



Darley Churchtown C of E Primary School
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Dear Parents and carers,

It doesn't seem long since we were welcoming the children back after Christmas but we are already nearing the end of the first half of the Spring term. It's been a varied one with some snow, some exciting events and theme days and, of course, the publication of our Ofsted report back in January. Below are some of the highlights and also some key events we are looking forward to next half term.

Looking back:

Ofsted

Having a visit from his majesty's inspectors is always a nerve wracking experience and getting the phone call in the week before Christmas added to the excitement but everyone pulled together and demonstrated what a wonderful school this is. You can read the full report [online](#) but in summary inspectors found we have 'taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection' – meaning the previous grade of 'good' has been sustained.

The report talks about the 'big aspirations' that the school has for its pupils and how they leave well prepared for their future lives. It also praised the 'broad and challenging' curriculum, support for children with additional needs and the wide range of experiences that are on offer.

Local media have also reported on the inspection with stories in the Matlock Mercury and [Derbyshire Times](#).

Chinese New Year

During the school year we like to celebrate key events from other cultures and this half term we focused on Chinese New Year. Children were invited to come to school wearing red and we spent time learning about the traditions and ideas that are part of this celebration.

In the afternoon, children worked together in mixed age groups to perform a dragon dance, create paper chain dragons and to make and decorate gift envelopes.



Sporting events and clubs

It's a quiet time of year on the sporting calendar but we have had one event: class 3 took part in cross country running organised through the Rural Derbyshire School Sports Partnership at Whitworth Park. Running around a park in January isn't everyone's idea of a good way to spend an afternoon but our year 5s and 6s really rose to the challenge. Special mentions are due for Tahlia and Lottie, who came third and fourth in the girls' race out of nearly 100 competitors, but everyone who took part stuck with it and did their best.



Next half term the football league with other local schools starts up again so we're hoping to continue the success we had in the Autumn term.

Our sports clubs have also continued to be well received with archery and gymnastics on offer this half term. Next half term we'll be running boxercise and badminton so look out for details of how to sign up if you're interested.

Space centre trip



Class 1 have been learning out space this half term in their history lessons and also using this as a stimulus for writing in literacy so it was great to be able to visit the National Space Centre in Leicester to find out more about space travel and see craft that have actually been to space.

The children had a go at pretending to be astronauts and learned all about the Solar System.

Church school

The first all-age community service of the year was held at St Helen's on Sunday 12th January and our handbell club went along to perform for the congregation. It was lovely to give the children another chance to show the songs they'd learned for Christmas before they hang up their bells for another year.

We also visited as a school later in the term for our regular 'Thursday Church' act of worship. We thought about the value of service, which we've been focussing on in school this half term, and how we can enrich both our own lives and the lives of other by sharing the gifts and talents that we have been given.



Parent survey

Our annual parent survey is currently live and we'd love to get as many of your views as possible. Please complete by the end of the half term (14th February) and we'll then review the findings and report back with a summary and our planned actions: <https://forms.office.com/e/2vDZDKxQCy>

Looking ahead:

Safer Internet Day

Online safety continues to be an area of increasing concern for children and adults alike. We teach children how to stay safe online through our computing lessons every week but we also focus on this through Safer Internet Day, which falls on 11th February. The theme this year is protecting yourself from online scams so we'll be discussing this with the children and joining in with activities and live lessons during the day.

There are lots of helpful resources online – just search for 'safer internet day 2025' – and we also collate these on a page on the school website: [Online safety | Darley Churchtown Church of England Primary School](#). One document we've recently added is a guide for parents on spotting scams, which is definitely worth taking a few moments to read.



Forest school

As the weather starts to (hopefully) improve, we'll be restarting our forest school activities. All children will have a chance to learn about the outdoors with our trained forest school leader, Mrs Parsons, using the fantastic site at one of our partner schools, St Giles CE Primary School in Matlock.

We've managed to secure funding from the Ernest Bailey Charity, through Derbyshire Dales District Council, to cover the cost of transport to and from the site so we will not have to ask for any contributions towards the costs of running forest school this year. We are very grateful to the charity for approving our application.

Early years outdoor area

A project for the remainder of the Spring term is the early years outdoor area and the playground environment in general. We will be investing in resources for this area and redesigning it for the benefit of all children. We are likely to require some help with setting up new equipment and moving existing items to new homes to watch this space for a date and time – all volunteers will be most welcome.

School history investigation

Another ongoing project is our investigations into the history of the school. Staff have visited the records office in Matlock and started delving through dusty cupboards around school to see what we can find. We hope to put our discoveries together and share them with the community later in the year.

Values

Our value for next half term is forgiveness. We will be considering this through our collective worship in school and thinking about how this links to the events of Holy Week and Easter. Our Easter Service will be held at St Helen's Church on 3rd March.

Best wishes,

Tom Lloyd

Head of School