



Dame Ellen Pinsent School

Spring Term Newsletter - 2024

Where children are happy; developing independence and confidence, so that they can be their very best.



Head Teacher Updates



Curriculum

Our curriculum continues to inspire our children to develop independence and confidence so that they can be their very best within each of our curriculum pathways. I have put the pathway below with the class groups as a reminder as to what pathway each class is in. If you want to read more about the pathway, then please visit our website.

- **Seedlings** – Bunnies, Woodpeckers, Squirrels and Ladybirds
- **Orchard** – Otters, Deers and Crickets
- **Woodlands** – Bumblebees, Wildcats, Grasshoppers, Wildcats, Badgers and Robins

Each ½ term our Curriculum has a different topic that ends in a 'Let's Connect Event'. Every class participates in this, regardless of Pathway. This term our topic was Snow White (with a focus on performing arts) for the first ½ term and Birmingham and the UK (with Geography as the focus) for the 2nd. After Easter our topic will be Food from Birmingham and the UK (with a focus on technology) and the 2nd summer ½ term will be Disney's Brave (where music will be the focus).

We also ensure we enrich our curriculum with many different visits, trips and events. This term children from different classes have accessed Golf, Tennis, Football, Dance, Dodford Farm, local parks and cafes, Attwell Farm, CBSO and we hosted a performance of Snow White in school, by M&M Productions.

In school we also put on a number of different Lunchtime clubs. We have over 10 different clubs running throughout the week that the children can choose to come along to. These vary from board games to film club to soft play and tennis. Over 60 % of the children have opted to come along to at least one lunchtime club.

Birmingham Special School Cooperative Trust

Through the Birmingham Special Schools Cooperative Trust, we have several different opportunities that run for both the children and the staff. On the 19th of March we took a group of children to the BSSCT Forest Schools Day hosted at Wilson Stuart School

BSSCT Arts project.

In the summer term all the schools in the Cooperative Trust are taking part in a Trust wide Arts project, that has been supported by a substantial charitable grant. Each school has a visiting artist and a theme (Dame Ellen will be working with fabric and sculpture with an environmental focus working with Hipkiss and Graney <https://www.hipkissandgraney.com>). The work we are all doing will culminate in BSSCT SEND Arts Exhibition at the MAC from 22nd – 28th June, there will be a weekend of activities for families and from 24th – 27th June schools will be able to visit for workshops and film screenings. We will share full details nearer the time.

Some of the grant will also be used to develop new professional development films 'SEN arts ideas'. We will be utilizing last year's artists to demonstrate practical activities teachers can facilitate in the classroom to support creativity and arts curriculums.

Attendance

We strive to have every child in school every day, but we do understand that sometimes that children are not well enough to attend. One of the ways we work to support good attendance is to adopt the LA's 'FAST-Track to Attendance' Procedures.

All schools, academies and alternative providers and independent schools in Birmingham should follow these procedures, including where there are concerns about unacceptable levels of individual pupil absence. It seeks to improve pupil attendance and act quickly where there is unauthorised absence. The procedure is designed to reflect the model of support outlined in 'Working together to improve school attendance' and has 6 steps:

1. Expect – we do expect high standards of attendance from all pupils and the current school attendance levels are 93.4%
2. Monitor – we regularly monitor our attendance data so we can try to resolve any poor attendance
3. Listen and Understand – when a pattern is spotted, we discuss this with parents/families to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
4. Facilitate Support - we try to help remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help referral.

5. Formalise Support - Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.
6. Enforce - Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, the FAST-track to Attendance procedures enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

We welcome working with all families to support children to be in school every day. The first 4 steps of this procedure usually work well and our overall attendance is very positive. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case and the LA has prosecuted one of our families this academic year (£237.00) through this FAST-track process.

Staffing

This term we have welcomed Mr Doxford to Dame Ellen as part of our teaching team. He leads the Crickets class and with his welcoming approach and passion for SEND education he has already made a positive impression on both the children and staff alike. We are excited for the knowledge and inspiration he will bring to the Dame Ellen community.

We also welcome Charlotte as a Teaching Assistant to Dame Ellen. She has been working with the Grasshoppers team and is quickly becoming a real asset, supporting the children's learning and fostering a positive approach.

Welcome aboard both!

Best wishes

Mrs Fountain

Curriculum

Snow White Let's Connect

Spring 2 was our whole school topic of 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves'. We started the term off with a performance of the story by M&M Theatre productions in the school hall. The children were so excited to watch the performance and it was a great introduction to the characters and story.





Throughout the rest of the half term, each class had their learning themed around the topic of Snow White with a heavy focus on drama and performing arts. Many of the children, (and staff!), dressed up as characters from the story and had a go at retelling the story.







For our 'Let's Connect' day we turned the classrooms into scenes from the story, offering an immersive experience into the woodlands and setting of the story. Some classes set up sensory trays to allow children to experience walking through the woods and the classrooms were filled with light and sound to replicate the setting. Classes were found re-enacting the story, some with alternative endings, and some classes made silent movies. Robins class hosted a Snow White themed escape room and invited the kitchen staff to take part. Orchard pathway invited some children from Fox Hollies school to come and experience the event and the visitors had a wonderful time.





There was apple bobbing, sandwich making and role-play...





PSHE – Community Action

We have reconnected with a local care home in Moseley called Anita Stone Court. We visited them regularly before lockdown and we are so pleased to restart our visits there. Each week, Wildcats class will be visiting the care home and spending time talking to, and doing activities with, the residents. We believe it is really important to have good community links and that the children's presence will really benefit some of the elderly residents, improving communication skills and developing a mutual respect. We will update you further as our visits progress and share any success stories on our Dojo Page.





World Book Day

Thursday 7th March was our annual World Book Day event in school with the theme being 'Read your way'. Children and staff were invited to come to school dressed as their favourite book

characters and to talk about what they love about their character. Reading for pleasure was encouraged throughout the day in a variety of ways, chosen by the children.

During the afternoon we had a whole-school scarecrow festival on the field. Each class made a scarecrow of their favourite book character and there were some staff entries too: Spongebob scarecrow made by Miss Parker and Mrs Gray, Highway Rat scarecrow made by Mrs Cater and Aimee Whittaker.

The children used maps, in line with this term's Geography topic 'Birmingham and the UK', to go and identify where each scarecrow was found. We had some wonderful entries and the children thoroughly enjoyed seeing each other's creations.







Pathways



Seedlings Pathway

Our Snow White 'Let's Connect' day during Spring 1 was a great success. The Seedlings classes came together to celebrate all of our learning surrounding the topic. We set up each classroom as a different theme; Grumpy's self-regulation station, the dwarf cottage and the enchanted forest. The children enjoyed 'poisonous' apple bobbing, a barefoot forest walk and relaxation time. They enjoyed playing and exploring with their friends from different classes.



We continue to enjoy coming together for our Work-Out-Wednesday lunch clubs and our weekly Singing and Signing assemblies. We have some exciting class trips coming up during Spring 2; trips to the park and drives around the local area to spot famous landmarks such as Cadbury World linked to our topic Birmingham and the UK.

Special characters will be coming home with the Seedling children to join their weekend fun around Birmingham. Characters include Peppa Pig, Paddington Bear and Stitch.

Orchards Pathway

The children in Orchard have had a wonderful spring term, we started January with the topic 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves'. Each week was themed around elements and principles of the story.

We finished the topic with a let's connect event, where we invited some children and adults from Fox Hollies school to come in to experience an immersive sensory experience with us.



Spring two has seen the introduction of a new topic called 'Birmingham and the UK'. Again, each week has been themed around different elements of this topic including my house, transport as well as exploring the religions, culture and diversity in Birmingham.





For the World Book Day celebrations on the 7th March the Orchard pathway participated in the whole school scarecrow trail. All classes worked together, both children and adults to create numerous scarecrows to represent one of our favourite Julia Donaldson stories – The Gruffalo. The children enjoyed activities within the classrooms and some even dressed up as their favourite book characters.



As part of the Orchard pathway this year the children have been offered the opportunity to attend a one night residential to Dodford Children's Farm in Bromsgrove. As part of a transition, each of the three orchard classes have spent a day visiting the farm. You can see from the pictures the happiness and joy this brought to the children. You can find out more about the farm by visiting this link; [Home | Dodford Childrens Farm \(dodfordfarm.co.uk\)](http://dodfordfarm.co.uk).







Woodlands Pathway

Spring Term has certainly been a very busy one in Woodlands Pathway! It kicked off with a bang with our first whole pathway trip to the CBSO in Birmingham City Centre to watch a live orchestra perform Alice in Wonderland. The children were absolutely mesmerised by the performance and enjoyed singing along to the repeated songs.





Following this, we also had a visit from a pantomime company who performed a version of Snow White to link to our topic. The children were laughing along to all of the silly moments so it was a great way to hook them in to the Snow White story.



Lots of classes produced a variety of creative pieces to summarise our Snow White learning. We had film trailers produced by the Grasshoppers class team, green screen animation from Chipmunks class and lots of role play and acting from Badgers, Robins, Bumblebees and Wildcats.



In Spring 2, our topic changed to a geography focus with our current learning being on Birmingham and the UK. This has provided lots of opportunities for children to practice road safety, whether that is in the classroom, on the playground, or on a walk around the local area.









There have been lots of trips linking to our Birmingham and the UK topic. Chipmunks caught the number 18 bus to Broad Lane Café where they ordered their own snack costing £2. Badgers and Bumblebees have got an upcoming trip planned to the Thinktank, and Grasshoppers class will be visiting Legoland to complete a workshop creating famous Birmingham landmarks out of Lego!

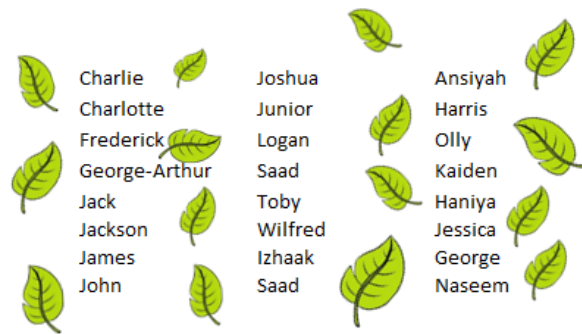


All updates will also be shared on the School [Dojo page](#).

Kindness Tree

We would like to give recognition to the following children who have shown special kindness to staff and / or their friends within the school. Details of the children's kindness are written onto a leaf and placed onto the Kindness Tree in reception.





"Kindness Is Showing Someone They Matter"

Parent Information

Key dates



- Friday 22nd March 2024 - break up from School, normal time
- Monday 8th April 2024 - back to School, normal time
- Wednesday 17th April - Eid Assembly - Bumblebee's parents only
- Wednesday 24th April 2024 - coffee morning, 9.30am - 10.30am (all welcome)
- 7th - 14th May 2024 - Book Fair in School (more information to follow)
- 20th - 24th May 2024 - Do and Discover Week
- Friday 24th May 2024 - break up from School, normal time
- Monday 3rd June 2024 - back to School, normal time

Other News

School Governors



We have a strong Governing Body that represent and challenge the school well. They are immensely supportive, bringing a variety of skills and knowledge to further enhance our provision. To view the governors roles' please visit our school [website](#) for further details.

New Parent Governor Bio - Amundip Supra



A small introduction to myself as a parent governor. I am a mum to two children. My son attends DEP and has ASD, my daughter attends a mainstream school and has no neurological challenges. I'm really happy to have been selected as parent governor. I'm extremely passionate about SEND and the challenges we as parents and a community face. I have set up a community group in Leamington Spa called Inluseva which is supporting Neurodiverse and disabled families by raising awareness amongst the south Asian community. I have been doing talks amongst the congregation on Sunday mornings for a number of weeks to talk about neurodiversity and what it means and the impacts and the challenges. Further to this we now host a monthly event for the families and community to come and join in and network.

I work full time in the complaints field and have done so for over 20 years and have experience within the legal, financial services and utilities industries. I have worked in compliance to ensure the right outcomes have been achieved in accordance with regulatory requirements.

We have many family members who suffer with mental health and also neurodiversity and this is perhaps why i am so strongly of the view that we need to educate and make space for them in society

New Staff Governor Bio - Lisa Tombs



Hello, My name is Lisa Tombs, and I recently joined the Governors Board in October 2023.

I am a class teacher at Dame Ellen Pinsent School. I have been here for about 3 years now. I decided that I wanted to become a Governor of the school, as I care about the children, staff and what that means for the school's future. I want to make sure that I can help and support the important decisions that need to be made to ensure the smooth running of the school. As a previous parent of Dame Ellen Pinsent School, it is imperative to me that all the children are happy and getting the education they deserve. It's something I am passionate about. I am excited for this journey and to see what we can achieve together for the children of Dame Ellen Pinsent School.

School contact information

Dame Ellen Pinsent School

Ardencote Road

Birmingham

B13 0RW

Office hours are 8:00 to 4.45pm, outside of these times the answering machine will be in operation.

For all enquiries, call or email Elaine Eustace (Senior Office Manager)

Telephone: 0121 675 2487

Email address: enquiry@deps.ac

Contacts

Headteacher - Mrs Denise Fountain

Chair of Governors – Mr Andy Punch

Should you wish to contact the Headteacher or Chair of Governors by mail or phone, please use the main school address and telephone number (above)

For all general enquiries please contact the school office on the main school number above, or email enquiry@deps.ac

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Mrs Cater (SDSL)
- Mrs Fountain
- Miss Parker
- Mrs Gray
- Miss Whittaker

SENCO

- Mrs Cater
- Miss Guest (Assistant SENCO)

School opening hours:

Monday to Friday 09:10 to 15:10 = 31.4 hours

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint please contact the school office in the first instance on 0121 675 2487. Our Senior Office Manager, Elaine will take your details and get a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to return your call. Our full Complaints Procedure can be read on our [Policies page](#).

School parent apps

- [DEPS Twitter](#)
- [Class Dojo](#)
- [School Money / Teachers2Parents](#)

