five weeks of work experience at Bluebells Farm. They learned how to care for a variety of animals and gained hands-on experience in a real working environment.

Active Hands We have focused on developing motor skills through the Active Hands program, which has helped students improve their different motor skills in fun and practical ways.

Cultural Experience – 'Smed and the Smoos' As part of our cultural studies topic on theatres and performances, the class enjoyed a trip to see 'Smed and the Smoos'. It was a fantastic opportunity to experience live theatre and connect learning with real-world experiences.

Local Visits As part of our Beyond Bennerley topic, we've explored a variety of local places. This term, the class enjoyed trips to Ilkeston Bowling, Shipley Garden Centre and the Library. These visits provided wonderful opportunities for students to engage with their community and extend their learning beyond the classroom.



Rufford

Rufford Class have had an incredibly busy and rewarding first term! As part of our Pathway to Adulthood lessons, we have been developing our independent living skills by planning meals, going shopping and preparing a range of tasty dishes on a budget. So far, we've cooked healthy chicken meals, homemade burgers, and a delicious macaroni cheese.

In maths, we have been learning all about money, and the pupils have been able to put their skills into practice when buying ingredients for our cooking sessions.

In English, we have been reading 'Oliver Twist'. To bring the story to life, we visited the workhouse in Newark, and we're also looking forward to seeing 'Oliver Twist' performed at Derby Theatre before Christmas.

Rufford Class have worked incredibly hard this term and are very much looking forward to a well-deserved rest over the Christmas break, ready to return for a very busy and exciting term in the New Year.



Key dates for the year:

- **Parents'/Carers' evenings:** 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 and Monday 1st June 2026