

# BRACKEN HILL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

## Message from Mr Jackson

Time certainly doesn't stand still at Bracken Hill School, and this half-term has been no exception! It has flown by with so much happening. During Money Week, it was fantastic to see our students gaining practical, real-life experiences, and Nottingham Forest visiting with the European Cup was a personal highlight for me.

As always, our students have been out on all manner of visits and placements throughout the term. We even hosted our own Ready, Steady, Cook competition in Sherwood Class, where L'Auren and Nicolas emerged as winners and went on to represent the school in a regional cooking contest.

It's also been wonderful to see so many festive activities taking place over the past two weeks. A huge thank you to all the parents and carers who took time out to attend and support their children. We raised over £1,500 at our school fayre, and the Christmas craft sessions were incredibly well attended. Our students were so proud to share their creations and showcase their school—thank you for making that possible.

On behalf of everyone at Bracken Hill School, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## Social Media

We're excited to announce that Bracken Hill School is now on Facebook! 🎉

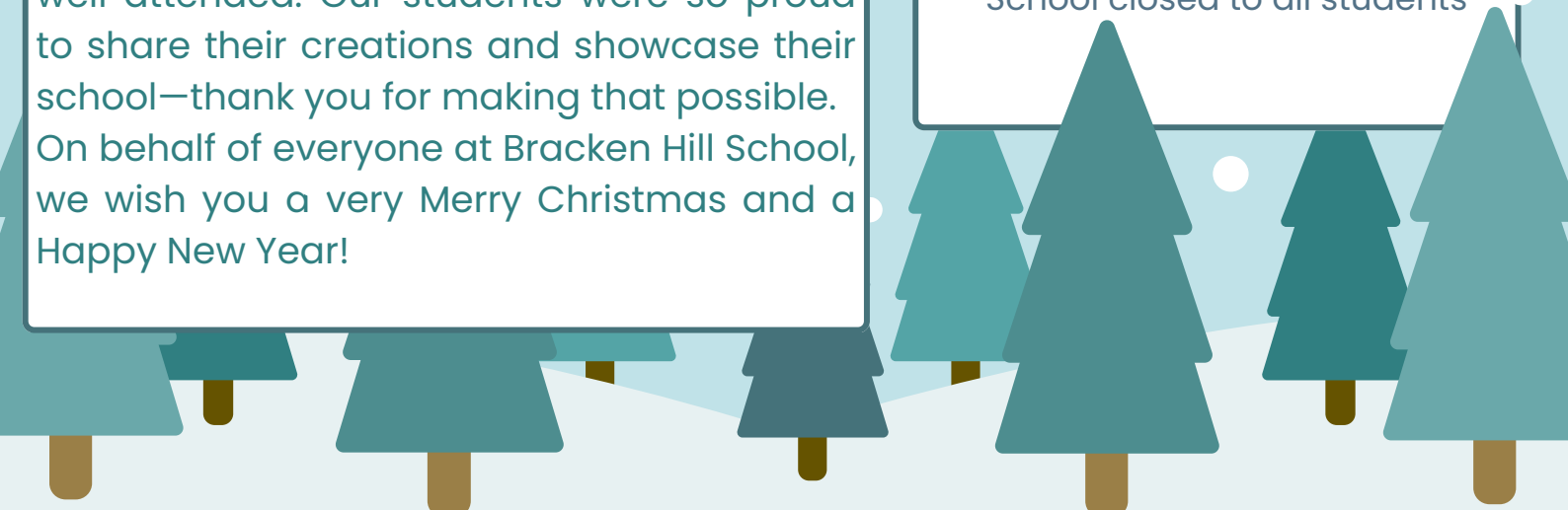
To find us, simply search for Bracken Hill School and give our page a follow.

We'll be sharing regular updates celebrating the amazing work our students are doing in their classes, as well as news about upcoming trips, events, and school life.

And that's not all — keep an eye out for our brand-new school website, launching in the new year, where you'll find even more information, updates, and resources.

## Dates for your diary

Monday 5th January 2026 -  
School reopens to all students  
Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026 - Inset day  
- School closed to all students



# CLASS UPDATES

## Caterpillars

The Caterpillars class has had a fantastic term filled with learning, laughter, and growing together as a team. The children have worked so hard to get to know one another, showing kindness and enthusiasm every day, and it has been lovely to see their confidence blossom. A special highlight was inviting parents in to join us for Christmas activities – it was amazing to share this time together, and the children absolutely loved having you there. Thank you so much to everyone who came along and helped make it such a memorable experience. We would like to wish all our families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



# Grasshoppers

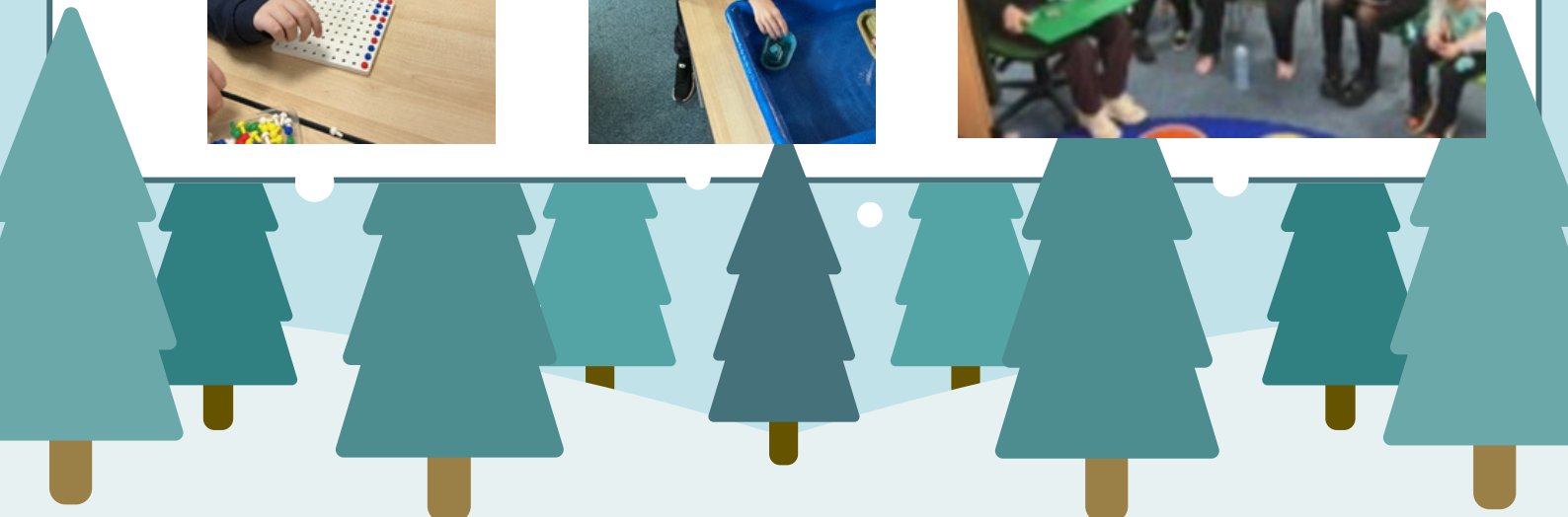
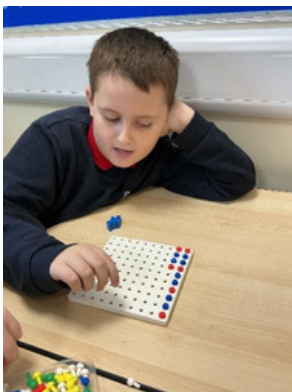
The Grasshoppers have had a wonderful Autumn term! We have worked really hard at our maths looking at shapes, patterns and positions. We also really loved money week and practised setting up our own stalls and shopping with money.

In Science we have explored floating and sinking and have enjoyed predicting what objects will float and which will sink!

We have been looking at letters and postcards in English and this week we have been creating a class letter to Santa.

We had an amazing trip to the Odeon cinema to watch Harold and the purple crayon; we were all absolute super stars!

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas and look forward to seeing you all back after Christmas.



# Ladybirds

What a busy half term we have had in Ladybirds! We have been working super hard in our class, learning all about Mary Seacole and William Wilberforce as we focus on heroes from Black History month in topic. We've got hands on with a variety of activities including exploring lots of different medical equipment and had some thought-provoking lessons to help us think of who our own personal heroes are.

In English we have been busy looking at our book, *Handa's Surprise*. The text features vibrant colours and illustrations which we have loved looking at and used to help predict what would happen next in the story. One of our favourite lessons from this sequence was when we got to explore all the different fruits that we read about in the book! We enjoyed touching, smelling and tasting different fruits including dragon fruit, lime and mango.

Turn-taking, following rules and co-operation has been a big theme in our PE lessons this term as we have taken part in a variety of target games. We have worked super hard at listening to our teachers to help us understand what to do; working with different peers and showing kindness and patience during PE games. Our ladybirds have worked super hard at this and enjoyed the games so much that they've asked to play them during their own free-time outside at lunch!

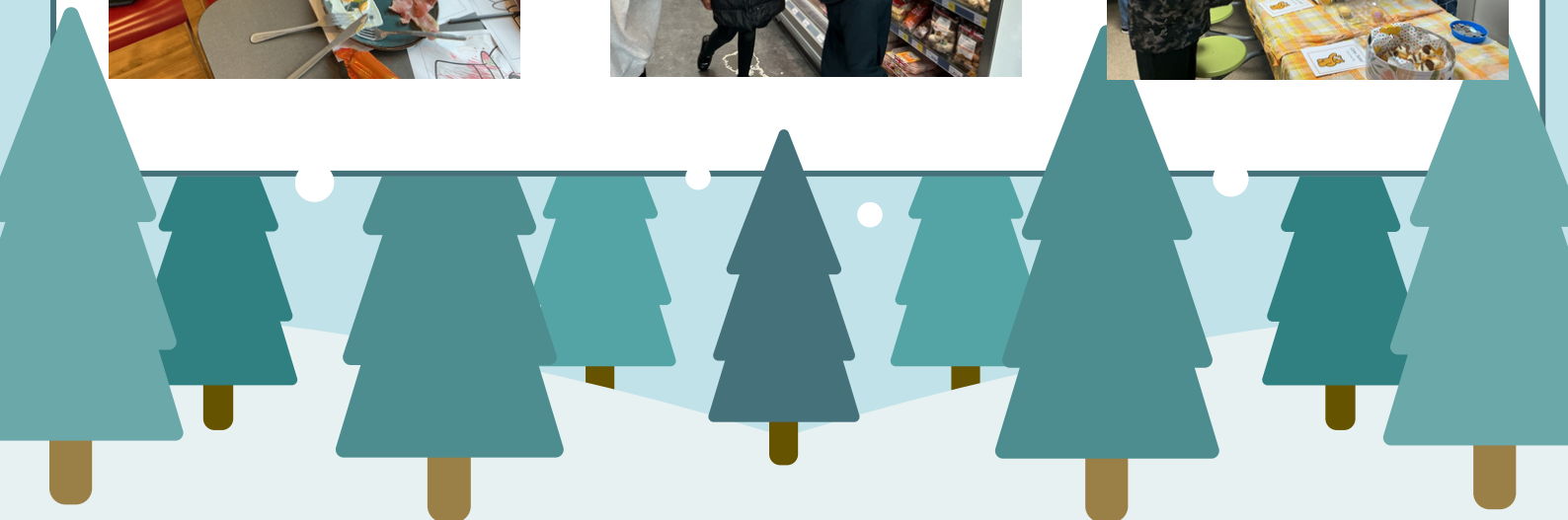
Not only have we been busy with our learning, but this term has also been jam-packed with lots of special days and trips including Children in Need, money week and a trip to the cinema to see *Harold the Purple Crayon* (which we all loved!).

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year!

The Ladybirds Team



# Ladybirds photos



## Ants

Ants Class have had a busy and exciting term! In English, we have enjoyed reading *Night Monkey, Day Monkey* by Julia Donaldson, exploring the story through engaging activities. In Science, we have been investigating sinking and floating, making predictions and testing different objects. Food Technology has been a real highlight as we created our own delicious fruit salads. We have also loved getting out and about in the community, visiting the café and enjoying the festive Christmas lights in Kirkby town.



# Butterflies

This half term, the Butterflies have been busy exploring, discovering and learning across all our subjects!

In History, we have been finding out about the remarkable Mary Seacole. The children loved learning about how she helped soldiers and cared for the sick. They even had the chance to dress up in bandages and practise listening to their own heartbeats with Nurse Bowler, which brought the learning to life in a fun and memorable way.

In DT, we have been exploring a range of fruits and vegetables. The children tasted different foods, discussed their flavours and textures, and learned how to cut them safely using the “bridge” and “claw” techniques. To finish off, they selected their favourites and carefully assembled their own delicious fruit kebabs.

In Science, our focus has been on forces. The class experimented with ramps and different surfaces to see how friction affects movement. We also explored the force of air by testing parachutes and paper aeroplanes. The children were full of excitement as they predicted, tested, and observed how each design moved.

We have also loved getting ready for Christmas and can't wait for the magical day to arrive! The classroom has been filled with festive fun and wonderful cheer.

It has been a fantastic half term of hands-on learning and curiosity. Well done, Butterflies!



## Dragonflies

This term has been full of exciting learning and festive fun! As part of Black History Month, we explored the achievements and contributions of inspirational Black individuals from around the world. In science, we have been investigating friction, carrying out hands-on experiments to discover how objects can be slowed down and which types of shoes offer the best grip.

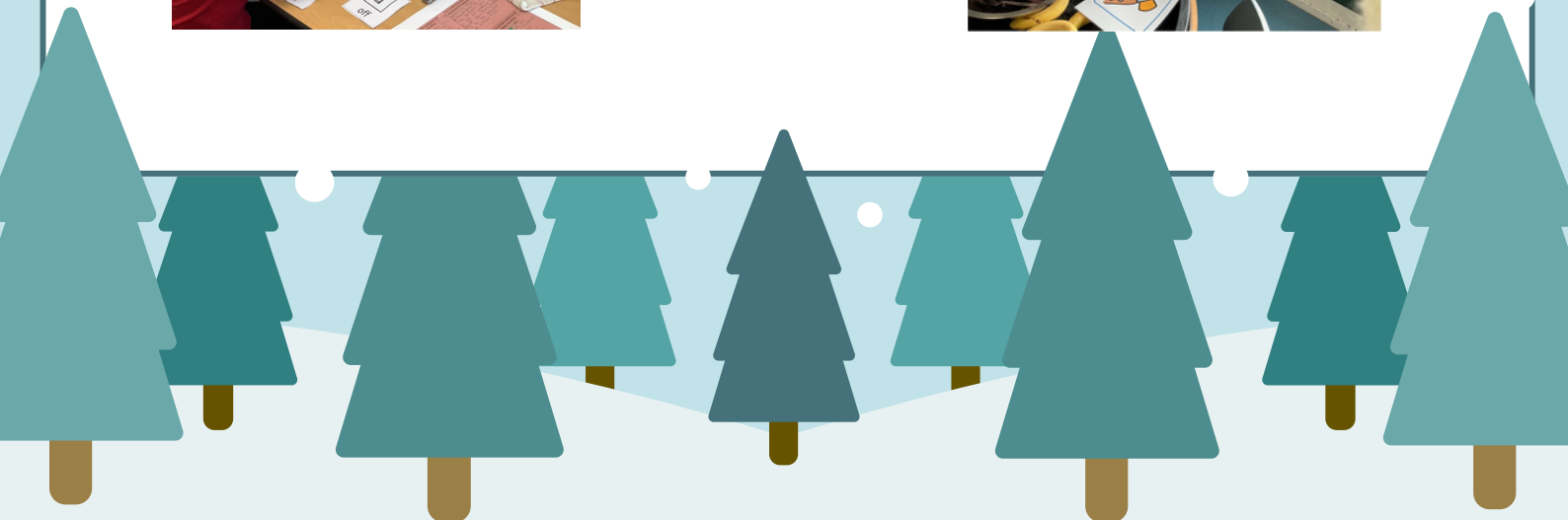
We also enjoyed two fantastic trips: a visit to the Bonington Theatre to watch *Bad Guys 2* as part of the Film Festival, and a lively performance of the pantomime at Mansfield Palace Theatre, which was great fun for everyone. In computing, we have been busy creating our own animations, and in music we've been learning to play Christmas tunes on the keyboard to get us into the festive spirit.

Dragonflies would like to wish all our friends and family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



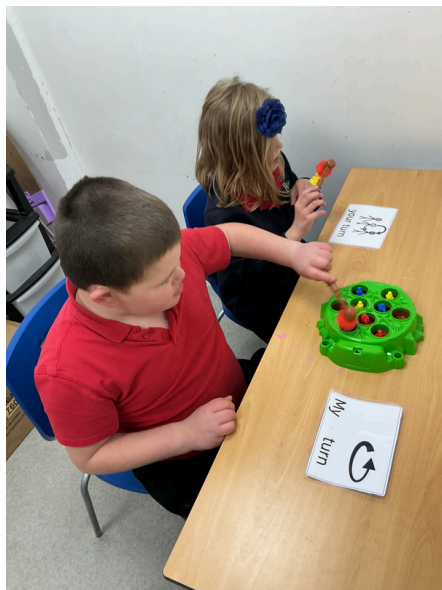
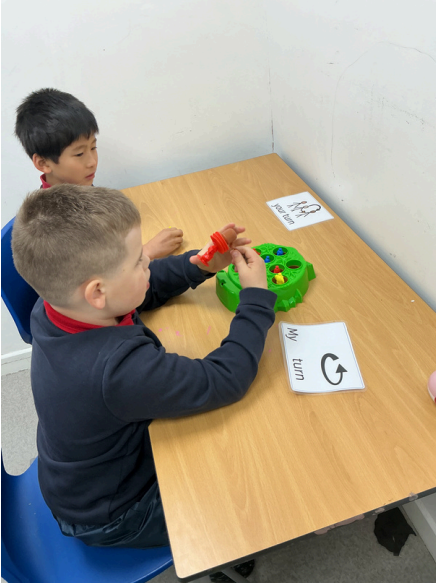
# Bumblebees

Over this term Bumblebees have thoroughly enjoyed our exploration with food whether that be in Cooking or in Computing. The children have loved to develop their independence skills and learn how to cut fruit whilst identifying the fruit and what it feels like. Using different appliances like kettles, toasters and especially blenders has been a huge hit in Bumblebees. Using our AACs we have identified what each appliance and fruit are and we have communicated if we want the appliances on or off. Some students' came back to use the blender again!



# Beetles

Wow, what a half term! The children at Beetles have been fantastic despite all the horrible bugs going around. We've been doing lots of work on turn-taking, practising sharing with our friends, and practising carpet times altogether.



# Newstead

During this half term, we have had a few from Newstead class had a trip to the cinema to see Tabby McTat and Tiddler! They had a great time and enjoyed their lovely snacks!

In our PSHE lessons we have been exploring if we get hurt or feel unwell what we need to do to get help and how we can tell adults how we are feeling.

In science lessons we have been looking at animals' habitats and what they eat so we made our own bird feeders.

As part of our English work, we have made some delicious edible nests made from shredded wheat and chocolate to show we understand where the owl babies to live.



# Welbeck

What a busy term it has been!



We started the term with a visit from the army, who helped turn our children into engineers for the day 🛠️. During Money Week, we enjoyed talking all things money and were lucky to have visitors from Barclays to support our learning 💰

We were also thrilled to welcome the Nottingham Forest team, who visited with the trophy – a very special moment for the children 🏆 To support Children in Need, we took part in the 'Challenge to 25', holding a plank for 25 seconds, completing 25 star jumps, and building towers using 25 blocks 🧡

We finished the term full of Christmas spirit with parent Christmas crafts, Christmas jumper day 🎄 and a fun-filled party disco 🎵



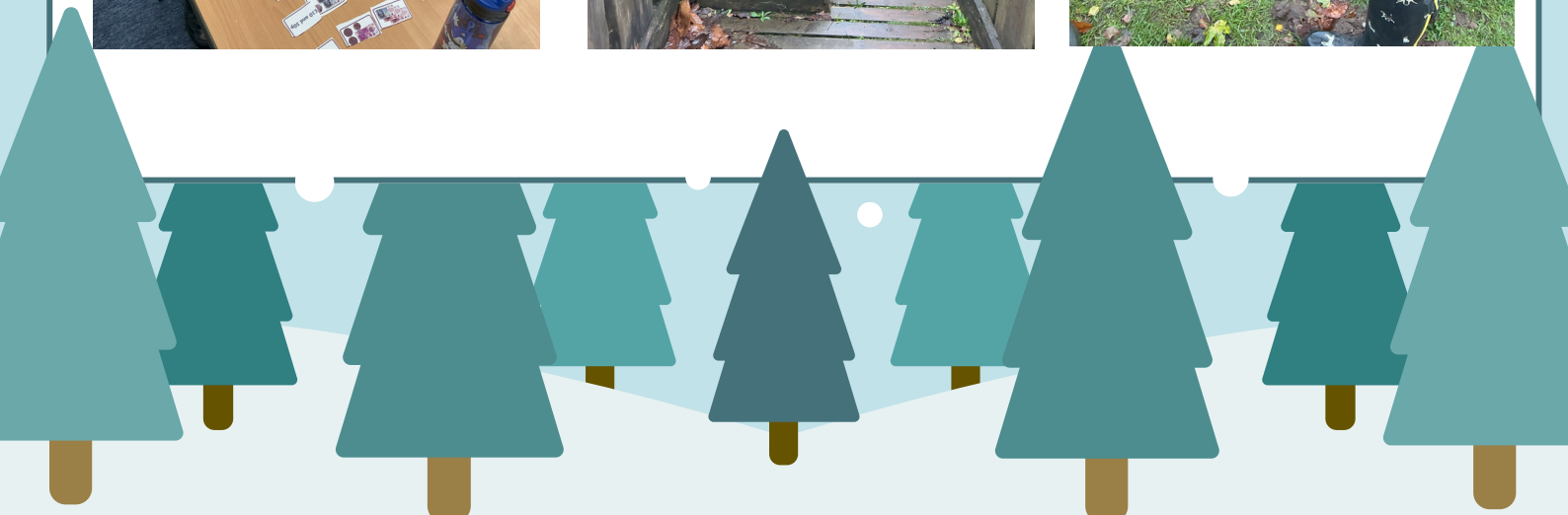
# Clumber

This half term has been busy in Clumber. We have learned a lot about different biomes and the animals that live there. We each created a 'biome in a box' and showcased our learning in an exhibition. Learning about food chains, the impact of humans on the environment and animal adaptations has been very exciting. We also had a wonderful trip to White Post Farm to see some of the animals we had been learning about in real life.



## Bestwood

This half-term has been full of exciting experiences and opportunities for learning! We began with a fascinating trip to Sherwood Pines, where the children explored the trenches and discovered what life was like during wartime. During Money Week, pupils learned valuable life skills, including how to budget and spot fraud and scams—an important lesson for the future! We enjoyed a magical cinema trip to watch Paddington, followed by a library visit to spark a love of reading. Our class proudly took part in Children in Need's Challenge 25, showing fantastic teamwork and generosity. We also had a wonderful day at White Post Farm, meeting animals and learning about nature, and got into the festive spirit with our Santa Walk. To finish the term, we welcomed parents for a creative Lego afternoon, which was a brilliant way to share learning and have fun together. What an amazing term it has been!



# Creswell

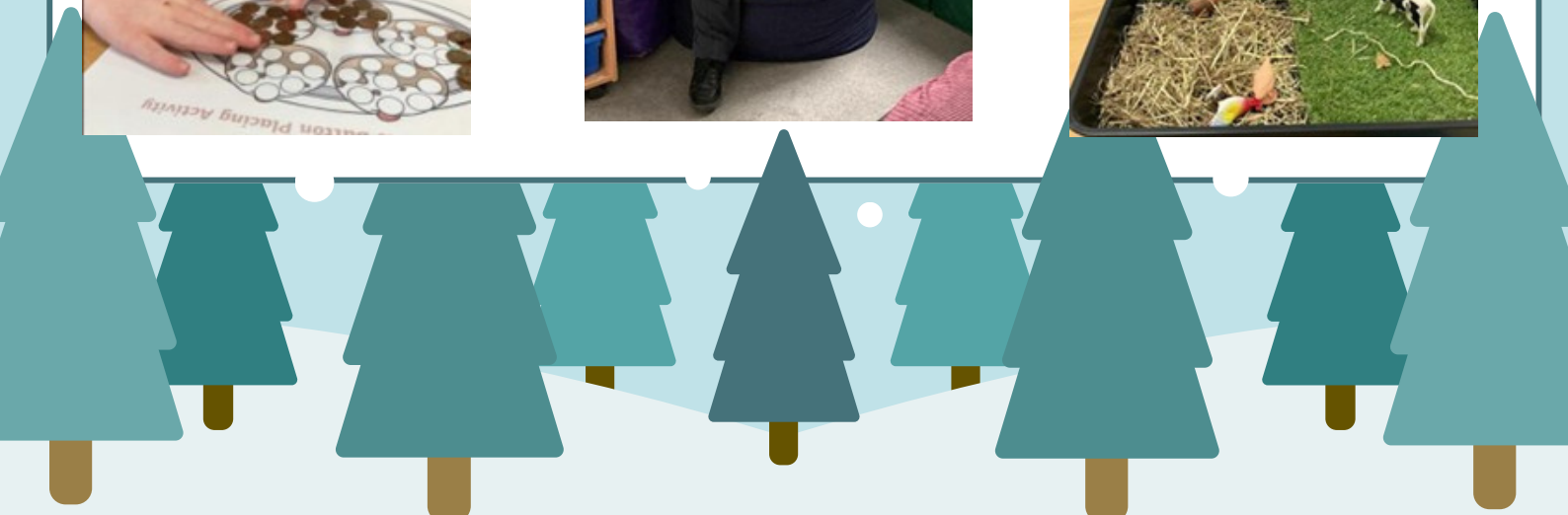
This half term we have been very busy!

In Maths we have been looking at number sense, counting, spatial awareness, repeating patterns and exploring position and space.

In English we have enjoyed looking at and sharing the story of 'The Owl Babies' and have taken part in various activities linked to this by listening to repeated phrases, reacting to sounds and voices, identifying the story sequence and showing an interest in illustrations.

In PSHE we have been looking at Self- Awareness, Self-care, Support and Safety, thinking about what it means to be unwell and who to tell when we are feeling unwell. We have looked at who keeps us safe at school and at home and have identified rules and procedures in school that keep us safe.

In Science we have explored 'Survive the Threats', looking at and exploring different environments, where animals live and what they eat. We have looked at our own environment and have looked at the changes around us.



## Creswell

In Cooking we have been helping to prepare vegetables to make blended soups, taking part in washing, scooping tearing vegetables and pressing the blender buttons. We have had the opportunity to smell herbs, observe changes during cooking and have tasted warm soups. Choosing our favourite soup at the end.

In Design and Technology, we have been looking at construction and have been using a variety of construction materials to build with.

In PE we have enjoyed experiencing a variety of net games and ball games. Demonstrating control over balls, including skittles and footballs.

In Computing we have been focusing on everyday technology and cause and effect thinking.

In Music we have been exploring how music can feel happy, sad and calm and can help, us show when we are happy, sad and calm.

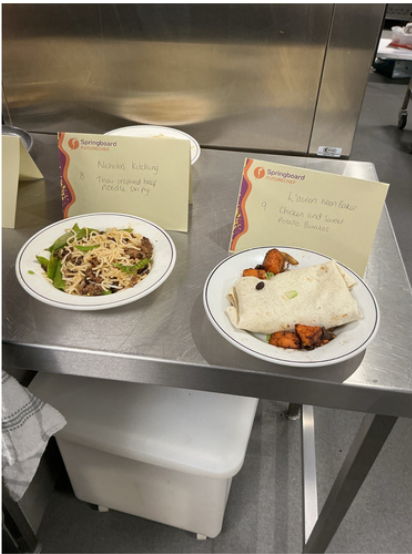
In Art we have been exploring mark making and stencil art and in Design and Technology we have had great fun exploring different types of construction by joining, stacking, testing and lining up objects.

Well done Creswell Class!



# Sherwood and Rufford

Nick and L'Auren represented Bracken Hill at the My Future Chef competition at Nottingham College this half term. We were very proud of the hard work and effort both boys put into their delicious meals!



## Sherwood and Rufford

This half term Sherwood and Rufford visited The Beacon in Mansfield where we learnt all about the fabulous work that they do to support homeless people in our area. On the back of this, we raised funds and bought items to put together our own Christmas packs to donate. It was lovely to have parents and grandparents in school to help with this so thank you! 🎄👶👶👶



We also had a lovely afternoon in Mansfield in the last week. Some students decided the walk to the Four Seasons in the rain wasn't for them, so they stayed and had something from the cafe at Tesco. Others decided to brave the puddles and explore the Christmas market. 🎄👶👶👶



# Thoresby

What a cracking Christmas term!

We have been practicing and exploring shape in maths and thinking about using our mathematical language to describe and explain our shapes. We then tried thinking about how we can use shapes and where we see them as well.

Our book In English, we learnt about our human rights and how to make choices and decisions.

Our PE this term was about moving and balancing and we really enjoyed Ball yoga and finding different ways to stay still and move around using a ball.



# Kelham

We have spent a lot of time this term working on our Young Enterprise Project. Although we are no strangers to enterprise, this is the first time we have entered the national Young Enterprise competition, and we have really started to examine how a company operates, including job roles, start-up capital, and profits.

After a lot of thought and discussion about what we enjoy doing, our company, 'Made by Us,' was born.

We had been working on an art project in a different subject, and this year we have many budding artists in the class with a range of drawing styles.

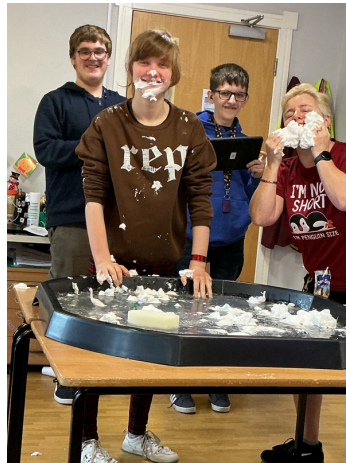
We have created original artwork and then utilised our computer skills to enhance it. We have started with the idea of turning these pictures into cards to sell, but we can also see the potential to create bags and T-shirts using our designs.

Anything is possible.



# Wollaton

This term Wollaton have been busy with activities related to the book 'Can I Build Another Me?' this has given us opportunities to describe ourselves and think about qualities. We have also been busy in maths measuring length, weight and capacity. In addition we had Big RE day where we looked at Global Warming and what different religions believe about how we look after the Earth, students enjoyed sensory activities related to this but we think Mrs Waterhouse enjoyed it more when she started making foam beards with the icebergs once we had finished.



# Sport at Bracken Hill

Sport is a vital part of school life and plays a crucial role in helping our students maintain physical and mental health. It also teaches valuable skills that last a lifetime.

Our senior students have been working extremely hard this term both in PE lessons and at various sporting events across the county.

The combined team from KS4 and KS5 PE Group 1 has now represented the school in dodgeball/handball and curling. Some also play in the school football team and for teams outside of school. They have come together as a team really well and finished the latest dodgeball competition unbeaten by any other school. Well done to all who took part.



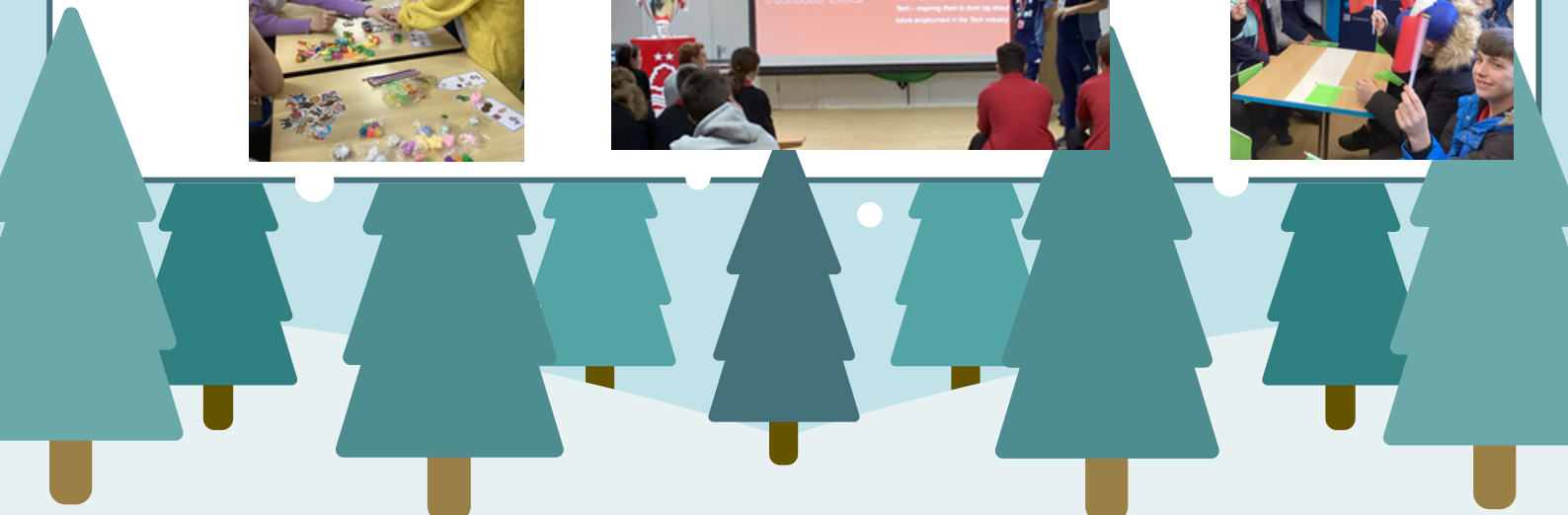
# Money Week

Last month, we immersed ourselves in all things money for a whole week. We recognised, sorted, drew and rubbed coins, counted and spent money in shops and cafés and kept simple accounts for mini-enterprise projects.

Barclay's showed us how to spot frauds and scams and helped us explore needs and wants and the difference between the two. They brought their banking van for us to explore and taught us how to recognise fake bills.

Two members of the Nottingham Forest community team talked to our older students about tech in sports and related job opportunities, and everyone was excited to see the European Cup they brought with them. We learned about taxes with the DWP, how to price a building project with Lovell Construction and emergency food parcels with Citizen's Advice.

James from Ashfield District Council explained where the council's money comes from and made us think about how we would spend it. It's been a packed week full of new experiences, thanks to all our visitors who supported our learning so generously.



# Retirement of Founding CEO Julian Scholefield

Dear Parents/Carers

After more than three decades dedicated to improving education for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the Midlands, our founding Chief Executive Officer, Julian Scholefield, has announced his decision to retire.

Julian founded Esteem Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) in 2018 with a clear vision: to create a truly inclusive organisation where every child, regardless of need or background, could access exceptional learning experiences and the right support to thrive.

Under his leadership, Esteem MAT has grown from a pioneering idea into a values-driven trust spanning the East and West Midlands. During his tenure, the Trust expanded its network of schools and specialist services while maintaining a strong culture of collaboration, care, and high standards. Julian's leadership has been transformational. His belief in inclusion and excellence has shaped the Trust's identity and ensured that every learner is valued and supported.

Beyond Esteem, Julian has made an important contribution to education nationally, serving as a headteacher, Ofsted lead inspector, and trustee of organisations including the National Autistic Society and Oasis Community Learning.

As part of the planned transition, Karen Hayes, currently Chief Operating Officer at Esteem MAT, has been appointed Interim Chief Executive Officer from 1 February 2026.

Karen's understanding of Esteem's ethos and strategic direction will support stability and continuity as the Trust enters its next chapter.

