

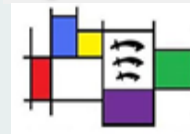


BERLESDUNA
ACADEMY TRUST

Parent
and
Carers
Newsletter



March 2026



The vision of the Berlesduna Academy Trust is to create and foster a culture of high aspiration, enjoyment for learning, academic success and lifelong skills amongst all pupils, regardless of their social, economic or cultural background.

CEO MESSAGE

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of the Spring Term, I just wanted to take a moment to say a heartfelt thank you. It really has been a busy and positive term across our schools, and I'm incredibly proud of everything the children have achieved.

The pupils have worked so hard, shown great enthusiasm, and tackled new challenges with a brilliant attitude. It's been lovely to see them growing in confidence and enjoying their learning, both in and out of the classroom.

I also want to say a big thank you to you at home. Your support makes such a difference — whether it's helping with reading, getting children in ready for the day, or simply encouraging them to do their best. We truly appreciate the partnership we have with our families.

I hope you all get a chance to rest, recharge, and enjoy the Easter break together. We're looking forward to welcoming the children back for a fun and exciting Summer Term.

Our core values of “aspiration”, “family” and “success” guide us on our journey of school improvement.

This term we have seen the Spelling Bee take place at Fairhouse and the Science competition take place at Felmore.

The Spelling Bee saw 4 pupils from each school across the Trust battle it out with some extremely hard spellings and word puzzles. The overall winners of the Spelling Bee were: KS1—Downham and KS2—Cherry Tree. .

The Science competition at Felmore was a huge success, 4 pupils from each school took part in the event. The winners of this event were: KS1—Downham and KS2—Merrylands

For both competitions, each participant received a certificate. First, second and third placed pupils each received a medal, and the winners also received a trophy for their school.

The schedule for the upcoming Trust events for the remainder of the year are:

- Orienteering—30th April 2026
- Football and Netball Tournament—18th June 2026
- Swimming Gala—1st July 2026



*Good bye
and
Good luck*

Unfortunately for us, we have some members of staff leaving the Trust at the end of this term:

**Mrs Fallon—St Marys
Mrs Langley—Fairhouse
Mrs S Webb—Fairhouse
Mrs Hollaman—Downham
Mx Maynard—Cherry Tree**

We would like to say a huge thank you to you all for your hard work and would like to wish you all the best for your future.

British Values support schools in creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in which every pupil is able to succeed.

They play a vital role in education by preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, helping them to understand how society functions, how decisions are made, why rules are important, and how to live respectfully alongside people with different beliefs and backgrounds.

The Pupil Voice session explored these principles and considered how British Values underpin the choices pupils make both within school and in wider society. Pupils engaged thoughtfully in discussions, demonstrating an understanding of how values such as democracy, mutual respect and tolerance influence everyday decision-making.

Fairhouse Eco-Council

The Eco-Council at Fairhouse have been very busy this year working on improving the outside area for all of the animals and insects. One of the projects that they are starting in the new term is an Eco-sensory garden which will provide homes and plants for the local wildlife and insects but also gives the children an outdoor learning environment. Back in the Summer of 2025 the Eco-Council applied for a Tesco Stronger Starts Grant and were lucky to have the garden project selected to receive blue tokens. We are pleased to announce that we won third prize for our project winning £500 to support this.



Please see the comments below from the Pupil Voice meeting that was held at Downham Primary school on Thursday 26th March 2026

Why is it important that everyone gets a chance to share their ideas?

It is good to hear from each other

How do we feel when a decision is made fairly?

Its stops me from getting frustrated

What should we do if the group chooses something we didn't vote for?

Understand

Why do we have rules at school?

This helps keep us all safe.

Which rules help us feel safe?

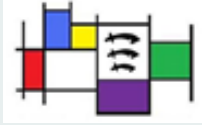
Signing into school lets us know who is visiting.

What does respect look like in our classroom?

When pupils listen to staff and each other.

How do we show respect to someone we disagree with?

Allowing them to share their point.



Felmore Primary School Vision:

Felmore Primary School (a proud member of Berlesduna Academy Trust) is an inspirational and positive learning environment for all, which provides exceptional educational opportunities.

It is a place where self-belief and respect empower motivated learners to successfully navigate their present and future worlds.

We have had a busy term at Felmore. Here is a snapshot of some of the things that we have all enjoyed.

Fire Brigade Visit

We were delighted to welcome the Fire Brigade to school, who delivered an engaging and informative talk for the children. As well as a whole school assembly, they went into classrooms to lead workshops where they discussed important topics including home safety, winter safety, and knife crime awareness. These sessions provided valuable opportunities to educate our pupils about keeping themselves and others safe, both at home and in the wider community.



Welcome Back Mrs Knight

Moonstone Class were very pleased to welcome Mrs Knight back to school. The children are delighted to have her with them again and have enjoyed settling back into their learning with her.



Year 5 Road Safety Workshop

Year 5 pupils took part in a highly informative road safety presentation that helped them better understand how to stay safe in and around their community. Through engaging discussions and clear, age-appropriate examples, the children learned about safe crossing points, the importance of staying alert near roads, and how to make responsible choices as pedestrians and cyclists. The session encouraged thoughtful questions and active participation, leaving the pupils feeling more confident and

aware of how to keep themselves and others safe when travelling to and from school.

Trust TT Rockstars Competition

We are incredibly proud of our pupils who took part in the Trust TT Rockstars competition. A special congratulations goes to **Garnet Class**, who were the **top-performing class across the Trust!** This is a fantastic achievement, and we could not be prouder of the children for their hard work, resilience, and positive attitude throughout the competition. Well done to everyone involved.



Bikeability for Year 5

Some of our Year 5 pupils have recently taken part in Bikeability training. Despite challenging weather conditions, the children showed great determination and maturity throughout the sessions. A big thank you to Mr Nunn for organising this opportunity and to Mrs Goldstone for getting on her bike and accompanying the pupils.

Autism Bus Experience

Staff and parents had the opportunity to take part in the Autism Bus Experience, which offered a powerful insight into the world from the perspective of someone with autism. This was an extremely valuable experience that helped deepen understanding and awareness of the sensory and social challenges some individuals face.

Crucial Crew – Year 6

Year 6 pupils attended the Crucial Crew event, where they took part in a range of interactive workshops designed to prepare them for the challenges they may face as they grow older. The sessions focused on making positive choices, staying safe, and developing the confidence to make responsible decisions as they become more independent.

Eco Adventurers – Our Eco-Champions have had a busy term. They voted for their representatives at the Trust Eco-Champion meeting as well as discussing what we can start putting in place to look after the environment and save energy in school. They have started litter picking, recycling bins are on order and there are many plans for the future.

School Council have been active too. They consulted with their peers and met with our Catering Manager so the pupil views are represented on the new menu. They have also conducted a learning and behaviour walk, which they found very informative.

EYFS - This year, our EYFS parents have come in once a month. We have had a variety of sessions, including sharing work they are proud of, sharing a story and stay and play sessions. We have had a huge uptake in these sessions, with almost every child having a parent or carer attending. It has enabled us to build strong relationships with families in the school community, and gives the parents an insight into their child's learning. They have been a huge success!

Yr4 Viking Day - Year 4 thoroughly enjoyed learning about the timeline of the Vikings on Thursday when a real Viking warrior visited our school! The children eagerly explored authentic tools and weapons whilst acting out different events in history. Our visitor was amazing with the pupils, who showed lots of respect, asked thoughtful questions and engaged in fun discussions throughout the day. The children looked amazing in their Viking costumes, bringing history vividly to life.

Science Week - What a Brilliant Science Week at Felmore!

We have had an absolutely brilliant Science Week at Felmore! It all kicked off with a visit from a real scientist, Dynamite Duj, who spent the whole day with us, delivering Key Stage assemblies and hands-on workshops for Years 4, 5 and 6. We watched him perform jaw-dropping scientific experiments and learned so much along the way. A huge thank you to Friends of Felmore for finding Dynamite Duj and giving our children this incredible opportunity.



But the science didn't stop there! Mr Sear delivered a special Science Week assembly all about this year's British Science Week theme: **curiosity**. Curiosity is what drives scientists to explore and discover. Being curious means asking questions, wondering why things happen and never being afraid to say, "I don't know – let's find out!" Questions like "What would happen if...?" and "Why does that work?" are exactly the kinds of questions that real scientists ask every single day.

Then on Thursday, Felmore hosted the Berlesduna Science Challenge, where two Year 5 pupils and two Year 2 pupils competed to build the best paper aeroplane that flew the furthest. Children had to test different designs and investigate which ones worked and which didn't, using scientific thinking and vocabulary along the way.

We have had a very busy Spring Term.. The school continues to make lots of improvements and anyone coming into the school is commenting on this.



Our PTA have been involved in securing a grant meaning we were able to refresh some of the play equipment in the EYFS reception classes play area and it is looking really nice there now, including a lovely new sandpit that just under a tonne of sand was delivered for last week!

The EYFS classes enjoyed hatching eggs to see the chicks arrive.



Key Stage 2 children did us proud when our representatives went to Fairhouse for the Trust Spelling Bee competition and brought back the trophy.

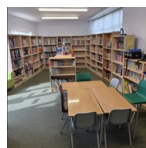
Year 6 have this week spent an afternoon at The Towngate Theatre for the Crucial Crew workshops which they enjoyed very much.



Due to ongoing issues with the traffic and parking outside the school, we had the SEPP (South Essex Parking Partnership) in to visit. The first visit was on a Tuesday and they delivered a talk and workshop to reception children and their parents. The year 5 children

then had a talk in the hall and went out onto the roads in small groups to learn better road safety. Following this on the Wednesday from 7.45am the SEPP team were joined by SERP and members of the local police force to try and make it safer for people coming to school, the local residents and members of the general public passing our school. They talked to lots of people whilst they were there and it provided a very positive approach to the traffic problems.

Our new library has been launched and it is open at lunchtimes for the children and after school once a week for the parents to bring their children in. It is looking very nice and we had some lovely book donations from parents to help us get it up and running.

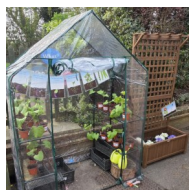


Over the last two weeks our year 1 team have been really focusing on reading. They have each has a phonics session with the parents and children, as well as a class visit to Vange library, supported also by some of the parents.



On Friday 20th March, the whole school was involved in a Sponsored Bunny Hop. The PTA organised an Easter Themed obstacle course for the children to complete whilst wearing bunny ears! We were very fortunate that it was a dry and sunny day for this event and everyone had lots of fun. It also raised just under £4000 towards our new IT Suite that will be coming soon.

During the Spring Term, we also secured a nature grant. This has meant we were able to buy greenhouses for the EYFS areas, planters for different areas within the school as well as gardening tools and plants. We are very excited to watch the development of this and see quite literally how it grows!



We were able to support staff and pupils from Fairhouse during the first half term when they had to leave their school for a couple of weeks due to having a fire on the premises. It would have been nicer to have worked together under different circumstances but everyone from both schools worked together very considerably and provided a safe, friendly and happy environment for everyone that was with us over this unexpected time.



Cherry Tree Visions and Values:

Ambition, Honesty, Kindness and Respect

At Cherry Tree our school aims are that our school will be a place which:
Provides a happy, secure, environment in which everyone thrives.

Prepares our children to be successful, lifelong learners who feel able to achieve their potential.

Develops our children's emotional well-being so that they have a sense of pride in themselves, their peers, their learning and our school.

Widens our children's horizons with a broad curriculum and a range of activities and opportunities. Cares for the feelings and beliefs of others, promotes good manners, courtesy and self-discipline at all times.

Supports our children on their journeys to becoming resilient and responsible citizens with a strong moral purpose.

Works in partnership with our families, developing positive links with our local community and the wider world.

We summarise our aims and our vision in our mission statement:
Ambition, Honesty, Kindness and Respect



Fairhouse Aims, Values and Ethos

**Courage
Responsibility
Respect
Kindness**

Our aim is to work together to inspire every child to reach their full potential in a safe, happy, caring and committed environment and to make a positive difference to the lives of each and every one of our pupils, both academically and personally. We are ambitious, passionate and determined to achieve success in every aspect of school life. The staff, the governing body and the Trust work together to create and foster a culture of high aspiration, enjoyment for learning, academic success and lifelong skills amongst all our pupils, regardless of their social, cultural or economic background.

Following a fire in mid-January, staff worked tirelessly to get the school repaired and get children back in after a few weeks of home learning.

This term, Mrs Argent, our new Deputy Headteacher started with us. She is a great asset to our school and it feels like she's been with us for much longer now.

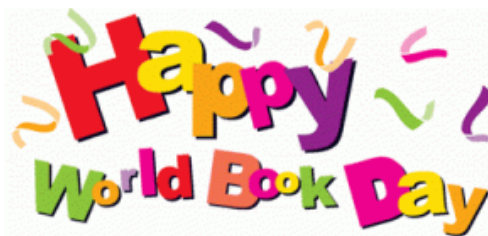
In February, we took 24 children to sing at the O2 as part of Young Voices choir.

The children had a great time and loved the opportunity to perform to such a large audience.



A number of our classes have visited Basildon Library this term. They have had the opportunity to choose a book on their library card.

Year 5 took a trip to Lambourne End. They learned about farming and farming techniques and how food makes its way to our plates.



On March 6th, we held out World Book Day at Fairhouse. It was great to see such wonderful participation from children and staff alike!

On Friday 27th, we are holding our EYFS and our KS1 Easter Bonnet parades and inviting parents in for some Easter craft activities.

This week we say goodbye to the following staff:

Mrs Waker is leaving to go on maternity leave. However, Mrs Hardy is covering this on her behalf.

We also say goodbye to Mr Gatenby who leaves Fairhouse for a new school within the Trust.

We say goodbye to Mrs Langley who leaves us to take up a promotion at another school.

We also say goodbye to Steph Webb who leaves her post of teaching assistant.



Essex Fire and Rescue visited year 6 pupils at St Nicholas regarding the dangers of carrying knives and the consequences of doing so.

The whole school attended a Chinese Dance workshop to celebrate the Chinese New Year, the year of the Fire Horse. They also experienced a lovely Chinese lunch with noodles.



Kingfisher Class walked to the local supermarket for their Geography Lesson and came back to school to taste the food they bought from different areas of Britain.

Pupils from years 4,5 & 6 enjoyed a trip to the London O2 Arena for Young Voices. They absolutely loved the experience.



KS2 pupils attended the Sportshall Athletics at The Deanes School alongside other pupils from other schools in the area

KS2 pupils attended a Cross Country Competition alongside other pupils from the area. They were fantastic and made it through to the finals.



St Nicholas Core Values

Our school community identified three core, Christian, values that we believe should underpin every aspect of our work, play and relationships. They are at the heart of everything we do and our commitment to providing the very best for the pupils in our care.

Our Core Values are:

Respect:

Every member of our school community aims to demonstrate politeness, honour and care towards others, ourselves, the environment and our world.

Responsibility:

Every member of our community aims to demonstrate good judgement and the ability to act correctly and make decisions on our own. We try to understand and demonstrate our understanding of the fact that actions have consequences.

Integrity:

Every member of our school community aims to consistently demonstrate honesty and tries hard to do what is morally right. We tell the truth, own up to our mistakes and we know the importance of giving praise and receiving praise.



The Willows Core Values

OUR CORE VALUES:

**RESPECT,
RESPONSIBILITY,
COURAGE,
HOPE,
JUSTICE,
COMPASSION,
INTEGRITY,
WISDOM**

At The Willows, we are proud of our friendly and family atmosphere where we get to know each child whilst fostering a sense of community responsibility.

Our school values underpin everything we do, providing a safe, supportive and encouraging environment in which we recognise each unique individual. We set high standards of achievement and behaviour whilst ensuring that the children's school days are enjoyable.



The school were awarded the Best Practice Award for physical activity and Outstanding Achievement in physical activity from Healthy Schools Essex!



We took part in a Royal Ballet workshop where our children toured the Royal Ballet and Opera's Production Building and took part in a design with mannequins.

At the Civic Hall in Grays, a selection of our children took part in an Empathy Workshop also ran by the Royal Ballet and Opera where they explored how movement and dance can help us understand one another's stories, celebrate the cultures that shape us and create something meaningful together.



Our choir have been busy. We took part in Young Voices

The PTA have raised over £4000 through sponsored events, sales and non uniforms. We are going to put the money towards new sails for our shelters.



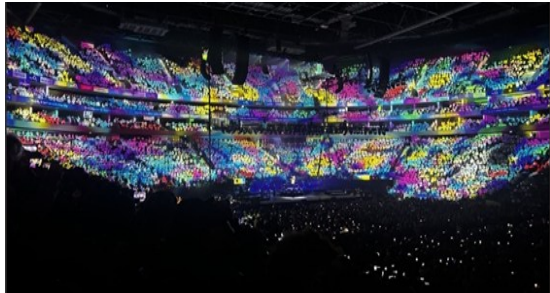
The children have been very busy during the Spring Term at Canewdon Primary School.

Our Reception class looked at 'People Who Help Us' and had visits from people who work in public services such as the local postman, the Fire Brigade and one of the parents who is a detective in the police force. The children really enjoyed their project and got a chance to sit inside a fire engine.



The whole school had a Chinese drama/dance workshop in January. The workshop introduced the children to the styles of dance from China

Robin Class enjoyed a visit to Clay Cottage. A purpose built clay and craft studio. The children really got creative with clay moulding and using tools and cutters to help with their designs.



Just before we broke up for the February half term, children in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 who sing in the choir, attended the Young Voices (the largest children's choir concert in the world!) at the O2 Arena, London.

Selected pupils took part in a Cross Country Competition which was held at Garons Sports Centre and involved many schools in the area. Each race had approximately 150 children and three of our students achieved a 6th, 19th and 27th place in their race.



In March our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils took part in the Bikeability level 1 & 2.

The children absolutely loved it and gained skills and confidence to cycle safely on the roads.



The pupils in Parrot Class enjoyed a trip to Colchester Castle, the oldest Norman Keep in Europe and built on the foundations of the Roman Temple of Claudius. Here the children learnt about its history and had fun dressing up in Roman costumes.

Before we end this term, Kingfisher Class will be visiting Duxford Museum. This will fit in with their learning of scientific developments over the years and Chick Class have a trip to 'Call of the Wild' to look forward to.



Canewdon Core Values

Our school community identified three core, Christian, values that we believe should underpin every aspect of our work, play and relationships. They are at the heart of everything we do and our commitment to providing the very best for the pupils in our care.

Our Core Values are:

Respect:

Every member of our school community aims to demonstrate politeness, honour and care towards others, ourselves, the environment and our world.

Responsibility:

Every member of our community aims to demonstrate good judgement and the ability to act correctly and make decisions on our own. We try to understand and demonstrate our understanding of the fact that actions have consequences.

Integrity:

Every member of our school community aims to consistently demonstrate honesty and tries hard to do what is morally right. We tell the truth, own up to our mistakes and we know the importance of giving praise and receiving praise.



**Crays Hill
Vision, Aims and
Values**

Learning, safety and respect for all.

Our Aims

For children to operate as independent learners and thinkers

To inspire a love for learning

To provide a relevant curriculum for all

For children to value themselves

To foster a sense of belonging to a community

Our Values

Respect for ourselves and others

Respect for property

Truthfulness

Responsibility for own actions

Being polite and considerate

No bad language

No bullying

No racism

We have had a very full and exciting Spring Term at Crays Hill Primary School. The children have tried lots of new activities, learned new skills and enjoyed many special events. Here are some of the things we have been doing this term.

Every Monday, the whole school has enjoyed Musical Mondays. Children have taken part in singing, rhythm games and music activities. It has been a lovely way to start each week.

This term, we welcomed Layla Curtis, a visual artist who explores themes of journeys and map-making. She has worked in many exciting places, including Antarctica, the Borneo Rainforest, and in local communities in Lancashire. Layla is helping our children create artwork based on the theme of "Journeys." The children have enjoyed using different materials and hearing about her adventures.



We celebrated St Patrick's Day by dressing in green. Our school kitchen also served a special Irish lunch, including Dublin Coddle, which everyone enjoyed.

For our Easter assembly, children performed Easter songs, rhymes and poems for families and members of our local community. Afterwards, we held a wonderful Easter Bonnet Parade, with lots of bright and creative hats.

Starlight STEM Limited brought a mobile planetarium to school. The children loved sitting inside the dome and learning about stars, planets and the night sky.



Our youngest pupils took part in a fun drama workshop based on The Owl and the Pussycat. They acted out parts of the poem and joined in with movement and storytelling. We also had a visit from Nite Owls, who brought several beautiful owls to school. Children learned about their habitats and enjoyed having their photographs taken with the birds.



For World Book Day, children joined in with a special book-themed afternoon of activities. They enjoyed reading, drama, art and storytelling tasks linked to well-loved books.

The whole school took part in NSPCC Number Day. Classes enjoyed maths games, puzzles and number challenges during a fun afternoon of learning.

For safer internet day, all classes talked about how to stay safe online. Children learned about safe choices, responsible behaviour and what to do if they are worried about something they see online.

Magistrates in the community—Year 6 learned about the justice system and the role of magistrates. They had thoughtful discussions about laws, fairness and keeping people safe.

Thank you to all our children, families, staff and governors for your support this term. We hope you have a restful break and look forward to seeing everyone again for the Summer Term.

KS2 Choir Performs at the O2 Arena

Our KS2 choir had an unforgettable experience performing at the O2 Arena as part of the Young Voices concert – the world's largest school choir event. The children performed alongside thousands of other pupils and professional musicians, creating a truly spectacular show. This was a huge milestone for our young performers, and they're already looking forward to next year's event!



World Book Day Celebrations



We celebrated World Book Day with a wonderful day of activities that brought stories to life across the school. The children arrived in creative costumes representing their favourite book characters, and we held storytelling activities throughout the day. A particular highlight was inviting parents into school to spend time in

their child's classes, reading together. This provided a valuable opportunity for families to engage with their children's learning and share the joy of reading.

Online Safety Workshops

This term, our children participated in engaging online safety workshops designed to help them navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. These interactive sessions allowed the children to discuss their online activities and share their experiences with their peers.



The workshops covered important topics including:

- Recognising safe and unsafe online behaviour
- Understanding what steps to take if they encounter something that doesn't feel right
- Making informed decisions about their internet use

Protecting their personal information

Our aim was to empower the children with the knowledge and confidence to make safe choices while using the internet. These workshops provided them with valuable tools to protect themselves and fostered important conversations about digital wellbeing – a crucial aspect of keeping our children safe in today's connected world.



Whitmore Core Values

Honesty
Perseverance
Respect
Positivity
Friendship

At the heart of our school community is the well-being and education of all of our pupils.

We are passionate about providing quality experiences and maximising knowledge, skill and enjoyment for the children from our curriculum.

We strive to ensure that all children are making good progress, whatever their starting point.



Merrylands

School Values and Ethos

Growth Through Learning

At Merrylands Primary School and Nursery, we believe passionately in the importance of recognising every child as a unique individual.

We nurture the growth of the whole child academically, socially, emotionally, morally and physically, celebrating all achievements in a safe, caring and creative environment.

We believe a happy child will be a successful child and work to ensure every child enjoys school and achieves.

The Core Values at Merrylands underpin all that we believe in:

- Respect
- Kindness
- Perseverance

The Spring term at Merrylands started with a focus on Careers and Aspiration. We had a visit from our local MP Richard Holden who spoke about his role and why he wanted to be an MP. We also had visits from a chef, police officer, dental practitioner, librarian and paramedic. Each visitor spoke about their job, giving the children a wider understanding of opportunities available to them.



On 21st January, the KS2 Choir attended the O2 Young Voices performance. After a day of rehearsals, the children performed to a packed audience. It was an amazing experience for all involved.

In February we celebrated National Storytelling Week. The children enjoyed listening to different stories as well as writing collaborative stories between different year groups. The children in KS1 and KS2 also participated in a National Literacy Trust live storytelling workshop which was led by authors who also have a keen interest in music.



On Safer Internet Day on 10th February the children explored the safe and responsible use of AI. They participated in a BBC Live lesson focusing on selecting reliable, accurate and unbiased information as well as other class-based activities.

Throughout the term, the children have also participated in a range of workshops including Explorers in Year 1, Chinese New Year in Nursery and Reception and The Mayans in Year 6.

On 5th March we participated in World Book Day. The children enjoyed a variety of book-based activities, a whole school assembly, live World Book Day lessons, a special dinner and much more. All the children looked fantastic dressed up as their favourite book character.



Also in March, four children took part in the Berlesduna Trust Science competition. The children enjoyed designing paper aeroplanes and making predictions about their performance before flying their aeroplanes. We were delighted when the Year 5 team were announced as the Key Stage 2 winners.



Finally, towards the end of term, the children dressed in red to raise money for Comic Relief.

In February our school took part in "Dress as a Digit" Day to raise money for the NSPCC, and it was a fantastic success! The event combined creativity with a love of maths, as pupils came to school dressed as their favourite digits, numbers and mathematical ideas.

Throughout the day, classes took part in a range of fun maths activities linked to numbers and problem solving. The excitement around the school was clear, with pupils proudly explaining their outfits and sharing their love of maths with friends and teachers.



A huge congratulations to Ivy, Sophie, Alfie and Joe, who represented our school beautifully at the Trust Spelling Bee. Competing against pupils from across the Trust, they showed fantastic determination, teamwork and confidence as they tackled a range of challenging words.

We are delighted to share that the team came away with bronze medals, finishing in an impressive third place overall. This is a fantastic achievement and reflects all of the hard work and practice they put in leading up to the event.

We had a wonderful time celebrating Pancake Day in school, with lots of exciting activities taking place across the year groups.



On Monday 23rd February, our school enjoyed a wonderful day of celebrations to mark Chinese New Year. The day was packed full of exciting activities, giving the children the opportunity to learn more about Chinese culture and traditions.



We had a fantastic time celebrating World Book Day on 5th March. The children looked absolutely wonderful in their costumes, and it was lovely to see such enthusiasm for reading across the whole school. Pupils arrived dressed as a wide range of favourite book characters, and it was fantastic to see so much creativity and effort put into the costumes. From well-known storybook heroes and villains to imaginative homemade outfits, the day was filled with colour, excitement and a real celebration of books.

We would like to say a huge congratulations to Albie, Henry, Finlay and Wilfred, who represented our school wonderfully at the Trust Science Challenge. Albie, Henry, Finlay and Wilfred demonstrated excellent teamwork, enthusiasm and determination during the event and were fantastic ambassadors for our school. We are incredibly proud of the way they approached the challenge, showing curiosity, resilience and a very positive attitude to learning.



For Science week, it was fantastic to see children applying scientific thinking, experimenting, predicting outcomes, and most importantly, having fun while learning. We can't wait to see what they discover next! At the end of Science Week, we were thrilled to invite parents and carers into school to join in with some experiments and to see all of the fantastic work the children had been doing throughout the week.

We had a fantastic time celebrating Red Nose Day in school in support of Comic Relief. To help raise money for this important charity, children were invited to come to school wearing something red and to make a small donation.

It was wonderful to see so many creative additions to our usual school uniform. From bright red tops and accessories to face paint, hair ribbons and even a few red noses, the school was filled with colour and excitement throughout the day.



This term, Mrs Fallon put together a wonderful Easter performance centred around "The First Easter." The whole school took part, learning about the importance of Easter for Christians and sharing in a story of hope, joy, and new beginnings.

We are so proud of one of our year 5 pupils, Albie South who became the **ACU British Youth**



Grass Track Championship in 2025.

Albie has since been invited to attend a Young Lions Speedway training day in Leicester in preparation for this seasons British Youth Championships. Albie had an amazing day as you can see from the race photo! We could not be prouder, not only of his accomplishments but also of how modest he remains about them.



St Marys Core Values

Vision, Ethos and Values

*'We believe, we achieve,
we succeed in God's
family.'*

**Thankfulness
Compassion
Community
Truthfulness
Courage
Forgiveness**

St. Mary's C of E Primary School is a fully inclusive, caring school where all of God's children are welcomed, a place where pupils have access to a broad, balanced and bespoke curriculum. We aim to foster an environment of success where all children are offered opportunities to celebrate success, raise aspirations and develop their own character. Together we will build courageous, kind and thoughtful citizens of the future. Our vision is to provide children with a love of learning, social competence and the best possible tools to succeed personally, academically, spiritually, morally and socially in a fast paced, ever changing and technological 21st Century world. The caring, Christian ethos of the school is firmly based on our six core values which remind us all that we must consistently strive to achieve and exceed our potential.



Downham Values and Ethos

Care Consideration Courtesy

We **CARE** about each other as members of our school community and the world around us. We want to show God's love to everyone.

We **CONSIDER** our future and prepare for it today. We do our best. When we make mistakes, we take responsibility and try again. We know that God has good plans for us.

We show **COURTESY** to everyone. We are all made in God's image, unique but equal. We treat each other with respect.

Children are taught about the **24 different character strengths** that make up their personality. They understand that we all possess these strengths, but in different degrees, resulting in a truly unique character strength profile.

These character strengths have been carefully aligned with our school values "care, consideration and courtesy" and are recognised as part of our weekly celebration assembly

Celebrating a Season of Success: The Spring BAT Competitions

What an incredible Spring Term it has been for our students! Over the past few weeks, we have proudly taken part in a series of Berlesduna Academy Trust (BAT) competitions, providing our pupils with the chance to showcase their talents, test their knowledge, and demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship alongside their peers from across the Trust.



Our students have truly excelled in the following events:

BAT Science Competition: Our young scientists blew us away with their curiosity and problem-solving skills, tackling complex experiments with precision and flair.

BAT Spelling Bee: Under the spotlight, our linguists showed nerves of steel, correctly navigating challenging vocabulary with impressive speed and accuracy

BAT Swimming Gala: It was all hands on deck at the pool! Our swimmers displayed fantastic technique and determination, cheering each other on to several personal bests

BAT Cross Country: Battling the elements and the terrain, our runners showed immense grit and stamina, proving that hard work and practice really do pay off.

Events like these are about more than just trophies; they are about building confidence, fostering teamwork, and representing our school community with pride. A huge **"Well Done"** to every pupil who stepped up to participate. You have made us—and your families—incredibly proud!

PTA Events

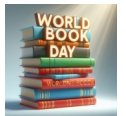


Our PTA has been busy spreading magic across the school this term, creating unforgettable memories for our children through a fantastic line-up of events. The energy was electric at the school disco, where students danced the night away, and the sheer level of skill on display at Downham's Got Talent left us all in awe of our gifted performers.



As we moved toward the end of the term, the atmosphere turned wonderfully festive with our Easter Egg Hunt and creative craft sessions. We also took a heartfelt moment to celebrate the special figures in our lives, with the PTA helping children prepare beautiful Mother's Day flowers and cards. We are also grateful to the PTA for funding our live chick-hatching project. They have also spent time at the weekend improving our outside area so that the children have a lush school field to play on, as well as tidying the PE cupboard and helping with sewing in class. We are incredibly grateful to our parent volunteers whose dedication makes these joyful experiences possible!

Reading Takes Centre Stage: Celebrating World Book Day



World Book Day is always a highlight of our school calendar, but this year the excitement was palpable from the moment children arrived in their brilliant costumes! This year we also had a live author visit. Having a professional writer share their creative process and read from their own work sparked a wave of inspiration, proving to our pupils that every great book starts with a single, bold idea.

The literary buzz continued with the arrival of the Scholastic Book Fair. It was wonderful to see children huddled together, debating which titles to pick and eagerly flipping through the pages of new adventures. To top off our celebrations, we are thrilled to unveil our brand-new reading chair, which we won in a competition! This story chair has already become a favourite spot, providing the perfect nook for children to get lost in a story. Whether through meeting authors or exploring the book fair, this term has truly reinforced our love for reading and the endless doors it opens.

Other Events

This term has also been brimming with diverse learning experiences and community spirit, offering our children countless opportunities to soar to new heights beyond the classroom. Academic curiosity was ignited through immersive trips, including Year 5's voyage to the London Planetarium, Year 3's exploration of the Chelmsford Museum, and a vibrant Spanish Day. Our commitment to STEM and awareness flourished during Science Week, where parents joined us for hands-on workshops, alongside focused sessions for Safer Internet Day, NSPCC Number Day, and a fascinating Lunar New Year live assembly. We also celebrated our children's voices and identities at the Year 4 Mighty Oak public speaking event at Anglia Ruskin University and the Pupil Identity and Diversity Summit at Chelmsford Cathedral.

Our budding athletes and performers have been equally busy, from the Year 2 Infant Music Festival to competitive spirit at the Chelmsford Athletics Club Cross Country, the Ghyllgrove Community Cup, and Shooting Stars girls' football. We also ensured inclusivity remained at the heart of our physical activities with a dedicated SEND ten-pin bowling event. Our youngest learners were welcomed through EYFS starter sessions focusing on reading and Forest School, which remains a staple of our outdoor enrichment. Finally, the term concluded with powerful moments of reflection and community, including the Easter service at Chelmsford Cathedral, Easter reflection workshops for Years 3 and 4, the Worship Group's visit to The Belfry, a heartwarming EYFS Mother's Day lunch, and our school-wide support for Comic Relief.

Social Stories

Canewdon pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 taking part in Bikeability Level 1 and 2



Crays Hill creating artwork based on the theme of 'journeys.'



St Marys pupils enjoying pancake day



Pupils holding the chicks at the Pupil Voice meeting



TRUST VISION



BERLESDUNA
ACADEMY TRUST

ASPIRATION FAMILY SUCCESS



Happy Easter

