



Newsletter

Spring Term 2025

Message from the Headteacher—Jenni

This term has seen some lovely activities both in school and outside of school, even better as we've had some lovely sunny weather too. I have also loved so many children bringing me their work to show me when they have done something extra special. It's the highlight of my day when this happens; it's great to see their pride and progress.

A big thank you for the continued support of all our families in the way we work together to get the best outcomes for every pupil.

Dovedale Dovedale have really enjoyed their topic 'Let's Build!' this half term. In English, we have been reading stories such as 'Bizzy Bear's Building Site,' 'The Three Little Pigs' and 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff.' As part of our English learning, we have been sharing sensory stories, carrying out mark making activities linked to our stories and matching objects to symbols. We have also been working on our questioning skills to answer 'what?' 'who?' and 'where?' questions using objects and pictures for help.

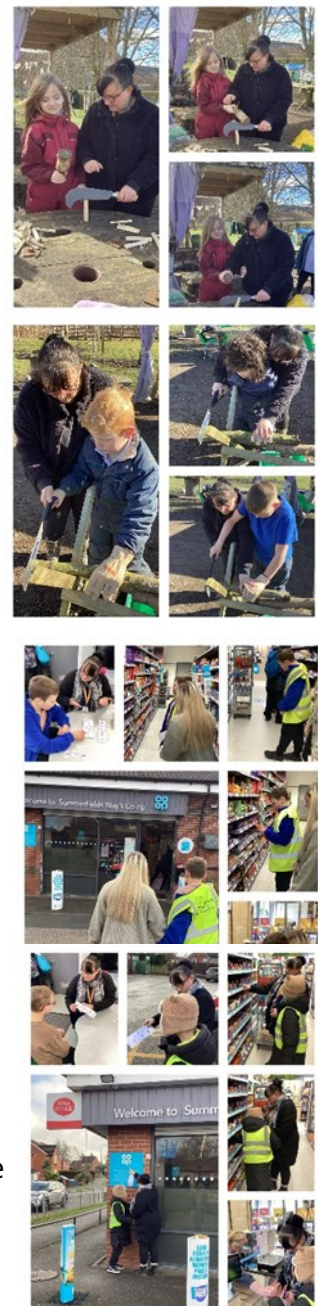
In our Creative subjects this term, we have had lots of fun experimenting with colour and patterns to create our own prints. We have enjoyed using different materials to print with as a way of creating our artwork. This half term, we have enjoyed building different structures using a range of materials including 2D shapes. At the moment, we are planning a house design. We have made a list of things we need to help us make our house and have chosen what colours we would like the doors and windows of our house to be.

In PE this term, Dovedale have been practising their rocks, rolls, balances, ways of travelling and jumping for gymnastics as part of our sensory circuit time. We have also been exploring how our body moves and have been copying a range of movements when dancing to different songs. We have used objects such as ribbons and pom-poms to help us copy and create dances.

As part of maths this term Dovedale have been working hard on lots of different topics. We have been looking at 2D shapes and their properties. In measurement and capacity, we have used sand, lentils and water to look at pouring liquids and looking at full and empty. During number lessons we are working on number names, counting and naming amounts.

Dovedale have enjoyed Forest School this term, developing their independence around the site and developing their abilities to create their own games and activities with the core site activities. Dovedale have developed their listening skills so well at Forest School this term, they have been learning to use different tools for different jobs.

As part of Beyond Bennerley, Dovedale have been working on the topic of money, we have worked on different shop experiences in school and out in the community. In school we have made our own shops and practiced purchasing items and then visited real shops in our local community to make a real transaction.



Newstead



Newstead are working hard at developing their independence and communication skills. We are taking responsibility for our belongings by hanging our bags and coats on our coat pegs and putting our shoes in our boxes. Newstead are using PECs with less prompts from staff and we have made some new communication boards for lunchtimes and using our familiar symbols during lesson



to help embed successful communication skills.

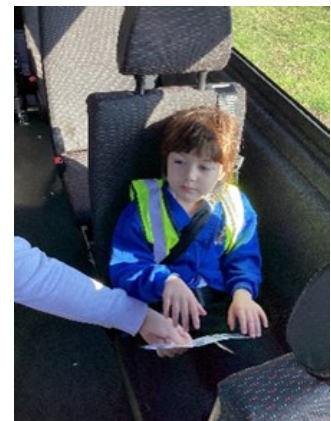
Over the past term Newstead have been exploring gymnastics and dance within PE. We have been practicing rolling and balancing in a variety of ways within gymnastics, and we are having lots of fun freely expressing ourselves within dance by using ribbons and pom poms.

Our topic within Spring 1 was 'Let it Snow!' where we learnt all about artic animals and their habitats through play and stories. Newstead find their weekly sensory stories highly engaging and are working hard to develop their listening skills. We really enjoyed exploring ice and learning about how it melts within science.



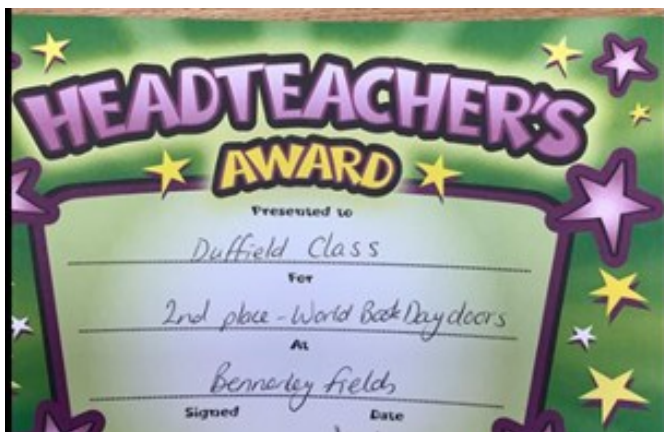
This half term our topic is called 'Let's Build' where we are exploring about building and their materials. We are enjoying our stories of 'The 3 Little Pigs' and 'The Billy

Goats Gruff' where we having listened to the stories, matched characters and built our own houses to recreate the story for World Book Day. As part of our topic and linking to Beyond Bennerley, Newstead have been accessing the school minibus to explore the local area and learn all about different types of shops. The pupils have all transitioned well from the classroom to the minibus following a visual timetable.



Duffield

This term Duffield absolutely loved our trips to gymnastics, swimming and soft play which tied in with both terms' topics, 'Let's Get Fit!' and 'Exploring Our Neighbourhood'. We loved acting out elements of the Sports Day Story in our English lessons and later in the term for World Book Day we decorated our door with photos and pictures from these lessons and came 2nd in the whole school door decorating competition! We have tried lots of different customs around Easter including flipping and eating pancakes, mmmmm!!!!



Chatsworth

It has been another action-packed term in Chatsworth. Pupils have really enjoyed the 'Exploring Our Neighbourhood' topic and have developed map reading skills through locating and visiting parks and sports venues in our local area. We have explored the history and significance of Bennerley Viaduct. Students researched the viaduct's historical importance, learning about its role in railway history. As part of our learning, we had the opportunity to visit Bennerley Viaduct, observing the iron structure and understanding its place in our community.

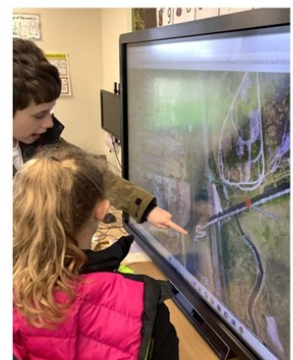
In our RSE lessons, pupils have been learning about the importance of online safety. We have discussed key topics such as identifying trusted adults to talk to, the importance of password protection, and what to do if they feel worried or upset while online. These lessons have helped strengthen pupils understanding of how to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly, ensuring they understand how to seek help and protect their personal information.

In Computing, pupils have been developing their programming skills. They have been sequencing directional instructions to navigate different challenges by working with BlueBots and the A.L.E.X app. Through trial and error, they explored the importance of clear, logical sequencing and problem-solving. This has not only enhanced their coding skills but also built their confidence in using technology to solve problems creatively.

In our science lessons, we have been exploring states of matter via a range of practical activities. Pupils have experienced how matter can change state through heating or cooling. They have investigated how water changes between solid and liquid states using ice and enjoyed making ice cream in a bag by freezing chocolate milk. These activities have supported students to develop scientific thinking skills including predicting, observing, recording changes and understanding cause and effect.



We went for a walk to Bennerley Viaduct



Willows Department: Derwent and Shipley

This half term, Derwent and Shipley classes have been exploring the theme of Neighbourhoods. In English, we have dived into a variety of books that explore the concept of buildings and neighbourhoods, helping us understand the structures that make up the places we live. From stories set in different communities to discussing what makes a good neighbourhood, we have enjoyed uncovering new ideas and perspectives.

In maths, we have been focusing on shapes, learning to recognize and describe different types of shapes in both 2D and 3D forms– all while applying our understanding to real-world examples.

We have also had some fantastic trips that helped bring our learning to life and allowed us to connect with our local environment in meaningful ways:

Rutland Sports Leisure Centre: Our visit to Rutland Sports Leisure Centre was full of action! The students had the chance to try out a range of sports and activities, which encouraged teamwork and promoted physical fitness. It was a fun and energetic day, highlighting the importance of staying active and how sports facilities play a key role in our local community.

Erewash Valley Gymnastics Centre: At the Erewash Valley Gymnastics Centre, we were able to put our coordination and balance to the test. The students participated in gymnastics activities that challenged their strength and flexibility. It was a great experience that not only introduced new skills but also allowed the students to appreciate how local sports centres support the development of young athletes in our neighbourhood.

Bennerley Viaduct: Our trip to the iconic Bennerley Viaduct was a fascinating journey through history. As we explored this beautiful piece of local heritage, we learned about its significance in the development of the railway network and its place in our neighbourhood's history. The students had the chance to observe the engineering marvel up close and understand how the viaduct connects our past to the present.

Local Walk around Ilkeston Town: To further connect with our neighbourhood theme, we took a walk around Ilkeston town. As we strolled through the area, we observed the various buildings, landmarks, and the layout of the town. This walk helped the students better understand the relationship between the places we live and how different buildings and spaces shape the community we're part of.

It has been an exciting and enriching half term, and these trips have helped deepen our understanding of the neighbourhoods we live in. We cannot wait to share more of our learning with you soon!



Hardwick

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

We have enjoyed our key texts Erik the Viking and Vicious Vikings - lots of adventures and gruesome facts. Some parents may know of the Horrible Histories books from school, the children have enjoyed the books alongside clips and songs from the TV show! We have written out parts of the story Erik and the Viking, answered comprehension question regarding our non-fiction text and have created biographies about Erik the Viking.

In maths the children have continued to work on addition and subtractions, capacity and volume, shapes and patterns and exploring data using computers.

In our topics lessons we have focused on learning about Vikings and Anglo-Saxons - their history, where they came from and how they changed Britain, their art, how they travelled the world and listening to and creating music inspired by the Vikings!

We have visited Derby Museum to explore local history related to our topic, as well as seeing artwork by the renowned artist Joseph Wright and exploring global artefacts (including an Egyptian mummy!). We have been to Elvaston Castle to conduct experiments linked to Science and D&T.

We have explored why Red Nose Day is important, we have had special assemblies linked with other schools in the Trust, and we have dressed up for World Book Day!

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



Elvaston

This term, we've set sail on a thrilling journey back in time to explore the world of the Viscous Vikings! Elvaston class have particularly enjoyed learning about Viking longships. We have been designing and making our own boats in D&T lessons. First, we worked in teams to create a large-scale ship that we could sit in, learning about the structure and design of real Viking ships. After that, we got to work independently crafting smaller-scale ships from wood, using our measuring, cutting, and assembling skills. It's been fantastic to see all the pupils so engaged and determined during these lessons.

Alongside our creative projects, we have delved into Viking life through our class texts, *The Saga of Erik the Viking* and *Horrible Histories*. These books have inspired us to write diary entries and biographies, helping us to step into the shoes of Viking explorers while learning fascinating historical facts. We also had a fantastic time celebrating World Book Day, dressing up as our favourite characters and sharing our love of reading with exciting activities throughout the day.

In our Beyond Bennerley sessions, we've been learning how to clean up and take care of our environment. As part of this, we tidied and deep cleaned the classroom as well as surrounding areas in school. We also visited Lane's Farm and Pets at Home to explore how we look after animals and their habitats too.

In maths, we've been sharpening our skills in shape and time, tackling challenges with great enthusiasm. Our PE lessons have been full of energy, with dodgeball and hockey proving to be firm favourites among the class. And, of course, no term would be complete without music—whether through singing, dancing, or finding creative ways to incorporate it into our lessons.

It's been a fantastic term, and we can't wait to see what the next one brings!



Wollaton

Our topic this term is 'Vicious Vikings' we have been learning about Viking longboats. Pupils worked together to make a large scale longboat for primary pupils to play in.



As part of our Viking topic pupils played a Viking longboat game. In science pupils worked together to create a raft that had to float using sticks.



It is that time of year again... we are at the planning stages of our class Enterprise project – watch this space!



Spring term at Forest School

During the spring term Stage 1 classes Dovedale and Newstead and KS4 classes Haddon and Rufford have been at Forest School for half a day a week.

Stage 1 have been developing their independence skills around the whole site, working hard on accessing the core site activities on their own and in creative ways that interest them. Stage 1 have worked so hard on their listening skills and they have been working on using different tools for different jobs (chopping firewood, getting a spark from a flint and steel and using the saw to cut wood cookies).

Both Haddon and Rufford have been working hard to complete AQA awards whilst down at Forest School. Haddon have been working on sharing the woodland environment with each other and exploring the different sights and sounds of nature, as well as learning to build, light and maintain a campfire safely to cook their chosen campfire foods on.

Rufford have also been working on their campfire skills and are now all very knowledgeable about effective fire triangle aspects and how this supports them to build, light and maintain their campfire for cooking activities. As part of their most current AQA at Forest School Rufford have been looking at different types of living and dead wood, different tree types, food chains and the safety aspects of Forest School and the fire circle rules.



Careers

Developing Skills Across the School



Over the past term, students across the school have been working hard to enhance their skills. By using the Skills Builder Framework, we're providing opportunities for pupils to not only learn about key skills but also apply them in real-life situations. It's been inspiring to see so many examples of pupils actively developing their skills.

To celebrate these achievements, we showcase their successes on the Wow Board in the corridor, which highlights accomplishments across all eight skill areas. It's wonderful to witness the progress our pupils are making!

Here are just a few highlights from this term's activities:

Teamwork / Leadership & Problem Solving: Rufford class recently visited Shipley Park, where one of the challenges set by the Ranger was to build a water-tight den. The pupils worked together to problem-solve and demonstrate their leadership skills.

Aiming High: It's exam season for our older pupils, and they've faced it with incredible resilience and dedication. Well done, Key Stage 4, for giving it your all!

Creativity: Our lunchtime club artists have been exploring their creative sides using a variety of materials. One exciting project involved marbles, which were used to create one-of-a-kind wall art.

Speaking & Listening: Our Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils recently had a visit from DEBP: Project Search, an organisation that offers supported internships. The pupils listened attentively to the guest speakers and asked insightful questions about the program. Some pupils will even be visiting current interns to learn more about this valuable opportunity.

Haddon

This term, our class has had an exciting time exploring both in the classroom and out in the community.

Our text this term has been the book "Zog", this has given us lots of exciting learning opportunities which have included researching how to look after bearded dragons, to then set up our own bearded dragon habitat in our classroom.



We had the chance to visit Zogland, at Warwick Castle where we immersed ourselves in the world of the beloved character Zog. The children loved learning about Zog's adventures and taking part in fun activities that brought the book to life.

In numeracy, we've been focusing on number patterns, 2s, 5s and 10s. Activities included pairs of socks on a washing line, interactive whiteboard games and number rhymes.



We also discussed the importance of cleaning and keeping our environment tidy. We have sorted washing and used a washing machine.



The children came up with great ideas for maintaining a clean and healthy space, both at school and at home. They have done a super job of keeping different environments around the school clean.

To wrap up our term, we put our money from our Jacket Potato Enterprise to good use by purchasing some new outdoor play equipment. The children are already excited to use it during outside time, and it's a great reminder of how teamwork and creativity can lead to something great.

It's been a busy, fun-filled term, and we can't wait to see what's next!



Rufford

Rufford Class Embraces the Outdoors!

This half-term, Rufford Class has been making the most of the great outdoors while working towards their Forest School and Environmental AQA Award. Pupils have developed a range of skills, from collecting firewood and building a campfire to using a splint to light the fire and cooking a variety of delicious foods.

In addition to fire-building, the class has been busy creating shelters for local wildlife, including a hedgehog house, a frog house, and a bug hotel in our Forest School area. Throughout every session, Rufford Class have demonstrated great respect for their environment, connecting with nature and learning valuable skills.



Key dates for the year:

- **Parents'/Carers' evenings:** Tue 13th May 2025
- **For holiday dates, next year's term dates and Inset days please see the school website:**
<https://www.bennerleyfields.derbyshire.sch.uk/term-dates-and-times/>
- **Inset days remaining:** Tue 6th May
- **Sports Day:** Tue 24th June (morning, weather dependent)