



March 2026
Issue 2.7

Dear Families and Friends of The Duke of Norfolk,

Welcome back for the second half of the Spring term, a short but very busy term. I love this time of year, the days are getting longer, the weather is getting warmer and nature is showing signs of renewal and regrowth. In the same way, school has burst back into life again, with the children full of energy, excitement and zest. There have already been so many *wow moments* in classes across the school.

Our children have been fully immersing themselves in their learning. The first week back ended on a real high, thanks to a Dukes first – Maths Puzzle day. Thank you Mr Williams for arranging this for all the pupils. It was fabulous to see all the children engaging in teamwork and communication skills as they worked together in small groups to solve a range of mathematical problems that ranged from fractions to measurement to geometry.

On a polite note you may have seen the news this week and the discussions linked to childhood allergies, just a reminder, we are a nut free school due to allergies. The staff across our school support families with a range of other different types of allergies. Please could you check packets carefully for snacks and lunchboxes, but especially if you are kindly sharing birthday treats for a class. If you do make the kind parental choice to send in food for a birthday treat, please make sure the food is pre-packaged and nut free.

Yours with kind regards as always

Mrs. S Barker

Headteacher

Staffing News

Congratulations to Mrs Cousen who has decided to retire at Easter. She will be missed for her sunny welcome in the school office each morning and her knowledge of all the Dukes families. Following a successful round of interviews today, we have already appointed a new member of staff to join Ms Moody in the office. I know you will make them feel welcome so please come and say hello and introduce yourself.

Many of you will have received the letter this week to say that due to personal reasons Miss Hampson has also decided to take a break from her teaching career and will be leaving Dukes just after Easter, we shall be sorry to be losing her.

Miss Hartley will therefore be teaching Cherry Blossom class following the Easter break. Miss Hampson will still be on site for a few days to support with the transition process whilst also supporting in other areas and classes at school. Miss Hartley is a trained teacher and knows the children in year 1 and 2 well as she already supports this department in school.



INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER

Updates
Staffing News
Parents Consultation meetings
PTA Events
World Book Day
Bunny Hop
Comic Relief
Play at Dukes
Socks
Sports Updates
Attendance
Key Dates
INSET Dates

Parents Consultation Meetings

It was lovely to see so many parents attend our SEND parents meetings. There were also some lovely comments to the staff about the support the children receive at Dukes.

You will all have received a letter via ParentHub inviting you to book a **10 minute** meeting slot with your child's teacher. Thank you for booking these and for your patience as the system had to be extended to increase the time slots. We continue to learn more about the booking system each time we use it.

I was recently asked if I attended the SEND meetings could I still look at my children's work books on parents evening, even if I now feel I no longer need a parents evening appointment. The answer is yes, you are more than welcome to attend parents evening to look at your child's work, however if you no longer feel you need to meet your child's class teacher, please could you contact the school office so your appointment can be given to another family.

We also kindly ask you to please respect the time allocated so that all appointments can run to time. The meetings will be held in a few of the classrooms or the library and your child's work books will also be available for you to enjoy in the school hall.

PTA Events

Coming up for Mother's Day, our PTA is offering all the children the chance to buy the special women in their lives a Pocket Hug. A donation of £1 per gift can be made on ParentPay, this will be open until 4pm on Wednesday 11th March. Maximum of 2 gifts per child, the gifts are the same, but varying colours. Gifts will be delivered to classrooms on Friday 13th in time for Mother's Day.

Toastie Friday continues to be much loved by the children and brings in a big amount towards your PTA funding resources and activities in school. **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.** Sadly, there has been a dip in the number of volunteers for running our weekly Toastie Friday. Can you or a family member help on a Friday morning after drop off for roughly one and a half hours? This could be a one off or more regular help. We would so appreciate your help to keep this going. Please contact Sarah on pta.chair@dukenorfolk.derbyshire.sch.uk.

Thank you all for your support. ❤️



Whole School Bunny Hop

The children will be taking part in the annual Bunny Hop on the final day of the Spring Term, Friday 27th March. Donations in support of Willow Wood Hospice can be made here https://www.justgiving.com/page/duke-of-norfolk-c-of-e-primary-school-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=LFCFRUK_30DaystoEvent_NonActive



World Book Day

Thank you to Mrs Hargreaves and Orange Blossom class for a great start to World Book Day by marking the internationally recognised event with a class assembly. The staff at Dukes have again got in role by dressing up, but I am not sure who is who in year 5 and 6 due to the 'Where's Wally' theme and there was a dinosaur on the loose as it had made it's way out of Harry's bucket! It was lovely watching the children

arrive on to the playground with a real buzz of excitement! The children looked amazing and were rightly proud of their outfits. The day had a truly wonderful feel alongside and every class engaged with stories, reading and live lessons throughout the day.



Comic Relief

Comic Relief, do something funny for money, will be wacky hair day at Dukes. Like last year you will be able to make a donation via ParentPay, here is the link . <https://app.parentpay.com/ParentPayShop/Foc/Default.aspx?shopid=20678> We will be holding a joke-a-thon. So please send your child into school with an age-appropriate joke to share in class or maybe even assembly to see if the children can make the staff giggle too. To quote Mrs Pendlebury, the more dad jokes the better! The ideas for the day have been chosen by our School Council and we look forward to sharing the children's



Play at Dukes

A shout out to Mrs Blower's dad who has constructed this superb garage for the children in Reception and Nursery. It has proved a very popular addition to the classroom.



Thanks also go to Mrs Wardman for all her creative skills, to support with play resources and finally to the Riley family who have taken on the huge task of helping us achieve our construction dreams to turn pallets into mud kitchens.

Lots of Socks

Believe it or not, socks get people talking! On 23rd March, choose some socks that are going to get noticed!

They might be mismatched socks or your boldest and most colourful socks, whatever takes your fancy! The idea is to start a conversation, **"I'm wearing them to raise awareness of Down syndrome"**. Let's see those snazzy socks on 23rd March everyone!

Sports Updates

Four of our children have recently competed in the High Peak Gymnastics Finals competition at Glossop Gymnastics Centre and return to school with a very happy Mr English as they achieved first overall. Super well done to the girls who took part.



A huge thank you to everyone for the support the Dukes Athletics Team received to attend the High Peak Finals at Chapel-en-le Frith. Unfortunately we did not achieve a team medal but the team showed fabulous skills and teamwork to achieve 4th overall. We cannot win them all.

KEY DATES

MARCH AND APRIL 2026

Thursday 12th March—EYFS and Nursery Mother's Day performance

Tuesday 17th March Parents Evening

Thursday 19th March—Parents Evening

Friday 20th March—Comic Relief in school

Monday 23rd March—Rock Your Socks Day

Wednesday 25th March—Easter Service at Church (children only)

Friday 27th March—Whole School Bunny Hop

Friday 27th March—House Treat for winning house of the Spring Term

Friday 27th March—School closes for the Easter holidays

Mondy 13th April— All children return to school.

Wednesday 15th—Art Day at Dukes

Thursday 23rd April—Apple class assembly

Advance Notice

Week beginning Monday 11th May— is SATs week for Year 6 children, more details related to this from Mrs. Pendlebury to follow in the next few weeks.

INSET DATES

Monday 1st June 2026

Thursday 23rd July 2026



Attendance Matters Celebrating February

Sycamores	97.05%	Chestnuts	94.3%
Apple	97.35%	Orange	94.71%
Cherry	96.05%	Holly	98.02%
Fir	90.52%	Pine	97.32%
Beech	96.31%	Willow	96.1%
Oak	98.65%	Whole School	96.07%

Congratulations to **Oak Class** and **Mrs Pendlebury** for leading attendance in the school for February with **98.65%** attendance as a class overall. As a special treat they will choose the music for the next celebration assembly next Friday.