



ARK | NEWMEAD FARM | HIVE

This newsletter offers just a small glimpse into the vibrant life across our three sites. Every day, our students demonstrate resilience, compassion, and a growing sense of belonging within their school community. This term has been our busiest yet, filled with moments that highlight the strength and potential of every young person in our care.

From weekly life skills trips and outdoor education experiences to our whole Hive site visit to Longleat and the overnight expedition to Dartmoor, students have embraced opportunities to explore, connect, and achieve. Among the many moments of pride, we celebrate the student who completed their first ever exam with confidence, those who impressed teams during work experience, and the students who donned suits and want to support interview panels. Even the simple joy of students playing football together reflects the positive, supportive relationships that help our school thrive.

We are incredibly proud of the academic and personal progress our students continue to make. Their achievements reflect not only their determination but also how far the school has grown in creating learning pathways that truly meet individual needs. Next term, students will undertake 55 assessments across a range of levels, on top of eight GCSEs—an exciting sign of how our offer has broadened from previous years. Already this year, 50 students have earned 200 or more AQA awards between them, and a further 32 examinations have been successfully completed since January. Each qualification represents a moment of success, a story of confidence built over time, and the positive impact of a trauma informed environment where students feel safe, supported, and ready to achieve. We remain committed to creating diverse, personalised pathways that recognise and celebrate success in all its forms and ensure every young person can take the next step with pride.

As part of our ongoing development, we have strengthened our trauma informed practice. We are transitioning away from the Thrive model and deepening our whole school commitment to trauma informed approaches. Three staff members have retrained as Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs). With oversight from Fiona, our clinical lead they will help us respond even more effectively to the needs outlined in our students' EHCPs and to support emotional wellbeing consistently across all sites.

Continued...

**BE KIND
BE SAFE
BE RESPECTFUL**



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Acorn Education

Part of Outcomes First Group

Pupils receive the care and support they need to help them overcome the challenges they face and to re-engage in their learning. The core values of 'be safe, be kind and be respectful,' help pupils develop a strong sense of community and keep them safe.



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BE KIND
BE SAFE
BE RESPECTFUL

We are also delighted to welcome several new colleagues in the coming months who will further enrich our school community and will join once safer recruitment checks are complete:

- **Leah Roberts**, joining the Senior Leadership Team, will oversee attendance, whole school wellbeing, and transitions into, through, and beyond Year 11. Leah presently works in a similar school.
- **Laura Chumbley**, also joining SLT, will lead on PSHE, SMSC, and careers, working closely with the teams already leading these key areas. Laura currently works in an SEMH provision
- **Hector Miles** will bring Music Technology to the curriculum, drawing on his background in youth work and inclusive music education Hector will allow creative music technology to be taught.
- **Rosie Rushton** will join the Art and DT department, ensuring that creative learning is accessible and expanded across all sites and supporting the present art and DT provision.
- **Lenny Gale** will support reintegration and engagement at the farm site as part of our pastoral team.
- **Jake Courtier**, from an autism specialist setting, will bring valuable experience to his work taking on a class group on the farm.
- **Lisa Byrne**, joining the Hive at the end of June, brings significant experience from another autism specialist school, including strong pastoral and trauma informed practice.

Recruitment continues, and I look forward to announcing further staff developments soon. As we celebrate the achievements of this term and look ahead to the next, we have the residential, the trip to RIAT, the ongoing trips and visits booked into the curriculum, the new farm barn opens soon and we have the exam season and our first ever Leavers Prom.

I am immensely proud of our students and everything they have achieved so far this year; their growth, resilience, and willingness to engage so positively with school life continues to inspire us all. I am equally grateful for our dedicated staff, whose kindness, consistency, and care create the safe, nurturing, and trauma informed environment that allows every young person to feel seen, supported, and ready to succeed. I would also like to extend sincere thanks to parents and carers for the trust, partnership, and encouragement you offer every day. The progress we are making as a school—academically, emotionally, and as a community—is only possible because of the strength of this shared commitment. Together, we keep our children at the centre of all we do, celebrating their successes and ensuring working together we provide the foundations they need to flourish.

We wish you all a relaxing break and look forward to seeing students back on the 21st April.

Best regards

Ben Coombes

Headteacher of Wessex Lodge School

Ark News

It has been a busy and exciting term at the Ark since Christmas. We have been enjoying the sun and spending some time up at the park where students were teaching staff football skills, as well as how to push someone really high on the basket swing.

We have had a focus on building solid friendships and learning to work together this term so we have had a range of trips. Some students have visited a pottery painting café and painted some beautiful pieces that we hope they treasure for a long time! Other students have been bowling where they stretched their competitive muscles! We have also taken students to see the film 'Pets on a Train' as part of the Into Film Spring film festival which they will reflect on as a part of their English lessons.

We have a number of students at the Ark who are leaving us at the end of this academic year to move on to bigger and brighter things! Staff have been supporting students with their upcoming transitions through visits to colleges and learning other life skills. Supporting students in spending time in their local community and in taking the message of being Kind, Safe, and Respectful with them wherever they go next.

Students have prepared potted flowers as gifts for the local care home and a number of visits to the residents. These visits have been successful with students asking if they can go

back and visit again.

The first week back after half term was 'No Worksheet Week' and staff had to think creatively about adapting their teaching and engaging students in their lessons. Ark teacher, Beth Hart said, 'the first week back after half term was an exciting "No Worksheet Week," where students explored learning beyond the usual classroom routine. They enthusiastically took part in drama games such as *Wink Murder*, *Keeper of the Keys*, and *Follow the Leader*, collaborating with both peers and staff.

These activities were full of energy, creativity, and fun, helping students build essential skills such as communication, confidence, and teamwork. It was wonderful to see everyone engage so positively, showing that learning through play can be both enjoyable and empowering!

We have had students spending some time at the Ark from the other sites to build friendships and support the sense of the Wessex Lodge community across all of our sites. This has been displayed in the positive interactions between different students in and outside of the classroom. We look forward to more of these visits in the future.

Wishing all of our students a restful break from the staff at the Ark.

Bethany Vowles—Assistant Headteacher

"If You Were an Engineer, What Would You Do?"

A small group of students at the Ark have opted into the "If You Were an Engineer, What Would You Do?" award.

A programme that gives young people insight into the world of engineering and challenges them to design their own solution to a real-world problem.

As part of the award, students had the opportunity to meet professional engineers.

This week, we were visited by a Structural Engineer and a Sustainability Engineer from Buro Happold. They spoke to the students about their day-to-day roles, the different pathways into engineering, and future career possibilities. They also led a hands-on activity called "Hold Back the Flood," where students designed and built a structure capable of withstanding a flood and keeping their Lego figure dry.

The students were highly engaged throughout, and the engineers commented on how polite and thoughtful they were.

It was a fantastic session, and we're hopeful we've helped inspire some of the next generation of engineers!

Beth Hart— Maths Teacher





The Hive

Welcoming New Students & Growing Together

This term, we have been delighted to welcome several new students into The Hive. They have each made a positive start, quickly becoming part of our community. Our existing students have shown fantastic examples of our school ethos, Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Respectful from offering to guide new peers around the site, to sharing resources, modelling safe choices, and showing genuine kindness in everyday interactions. It has been wonderful to see these values lived out so naturally.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

An area we have focused on since returning from Christmas has been expanding our outdoor learning opportunities, making the most of our local parks, nature walks, and life skills outings. There has been walks to The Knoll, Alfreds Tower and Visits to museums and outdoor gyms and even a trip to a local supermarket to see

how it 'works' These experiences help students grow in confidence, independence, and curiosity, while supporting their wellbeing through movement and time in nature. Whether exploring seasonal changes in the environment or practising practical skills in the community, our students have shown enthusiasm and resilience.

The 3Cs: Co-Connect, Co-Regulate, Co-Reflect

Across The Hive, we continue to nurture our relational and reflective culture through the 3Cs:

Co-Connect – building trusted relationships between staff and students.

Co-Regulate – supporting each other through emotional ups and downs.

Co-Reflect – thinking together about successes, challenges, and next steps.

Tutor time has become a particularly meaningful space for this work. Students are offered options that meet their sensory and emotional needs, including quieter areas for calm starts, board game stations for social interaction and shared problem solving, and movement based “dance” sessions to energise the day. These tailored approaches help create a positive rhythm each morning and strengthen our sense of belonging.

A Memorable End of Term Trip

To celebrate the progress, connections and trust developed across the term, students and staff enjoyed an exciting end of term trip to Longleat Estate and Safari Park. This was the first time our group has taken part in a trip of this scale, making it a significant milestone for everyone involved. Students explored the grounds, learned about the animals, and shared the adventure together. The day was filled with curiosity, smiles, and moments of genuine teamwork showing just how far our community has come.

Having been based at the Hive as interim Site Lead it has been a pleasure to see all this wonderful work taking place. Thank you to our students for making this the site it is, the staff for their continued efforts and all parents and carers for their continued support.

Have a lovely break and we look forwards to seeing the young people back on Tuesday 21st April 2026!



Jemma Latham– DSL, Interim Site Lead

A New Year, A New Term, and A Fresh Start on Newmead Farm

EQUINE & THE FARM

After a long spell of wet weather, we were delighted to finally see the rain clear and the sunshine return to the farm. The brighter days have lifted everyone's spirits and allowed our students to get back outside and fully enjoy their farm and equine sessions.

This half term also included an exciting trip to Wyke Farms, where students had the opportunity to see how cheese is produced on a working dairy farm. The visit helped them understand more about food production, farming processes, and the journey from farm to table. It was a fantastic hands-on learning experience, and the students represented the school brilliantly.

Back at the farm, work has started on a brand new barn which will provide improved shelter and space for our animals as well as better facilities for learning. Students have been very interested in watching the progress and learning about how farm buildings are designed and constructed.

Our BTEC students have also been busy developing their practical skills by carrying out animal health checks. They have been monitoring the animals' wellbeing by checking body condition, observing behaviour, and ensuring all animals are healthy and well cared for. These activities are an important part of their coursework and help build confidence and responsibility when working with animals.

It has been a positive and productive few weeks on the farm, and we look forward to sharing more updates as the school year continues.

Laura James—Equine

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As we embark on this new term, it's hard to believe how quickly the year has flown by! The excitement of a fresh start is palpable, and both pupils and staff at the farm have returned to school with renewed energy, eager to seize the opportunities that await us, both inside and outside the classroom. This term promises to be filled with enriching experiences that will foster growth and learning for everyone involved.

Despite the wet and windy weather that has greeted us, we have much to celebrate this term. Our weekly routine has quickly fallen back into place, and it has been heartening to read the recent reports highlighting the remarkable progress our pupils have made. Not only have they excelled academically, but they have also developed their relationship-building skills, which are so vital in our community. All primary classes—Dragonflies, Willow, Oak, Maple, Sunflowers, and Pigeons—have made fantastic contributions to our site, showcasing their talents and enthusiasm in various projects and activities that have enriched our learning environment.

One of the most exciting developments has been the construction of our new barn, which has been eagerly anticipated by both students and staff. As I write, the final touches are being made, and we hope to welcome animals into their new home very soon. The prospect of being able to pet and interact with them without being blown away by the elements is something we are all looking forward to! This new facility will not only enhance our agricultural education but also provide a safe and engaging space for our pupils to learn about animal care and responsibility.

Outdoor education has also seen tremendous achievements this term. From climbing to mountain biking, our pupils have been learning invaluable skills, including teamwork and resilience. We organised two overnight mini expeditions—one at the farm and another that involved an 11-kilometre walk on Dartmoor. I am proud to say that all pupils gave their best, and both trips were resounding successes. The camaraderie and spirit displayed were truly inspiring, with pupils supporting one another through challenges and celebrating each other's successes, which is a testament to the strong community we are building.

In the kitchen, our home cooking skills sessions continue to be a hit, with enthusiastic students whipping up an impressive array of dishes that reflect diverse culinary traditions. This term culminated in our Chinese New Year celebrations and a delightful end-of-term lunch, for which we owe a huge thank you to Andrea and the pupils for their hard work in preparation. The joy and pride in their cooking were evident, and I can confidently say that we shall never go hungry! These sessions not only teach practical skills but also encourage creativity and collaboration among our students.

A special mention goes to Kingsleigh, who completed a week's work experience at TH Whites. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience and gained valuable insights into the agricultural business, learning about the various aspects of the industry.



Stuart Hamilton—Deputy Headteacher

NEWMEAD NEWS CONTINUED...

The feedback from Kingsleigh's supervisors was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting his enthusiasm and dedication. We hope this opens up future opportunities for him, as it's amazing to think that this opportunity arose from a visit TH Whites made to our careers fair! Such experiences are invaluable in helping our pupils explore potential career paths and develop essential life skills.

This term has felt like a sprint, and I apologise if I have missed any highlights. I want to take this opportunity to thank all pupils, staff, and parents for your unwavering support. Your involvement and encouragement make a significant difference in our community. As we approach the Easter break, let's take a moment to relax, reflect on our achievements, and prepare to dive back into our activities with renewed enthusiasm and commitment to our goals.

In addition, our Forest School programme has been a tremendous success, with pupils engaging enthusiastically in a variety of activities. They have been planting trees, learning about the environment, and even cooking flatbreads over an open fire. These hands-on experiences not only foster a love for nature but also promote teamwork and practical skills among the students. The horticulture area looks very different from this time last year. Thank you, Liza, for your planning and vision; as it slowly takes shape, it is great to see our pupils engaged in the area. Horticulture continues to blossom.

Wishing everyone a restful break and looking forward to what the next term will bring! Let's continue to inspire one another and make the most of the opportunities that lie ahead.

Stuart Hamilton

Deputy Headteacher





Choosing which direction to take after leaving school is a big decision. We're here to support our students and make sure they know all the options and routes open to them. Our Careers programme is designed to give our young people the skills, knowledge and confidence they require to find and access a career they will enjoy and thrive in. Alongside dedicated careers lessons students will receive advice from an independent, level 6 Careers Advisor on request.

The Careers Lead is Laura

Gregg: LauraG@enhancedlearningservices.co.uk

Careers Advisor is:

Oli Masters: oli.masters@ofgl.co.uk

Please do contact Laura if you have any questions about our careers programme.

Below are some links to websites that are useful tools when thinking about the future. The top one is aimed at supporting parents and carers when having conversations around next steps and career choices.

<https://www.talkingfutures.org.uk/>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

<https://careerpilot.org.uk/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers>

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>

Laura Gregg- Careers Lead

“Supporting students to prepare for their future, their way”

PSHE meets Gardening:

A Heart Warming

Collaboration with Belmont Villa Care Home



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This term, we've loved bringing together two much valued parts of our curriculum; PSHE and Gardening — in a wonderfully meaningful way. Belmont Villa Care Home in Frome has very kindly welcomed our young people for weekly visits, and these sessions have quickly become a highlight for everyone involved.

Our students and the residents have built genuine intergenerational connections, sharing chats, laughter, memories, and crafts over cups of tea in the cosy bistro area. One particularly special moment was hearing an 89 year old retired bricklayer offering words of wisdom to a 17 year old student preparing to start his Bricklaying Apprenticeship; "Be proud of every brick you lay and don't try to show off, take your time and do it well." A perfect example of the rich social experiences these visits have created.

I could not be prouder of our young people. When given the opportunity to offer companionship and nurturing conversation, they rose to the challenge beautifully, showing kindness, warmth, and natural friendship to those who truly valued it.

Our Gardening Club also made a wonderful contribution by creating 22 beautiful Spring Flower Pots — one for every resident at Belmont Villa. Each bright pot brought a touch of spring cheer to the residents' windowsills, proudly gifted by the students of Wessex Lodge School.

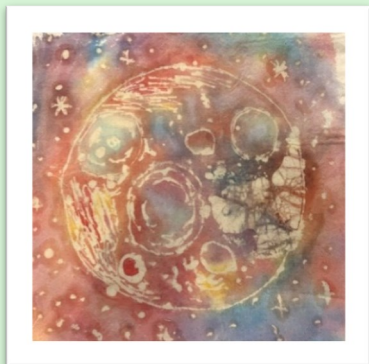
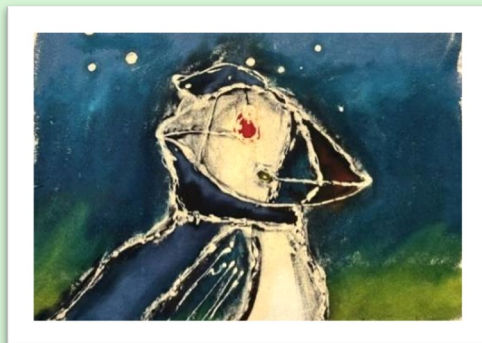


Amanda Jones—PHSE & Gardening



This term in **Art** students have been looking at Portraits and an Indonesian and African process called Batik. Students have shown real resilience in both of these projects and have shown growth in their abilities and confidence. In the portrait project we focussed on charcoal and Abstract portraits, students loved using new materials such as charcoal and using their imaginations to expand their idea of what makes art.

In the batik project, students have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to use their drawing and painting skills in a new and unique way by drawing with hot wax and dyeing fabric, then learning how to do some basic stitches.



Expanding Horizons

We are pleased to report on the progress of our Life Skills curriculum during the Spring term. This programme focuses on practical learning and community engagement to help students develop independence in a supported environment.

Primary Phase Highlights;

Our **Primary students** have been active in the local community this term. Their activities included:

- **Local Research:** Visiting and reviewing local parks to understand community spaces.

Educational Trips: A visit to the **Fleet Air Arm Museum** to explore aviation history.

Year 11 and Leavers

Our senior students have focused on developing travel independence by using public transport to reach various destinations. Key visits this term included:

- **Aviation Heritage:** Trips to the **Army Flying Museum** and the **Fleet Air Arm Museum**.
- **City Navigation:** Practical travel training and community access in **Bath** and **Bristol**.

Geography & Exploration: A visit to the caves at **Wookey Hole**.

These excursions are essential for building the confidence and practical skills our students need to navigate the world as they move toward the future.



Life Skills



Will O'Rourke

Design and Technology

It has been another busy and productive term in the Design & Technology department, with students engaging positively and enthusiastically in their learning.

Across the year groups, students have demonstrated excellent focus, creativity, and determination in the workshop. The attention to detail and pride in their finished products have been wonderful to see. Students have explored movement and mechanisms through the creation of flying bird mobiles. A variety of birds from bats to parrots have flown out the door!

Students have been developing their craftsmanship and creativeness by producing interesting paint designs for their projects.

Overall, students have engaged extremely well this term, supporting one another and taking pride in their work. We look forward to seeing their skills continue to grow next term.

Jamie Stratton



Hive Class Groups



PIXIES & ELVES

Pixie and Elf class have had a super Spring term! Lots of woodland walks looking for signs of Spring, splashing in the river at Vallis Vale and collecting wild garlic to make garlic butter which also included making the butter from scratch! The children have been taking part in lots of activities based around traditional tales, including The Little Red Hen, Three Little Pigs and Jack and the Beanstalk - some of the activities have been making bread rolls, building houses the wolf can't blow down and making treasure chests for their gold. We have been out and about exploring our local area with visits to Alfred's Tower, Trowbridge Museum, Old Wardour Castle and lots of park trips too. As the children have become more settled in routine, we have been able to develop resilience and focus on classroom learning too which we look forward to continuing into next term. Happy Easter everyone! - Amy Fournier D'Albe



LEPRECHAUN CLASS



We have had a busy start to 2026! We have visited Fleet Air Arm Museum where we dressed up and investigated the different aircrafts. For the first half term we explored our topic Space and Places. We designed our own planets and aliens. It was great fun discussing our different ideas. For the second half term our topic Art Attack allowed us to get creative! We drew a picture of our choice then added a splash of colour. The next step was to create and make a frame for our piece of art. In English we have been

reading Ratburger and have enjoyed making predicts, posters and banners to help the characters. In Maths we began to build on our addition and subtraction knowledge. We have moved on to learn about multiplication and division. Whilst we have been busy learning, we have also been building our peer relationships lots of park trips have helped us with this skill. We have worked as a team to improve our hole at the bottom of the field. We visited Morrisons and had to find items within the store. The staff let us scan items at the till. We finished the visit with a snack and drink in the café. - Kelly Apsey



YETI CLASS GROUPS

This term in Yeti class we have welcomed two new members to the group who have settled in amazingly! It has been a term of some brilliant highs both academically and socially. Even with some changes to personnel, we have battled on through our Phonics, Maths and Reading showing incredible progress. As well as this we have been showing our immense creative skills in both Music and Art. Another huge positive for this term has been the ability of the class to play games and cards together, and really showcasing our 3 B's when doing so which has resulted in a consistently positive atmosphere in the classroom! We have spent a lot of time outdoors and being active especially during Forest School where we have done Scavenger Hunts, collected Frogspawn and played entertaining games of manhunt! Hopefully this will increase as the weather gets even better over the coming months! A big well done to all the children for their effort and enthusiasm! Let's keep it going next term.—Alfie Dix



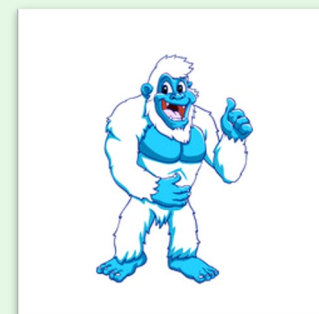
BIGFOOT CLASS GROUPS

It has been a term of consolidation since Christmas. We have had a change in students and staffing, which has had its challenging moments. This has now settled down so that the students are a strong unit and we can look forward to spending warm, happy summer days together.

We have expanded our PE activities to include visiting the gym at the farm and the outdoor gym in Frome. This has been important not only to get everyone more active, but also in strengthening relationships between us.

This term we have been reading The Demon Headmaster which has led to plenty of diversions in our learning. The differences between the experiences of the young people in the book and those in Bigfoot have given us plenty to discuss.

One of the aspects of this term I have particularly loved has been our regular walks out to explore the countryside around Kilmington. As well as tramping the lanes, we've been up to the top of the incredibly steep Long Knoll. Some of us enjoyed the climb more than others, but the views from the top were well worth the effort, even on a misty day. We're not yet ready for an expedition to Everest Base Camp, though. Yet.—Jim Arnall-Culliford



Newmead Farm Class Groups

Sunflower Class

Since coming back to the farm after Christmas and New Year, Sunflower Class have continued to build on the great work we are doing to make the classroom as warm and welcoming a space as possible. We have been using AI to help us create pictures, we have created our own artwork, we have a countdown calendar and a soft space for chill time – amongst many other things!

In English, we have been doing ‘The Island Project’ where we have been imagining our very own islands. We have had cats flying on dragons, centaurs cooking breakfast and lots of horses doing their horsey thing. We have created papier mache models of our islands and are waiting for them to dry now so we can paint them.

In Maths we have been working on consolidating our skills in column addition and subtraction, times tables and functional skills. We have set up a shop within the class and practiced with money to work out totals and change.

One of the things we love doing is working with food and creative things so we try to fit this into lots of subjects. We have made sherbet and bath bombs for Science, fruit smoothies for PSHE and cake mixes for Maths as well as vegetable pasties, pasta from scratch, apple crumbles and pizzas. Thanks to the Sunflower parents who have supported us when these things are brought home and need to be cooked!

We have made lots of different sensory and fidget toys and quite possibly our own bodyweights in slime.

We have spent lots of time on the farm, working with the animals, playing on the swing, having walks and enjoying the fresh air, although it has been quite cold and rainy.

Felicity Gibson



This term in **Pigeon** Class has been full of resilience, creativity and exciting experiences.

In English, we have been reading *Skellig*, and the boys have engaged really well with the story, showing great interest and thoughtful discussion.

Despite not having access to their cabin, the boys have coped incredibly well. They have shown fantastic adaptability by creating their own fun in the Forest School area, working together and making the most of the space around them.

We have also enjoyed some memorable days out, including visits to reptile shops, which the boys thoroughly enjoyed. They represented the school brilliantly and were a credit to the class while out in the community.

Another highlight has been our time spent on the farm with the alpacas. The boys had the opportunity to get up close and personal with them, which was a wonderful experience. A special mention goes to Harry, who we have now nicknamed “the Alpaca Whisperer” after successfully getting the alpacas to eat out of his hands—something they don’t usually do as they can be quite wary of humans!

I would like to wish everyone in Pigeon Class a very Happy Easter. I hope you all have a restful and enjoyable break.



Kelly Cole

Newmead Farm Class Groups



During the spring term **Maple** class have been busy!

We have been mountain biking in outdoor education and playing Dodgeball and working on our skills in football at our PE lessons. We have been working hard on our communication skills and playing lots of games inside and outside of the classroom.

In Home cooking lessons we have been cooking delicious meals from around the world and learning about different countries along side this in our Topic lessons.

In Forest school, we have been using our skills to build fires, chop wood, plant trees and we even cooked pancakes on the fire.

The Maple boys have worked hard this term with their English and Math's skills and made excellent progress!

Well done Maple class another fantastic term!

Katy Newland



Willow Class have enjoyed a productive Spring term, as we continue to balance opportunities for play alongside academic development. The class settled quickly following their return from the Christmas break and were soon re-engaged with the daily routines of school life at the Farm.

Outdoor Education has seen a change this term, with mountain biking replacing rock climbing—an activity that has quickly become a firm favourite among the pupils. Home Cooking Skills also remains highly popular, as does Forest School, particularly with the introduction of a new slack line which has added an extra level of challenge and enjoyment.

We were also pleased to welcome a new pupil, Oscar, to Willow Class this term. He has been warmly received by the rest of the group and is already beginning to settle in, finding his place within the class and becoming familiar with life at the Farm.

At the beginning of the term, all pupils completed their Star Assessments and have recently started the next round with minimal complaint. It is encouraging to see increasingly consistent engagement in Maths, English, and PSHE lessons. Alongside their learning, the pupils continue to enjoy their play opportunities—particularly with their Christmas Gel Blasters, which have now overtaken Beyblades in popularity.

It only remains for myself and all the pupils in Willow Class to wish you a very happy and peaceful Easter break.

Steve Friday

Forest School

This term, Forest School has been full of energy, laughter, and outdoor adventure. Across all sites, our young people have enjoyed playing lots of group games, building friendships, and making the most of being outside in the fresh air. It has been wonderful to see so much joy, teamwork, and positive social interaction during sessions.

Cooking around the fire has continued to be a real highlight. Preparing and sharing food together has provided valuable opportunities for communication, turn-taking, and relationship building, helping our pupils to grow in confidence and strengthen their connections with both peers and adults.

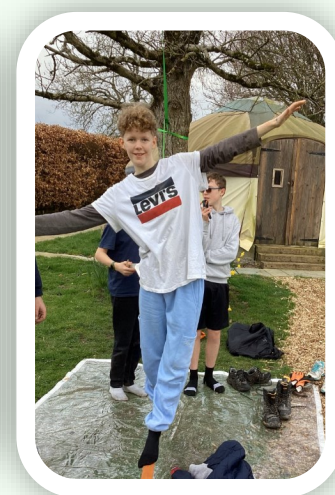
With the sunny weather, the slackline has been a huge success! Pupils have been challenging themselves, developing balance and co-ordination, and showing great perseverance while having fun in the sun.

There has also been plenty of exploration, with learners using their curiosity to investigate the natural environment, discover new spaces, and engage in imaginative play.

A particularly exciting part of this term has been our work to develop the Forest School area itself. Our young people have helped to plant new trees around the site, learning about how trees grow and the importance of caring for our natural environment. We have also begun creating a willow dome, which will grow into a wonderful living structure for quiet time, storytelling, and future outdoor learning. It has been fantastic to see the young people take pride in shaping their own Forest School space.

Tick Reminder

As we continue to enjoy the outdoors, please remember to check your child for ticks after Forest School sessions and ensure they attend in suitable outdoor clothing and closed-toe footwear.





Moving For Mind

In January our Designated Safeguarding Lead Jemma Latham has been completing a series of challenges to raise money for the charity Mind.

The first challenge saw her take on 'Move for Mind' where Jemma moved for at least 31 minutes every day of January, she often walked or took part in PT classes to reach

this goal. Jemma didn't stop there, during February she completed the '56 miles for February' challenge, walking or running every day smashing the target of 56 miles by clocking up nearly 74 miles. Not content with this Jemma decided to take up the March challenge for Mind, '100 miles for March' Jemma could often be seen walking, running and on occasion dancing around the streets to hit the target, covering over 110 miles! She has 'moved' in some way for 90 consecutive days, has covered over 270 miles and raised just over £1300...but she is not finished.

“Jem is doing a thing”...



Whilst this mission has been about raising vital money for Mind, Jemma has also been having conversations with students and staff about mental health, the benefits of activity to support wellbeing and raising awareness around this. And this is reason that the annual Wessex Lodge Fayer will be raising money for Mind as well.

So, during our summer terms staff will be providing specialised PSHE sessions from Mind to support their mental health and wellbeing, there will also be guides and information shared in lessons with practical tips and signposting that our young people can use if they feel they are struggling or they know someone who is struggling with their mental health.

There will also be opportunities for staff and students to support Jemma in her next fundraising quest as she takes on the Jurassic Coast 42 kilometre Ultra by doing some walking activities.

If you would like to support Jemma on her next challenge, then please click the link below. We look forward to seeing her progress and to engaging the young people in this vital work around mental health.

GOOD LUCK JEMMA!!!

[Jemma Latham is fundraising for Mind](https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/how-to-get-help-and-support/useful-contacts/)

Click the link below for useful information for young people and mental health:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/how-to-get-help-and-support/useful-contacts/>

How your money can help

£5

could help us give someone vital information with 40 of our information booklets. They cover all kinds of mental health topics and give people trusted information when they need it.



£10

could help our Infoline answer 1 enquiry. Our Infoline helps people find out more about everything from mental health problems to treatment options, every weekday.



£50

could help pay for 2 people with lived experience of a mental health problem join a focus group about our work. Having people with lived experience work with us is crucial. It makes sure the things we do stay relevant for anyone with a mental health problem.



£100

could help pay for 3 hours of script advice from our media advisory service. This is really important in stopping stigma. It's a service that helps writers show mental health respectfully and accurately across TV, film and media.



£2,500

could help us keep Side by Side open for 3 days. Side by Side is Mind's online community where anyone can join, talk and find support. 24/7.



£5,000

could help pay for 25 lived experience consultants shape our work. Having people with lived experience of a mental health problem work with us is crucial. It means our work stays relevant for anyone with a mental health problem.



£10,000

could help us answer 425 calls to our Infoline in Welsh. It means we can be there to support someone in the language they feel most comfortable with.

£22,000

could help pay our Infoline's phone bill for a whole year. Keeping our Infoline running is crucial. The information and signposting it gives people on mental health is vital for people across England and Wales.



£50,000

could help us make mental health a priority. It'll help us stand up to injustices - in healthcare, in work and in law.

£100,000

could help us keep Side by Side open for 18 weeks. Side by Side is a really important place where anyone can talk and find support from others, any time.





Approved by
FINANCIAL
REGULATOR

Mind is the National Organisation
for Mental Health (Registered
Charity No. 276832)

mind.org.uk

Outdoor Learning

This term started with us seeking shelter from the rain. Parts of the UK experienced 70% more rain than average, it rained every day for more than 40 days. So we chose to climb. Sheltering at The Arc in Chippenham this allowed our students to focus on climbing. Progressing well from beginners through to our experienced groups. The venue lends itself well to a variety of climbing disciplines from bouldering to lead climbing. We have been able to introduce the NICAS award this year which has given a new way of tracking progress and a huge congratulations to those who have achieved their level 1. We hope to continue climbing in Summer term when the weather is better and we can transfer our skills outdoors with the possibility of day trips to the South Coast.

While the weather has been better since the half term holidays we have gotten our fleet of mountain bikes out and ready to go explore some of the trails closer to home. Our usual beginner venue of Shearwater is always a good starting point while we let the ground harden to facilitate trail riding. We have explored some new areas as well which our learners have thoroughly enjoyed. Linking new trails, discovering new progression areas and most importantly, having fun on two wheels. We have introduced the MIAS gears awards. This nationally recognised scheme covers all of the skills needed to get started riding bike on trails and gravel paths.

We have welcomed 2 new members of staff to the team and are excited to have watched them progress their skills and learn new ones along the way. They are still in training phase but we look forward to seeing what they bring to the team in new opportunities and fresh faces and ideas.



Harry Brown

TEN TORS (JUBILEE CHALLENGE)

Saturday 28th March saw the return of 9 students from Dartmoor National park. This is part of their training to take part in the Jubilee challenge. A 15 mile walk in a single day organised by the British Army. This event sees teams from all over the South West put themselves to the test against the Dartmoor terrain. Be under no illusion, this is no walk in the park, as the training pointed out to the learners taking part. This trip saw the team camp overnight in below freezing temperatures -3°C . They worked as a team to ensure everyone's morale stayed high and the campsite was left following countryside code leave no trace principles. An earlier start for some of 0600 saw the team pack away and get ready to put themselves through 12km of tough terrain and navigation in a time of 4 hours. Not a bad pace at all over unfamiliar terrain carrying backpacks. This training has proved invaluable. We have covered equipment issues, water purification, navigation and terrain complications, teamwork and soaked up the rare sight of some March Dartmoor sunshine. The team have done fantastically well thus far and we look forward to seeing them at the next training to turn up the heat and challenge further.

It is a pleasure to report that all nine pupils who began the training successfully completed it without accident, injury, or incident. Their behaviour throughout the weekend was excellent, and they demonstrated impressive teamwork, problem-solving, communication, and leadership skills.

The next training weekend is scheduled for 24th–26th April, with the Ten Tors Jubilee Challenge taking place from 8th–10th May. Further information about the event can be found at: <https://www.tentors.org.uk/page/jubilee-challenge-teams>



Harry Brown/Steve Priday

This term in **English** we have celebrated success and progress with students across the school. For those students who are working towards their qualifications and are leaving us this year there has been a focus on exam skills and students are making great progress towards these.



In other parts of the school the focus has been reading novels. Although not all of the students were keen to read a book in their English lessons, I have had feedback from across the sites that students are enthusiastic about these books and are asking what comes next. If any students would like to share ideas about books, we could introduce to English next year, then we would love to hear about them.

This year some students have been reading about *The Demon Headmaster* by Gillian Cross, which was supported by a Hive member of staff dressing as the titular character for World Book Day. Some students have been learning *How to Train Your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell and have been creating representations of their preferred dragons.

This term we had a wonderful day celebrating books and reading across our three sites. There was a book quiz and wordsearches and opportunities for students to pick up a book token.

Reading can be seen as boring by young people so hearing staff share about their own reading journeys and their favourite books was inspiring and I even overheard some students recommending books and promising to bring them in to share.

The Farm hosted students from across the sites in the afternoon for a scavenger hunt and a costume competition. It was great to hear students figuring out the riddles and getting competitive about being the first team to the finish.

Can you work out some of the riddles? *Bethany Vowles—Assistant Head*

<p>My spine is stiff, my body pale, I'm always ready to tell a tale.</p>	<p>No legs have I to dance, No lungs have I to breathe, No life have I to live or die And yet I do all three. What am I?</p>	<p>I have feathers but I don't cluck, I live in cities where I'm covered in muck.</p>
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World Book Day



A Football playing Mary Poppins. Mark Anthony & Julius Caesar Mario and his Moustache Miss Trunchbull, Stitch & Harry Potter (being protected by a Stormtrooper!)

Horticulture

We have used the generous grant from OFG Sustainability to buy all sorts of wonderful equipment to reestablish our horticulture site from scratch, albeit it will take until the next academic year to erect the new poly-tunnel, re-cover the old one, build a tool shed, office cabin, expand the pond and fill it with ducks, make a fruit cage, etc. We have had a delivery of 20 tonnes of compost which we are already using to fill 12 newly constructed raised beds (with MANY more to come,) and seedlings are growing at speed, ready for planting out plenty of vegetables and flowers. Many students beg for time to dig, strim, plant and wallow comfortably in soft, heat-emitting compost like veritable pumpkins! Even those who allegedly don't like gardening can find that they actually enjoy doing it. It's hard not to feel good when the sun is shining, the air is fresh and trillions of soil microbes are re-setting our physical and emotional equilibrium. The onset of spring has accelerated the energy and exuberance of humans, plants and animals on the Farm - it's such a life-affirming, wonderful place to be!

Liza Kearney



This term has been filled with success and achievement for our young people across all sites. Our students have fully immersed themselves in creating an array of impressive dishes, while consistently demonstrating strong, safe practices in food preparation and cooking, alongside a clear understanding of food safety and hygiene.

One of the biggest highlights of this term has been the Chinese New Year celebrations across all sites. Students actively participated in preparing a range of delicious Chinese-inspired dishes, including spring rolls and homemade curry sauce, with some taking on a key role in supporting the full day of preparation and cooking.

Students fully embracing their cooking lessons and developing a wide range of skills.

Our Primary students have enjoyed making mug cakes, smoothies, salads, pizzas and tasting and exploring a variety of new fruits and vegetables. Alongside this, they have been practicing essential food preparation skills such as food hygiene, cutting, measuring, mixing, and following a recipe. It has been wonderful to see their confidence grow as they learn where food comes from, get creative with recipes, and begin to adapt them to their own tastes. Cooking sessions have also provided valuable opportunities for students to show Wessex Lodge's 3 Bs (Be Kind, Be respectful, Be safe) many have chosen to use extra portions to share with their friends, family and staff which has been lovely to see. Sensory exploration continues to be a key part of our lessons, and students have particularly enjoyed engaging with different textures, tastes and smells. We have even incorporated a little Spanish into our sessions, as students have shown curiosity in learning cooking related words, alongside having meaningful conversations about different cultures and how food and produce have evolved over time.

Whilst other students across sites have demonstrated fantastic teamwork skills, working together to prepare meals while also developing independence within a shared kitchen space. They have explored a range of new recipes and particularly enjoyed celebrating Chinese New Year by preparing dishes such as egg fried rice, sweet and sour chicken. These were presented in a buffet style and shared with the whole school, creating a real sense of pride and community. Students have also been learning about healthier choices by adapting favorite treats such as muffins and milkshakes, reducing sugar and fat, and using alternatives like honey and Greek yoghurt. Other highlights of this term include making stuffed flatbread, pasta dishes and perfecting roast potatoes.



Home Cooking Skills

Andrea & Paola





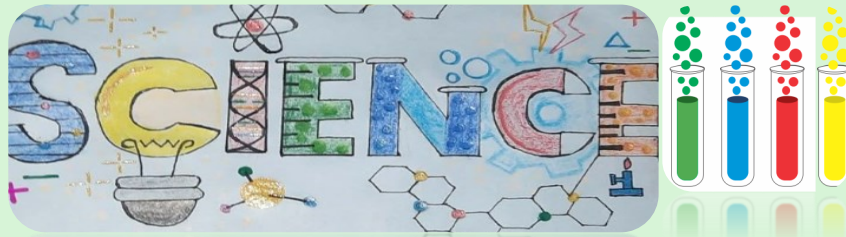
Maths

As we are now in spring hopefully the worst of the weather is behind us. That is certainly one reason to celebrate. Another reason to celebrate is our maths assessments. For many of our learners they have now completed many Star Assessments. There has been some amazing academic progress but also personal progress to celebrate. Learners have asked for paper to work out answers, completed the assessment in one sitting, answered every question and not left the classroom even when the questions were really difficult. All fantastic reasons to celebrate our learner's progress and engagement with their maths lessons.

In January all of our Year 11, 12 and 13 learners took their functional skills exams. The pass rate was extremely high (over 90%) Now we also have lots of year 10 and older learners working very hard towards their GCSE and next Functional Skills qualifications.

We wish them all the best for their exams in the summer term!

Helen Wilkins



This term in science some students have visited *We the Curious* in Bristol, where they attempt to answer questions posed by the public. One that the students engaged with was "Who was the first person to see sand?" Students were able to see how sand has helped humans through the ages and were able to build land by moving sand in an altered reality box. Students were able to create sand sculptures on rotating platforms.



Some students have been looking at human biology understanding the heart and the circulatory system, hormones and how the human body uses them including how humans use insulin to control blood sugar and how we treat diabetes. To understand how hormones impact puberty and menstrual cycle.

Some students have been helping to build up the tropical fish tank, we have lots of baby Guppies. We have also recently got a few Kuhli Loach who are very shy and very fast (this is the stripy brown and yellow looking thing in the picture along side the shrimp). We are continuing to build the community with some cherry shrimp with hopes to expand our community with a range of other tropical fish such as neon tetras.



Students have been looking at the life cycle of stars how they start off as a collection of dust called a nebula brought together with gravity beginning fusion and becoming a star and how the largest stars turn into black holes.

All of this learning is supporting students to work towards qualifications either an Entry level certificate or a GCSE.

James Rigby

This term in **Digital Functional Skills** we have been focusing on online safety and security as well as online transacting. As a part of this we have learned how to tell if a website is secure before and after we visit it by checking for the padlock to the left of the web address in the address bar as well as the address itself beginning with https:// as opposed to just http:// as well as suspicious things to look out for in our email inboxes like emails from people we don't know or addresses we don't recognise.

We also looked at online transacting, learning how to buy and sell things online safely as well as the regulations around selling items online and the extra protections it can grant the buyer. We also delved into secure payment gateways, designed so that the buyer's bank details are kept secure, and the importance of keeping and organising digital receipts.

For our next topic we looked at some online forms, comparing them against their paper equivalents to see what differences there are. We also learned about data validation and how that only allows for specific data to be input into certain fields as well as Captcha codes and other methods for keeping online data safe from bot and hackers.

It's been a very productive term and our learners are increasingly growing in confidence in their digital world!



"A Splash of Colour" Pottery Painting





Wessex Lodge School 2026/2027 Academic Year

September 2026						October 2026						November 2026								
M			7	14	21	28	Mo			5	12	19	26	M		2	9	16	23	30
T		1	8	15	22	29	Tu			6	13	20	27	T		3	10	17	24	
W		2	9	16	23	30	We			7	14	21	28	W		4	11	18	25	
Th		3	10	17	24		Th		1	8	15	22	29	Th		5	12	19	26	
F		4	11	18	25		Fr		2	9	16	23	30	F		6	13	20	27	
Sa		5	12	19	26		Sa		3	10	17	24	31	S		7	14	21	28	
Su		6	13	20	27		Su		4	11	18	25		S	1	8	15	22	29	
December 2026						January 2027						February 2027								
M			7	14	21	28	M			4	11	18	25	M			1	8	15	22
Tu		1	8	15	22	29	Tu			5	12	19	26	Tu			2	9	16	23
W		2	9	16	23	30	W			6	13	20	27	W			3	10	17	24
Th		3	10	17	24	31	Th			7	14	21	28	Th			4	11	18	25
F		4	11	18	25		F		1	8	15	22	29	F			5	12	19	26
Sa		5	12	19	26		Sa		2	9	16	23	30	Sa			6	13	20	27
Su		6	13	20	27		Su		3	10	17	24	31	Su			7	14	21	28
March 2027						April 2027						May 2027								
M		1	8	15	22	29	M			5	12	19	26	M		3	10	17	24	31
Tu		2	9	16	23	30	Tu			6	13	20	27	Tu		4	11	18	25	
W		3	10	17	24	31	W			7	14	21	28	W		5	12	19	26	
Th		4	11	18	25		Th		1	8	15	22	29	Th		6	13	20	27	
F		5	12	19	26		F		2	9	16	23	30	F		7	14	21	28	
Sa		6	13	20	27		Sa		3	10	17	24		Sa	1	8	15	22	29	
Su		7	14	21	28		Su		4	11	18	25		Su	2	9	16	23	30	
June 2027						July 2027						August 2027								
M			7	14	21	28	M			5	12	19	26	M		2	9	16	23	30
Tu		1	8	15	22	29	Tu			6	13	20	27	Tu		3	10	17	24	31
W		2	9	16	23	30	W			7	14	21	28	W		4	11	18	25	
Th		3	10	17	24		Th		1	8	15	22	29	Th		5	12	19	26	
F		4	11	18	25		F		2	9	16	23	30	F		6	13	20	27	
Sa		5	12	19	26		Sa		3	10	17	24	31	Sa		7	14	21	28	
Su		6	13	20	27		Su		4	11	18	25		Su	1	8	15	22	29	

Key:

	School
	Bank
	Term Time
	Inset Days

Wessex Lodge
Ark, Frome
BA11 4LA

Wessex Lodge
Hive, Butts Lane
BA12 6RB

Wessex Lodge
Newmead,
Maiden Bradley
BA12 7HJ

Term dates summary:

Term 1: 03 September – 23 October 2026 (37 days)
Term 2: 02 November – 18 December 2026 (35 days)
Term 3: 04 January – 12 February 2027 (30 days)
Term 4: 22 February – 25 March 2027 (24 days)
Term 5: 12 April – 28 May 2027 (34 days)
Term 6: 07 June – 23 July 2027 (35 days) TOTAL = 195

Bank and public holidays 2026/27

Christmas Day Bank Holiday	25 December 2026	Easter Monday	29 March 2027
Boxing Day Bank Holiday	28 December 2026*	May Day Bank Holiday	03 May 2027
New Year's Day Holiday	01 January 2027	Spring Bank Holiday	31 May 2027
Good Friday	26 March 2027	Summer Bank Holiday	30 August 2027

*Replacement Bank Holiday when Bank Holidays falls on a weekend.

Academy, Free Schools, Foundation & Voluntary Aided schools can set their own term dates and may differ from ours. Please check with the individual schools for their term dates.