



Newsletter

Spring 2026

A Word From Gail

Hi Everyone

I hope that you enjoy reading about the range of curricular and enrichment activities available this term.

Our Post 16 Oaks 9 learners are heading to the Wingate Centre this week for their residential and I'm sure they will have a great time.

We will be turning our attention to transition planning for 2026/27 after Easter and we will be in touch about this. Happy Easter!

Gail

Mark Wilson – Head of School Primary

It's been another busy term and the pupils have embraced and engaged with a range of events and opportunities. World Book Day was a real highlight—there were some fantastic costumes and onesies on show! We'd like to say a big thank you to the parents and carers who volunteered their time to come in and share stories with the children—it made the day even more special and brought the joy of reading to life.



Our KS2 football team also celebrated a brilliant 4–0 win in their friendly match, showing real teamwork and determination. Pupils across KS2 have also enjoyed taking part in archery and athletics, challenging themselves and trying new skills with great enthusiasm. Our EYFS and KS1 children have particularly impressed us with their growing confidence and coordination in gymnastics, and it has been lovely to see their sense of pride as they develop their physical and motor skills.

Thank you for your continued support throughout this busy and vibrant term. Wishing everyone a restful break before we begin a new term together.

Diary Dates

Monday 4 May	Bank Holiday
Wednesday 20 May	Parents Evening
4pm until 6pm	
Monday 25 May - Friday 29 May	Half Term Break
Monday 22 June— Friday 26 June	Sports Day Week. (Key Stage dates to be confirmed)
Tuesday 7 July	Last day before the start of the Summer Holidays
3.20pm	
Monday 24 August	School Opens for Autumn Term 2026
8:50am	
Monday 31 August	Bank Holiday

Sarah Wallace – Head of School Secondary

During the spring term, the Secondary Phase has been focusing on how to stay safe online through a series of assemblies.

These assemblies were also streamed to classrooms for some students who were not quite able to access the school hall. We have explored a wide range of topics, including staying in control and saying no online, making positive choices, cyberbullying, grooming, scams, phishing, gaming safely, and the risks of posting selfies online.



We then moved on to the theme of consent beginning with personal space and progressing to the age of sexual consent and the laws surrounding it. We also discussed what consent might look like in real situations: how someone may show that they *do* or *do not* want to consent, and the important understanding that a person can change their mind at any time and withdraw consent.

I have to say that both Jo Rayns, our Pastoral Manager, and I could not have been more proud of how maturely the students engaged with these sessions. They participated brilliantly, and the question and answer discussions were outstanding. Students openly shared their thoughts, ideas, and growing understanding of some very sensitive subjects, demonstrating confidence, respect and genuine interest.

The Primary Phase also had assembly focusing on how to stay safe online along with who they can speak to in school if they are worried, upset or need help.

Forest Way Initial Teacher Training

Our school-based Initial Teacher Training programme is accredited by the University of Derby. It places Beginning Teachers in the classroom from day one working alongside experienced mentors to learn the skills of teaching 'on the job'. ITT programmes at the University of Derby have just been rated as 'Outstanding' in the institution's Ofsted report. Read the full report here: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50248593>

We have been running our successful programmes, in partnership with the University of Derby, for over 10 years and have seen fantastic results along the way with our Beginning Teachers all securing teaching jobs after completion of their PGCE training year. Based in and around the North West Leicestershire area, we work in partnership with local Primary, Secondary and SEND schools to offer our BTs high quality placements in good and outstanding schools.

If you are interested in training to be a teacher with us at Forest Eay Initial Teacher Training, please visit the below link for more information: <https://www.forestway.leics.sch.uk/fwtsa/initial-teacher-training/>

Alternatively, please feel free to email your query to: FWITT@forestway.leics.sch.uk



It really is great learning to teach 'on the job' with practical experience at local schools. The different experiences in my two placement schools and excellent theory sessions at the Hub and Uni have prepared me well for the demands of the job. I also have employment in my main placement school which means I get to stay on and do my ECT years with people I already have wonderful working relationships with.

2021/22 Trainee



I've had the best year and have grown so much as a teacher and a person. The course is challenging at times, as you would expect, but it prepares you really well for teaching and I always felt that our wellbeing was important to Uni and to Forest Way.

2022/23 Trainee

Operation Encompass

All Leicestershire schools are part of Operation Encompass, a national scheme that supports children and families affected by domestic violence and abuse. Through the partnership between Leicestershire County Council and Leicestershire Police, our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Sarah Wallace, is notified when police attend a domestic abuse incident involving a household where one of our pupils lives.

This early information sharing helps us provide timely, appropriate support. Details are kept confidential and shared only with staff who need to know, such as our Pastoral Team.

If you need confidential advice about domestic or sexual abuse, please contact:

- **FREEVA Helpline:** 0808 802 0028 *Mon–Fri 8am–8pm, weekends/bank holidays 10am–4pm*
- **24 hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline:** 0808 2000 247
- Website: <https://freeva.org.uk/>

Please remember, in an emergency situation, always call 999. As always, our Pastoral Team is here to support you in any way they can.

Our Pastoral Team, all Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, are here to support you.



Is your partner, ex-partner or family member hurting you, physically or emotionally?

We can help

0808 802 0028

Support for anyone experiencing domestic or sexual abuse/violence in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

www.freeva.org.uk



FreeVA is a registered charity. Charity number 103044

Online Safety

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ONLINE TRENDS ENCOURAGING VIOLENCE

7 out of 10 teens report seeing violent content on social media, with over half of that content featuring fights involving young people. Most don't 'seek' it but are shown it through social media feeds or messaging groups. 91% of young people involved in violence have seen violent social media content. Viral trends, challenges, or 'wars' that are spread online risk encouraging violence offline, while real-world incidents may also be recorded and promoted online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ALGORITHMIC EXPOSURE

Social media platforms are designed to keep users engaged, meaning dramatic or extreme content can spread widely and quickly. Algorithms often recommend content that reflects users' past interactions. As a result, young people may see more violent material if they have viewed, commented on, or shared it before. Repeated exposure can make violent content appear frequently in their feeds without them fully understanding why.

WEAPONS AND CRIMINAL RISK

Teens exposed to high levels of real-world violence on social media sometimes report feeling an increased need to carry a weapon for 'self-protection'; however, carrying a weapon increases the risk of victimisation (harm and injury by others) for young people. In addition, carrying a weapon is a serious offence that can lead to police arrest and a criminal record.

SHARING VIOLENT CONTENT

Encouraging or assisting an offence is a crime in the UK, including via social media, and can lead to arrest. This means sharing, forwarding, or reposting violent content carries a risk for young people too. Showing examples of content to a trusted adult is appropriate, but young people should take care not to further spread violent material by posting it online or sharing it within large messaging groups.

FEAR, ANXIETY, AND MARGINALISATION

Research shows young people's emotional wellbeing can be negatively impacted by repeated exposure to violent online content, especially when it depicts 'real-world' violence (as opposed to fictional depictions in games or films). Posts featuring weapons, threats, attacks, and fights – or content that appears to glamorise gang activity – can increase feelings of anxiety or fear among young people. Material that encourages violence targeting people because of their identity, such as their nationality or religion, can also create disproportionate harm for children belonging to those groups.

AVOIDANCE AND ISOLATION

Real-world violence on social media can increase young people's belief that their local communities – or the 'outside world' more generally – are unsafe places. This can result in avoidant and isolating behaviours, which may negatively affect their wellbeing. As well as feeling fearful of others, teens also report feeling judged for spending time together in large groups, which may affect their social interactions and leisure time.

Advice for Parents & Educators

STAY INFORMED

Stay alert for updates from police, schools, or local authorities, and follow the advice provided. Be cautious about unofficial accounts, fake content, and misinformation, which can spread quickly online or in chat groups. Ensure you get accurate information from trusted sources and encourage young people to do the same. Remind them never to share violent content online and to speak to a trusted adult instead.

TALK CRIME AND SAFETY

In most of the UK, the age of criminal responsibility is 10 (12 in Scotland). This means there can be serious criminal consequences for carrying a weapon, taking part in violence, or filming or sharing violent content. Discuss the law with young people alongside practical safety strategies. Ask questions such as: "What could you do if you feel unsafe?" Work together on action plans and remind them they can contact a trusted adult or the police if they witness or experience violence.

Meet Our Expert

Dr. Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading UK expert in media law, online safety, and young people. Her PhD investigates youth understandings of criminal and legal risks in a digital context. She works in schools to provide award-winning education on the criminal, legal, and ethical considerations of rapidly advancing technologies.



DISCUSS SOCIAL MEDIA

Encourage young people to talk about the content they see online and the effect it can have. This can be an opportunity to discuss topics such as misinformation, AI-generated material, the attention economy, and algorithms, helping them understand how and why extreme content can spread online. Explore tools available to block, report, and remove harmful content, and signpost where to get support and advice, such as reportharmfulcontent.com.

ENCOURAGE POSITIVE ACTION

Focus on strengthening young people's positive experiences both online and within their local communities. Discuss strategies to reduce negative social media effects, such as time limits, unfollowing certain accounts, or taking breaks from apps. Encourage offline activities such as spending time with friends, visiting local places, and taking part in hobbies that bring them joy, purpose, and connection. Remind them they can seek support with any concerns at any time via childline.org.uk.

A Wonderful Term of Learning in EYFS

Acorns 12 have enjoyed a fantastic term filled with exciting learning experiences and wonderful progress across all areas of the curriculum.

In **Literacy**, the children loved exploring *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*. They engaged brilliantly with the characters, sequenced key events, and confidently joined in with storytelling activities.

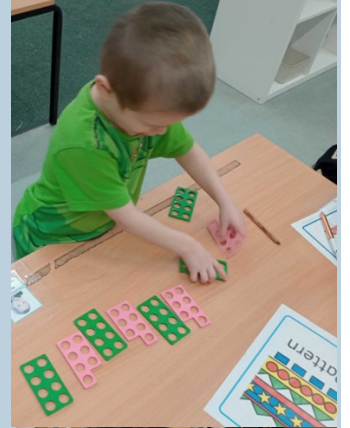
In **Maths**, the class explored comparing objects, creating patterns, and investigating weight through lots of practical, hands-on tasks that encouraged curiosity and problem-solving.

During **Phonics**, we followed the Little Wandle programme, focusing on the sounds *s, a, t, p, i, and n*. The children worked hard to build their early reading skills and are becoming increasingly confident.

In **PE**, pupils developed their balance and stability through fun movement activities and games. Meanwhile, in **Science**, they explored how things grow, observing changes and making simple but exciting discoveries about the world around them.

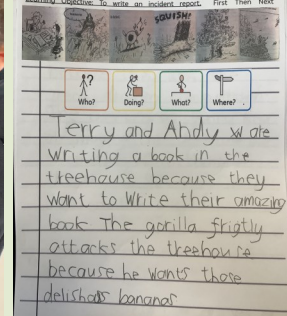
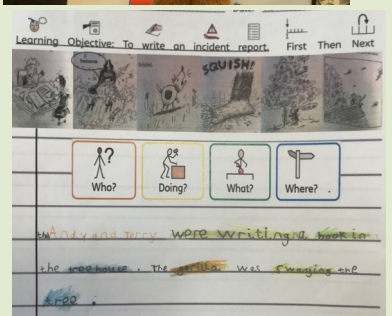
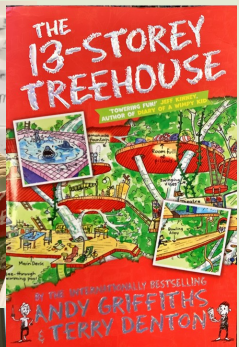
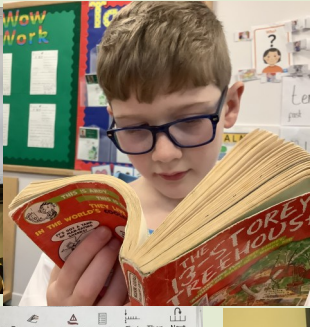
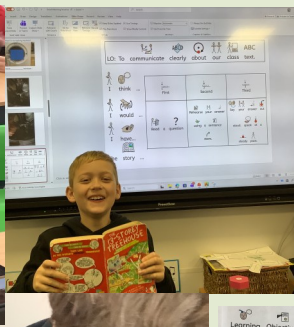
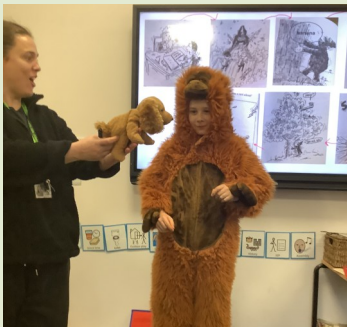
The children also thoroughly enjoyed **Music**, experimenting with a variety of instruments and discovering the different sounds each one can make.

It has been a wonderful term in Acorns 12, and we are incredibly proud of all the amazing progress the children have made!



Acorns 7—Exploring The 13-Storey Treehouse

Acorns 7 has been exploring the book *The 13-Storey Treehouse*. The class has completed some fantastic work inspired by the story and even acted out scenes from the book. Here is some of the brilliant work they have produced:

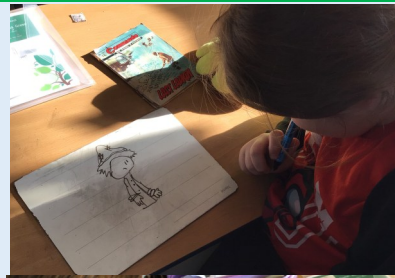
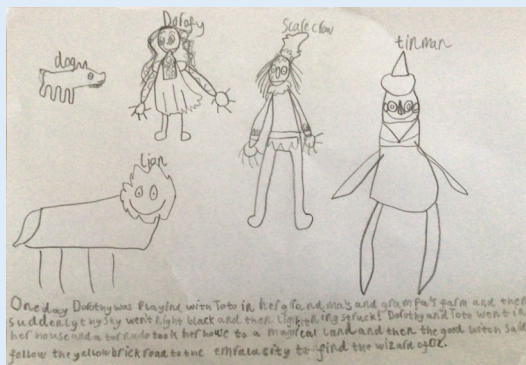


The Den (Bears) Discover the Land of Oz

In The Den (Bears), pupils have been exploring *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. They have completed a range of creative tasks, including drawing characters from the story, inventing their own twists to the plot, and working together to write a brand-new blurb for the book.

One pupil even brought in a Tin Man LEGO figure to share with the class!

Here are some examples of their fantastic work:



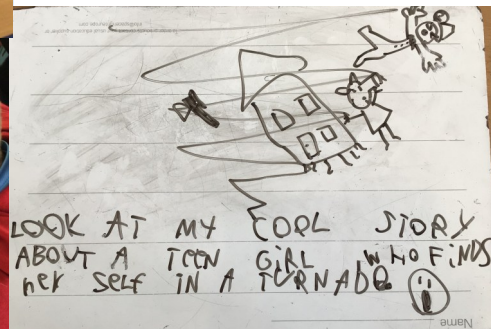
Are you ready for adventure? Join Dorothy and her little dog Toto on the yellow brick road, as they set off to explore the magical land of Oz.

Dorothy + Toto get blown away by a

storm. It takes them to the magical land of Oz.

? How will they get home?

The bears have started their journey through the wizard of Oz, reading the story, listening to the story AND practicing a short play! Here are their doodles and insights so far!



Key Stage 3 Explore the World of Work

This term, our Key Stage 3 pupils enjoyed an exciting trip into the local community with a visit to the supermarket — but this was no ordinary shopping experience! Instead, learners took part in an engaging mission to explore the world of work firsthand.

Armed with a fun scavenger hunt, pupils set off to spot a range of job roles in action. From the bustling café and the checkout tills to the hardworking cleaning teams, students were able to see many of the roles they have been learning about in class brought to life. This real world experience helped them think about the types of jobs they might enjoy in the future.

The visit also provided a fantastic opportunity to practise important community skills while out and about.

Well done to everyone who took part!



Oaks 9 - Bowling Trip

This term, learners in O9 had a fantastic time developing their community skills with a visit to Hollywood Bowl. Travelling on the school mini-bus added to the excitement, and the group demonstrated wonderful teamwork throughout the trip.

The learners put into practice the turn-taking skills they had been working on in class, showing great patience and encouragement for one another. Their behaviour and enthusiasm were exemplary, and they represented Forest Way beautifully while out in the community.

It was a fun filled session for everyone involved, and a brilliant opportunity to build confidence and independence beyond the classroom.



Post 16 Strike Again

During the second week of February some classes in Post 16 went bowling at Hollywood Bowl at Meridian in Leicester as part of their rewards trip.

Oaks 12 went on Wednesday whilst Oaks 11 went on Friday.

We had an hour's slot as we split into 2 groups we had a fantastic time as some of us got some strikes. Then we had lunch at the diner where we ordered our food using our money and life skills whilst the food was delicious.

After that some students played pool which was good fun then finally we went on the minibus back to school.

In Conclusion the trip was awesome and outstanding which everyone enjoyed going there whilst it helps with social skills and team building. It was an amazing experience for our class.

Written by Nathan Moulds O12



Amazon Internship Update

At Amazon after Christmas, we have been continuing to feed parcels onto the conveyor belts, but it is very quiet now Christmas has finished.

We are still very busy though and still speak to the employees at Amazon. In the baseroom we have started our new unit, which is preparation for employment, this has included looking at different jobs on Indeed, looking at different job websites, creating CV'S.

We have also had a visit from Heeten who is from the DWP and he has started working with the interns and will help them be more confident making a CV and sit through a mock interview.

Written by the Amazon Internship Students



Bamboozle

Back in January, our school hall was transformed into a world of wonder as we welcomed the brilliant Bamboozle Theatre Company for their new multi-sensory show, *Airship*. It was a magical start to the term, offering our students a gentle and immersive journey through the clouds.

Rather than simply watching a performance, the children became part of it. They explored the textures of the airship, felt the soft breeze of the sky, and were surrounded by a captivating soundscape of music and whistles. Bamboozle's talented performers connected beautifully with every child, adapting the energy and pace of the show to ensure that each learner felt included, understood, and truly seen. The hall was filled with calm, joy, and a sense of shared adventure as we "travelled" through the skies together.



Families may have already spotted some wonderful photos on Tapestry, capturing the children's engagement, curiosity, and delight during the performance. We are incredibly proud to offer inclusive experiences like this—ones that break down barriers, spark imagination, and create lasting memories.

And the excitement continues! We are already looking forward to our next musical enrichment experience, when a brass band will be visiting to perform for the whole school. We can't wait to fill our halls with even more vibrant sounds and joyful energy.



Enrichment at Forest Way School

The spring term has been a busy and exciting term for enrichment across the school!

Including KS3/4 community skills, sporting trips and post 16 learner choice trips!

Sporting trips

This term, Forest Way hosted the annual New Age Kurling competition and Boccia competition, organised by Northwest Leicestershire Schools Sport Partnership. We had a KS2 team participate in multiple games, at both events, against local primary schools, who enjoyed a morning full of competition and engagement to physical activity! Also, during the spring term, we have participated in (and have upcoming) a wide range of sporting participation and sporting competition events, such as:

- KS2 Archery festival.
- KS2 Basketball excel tournament.
- KS3/4 MLD/SLD boccia festival.
- KS3 SEN football tournament.
- KS3/4 football friendly against Fusion.
- KS2 SEN football tournament.
- KS3/4 table cricket tournament.
- KS2 hockey festival (upcoming).
- KS3/4/5 Leicestershire and Rutland County Athletics Final (upcoming).



Swim England Badges—Castle Rock

Over the course of the academic year, KS2 KS3 and KS4 learners have been attending Castle Rock School for the swimming lessons. We have two external swimming teachers who have been supporting the targets of each learner and focusing on improving technique and stamina to achieve Swim England distance badges. We are very proud of all our Castle Rock swimmers, who have been working on improving their personal best throughout the year on their distances! This academic year to date, 36 badges have been awarded for learners completing their distances. Two of our students have completed their 600m (over 24 lengths without stopping!).

