

# BRACKEN HILL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER MAY 2026

## MESSAGE FROM MR JACKSON

The Summer term is always a busy one, with a great deal taking place, but it is also a valuable time for reflection.

Recently, I have had the pleasure of supporting our Year 11 and Year 13 students as they complete their external accreditations in English and Maths. It is always incredible to see how hard our students work and the progress they make from their individual starting points at Bracken Hill School.

While we are proud of their academic achievements, the real magic lies in the wider progress our students make. This includes the development of social skills, communication, confidence and independence. This term, I have seen students independently collecting their dinner, using communication boards for the first time, and showing great courage in tackling activities they may previously have avoided.

These moments of progress are what make our school so special. The opportunities our students have accessed this term, including residential experiences, outdoor and adventurous activities, and farm visits, have played a key role in engaging them and helping them take pride in their achievements.

I hope that you are also seeing this wonderful progress at home. As a school, we look forward to celebrating each student's achievements further in their reports later this term and hope to welcome you to our Summer Fayre on Thursday 25th June.

The ECO Refill Shop team are working hard to reduce plastic waste, and they would be very grateful if parents, carers and staff could please complete this short survey about the ECO Refill Shop:  
<https://forms.gle/R5Vy2wcQ83KV3brB7>

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday, 22nd May - The last day of half term

Monday, 1st June - The school reopens to all students and class group photographs are being taken.

\* Please ensure your child comes to school in full school uniform.

Monday, 22nd to Wednesday 24th June - Sports Week

Thursday, 25th June - Summer Fayre 10am-12pm

Friday, 26th June - Inset day, the school is closed to all students

Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> June - Transition to new class groups

Tuesday, 30th June - Meet the Teacher, an opportunity to meet your child's teacher

Friday, 24th July - The last day of term



# Bracken Hill School Summer Fayre

Parents, carers and families please  
join us at our Summer Fayre on  
Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 10am-12pm

White Post Farm

Animal Roadshow

Face painting






Inflatable Helter Skelter  
Ride and Shootout

Bubble entertainment  
from The Joker

Refreshments

Arts and Crafts

Jen and Emma's Super Whippy ice  
cream £2 each cash is preferred (free  
for students)



# CLASS UPDATES

## CATERPILLARS

This half term has been full of curiosity, discovery, and a little bit of muddy fun as our pupils became young explorers of the natural world!

We've been getting hands-on with flowers—watering them, caring for them, and watching closely to see what helps them stay alive and healthy. But we didn't stop there! We also investigated flowers that had died, giving pupils the chance to notice changes and begin to understand the difference between living and non-living things.

Through exciting sensory activities, pupils have been learning to tell the difference between things that are living, things that are dead. Using their senses—touching, smelling, looking, and even listening—they explored a variety of objects and materials, sparking lots of thoughtful questions along the way.



# CLASS UPDATES

## ANTS

This term in Ants Class we have been very busy and had lots of fun learning together.

We enjoyed exploring the story We're Going on a Bear Hunt by learning about the characters, travelling them through the different scenes, taking part in our own sensory bear hunt and even rewriting the story ourselves.



In Maths, we have been learning about shapes and using them creatively to make pictures such as houses, ice creams and rocket ships.

In PSHE, we have also been learning more about our bodies and emotions by exploring how we feel when we are hot, hungry, tired or cold, and practising ways to regulate ourselves more independently.

Ants Class has loved exploring our new science garden and the local community through our swimming sessions and visits to the park, Morrisons café and our school café.



Swimming has helped us to develop confidence and learn new skills in the water.

It has been a fantastic term full of learning, exploration and fun!

# CLASS UPDATES

## BUMBLEBEES

What an amazing time we have had in English this term!

We started exploring the book 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', creating our own sensory paths for the children to step into or touch.

We used different textures and using aided language boards; we could describe how the different textured scenes felt, from cold, to slimy or fluffy!

We looked at a story map and used characters from the story to walk through the map to retell the story.

For the last 2 weeks we have created our own bear hunt story, by changing the scenes and going for a hunt for a huge rollercoaster!

We have explored jelly swamps and bubble rivers to reach the rollercoaster!



# CLASS UPDATES

## GRASSHOPPERS

Grasshoppers have had a super Spring half term. We have taken part in some wonderful activities together!

The children have been having a super time at forest school out in the sunshine taking part in lots of nature and outdoor activities.

We also had a fantastic trip to Willow tree farm where we fed sheep, goats and alpacas, they were very hungry!

We listened to some very interesting information about the reptiles.

We got to hold a bearded dragon, corn snake and lots of other interesting creatures.

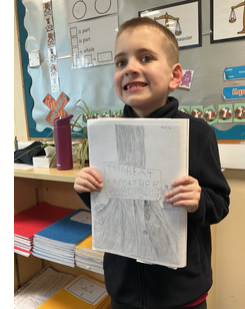


# CLASS UPDATES

## BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies have had an amazing half term, as always! The children have worked incredibly hard and have enjoyed lots of exciting learning across the curriculum.

In English, we explored The Great Kapok Tree and used it as inspiration for persuasive writing to encourage people to look after our planet and protect the environment.



In Science, we learned about living things and life cycles, developing our understanding of how plants and animals grow and change.

Our Topic work focused on caring for our world. We discussed pollution and recycling, and learned about different animals and their habitats and homes around the world.

In PSHE, we had an important focus on online safety and how to stay safe and responsible when using technology.

In PE, the children enjoyed taking part in simple team games, building their teamwork and cooperation skills.



We have particularly enjoyed and worked extremely hard in DT learning how to sew! It was so nice to be able to take home our own stuffed animals at the end of the topic.

In Maths, we worked on money and explored different addition and subtraction structures to strengthen our problem-solving skills.



We are so proud of all the children for their enthusiasm, kindness and hard work this half term!

# CLASS UPDATES

## BEETLES

This half term, Super Beetles have been working incredibly hard across the school, with a strong focus on our core word programme in English. The word “in” was a fantastic one for us all to explore, and the children did a great job using it in a variety of contexts.

We also made the most of the sunshine around school, enjoying our learning both indoors and out, with our favourite place being outside in the sunshine.



# CLASS UPDATES

## LADYBIRDS

Our visit to Willow Tree Farm was a massive hit with all of our little ladybirds. They were incredibly brave to hold, stroke and look at new and unusual animals including a bearded dragon and alpaca! We even got the chance to feed them and laughed at how much they tickled the palms of our hands.

Back in the classroom, we have been super busy with learning all about the planet and ways that we can stop polluting the oceans. We've been looking at different ways that we can help to keep our planet clean, safe and a place that we want to live.

In science, we have been learning all about living and non-living things. The children have thoroughly enjoyed exploring the different animals and habitats through sensory and water play.

All in all, it has been another fantastic half term in the Ladybirds Classroom and all our children have worked incredibly hard. Here is to a well-deserved rest and a brilliant final half term!



# DRAGONFLIES

Dragonflies have had a brilliant start to Summer Term 1! The children have jumped into some exciting new topics, including learning about pollution and exploring the difference between living and non-living things. They've been curious and have asked some fantastic questions along the way.

We've also had some very exciting new additions to the classroom—caterpillars and an ant colony! The pupils have loved observing them closely and are already learning so much about how they live and grow.

With the sunny weather on our side, we've been able to enjoy trips to the park and spend time at Forest School, which the children always look forward to. It's been great to get outside and learn in a different environment.

In Cooking, the class had lots of fun designing and making their own pizzas. They did a great job making the dough and choosing their toppings—there were some very tasty creations!

It's been a lovely start to the term, and we're excited for what's still to come.



# NEWSTEAD

Newstead Class had an amazing day out this May at the Believe, Move, Achieve SEND Sports Festival held at Nottingham University, enjoying a full day of inspiring and energetic sporting activities.



The day kicked off with Sitting Volleyball, where pupils jumped straight in, showing brilliant teamwork enthusiasm and determination. Lots of encouragement and laughter filled the sports hall as everyone gave it their best!

Next, pupils were treated to a truly special experience with a talk from Paralympic silver medallist Mel Clarke, followed by an archery session led by Mel herself. She shared her inspirational journey to becoming a Paralympic athlete, and pupils were thrilled to hold her silver medal and even the Paralympic torch!



After this, it was time for Climbing, and Newstead Class showed incredible bravery and resilience. With coaching from the Nottingham University students, pupils learned how to belay for one another, supporting their friends and building confidence as they challenged themselves on the climbing wall.



# NEWSTEAD

The day finished with Boccia, where pupils showed off their fantastic skills. Having taken part in a Boccia tournament at Harvey Haddon Sports Village the week before, Newstead pupils proved they are now complete Boccia pros!



Throughout the day, pupils demonstrated excellent confidence, determination and a willingness to try new challenges. Many pushed themselves outside their comfort zones, showed growing independence and took great pride in their achievements.

We are so proud of how they embraced every challenge with confidence and enthusiasm.

Fantastic sporting spirit, Newstead Class!

# CLASS UPDATES

## WELBECK

What a fantastic half term we have had! ★

This term, we have been doing lots of work around Zones of Regulation 🧡💚💛❤️ to help prepare us for transition, understand our emotions and learn strategies that can help us.



We have also been enjoying Careers 👩‍🎓👨‍🎓👷‍♂️👮‍♂️👨‍🍳, dressing up as different jobs and playing Guess Who? to learn all about different careers and aspirations.



In PSHE 🍏🦷, we have been learning all about healthy lifestyles. We explored healthy and unhealthy foods and learnt how to look after our bodies by brushing our teeth and keeping ourselves healthy and strong 💪🌟.



One of the biggest highlights was our exciting residential trip 🚐🌟. We had lots of fun, made special memories, and enjoyed our adventure together!



# CLASS UPDATES

## CLUMBER

This term, Clumber's learning has had a strong focus on wellbeing.

In English, our work has been linked to the film Inside Out. Pupils have written character descriptions, speeches from different characters' perspectives and answered a range of comprehension questions linked to the text.

They also enjoyed creating their own new character for the film, thinking carefully about how their character would look, what they like and how they act.

In PSHE, we explored different ways to support our wellbeing, focussing on the benefits of good sleep, healthy eating and regular physical exercise. Pupils had the opportunity to put this learning into practice through a trip to the park and a visit to Mansfield Town Football Club, which they thoroughly enjoyed.



# CLASS UPDATES

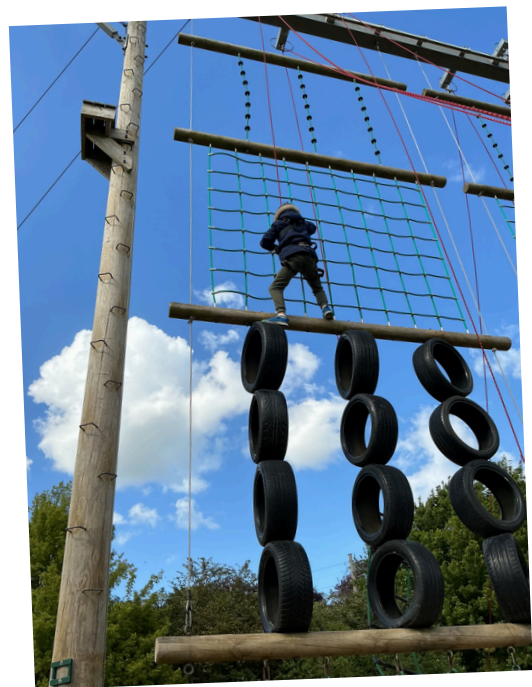
## BESTWOOD

Bestwood have really enjoyed their residential this term and it has been an experience to remember!

The children took part in a wide range of exciting activities including the giant swing, Jacob's Ladder, raft building, fencing, the vertical challenge, laser tag and the zipline.

Everyone showed fantastic bravery, determination and teamwork throughout, pushing themselves out of their comfort zones and supporting one another.

It was wonderful to see so many smiling faces, and all of the children should feel incredibly proud of what they achieved during such a fun and adventurous trip.



# CLASS UPDATES

## CRESWELL

This half term we have been very busy!

In Maths we have been continuing to explore 'Number' some more, and doing lots of counting, matching the quantity to the numeral and have practising giving several objects when shown a numeral.

We have also been looking at capacity and have been deciding if something is 'full' or 'empty'. Weighing objects on the scales and deciding if it is 'heavy' or 'light' and giving 'more' or 'less' objects and the 'same'.



In English we have enjoyed looking at and sharing the story 'Things that Go', this has involved us looking at lots of different types of transport in daily life, identifying vehicles, understanding movement and direction and making connections.

In PSHE we have been looking at 'Changing and growing and Healthy lifestyles. For this we have looked at how we grow and change from birth to adulthood. We have loved looking at photographs of our families and the people who we love. We have looked at young people in pictures and the need to ask a person before borrowing something and finally we have looked at what a romantic relationship is.



# CLASS UPDATES

## CRESWELL

In Science we have explored 'Sort it Out', this has involved us exploring how solids, liquids and gases behave and how mixtures can be separated. This has also involved using sieving, filtering and mixing different materials together. We have been investigating how some materials dissolve in a liquid to form a solution.



In Cooking we have developed our skills of using a microwave and cooking a ready meal from a supermarket. We have been choosing our favourite ready meal and have looked at the instructions for preparation and safely handling it when it is cooked.

In Design and Technology, we have been looking at 'Getting to know different Materials'. This has involved us exploring a variety of materials and textures, including play dough, corn flour, ice. We have looked at the changing textures of materials by mixing them too.



# CLASS UPDATES

## **CRESWELL**

In PE we have enjoyed experiencing 'Through the Decades, this has involved us taking part in several outdoor activities where we have followed directions and have looked for specific things using our orienteering skills.

In Computing we have been exploring different devices, exploring different functions and using simple problem solving.

In Music we have been using the 'Singing Hands' and have been choosing our favourite song and have been using a variety of musical instruments.

In Art we have been exploring Collage by using lots of different materials.

Well, done Creswell Class!

# CLASS UPDATES

## RUFFORD

A lot has happened in Rufford Class this term.

As part of our ASDAN work, we visited the Ashfield District Council Offices to find out about the help and support our students can access there if needed. We met two community support officers and even tried on their stab vests.

This week, we were very lucky to have the opportunity to work with Rebeca and Katie, two researchers from the University of Loughborough, on two projects about climate change. One of these will result in a, animation, which may incorporate some of our students' work, so we're looking forward to seeing this later in the year.

Following on from our science work around wind turbines with E.ON last term, Matt and Kara came in today to give us a tour of their Blackburn Meadows site using VR headsets. This was an amazing experience that really brought to life what Matt has been explaining to us.



# CLASS UPDATES

## SHERWOOD

We have had a great term in Sherwood, involving lots of hands on experiences and trips out.

As part of our ASDAN we visited the Ashfield District Council Offices where we had chance to ask lots of questions about the local area. We have been researching into current issues and projects within Ashfield.

Following on from the windmill project last half term, Matt and Kara from E.ON came into school to give students a virtual tour of one of their sites using VR headsets which was fantastic.

A huge well done to all our Year 11s that have submitted coursework and sat exams this term. You should all be very proud of yourselves. We certainly are!



# CLASS UPDATES

## THORESBY

It has been a busy term in Thoresby Class!

In Science, we have been exploring different materials to see if they will float or sink and how shape impacts buoyancy – Lydia managed to keep Captain America afloat by making him a boat!



During Maths, we have been identifying left and right, forwards and backwards by getting active and we had fun practising to Cha Cha Slide.



In English, we read That Rabbit belongs to Emily Brown and written about our own favourite toy using simple sentences and colourful semantics.



In RE, we have explored the purpose of prayer and how different religions pray. The children had a go at praying using prayer mats. In PE, we have had fun with balloons!

The pupils have been practising their hand eye coordination and gross motor skills by playing balloon volleyball.



In readiness for our DofE adventure, we have been practising how to put a tent up and how to get in and out of a sleeping bag!



# CLASS UPDATES

## WOLLATON

Wollaton Class has had a very busy and exciting term!

In English, we have been learning all about animals. As part of this topic, we enjoyed a visit to Graves Park Animal Farm in Sheffield. Although the weather was very wet, we still had a fantastic time exploring the farm and meeting the animals. By the end of the visit, we were starting to resemble the wet alpacas ourselves, so we warmed up with a well-earned drink in the café.



We also welcomed visitors from Nottingham Trent University, who delivered an engaging session about the dangers of flooding. The students particularly enjoyed the interactive and sensory elements of the workshop, which helped bring the topic to life and deepened their understanding in a fun and memorable way.



# CLASS UPDATES

## KELHAM

Our year 12 Kelham students have been going out and about doing Trail blazers, this has included axe throwing, learning about bushcraft skills and learning to build dens. The students enjoyed and were very good at the axe throwing.

At the end of April some of the Post16 students went on residential at Hagg farm up in the Peak District. We did a variety of different activities over the 3 days. On Monday afternoon the students got to experience Abseiling from Millers Dale bridge. On Tuesday morning the students had a go on the Jacobs ladder and the zip wire at Hagg Farm. In the afternoon after lunch, we went out to a cave and explored the cave with the whole group with the help of the instructors, we were all very brave! On the final day Wednesday, we packed up and left Hagg Farm to walk to the Fairholmes car park (up a big hill across the hill and down the other side) for a picnic before heading back to school. Everyone enjoyed the experience and the lovely weather we had, a memorable residential enjoyed by all.

The students who stayed behind at Post 16 planned and cooked a meal in the mornings. They also enjoyed doing some art projects and did a mini table tennis tournament in the afternoons.



Larry the lollypop was the staff mascot and kept our spirits up during residential. Larry is hopefully joining KS4 on their Duke of Edinburgh adventures.

# BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Hi everyone, from this half term onwards, each newsletter will include a favourite children's book recommendation from a member of staff for families to enjoy together at home.



## My Book Review: Mrs Jenkin

I would love to recommend this wonderfully illustrated book about feelings: *The Hotel of Feelings*.

This gentle and reassuring story helps children understand that all feelings are welcome and that emotions can come and go, just like guests staying in a hotel. Some feelings stay for a little while and others stay longer, but they all eventually move on.

The beautiful illustrations and simple language make this book perfect for young and also older children. It opens up lovely conversations about happiness, worry, excitement, anger, and kindness, helping children feel more confident talking about their emotions.

This is a lovely book to share together at home and a wonderful way to support children's wellbeing and emotional development.