

Newsletter

Spring Term 2026

Week 5

We break up for half term on Friday 13th February at 3:20pm, and return on Monday 23rd February. We hope you all have a wonderful rest and we look forward to seeing you all again for the second part of Spring term!

Free School Meal Half Term Vouchers

The council want to ensure every child who receives benefits-eligible Free School Meals continues to be supported over the half term holiday 2026. The council continues to work with Wonde/evouchers who will provide families with e-vouchers that can be spent on food and drink in a range of supermarkets and shops. The voucher will be worth £17.25 for each eligible child/young person and covers the 5 day holiday period Monday 16th February to Friday 20th February 2026. School is working with Wonde to ensure they have the right contact details for you. It is important that the email and mobile contact details we hold are up to date. Please let us know if immediately your details have changed.



Wonde will contact you to ask which supermarket you would like to use your voucher in.

The voucher will then be sent via TEXT or EMAIL. If you do not have internet access on your mobile and are therefore unable to view the voucher you can forward the message to someone who has and they can help you redeem the voucher, or school can help by printing vouchers for you.

If you have any questions about the message that you receive from Wonde/evoucher, or if you believe you should have received a message from Wonde/evoucher and haven't by Tuesday 10th February please contact the school office.



Gymnastics

On Wednesday, our gymnastics team took part in the Key Steps gymnastics competition at Netherhall School. We are so proud at how hard they worked and how well they represented our school. All pupils had a fantastic time, what an experience!



Parent/Pupil information

Have you moved house recently or changed your mobile phone number? It is a legal requirement that you let school know as soon as any changes are made in case of emergency. If you are unsure if we have your correct details, please contact Mrs Walker in the school office who will be happy to assist you.



Wellbeing Guide

AI is becoming a familiar part of young people's online experiences, with a growing number of school tools and entertainment platforms now using it  . This #WakeUpWednesday guide breaks down what AI really is, helping adults explain it clearly and realistically so children don't overestimate its abilities or trust it unquestioningly. With Safer Internet Day coming up on 10th February, it's the perfect moment to start meaningful conversations about how AI systems work, where they appear online, and why understanding them matters for safe, confident digital use.

Guide at the end of the newsletter.

Pupil Achievements

Penelope got "Man of the Match" on Sunday for Workington Diamonds against Whitehaven. She showed great improvement from the week before & really got stuck in! Well done, Penelope, keep it up!



Team Bassenthwaite

A very busy week for Team Bassenthwaite!

This week we have engaged in lots of fun and exciting learning.

As historians this week, we enjoyed an Ancient Greeks workshop. We learned all about some Greek statues, the Olympics, slaves and some of the Greek Gods. We did all of this through drama and oracy and absolutely loved it!

As clever writers this week we have carried on looking at the story of Theseus and using similes, but this time to write a diary entry. We talked about how difficult it can be to write in the perspective of someone else but tried really hard to get into character and pretend that we were Theseus.

We used pictures of the story to prompt us and managed to come up with some fabulous similes to add detail to our diary entries.

As mathematicians this week we moved onto looking at our 8 times tables. We have used what we know about our 2s and 4s to support our learning.

Well done, Team! A very busy week, have a lovely weekend!



Team Buttermere

Team Buttermere have had a fantastic week this week and have been busy across all areas of learning. We enjoyed a special assembly where visitors from rugby league came in to talk to us about the sport and encourage everyone to get involved and give it a try. As mathematicians, we have been adding and subtracting one-digit numbers with three-digit numbers and using the language of 'more than' and 'less than' to explain our thinking. In writing, we have continued our work on our focus story Theseus and the Minotaur, developing our use of similes and, this week, focusing on first person narrative through diary entries. In science, we have been exploring forces and magnets, investigating magnetic force through hands-on experiments. We also took part in an exciting Ancient Greek

workshop, learning more about this historical time period and reinforcing our key vocabulary linked to the Ancient Greek timeline.



Team Crummock

In our music lesson this week, we have been continuing with our recorder lessons and developing our ability to play along with a piece of music, together as a band. On Thursday morning, we were lucky enough to be a part of a Samba band. We learnt about the different instruments that are used about worked together to play in a rhythm. As writers this week, we have been continuing to use similes in our writing. We have been using them this week in a diary entry from the perspective of Theseus. In RE this week, we have been discovering more about the Seder meal so we could have a better understanding of why it is a different meal from any other and what each food item on the Seder plate represents. On Wednesday morning, we had a Greek workshop in class!

We had so much fun learning about the Greek Gods, Olympics and Democracy. As historians this week, we followed up on our workshop with a lesson about the Ancient Greek Gods. We answered the question of why the Ancient Greeks prayed to so many different Gods and then discovered facts about Zeus, Ares, Aphrodite and Poseidon.



Team Derwentwater

It has been another busy and engaging week for our Derwentwater pupils, with lots of fantastic learning taking place across the curriculum.

In Literacy, pupils have been learning about determiners. They explored how words such as a, an, the, this and those help give more information about nouns and practised using them accurately in their writing.

In Maths, pupils have been focusing on the 7 times table. They have been using songs, games and problem-solving activities to build speed and confidence in their recall.

In French, pupils learned vocabulary for eyes and hair. They enjoyed describing themselves and others using simple phrases, while practising accurate pronunciation.

In KidSafe lessons, pupils discussed online bullying. They learned how to stay safe online, how to treat others with respect, and what to do if they ever feel worried or uncomfortable.

In Geography, pupils have been researching the human geography of Antarctica, the Amazon Rainforest and the Lake District. They explored how people live in these different environments and how humans interact with the landscape.

In Music, pupils have been learning to play the G, A and B notes on the recorder, focusing on correct fingering and steady rhythm.

Pupils have also been practising the C, B, E and D notes on the keyboards, developing their coordination and musical understanding.

In Science, pupils have been learning to classify animals as vertebrates and invertebrates. They identified key features and sorted animals into groups based on their characteristics.

In Computing, pupils have been introduced to databases. They learned how information can be organised, sorted and searched efficiently.

In PE, pupils took part in teamwork activities. They focused on communication, cooperation and supporting one another during group challenges.



Team Coniston

As clever writers, our focus text has been Hakui poems. This week, our key writing skill was using determiners. Everyone produced their own Hakui poem inspired by Coniston and the Lake District.

As mathematicians, Team Coniston continued to practise column addition and subtraction with 4-digit numbers. We also began exploring perimeter, focusing on identifying regular and irregular polygons.

As scientists, we continued our topic Living Things and Their Habitats. This week, we concentrated on grouping animals. We explored vertebrates and invertebrates, learning to classify animals based on their characteristics.

In geography, we continued to identify and compare the physical features of the

Amazon Rainforest, the Lake District, and Antarctica.

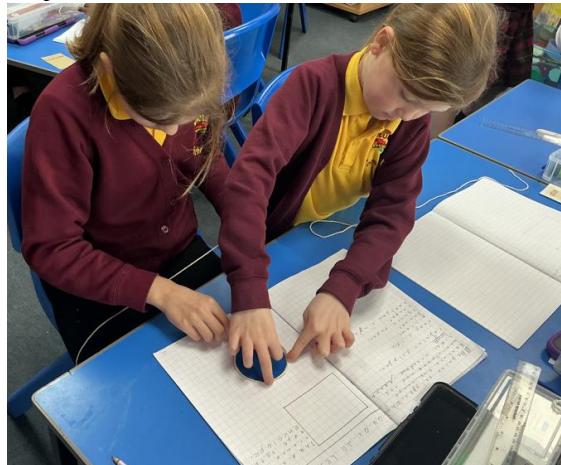
In art, we explored creating tints and shades using different paints. Everyone enjoyed experimenting to give a 3D effect to their paintings.

In French, we focused on French vocabulary for different parts of the face.

In RE, Team Coniston explored why Hindus show reverence and gratitude towards the Earth and discussed Krishna, the Hindu deity.

In music, Team Coniston enjoyed practising different notes on our recorders, improving both our skill and confidence.

A great week, well done Team!



Team Loweswater

This week in Loweswater we have been very busy writing haikus about Loweswater. We read haikus about the Lake District and then used this to help us count syllables and write lines for our own haiku. In maths this week we have

finished our work on perimeter. We have used multiplication and division to solve perimeter problems. In science we classified animals into vertebrates and invertebrates. We used pictures and a classification key to help us sort and identify animals. In geography this week we learned about the climates of the Lake District, the Amazon Rainforest and Antarctica and compared these. During our RE lesson this week we continued our work on Hinduism. We learned about dharma and how Hindus show dharma through their actions. On Thursday afternoon we had a fantastic Samba Bamba session.



Team Ullswater

Another busy week for Team Ullswater! We have finalised our own story continuation of The Nowhere Emporium, and, as expected, the results were fantastic. So many different ideas and writing techniques were used to really bring the descriptions to life.

As mathematicians, we have been learning about area and how to calculate and compare these in real life terms. There has been lots of investigation and practical elements to our maths lessons this week but everyone has grasped the concept really well.

As scientists, we conducted a timed experiment to see the effects of differently heated water would have on dissolving. It was very interesting to see whose hypotheses were correct and make sure our testing was fair and controlled.

As geographers, it was rather emotional to learn about the animals becoming extinct in the Rainforests BUT we have conducted research into the reasons why and how this is preventable. Using our persuasive skills, we have started to create cases to protect the animals and their habitats and learnt about what impacts they have on the world.

We are beginning our new writing unit today, which will include lots of questioning, fact finding and reference to our geography work, I am sure the children will love to watch some documentaries or clips from David Attenborough to help develop their understanding as we begin to write a biography all about him.

Next week will be a lot of fun with various different activities and creative

elements to the week to recognise the Chinese New Year. Have a lovely weekend!



Team Grasmere

Another busy week in Grasmere! This week in maths, we have been mastering the expanded multiplication method. We focused on multiplying 2-digit numbers by 1-digit numbers. The children have been practicing breaking numbers into tens and ones to make calculations easier and more accurate. In science, we have been investigating electric circuits. We explored what happens when we add more components, like bulbs, to a circuit. The class noticed that as we added more bulbs, the lights became dimmer. This helped us understand how electricity is shared in a circuit and how components affect the flow of the current. In English, we have been reading *The Lost Happy Endings* by Carol Ann Duffy. The children have been writing character descriptions of Jub, using

expanded noun phrases and similes to make their writing more detailed.

In geography, we have been learning to use 4-figure grid references. The children practiced finding locations on a map.

In RE, we have been learning about Kumbh Mela and why it is an important place of pilgrimage for Hindus. We explored how this event brings millions of people together and the significance of rituals performed there.

In our online safety lesson, we have been discussing adverts and pop-ups. The children learned how to recognise them and why it's important to be careful when clicking links online.

Well done Team Grasmere!



Team Ennerdale

This week in Year 5, the children have been working hard across the curriculum and have shown a really positive attitude to their learning. In English, we have moved on to a new writing unit based on David Attenborough, while in

maths we have been busy learning about regrouping when dividing, with many pupils now showing increased confidence by completing their homework and classwork in tandem. In science, the children enjoyed carrying out an investigation into how to create a solution using teabags and different water temperatures, discovering that warmer water causes the tea to infuse more quickly, and in geography we learnt about the Amazon River and how it affects life around the world. On Thursday, pupils took part in a brilliant team-building session with Kane, where they worked together to create challenging obstacle courses, and great fun was had by all. Well done to Oliver, who was last week's Reading Heroes competition winner, and to Dom, who was our Class Dojo Draw winner.



Team Thirlmere

It's been another busy week for Team Thirlmere.

In English, we have been editing our adventure stories and writing up a neat version. We have really enjoyed this piece of writing and the text it is based on.

As mathematicians, we have been learning about Algebra, learning about sequences, formula and expressions. We enjoyed football with Stuart and PE with Reece. In music, we have continued our work using Garage Band to layer sounds, recreating Twinkle Twinkle. In Science, we carried out an investigation to find out what would happen to the brightness of a bulb if we added more bulbs to the circuit. We found that they get dimmer due to sharing the energy that the power source provides.

In the afternoons, we have been continuing our SATs revision, going over past papers to support our learning and showing how to answer questions in maths and reading papers.

Well done Team Thirlmere, keep up the hard work!



Team Windermere

We have had quite a productive week in Windermere. It's great to see that pupils are independently finding time to go over knowledge that they have previously learnt. There's lots of revision going on both in school and at home. In English, pupils have been writing their final piece of writing for our unit of work on adventure stories. I have been really impressed with the work pupils have produced, there are some great stories. Pupils have followed the feedback they have been given to improve their work, upleveling vocabulary and making sure that a wider range of punctuation is used to guide the reader.

In Maths, we started a new unit of work on algebra. At first, pupils were a bit unsure and nervous about this topic but once they saw how easy it was, this seemed to boost confidence. Pupils began to spot patterns and make links.

In Music, pupils have been completing their 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' performances, using both single notes and chords to record the piece. Many of the pupils in Windermere are looking forward to going to Manchester next week for Young Voices 2026.

Another busy week in Windermere.



**Please note:
Diary dates are subject to
change - please check
back weekly for updates**

February

9th - 10th - Chinese Plate Painting
11th - 12th - Chinese Dance Workshop
12th - Young Voices

Half Term

Monday 16th - Friday 20th February

March

24th - 26th - Mental Health workshops
9th - 13th - Science Week
9th & 10th - Science Fiction workshops
10th & 11th - Forces and Magnets workshops
10th - Boccia tournament
12th & 13th - Forensic Science workshops
16th - 20th - Year 6 swimming
17th - U-Dance
23rd - 27th - Year 6 swimming
23rd - Easter Service at St Michaels Church
2pm (tickets on sale soon)
26th - Phunk Foods Year 6 parents

Easter Holidays

Monday 30th March - Friday 10th April

April

14th - Swimming gala
27th - 29th - Y4 Winmarleigh Hall trip
27th - 29th - Phunk Foods Y4

May

4th - Bank holiday SCHOOL CLOSED
5th - 6th - Y4 Winmarleigh residential
11th - 14th - Y6 SATs Week
11th - Y4 trip to Vindolanda
13th - 15th - Y5 York Residential

**Do you have concerns
about a child in Cumberland?**



If you are worried that a child is at risk of immediate harm please contact:

**Cumberland Safeguarding Hub on
0333 240 1727**

Email: safeguarding.hub@cumberland.gov.uk

(PLEASE PASSWORD PROTECT THE EMAIL AND SEND THE PASSWORD
IN A FURTHER EMAIL)

**Out of working hours – contact the
Emergency Duty Team on 0300 373 2724**

**To speak to a Local Authority Designated Officer
(LADO) for advice call**

0300 303 3892

or email lado@cumbria.gov.uk

To speak to the Cumberland Early Help Team call

0300 303 3896

Or email early.help@cumberland.gov.uk

Victoria School

Nursery, Infant and Junior Term Dates 2025/2026

Autumn Term 2025

Starts: Wednesday 3rd September 2025

Half Term: Monday 27th - Friday 31st October 2025

Ends: Friday 19th December 2025

Spring Term 2026

Starts: Tuesday 6th January 2026

Half Term: Monday 16th - Friday 20th February 2026

Ends: Friday 27th March 2026

Summer Term 2026

Starts: Monday 13th April 2026

Half Term: Friday 22nd May - Friday 29th May 2026

Ends: Friday 17th July 2026

Good Friday: 3rd April

Easter Sunday: 5th April

Easter Monday: 6th April

May bank holiday: Monday 4th May 2026

INSET DAYS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026

INSET are determined locally

Please note these may differ from Cumbria County Council term dates

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SUPPORTING SAFE USE OF AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly woven into young people's digital lives. It can offer some educational benefits and day-to-day assistance; however, it also raises concerns about misinformation, privacy, fairness, and safety. This guide provides parents and educators with practical strategies to support young people to navigate AI tools responsibly, and to use them safely and with discernment.

1 DEMYSTIFY WHAT AI REALLY IS

Children encounter AI in most online places, including games, streaming platforms, and school tools. Explain that AI uses patterns from past data to make decisions, but it doesn't think or feel like humans. Use age-appropriate examples, like how recommendations on YouTube or Netflix work, to build understanding and prevent false beliefs about AI being all-knowing or alive.

2 TALK ABOUT RISKS OF MISINFORMATION

AI can create convincing false information, including deepfake videos, photos, and fake 'facts'. Encourage children to think critically about what they see and read. Teach them to double-check information using reliable sources, to look at images and videos carefully, and to ask an adult if something doesn't seem right.

3 DISCUSS DATA AND PRIVACY

Explain that AI systems learn by analysing lots of data, sometimes including personal information. Help young people to be mindful of what they share online and why protecting personal data matters. Model good habits like reading app permissions together or reviewing what's collected by voice assistants like Alexa or Siri.

4 ENCOURAGE CREATIVE USE OF AI

Support children, when using AI tools, to explore ideas, make art, or build projects. This fosters confidence, imagination, and independent thinking. When children use AI creatively, rather than just passively consuming it, they are more likely to stay engaged and make thoughtful choices.

5 USE AGE-APPROPRIATE AI TOOLS

Not all AI platforms are suitable for children. Choose tools designed for education or creativity, with clear safety policies. Review terms of use and privacy settings, and help children use them in age-appropriate ways. For example, some chatbot tools mimic conversation but should only be used with guidance and boundaries in place.

6 USE AI TOGETHER

Exploring AI tools together can help adults understand how they work and spot potential issues. Try co-writing a story with an AI writing assistant or experimenting with an AI art tool. This encourages curiosity, helps you stay informed about the latest AI tools, and allows you to reinforce safe and respectful use while modelling critical thinking.

7 SET BOUNDARIES FOR AI USE

Establish when, where, and how AI tools can be used, just as you would with any digital technology. For example, you might agree not to use AI tools to complete school assignments without permission, or to avoid unsupervised use of voice assistants. Consistent boundaries help manage overuse and misuse.

8 WATCH FOR OVERRELIANCE

Some AI tools, like homework help apps, may be tempting shortcuts. Encourage children to use AI to support their thinking, not replace it. Celebrate effort and process over perfect answers. Reinforce that mistakes are part of learning and that relying too heavily on AI can limit real understanding.

9 TEACH DIGITAL ETHICS AND LITERACY

Help children explore how AI works, where it might be biased, and why ethical thinking matters. Building digital literacy alongside ethical awareness ensures children engage with AI critically, not just conveniently. Help young people to understand that not all people use AI for legitimate purposes; some use it for malicious reasons. Encourage questions about fairness, representation, and who benefits from certain tools; talk about algorithms, echo chambers, and the impact of automation on daily life.

10 STAY CURIOUS AND INVOLVED

AI is developing rapidly, and staying informed helps you support the young people in your care. Follow trusted sources for updates and keep the conversation going. If a child brings up a new AI trend or tool, take the opportunity to learn about it together. Showing interest builds trust and strengthens digital resilience.

Meet Our Expert

Home to the world's largest CPD library for educators, The National College has transformed the way education establishments go about developing their workforces and managing compliance. Our three memberships help all phases and types of setting raise standards, save time, reduce risk, and build a culture of improvement.

#WakeUpWednesday®

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