

Brackenhill School Newsletter October 2026

As we reach the end of a busy and successful autumn half term, it is always a great opportunity to take a moment to reflect on all that has been achieved across our school community.

It has been wonderful to see our pupils settle so positively into the new academic year. I have shown a range of visitors around the school at various times this term, and they have all commented on the positive interactions they have witnessed between students and the welcoming, purposeful learning environment.

Throughout this term, our students have embraced new learning opportunities, developed friendships, built confidence, and demonstrated resilience, determination and enthusiasm in everything they do. From exciting classroom projects and community visits to Enterprise Week, Forest School, careers activities and our recent visit from Team GB athlete Joel Fearon, there have been countless moments that have made us proud.

I dropped into our Dragon's Den experience for Key Stage 4 students this week, where they pitched their business ideas to two local business leaders. I was incredibly proud of how confidently our students communicated and how creative they had been in developing their class projects, many of which will be available to purchase at our Christmas Fayre on Friday 4th December.

We finish the half term today with our Halloween Disco. Ever since I started at Bracken Hill School, this has seemed to be one of our students' favourite social events of the year, and today's outfits certainly do not disappoint! Thank you to all the families and staff who have helped our students look so amazing today.

I hope everyone enjoys a well-deserved and restful half-term break. We look forward to welcoming pupils back on Wednesday 4th November, ready for another exciting term of learning, achievement and celebration.

On behalf of everyone at Bracken Hill School, thank you for your continued support, and I wish you all a safe, happy and enjoyable half term.

Richard Jackson
Head of School

Dates for your diary

Friday, 16th October 2026 - The last day of half term

Monday, 2nd November 2026 - Inset day - The school is closed to all students

Tuesday 3rd November 2026 - Inset day - The school is closed to all students

Wednesday 4th November 2026 - The school reopens to all students

Wednesday 25th November 2026 - Parents evening - Further information to follow

Wednesday 2nd December 2026 to Wednesday 9th December 2026 - Book Fair

Friday 4th December 2026 - Christmas Fayre - Further information to follow

Wednesday 16th December 2026 - Christmas Lunch. Please click here

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/DkZcms983e> or see the original message sent via SeeSaw

Friday 18th December 2026 - The last day of term

Monday 4th January 2027 - The school reopens to all students

Staying Safe Online

Bracken Hill SCHOOL **We stay safe online!**

Remember our 3 rules: **STOP** → **THINK** → **TELL**

stop

- Stop before you click.
- Stop if something doesn't feel right.

THINK

- Is it safe?
- Is it kind?
- Should I share it?

TELL

- Tell a trusted adult if you are worried, upset or unsure.
- We are here to help.

Remember!

STOP → **THINK** → **TELL**

We look after ourselves and each other online.

The online world offers wonderful opportunities for our children and young people to learn, explore their interests, and stay connected with others. However, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can be more vulnerable online and may need extra support to understand risks, recognise unsafe situations, and make safe choices.

At school, we teach our online safety rule: Stop, Think, Tell.

- Stop before clicking, sharing or responding online.
- Think about whether something is safe, true and appropriate.
- Tell a trusted adult if something makes you feel worried, uncomfortable or unsure.

How you can help at home:

- Take an interest in the apps, games and websites your child uses.
- Keep communication open and talk regularly about their online experiences.
- Check privacy settings and parental controls.
- Remind your child to follow our Stop, Think, Tell rule and to speak to a trusted adult if something online worries them.

If you have any concerns about your child's online safety, please contact Mrs Shelton for advice and support. Together, we can help our children enjoy the benefits of technology safely and confidently.

Carrey McLoughlin Community Liason



As the school's Community Liaison, I provide support to our pupils and families in a variety of ways. My main aim is to support every parent and family, whatever their circumstances.

Whether you need help with behavioural concerns, financial difficulties, completing forms, accessing support or simply someone friendly to talk to, I am here to listen, offer advice and help wherever I can.

I can signpost and refer pupils and families to a range of external agencies and support services, including:

- Early Help
- Esteem's FASST (Family and Student Support Team)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- The Children's Bereavement Centre
- Furniture Project
- Short Breaks (befriending) applications

I can also support families with applications and help them access the services they need. An important part of my role is building positive relationships between school, home, and the wider community. I work alongside local organisations and services to help meet the needs of our pupils and families. I am also involved with the Ashwood Centre in Kirkby, which supports our families through its food bank.

I host a monthly parents' group at Café 22 in Kirkby, providing a lovely opportunity to meet up, enjoy a coffee and cake, have a chat, and connect with other parents in a friendly, relaxed environment.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you need advice, support, or someone to talk to. If there is something you need help with that I haven't mentioned above, please let me know. I will always do my best to explore what support may be available.

Class updates

Caterpillars

This half term we have been very busy!

Our Maths learning uses short, practical activities in task boxes to help pupils develop their mathematical skills in meaningful ways. Learning is linked to everyday life skills, while activities remain fun, hands-on and connected to pupils' individual interests and motivations.



Our English learning has focused on the story 'Car Car Truck Jeep', where we have been using sensory stories and engaging activities to explore the story, characters and vehicles.

In PSHE we have been looking at Self- Awareness

Things we are good at- The children have been introduced to a range of stimuli introducing them to the ways in which we are special, our families are special and to recognize that there is self and there are others.

Playing and working together- The children have demonstrated being alert and ready to listen, we have been taking turns and have looked at times in school that we take turns.

In Science the children have been learning all about the human body and what the different parts of our bodies do. We have explored the different body systems and learn how our bodies help us to move, eat, breathe, see, hear and stay healthy. We have also compared humans with animals, looking at a variety of animals and exploring how their bodies are different. The children have looked at different animals and their young.



Caterpillars

In Art the children have been enjoying developing their mark making and line drawing skills, observing adults drawing and using a range of media. They have been creative manipulating and playing with different drawing materials, enjoying changing colours and materials. Purposefully changing pressure on media to change the effect, showing us their own ideas and wonderful creations

In Food Technology the children have taken part in hands-on sensory experiences with soft foods. They have explored food textures through touch and taste. The children have handled and used knives safely to chop different fruits and vegetables. We decorated buns with icing and chopped fruit to decorate them

In PE the children have travelled (walked, jogged, run and sprinted) at 3 speeds and distances, stopping and starting on command, including a race.

They have jumped on a variety of surfaces in different directions and thrown a variety of apparatus.

In Computing the children have been focusing on exploration of technology in the home. They have used simple buttons (e.g., turning lights on/off with switches, pressing buttons on toys). They have enjoyed exciting cause and effect gadgets along with kitchen timers and alarms.

Well done Caterpillars Class!



Ants

What a Wonderful First Term, Ants Class!

What an exciting first term we have had! As a new teacher at Bracken Hill, it has been so lovely getting to know all of the children, watching them settle into our class routines and seeing their confidence and independence grow.

We have been very busy with lots of fun and practical learning. In Maths, we have explored comparison, counting, shapes and patterns through engaging activities. From interactive games and videos to matching, mark making, cutting and sticking, the children have enjoyed exploring Maths in lots of different ways. We have even added some seasonal fun to our learning by counting Halloween pumpkins!

In English, we have especially enjoyed our focus book, Car, Car, Truck, Jeep! The story has inspired lots of exciting learning around vehicles and transport. The children have enjoyed joining in with the story, investigating and identifying different vehicles, getting creative with sensory activities and mark making, and exploring vehicles through play, matching and sorting. We have also had great fun exploring emergency and rescue vehicles and finding out more about the different vehicles we see in the world around us.

It has been a brilliant start to the year, and I am incredibly proud of everything the children have achieved so far. They have all worked so hard, taken part in so many new experiences and come such a long way already. It has been wonderful to see their personalities shine through and to share so many lovely learning experiences together.

Well done everyone on a wonderful first term! 🐜★

Grasshoppers



The Adventurers have had a wonderful first term back after the summer holidays. They have settled brilliantly into their new routines, made new friends, and enjoyed exploring their learning together.

In Maths, we have been developing our understanding of number, shapes and patterns through a range of practical and engaging activities.

In English, we have enjoyed reading Peepo! and learning about toys from the past. We have explored the differences between fiction and non-fiction texts and practised our labelling skills. Our English learning has linked closely with our Humanities topic, Picture This!, where we have compared toys we play with today to toys from the past.

In Science, we have been exploring our bodies, identifying different body parts, and learning about a variety of animals through matching and sorting activities.

In RE, we have been learning about the importance of celebrations and how people from different cultures and religions celebrate special occasions.

To finish our learning, we even enjoyed having our very own class party!



Dragonflies

What a wonderful start to the autumn term we have had in Dragonflies!

The children have settled brilliantly into their new class and have quickly become confident, enthusiastic members of our Dragonflies family.

In Science, we have been exploring our senses and becoming young scientists through a range of fun experiments. We have investigated our senses of smell, hearing and taste, making predictions, sharing our observations and discussing our findings. The children especially enjoyed putting their senses to the test!

We have also been enjoying a selection of engaging stories, including Grandad's Secret Giant and Esme Pepper. These books have sparked some fantastic discussions and inspired some thoughtful work across our lessons.

In History, we have been learning about seaside holidays past and present. It was wonderful to compare holidays from different eras and explore old photographs.

A particular highlight was looking at photographs of the adults who work in our class when they were children and even seeing pictures of some of their parents and grandparents! This sparked lots of curiosity and great conversations about how life has changed over time.

We are so proud of everything the children have achieved already and look forward to another exciting half term of learning and discovery.

The Dragonflies Team

Ladybirds

What a busy first half term back we have had!

In science we have been learning all about animals, including humans. We have been encouraged to learn, remember and label body parts and really enjoyed creating our own body maps with the help of some signs and symbols.



In DT, we have been learning about healthy diets and our lessons have been very practical and involved us rolling up our sleeves in the kitchen! We chopped and chomped our way through various pieces of fruit and veg, being encouraged to describe likes and dislikes, as well as describe the different tastes and textures.

Ladybirds

In English this term we were given the opportunity to go to our local library.

We loved exploring a new place and getting to see, touch and even hear new and unfamiliar books!



Humanities has focused on toys this term, with us learning all about old and new.

We have been encouraged to engage with different toys such as spinners, cup and balls as well as toy cars and dolls.

We have really enjoyed learning about old toys, and all got a real fright when we found out just what a Jack in the Box does!

Take a look at some of our own toys that we have had a go at recreating below.



Ladybirds

Finally, this half term we were super lucky to get a visit from Olympian, Joel Fearon!

He came to our school to help us complete a fitness circuit; we tried our hardest to complete a variety of different moves including star jumps, push ups and burpees!



All in all we have had a fantastic first half term back and cannot wait to see what Autumn 2 holds!

The Ladybirds team

Bumblebees

We have had so much fun exploring our story, Car, Car, Truck, Jeep!, this term! The children in Bumblebees have loved discovering all the different types of vehicles and learning about the important jobs they do.

We have enjoyed listening to the different vehicle noises and having lots of fun making our own vehicle sounds too! The children have also taken part in some fantastic sensory play, using vehicles in different environments where they would do their jobs best.

We have also been developing our fine motor skills, mark making and pencil control through lots of exciting vehicle-themed activities. The children have enjoyed colouring in different vehicles, practising their pencil control and having a go at writing the names of the vehicles we have been learning about.

It has been wonderful to see the children's imaginations grow as they explored, played and learned through our vehicle-themed activities. We have loved watching them get stuck in, get messy and have lots of fun while learning along the way!



Beetles

What an incredible time Beetles are having at Forest Schools!

For some of them it is their first ever time and they are loving it! The students are transitioning so well to and from the bus and have started to show more independence in their transitions.

We have loved to explore the Forest School area, kicking and throwing the leaves up in the air, exploring the trees, and jumping off branches on the floor.

We have also enjoyed the activities our Forest School leader has put out like the parachute, cars and the hammock is a big favourite!



Creswell

☀️ What a fantastic start to the new school year in Creswell! ☀️

We have been very busy making new friends 🧑🧑, building positive relationships ❤️ and developing our communication skills 🗣️.

We have really enjoyed our Attention Autism sessions 👁️👁️🌈, exploring lots of exciting and fun activities! Shaving foam has been a BIG favourite in Creswell! 🧼👐

We have loved getting messy, exploring different textures and having lots of fun! 😊

We have also enjoyed getting out and about in our local community 🚶🌳, especially our lovely trips to the café! ☕🍰

What a wonderful start to the year!

We can't wait for more fun, learning and adventures together! ☀️💛



Newstead



Newstead have enjoyed trying different fillings for our chicken wraps and saying what they like and don't like. As a class we had carrot, sweetcorn and chicken in our wraps. They were delicious! Great chopping and peeling skills from Newstead.

In our English lessons this half term we have enjoyed reading goldilocks and the three bears. We have made and tasted some porridge with a choice of toppings from chocolate, syrup and jam.



Welbeck

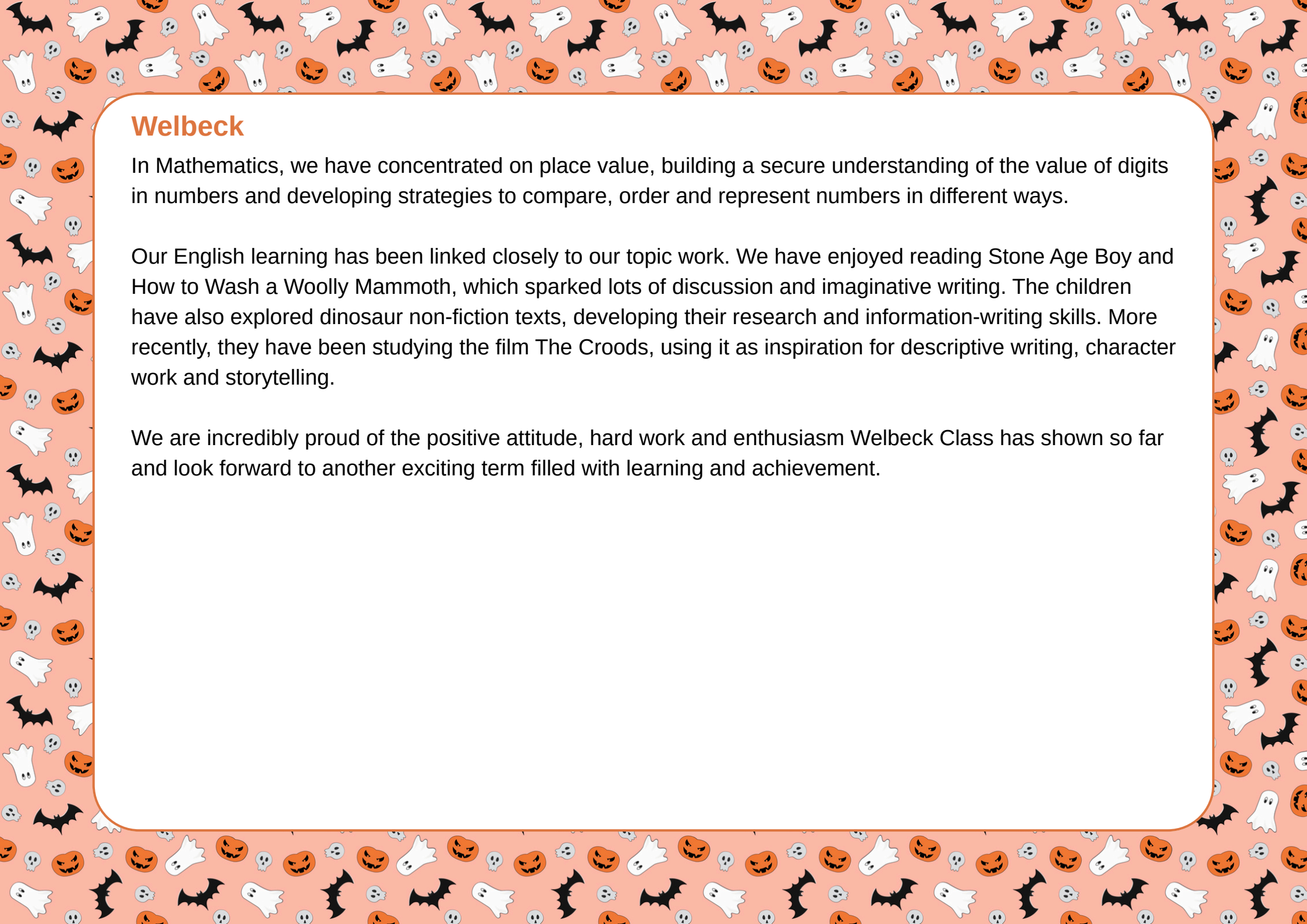
Welbeck Class has made a brilliant start to the academic year and has settled quickly into new routines and learning opportunities. The children have shown great enthusiasm and curiosity across all areas of the curriculum.

In History, we have been travelling back in time to learn about the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. The children have explored how people lived during these periods and have enjoyed getting hands-on with their learning by creating their own roundhouses, shields and stone axes. They were fascinated to discover how life changed as humans developed new tools, farming methods and ways of living.

In Design and Technology, we have investigated different types of structures, discussing what makes them strong and stable. The children have explored a range of construction techniques and used their creativity and problem-solving skills to design and build their own structures.

Our Science lessons have focused on the digestive system. The children have learned about the journey food takes through the body and the important jobs performed by different organs. They were particularly amazed to discover the incredible length of the small intestine and enjoyed discussing how it helps our bodies absorb nutrients.

In PE, the class has been working with Mrs Swain to develop balance, coordination and teamwork skills through the creation of a gym ball routine. The children have shown great determination as they learned new movements and worked together to perform sequences confidently.



Welbeck

In Mathematics, we have concentrated on place value, building a secure understanding of the value of digits in numbers and developing strategies to compare, order and represent numbers in different ways.

Our English learning has been linked closely to our topic work. We have enjoyed reading *Stone Age Boy* and *How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth*, which sparked lots of discussion and imaginative writing. The children have also explored dinosaur non-fiction texts, developing their research and information-writing skills. More recently, they have been studying the film *The Croods*, using it as inspiration for descriptive writing, character work and storytelling.

We are incredibly proud of the positive attitude, hard work and enthusiasm Welbeck Class has shown so far and look forward to another exciting term filled with learning and achievement.

Clumber

Clumber have had a great first half term back at school.

In Science they have been enjoying learning about the digestive system. We learned about different types of teeth, the role of saliva and how to clean our teeth properly. We then made a model stomach to observe how the food is initially broken down with the teeth, then with acid, then with the stomach muscles churning the food.

They have been very inquisitive, curious and excited by their learning.



Bestwood

Bestwood class have been busy exploring the Stone Age this term. As part of their topic work, pupils have learnt about Stone Age homes and created their own Stone Age jewellery.

In English, the children used their research skills to write their own non-fiction texts.

The class have particularly enjoyed taking part in Enterprise Week. One group have been making Grinch and Santa Hama bead keyrings, while the other group have been creating delicious chocolate truffles. To support their project, pupils visited Kirkby and the Designer Outlet to carry out product research and compare prices. They have worked hard to calculate costs and have now started making their products ready for the Christmas Fair.

We are very proud of their enthusiasm, teamwork and creativity.