



February 2026  
Issue 2.6

Dear Families and Friends of The Duke of Norfolk,

With the half-term break just around the corner, it is great to see such brilliant learning behaviour throughout school. The children are really challenging themselves and we're seeing lots of good progress as a result. A special mention to all the children of Year 4 who recently took part in the Multiplication Check World Cup and qualified for the National Finals where they collectively reached an impressive 7th place and answered 29,882 questions correctly.

Following on from this, February in school is set to be a busy month. We have plenty of amazing events to squeeze in between now and Easter such as: Class Assemblies, Mother's Day, World Book Day, Puzzle Day and fundraising opportunities for charity. As always I have listed dates for your attention at the back of the newsletter, please continue to check ParentHub and the school calendar for updates.

The weather has certainly been keeping us on our toes lately! Please do make sure children are coming to school dressed appropriately each day, with coats and suitable footwear. Even on wet days, if it isn't raining heavily, we will still try to get the children outside for play and fresh air. Outdoor time and physical exercise are so important for children's wellbeing, and it really does help them settle, concentrate and learn more effectively once back in class.

We look forward to sharing information with you about your child's learning in detail at our Parent/Carer meetings and we will also soon be opening the booking portal for parents evening. Parents Evening will take place over two nights on Tuesday 17th and Thursday 19th of March. As always, if you have any questions or want to discuss anything, please do not hesitate to talk to a member of staff please do not hesitate to make an appointment with the class teacher or myself via the school office.

Yours with kind regards

*Mrs. S Barker*

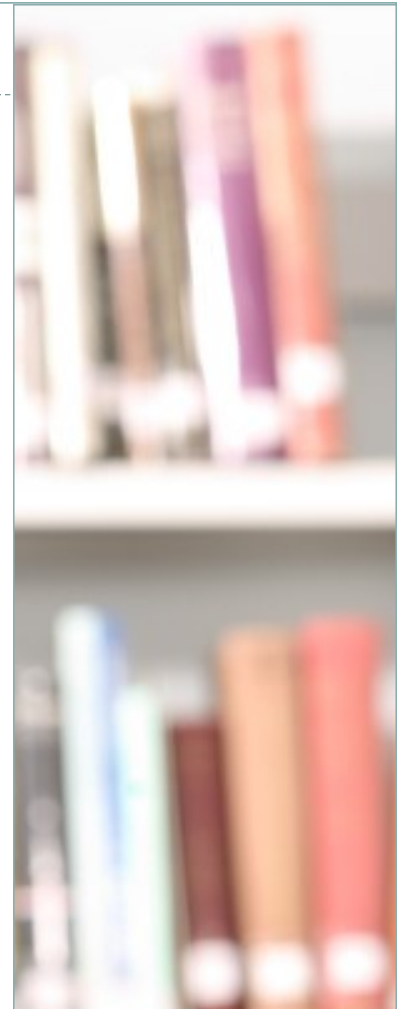
Headteacher

## Play Equipment

Thank you to everyone who has kindly donated items, towards our development of play-time equipment, we have received some lovely items especially for wet play times and sunnier days. We are still on the look out for more items to support playtimes outside. Over time, we are going to roll out the range of items to the children so that they learn to develop their playtime skills and types of play. It is proven that play helps your child to grow emotionally and is an outlet for stress and anxiety. Play is not just messing about!

Mrs Hadfield has been actively supported in developing playtime by two year 3 boys. Between them, they have begun to introduce some of the items to the children via play-time suitcases. Mrs Hadfield and Miss Harvey are planning to do the same for the Blossoms classes too over the remainder of this Spring Term.

However we are ambitious at Dukes and we don't want to stop here. We desperately need help to build and construct two mud kitchens using the pallets we have been given for the children, plus a nook where some children can go to access quieter activities. Please get in contact if you can support us to get this valuable project off the ground. We are more than happy to supply tea and biscuits!



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## Young Voices 2026

A special mention to our truly magical Year 5 and 6 Choir and their participation in the Young Voices concert at The Co-op Live Arena in Manchester on Thursday evening.

This event is always a highlight of our musical calendar, and once again our children, along with Miss Pitchford Harrison, Miss Harvey, Mr English and Miss Jones, deserve huge applause for their dedication, enthusiasm, and outstanding performance.

Mrs Pitchford-Harrison has commented on the camaraderie of the children during the event and their amazing participation. The seats were amazing too as the children had a front row spot and were able to observe the professional musicians and singers up-close. What a night of memories!



## Class Assembly Information

You may have seen last weeks ParentHub message. The times for all Class Assemblies are going to change, starting with Miss Hampson's Class Assembly on Thursday 12th February, which we be hosted from 2.45pm, whereby you will be able to collect your child directly from the performance.

## PCSO Visit to Dukes

As a part of our PSHE and Safeguarding curriculum, this half term we have welcomed PCSO Brian Buller into school to talk to the children of Years 5 and 6 about safety online particularly related to social media use and WhatsApp groups as this issue has been raised by a number of parents this term.

It is recommended at home if you can, to stick to age appropriate websites. Social networks like Facebook and X require users to be older than 13 to have a profile, and WhatsApp is 16, but we all know that younger children set up accounts anyway. Social networks keep children connected to friends and provide a space for self-expression but there are no guarantees of privacy: anything can be shared. Therefore it is important that we make sure the children understand the associated risks.

We encourage parents to take responsibility for underage use of social networks, privacy settings should, if possible, be restricted to friends only, children should not post too much information about themselves online.

Guidance below includes a link to the online safety letter we sent during the Autumn Term about You Tube and WhatsApp.

[Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Online Safety Newsletter for October](#)

## Egyptian Day in Years 3 and 4

Thank you to the staff in Years 3 and 4 for arranging a successful day for Fir, Holly and Pine classes as they still managed to travel back in time to Ancient Egypt despite the History Van not arriving at school. We were all very disappointed. The children looked wonderful in their

historical outfits for the day, there was lots of gold on display and some amazing jewelled collars. The children have designed clay amulets, made collages of an ancient scene, they even had a go at mummification. The staff team are rebooking the day with the History Van, we will let you know when this will be nearer the time.





## Sporting Success at Dukes

Recently some of the children have taken part in the Boys football competition as a part of the High Peak Sports Partnership. Mr English was proud of the children's team effort and sporting skills against some of the top teams in the High Peak area.

We also have sent a team to the Glosopdale Sportshall Athletics competition and have qualified for the High Peak Finals. Which is excellent news! Well done to all the children that took part.

Finally, a number of children attended the Pantathlon at Chapel High School. Mrs Barrow, came back to school full of praise for the whole team and their efforts despite not taking the win!



## Attendance for January 2026

Our school attendance remains slightly above the national target of 97%, it currently stands at 97.4%. A huge well done to Willow class who have topped the highest attendance for this month!

Sycamores	94.5%	Chestnuts	97.3%
Apple	94.7%	Orange	95.6%
Cherry	96.4%	Holly	97%
Fir	92.2%	Pine	95.5%
Beech	96.5%	Willow	97.5%
Oak	93%	Whole School	95.47%

A polite reminder that only very exceptional circumstance will be authorised for holidays during term time. We understand that holidays are cheaper during term time, but it is essential that children do not miss days off school wherever possible.

As a reminder, if your child is absent from school, please call 01457 852635 or report the absence via the following email before 9.00am.

[absence@dukenorfolk.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:absence@dukenorfolk.derbyshire.sch.uk)

## KEY DATES

### FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2026

Monday 2nd February Sunflower Group

Monday 9th to 12th February—Children's Mental Health Week at Dukes

Tuesday 10th February—Safer Internet Day

Thursday 12th February—Cherry Class Assembly at 2.45pm

Thursday 12th February—School Closes for the Half Term Break

Friday 13th February INSET day

Tuesday 17th February—Random Act of Kindness Day

Children return to school on Monday 23rd February

Wednesday 4th March—Orange Class Assembly

Monday 2nd March—Sunflower Group

Thursday 5th March—World Book day

Friday 20th March—Comic Relief - more details to follow nearer the time.

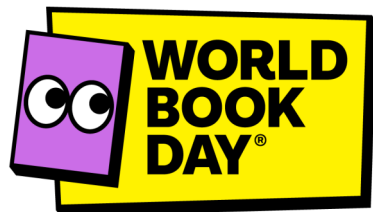
Monday 23rd March—Rock Your Socks

## INSET DATES

Monday 1st June 2026

Thursday 23rd July 2026





## World Book Day 2026

On Thursday 5th March, we will be celebrating World Book Day with the theme “Books That Changed the World.”

Throughout the day, children will explore stories that have inspired people, sparked change, or helped us see the world in new ways. These may be books that promote kindness, bravery, equality, imagination, or simply a love of reading. Activities will take place across the school to celebrate the power of books and reading for pleasure.

To mark the day, children are invited to come to school dressed as a book character linked to a book that has “changed the world” in some way for them. This could be:

- a character from a favourite story
- a well-known author or illustrator
- a character who shows courage, kindness, or makes a difference

Costumes do not need to be bought. We strongly encourage families to:

- reuse items already at home
- adapt everyday clothing
- use existing dressing-up clothes

A simple outfit or a small prop is absolutely fine, and children are very welcome to take part without a costume if they prefer.

We look forward to celebrating a wonderful day of reading, stories, and shared book recommendations.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mrs. Hargreaves—Literacy Leader at Dukes



## Mental Health Awareness Week 9th to 12th February

### Safer Internet Day Tuesday 10th February

At the Duke of Norfolk School, we think that teaching our children about mental health is very important. This year, we have started to train up some children in year 4 and 5 as our 'Wellbeing Warriors' and they are excited to share their learning about the SMILERS initiative with the whole school. In Jigsaw and science lessons, we regularly discuss how to have a healthy body and mind and teach our children what to do if they are ever struggling with their mental health.

This year to celebrate Children's Mental Health Week, children from years 1 to 6 are taking part in a Live Lesson held by Picture News. This live lesson is hosted by Katie Hopper, an author who writes books to promote emotional literacy in children. They will be able to reflect on how words and actions can make other people feel and how to make others feel welcome and supported.'

**Safer Internet Day 2026** | **Tuesday 10 February**

During the week it is also Safer Internet Day which is marked by 170 countries on Tuesday 10th February and the children will be focusing on AI technology and how to use this wisely.

Coordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre

[saferinternetday.org.uk](https://saferinternetday.org.uk)