Termly Newsletter – Term 1

It has been fantastic to see the continued efforts and progress across the school this term. I would like to praise the ongoing commitment to our whole-school reading programme, with staff continuing to promote a positive reading culture and support pupils in developing their literacy skills.

Engagement with our extracurricular clubs has also been encouraging, alongside opportunities for pupils to represent the school in football fixtures, developing teamwork, resilience and sportsmanship. The Wheel of Independence continues to be a real success, providing pupils with valuable opportunities to develop essential life skills, build confidence and increase their independence in preparation for adulthood. Our kitchen has also been a hive of activity, supporting a range of targeted interventions as well as practical learning through the Hospitality and Catering course. These opportunities reflect the dedication of our staff in providing a rich, engaging and meaningful curriculum that enables our pupils to develop their skills, celebrate their achievements and prepare for their next steps.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our parents and carers for their continued support, encouragement and partnership. Working together is essential in ensuring that our pupils feel supported, achieve their potential and make progress both in school and beyond.

Mickey Capeling – Headteacher

Mercury Class – Brad Kelly

Mercury Class have had a fantastic term, and we are incredibly proud of all the pupils and their achievements. Everyone has worked hard, tried their very best and shown a positive attitude towards their learning, particularly during assessments. We have enjoyed some wonderful experiences together, including our 5K sponsored walk, a visit to Wildwood Zoo and a trip to Blean Woods. The pupils also took part enthusiastically in our inter-house sports competition, demonstrating great teamwork, determination and sportsmanship. Attendance has been good, and it has been lovely to see our new pupils settling into Mercury Class so well and becoming part of our class community. Well done, Mercury Class, for all your hard work, enthusiasm and effort this term!

Mars Class – Hannah Blount

What an incredible start to the year Mars class have had! The students have come back from summer with increased maturity and a hardworking attitude towards their learning which has been amazing to see!

We have been very busy starting some completely new subjects including Hospitality and Catering, Land-Based Studies and Creative Craft. In Hospitality and Catering we have been understanding different types of places that serve food and food services, including understanding the different between a business and a charity. The students practiced their cutting skills with a knife and had the opportunity to pick a starter recipe that they wanted to make and they cooked it over in the therapy house kitchen.

In Land-Based Studies, we have been understanding the steps that go into caring for the animals and creating a plan on how to look after them to ensure they are happy and healthy.

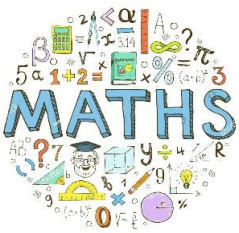
In Creative Craft, we have been learning about the safety rules for within the workshop, completed some isometric drawing, learning about the different types of wood and different tools, then finally creating a key ring out of plastic using all of their new knowledge.

The students have thoroughly enjoyed these new subjects and the new learning within them! In our core subjects, the students have worked incredibly hard. In Maths, we have been recapping place value and the four key written methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In English, we have been looking at non-chronological reports, and the students have written some fantastic reports about lions! The subject that I think the students have found the most interesting though, is Science! We have been doing Biology and learning about animal and plant cells, specialised cells within the human body and genetics. The students also had the opportunity to use the microscopes to look at different specimen, and they made their own model of DNA which they thoroughly enjoyed! After such a successful start to the year, we are all looking forward to Term 2 and the learning that is in store!





Neptune Class- Ciaran Doyle



Neptune

What a great start to the year. Students came back focussed and ready for the year ahead. This is an important year for Neptune, as all of them will sit some form of assessment.

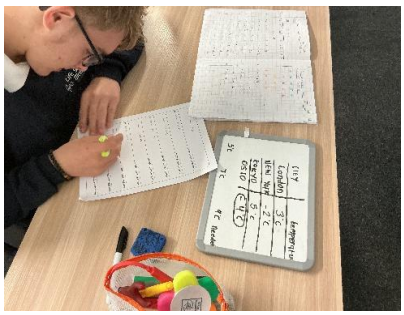




It is also a transition year for most. We had a little change around of seating arrangements and the class are working great as a team! In maths, we used our whiteboards to check understanding for any concepts before tackling number work, which will continue for term 2.

Students learnt how to use BIDMAS and negative signs in number work. I would like to give a big shout out to Neptune's TAs - Harry and Elaine – who play such an important role in Neptune's learning!

Saturn



This term students worked brilliantly again. They learnt lots of new vocabulary and new work. Students focussed on times tables and combined this knowledge with math's problems.



Jupiter

Firstly, a big congratulations to everyone who took external exams in the summer, as it is a very big achievement! This news and momentum helped the student off to a great start for term 1. The students have come back ready to learn and have made good progress learning vital skills for their assessments. As well as revising key vocab every lesson, the class have worked on angles and shapes this term. The students have also done some practice papers, so that they are equipped with these important skills.



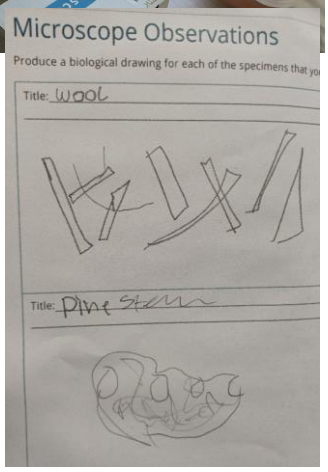
Neptune

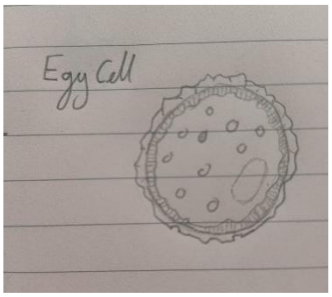
This term students studied biology and really enjoyed using the microscopes. The class engaged well with the topic, and we will build on our knowledge next term.



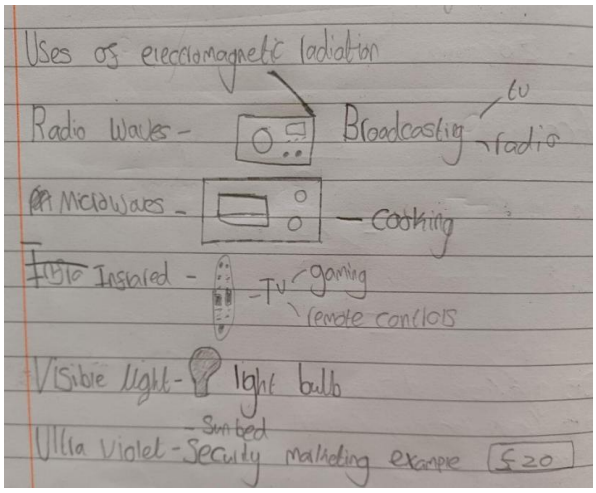


Students learnt about cells and got to look at various cells through the lens of a microscope! Students drew what they saw and there are some fantastic sketches of the part of these cells in their books.





Saturn

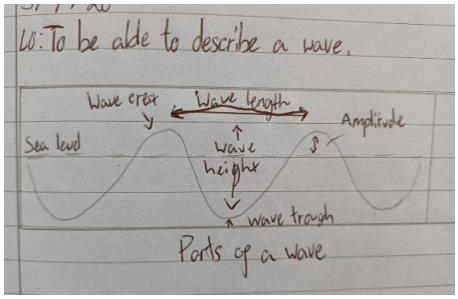


This term students started a brand-new subject. Students started the second part of the chemistry course. The class engaged brilliantly with this and learnt lots of new vocabulary. This topic is relatable to everyday life. As many of the words can be linked to everyday activities. Examples include hobbies, cooking and travel.

Jupiter



This term students started waves and radiation, which they embraced with gusto! Students learnt about the parts of a wave, before moving onto practical uses and dangers of various dangers of various types of waves on the electromagnetic spectrum.



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Students did an experiment for half-life of radioactive sources which was good fun. Students worked in small groups for the task, and the photos show how independently they worked. finished the term with an assessment. Well done all. Have a lovely half-term holiday.

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Saturn Class – Jo shaw

Saturn class have settled in well. They are already forging good friendships and developing a sense of class camaraderie.

In September, we performed assembly to the school, which focused on Autumn; the changes in weather, nature, strange facts, such as, people who are born in Autumn are more likely to live to 100, and the clocks going back on Sunday 25th October – don't forget you get an extra hour in bed! It was fantastic to see students taking part who usually find reading, in front of others, a challenge. It was no mean feat trying to pronounce chronological and astronomical repeatedly for the staff, let alone the students.

So far, the class have read a combined 256, 069 words from 6 books, during DEAR time. Let's hope this continues to rise, as students complete their books and develop their love of reading.

Mental Health Awareness 5k sponsored walk

After the success of last year's 5k walk, our wear yellow day is now set to become an annual event, raising money for worthwhile causes. Our chosen charity, this year, was the British Heart Foundation.

We all set off after lunch, to see who could reach the Viking Ship first. This year Mercury class were striding ahead, closely followed by Saturn, with Mickey and Nick taking up the rear. A mass of yellow made the day brighter than the forecast, although the rain stayed away. This did not discourage two furry ducks who made a fabulous effort in their outfits.

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Thank you to all students and staff for making this event successful, and for all your generous donations. Please feel free to donate, if you did not sponsor. Our final amount raised will be announced next term.

Our next event is **Children in Need** on **Friday 13th November**. It will be non-school uniform day with a cake sale. Any donations of cake will be greatly appreciated.

English – Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune

English for KS4 consists of a combination of Entry Level, Functional Skills and GCSE, although all classes follow the GCSE curriculum.

This term we have studied *Jamaica Inn* by Daphne du Maurier. Our focus has been on the use of language techniques, such as, metaphors, similes, personification, adverbs and adjectives and how they are used to describe settings and characters.

This led into the structure of texts, looking at the beginning, middle and end of the, surrounded by the theme of weather. Analysis of the characters has been interesting, whilst investigating how each one represents an element of weather, using quotes and inference.

One of our descriptive language tasks included the use of a picture, as a guide, and writing a short piece about travelling on a bus. Here is an example from one of our talented students:

As the bus trundled through the mud, I looked out at the darkening, cloudy sky. The setting sun occasionally peeked out from behind the hills like a child playing hide-and-seek. I squinted as the hills slowly became flatter, and I could glimpse some trees. The clouds floated lazily, like algae on a pond, and then I heard somebody yawn next to me.
The woman next to me asked for the time, and I looked at my watch. 6:50pm. She goes silent once more, and I look at the young boy sitting next to her, who had just come back from a long and tiring school week. As usual, he had bought some books and a bag of chocolate raisins. He flipped to the next page, the chocolate on his thumbs making a small imprint on the end of the page. He looked up, wiping some of the chocolate off his mouth, and waved. I waved back, then continued looking outside.
I smelt the familiar scent of chocolate, however subdued it was. I shivered, wishing I had brought at least a sweater, and sighed. All that I could taste was a small hint of mint, and a smaller hint of cool chocolate ice cream. This day was going to eat into my free time…

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Jupiter Class- James Norman

This term has started off with a bang. Jupiter's pupils have settled in well and are keen to reach their full potential. Within our form and Thrive time, some pupils are doing an extra GCSE in the form of art. Jupiter also created and delivered an assembly around farming in the UK, and we have joined together to play a game of Monopoly. This has helped us with dealing with money and with the art or bartering. Next term we are looking to contact pupils from a school in Thailand.

Land based

Within Land Based course we have been working on unit A2 which is a careers-based unit. We have looked at our current grades and our predicted grades and discussed how we can reach them by the end of the year. We also had the chance to spend time talking to a local farmer about the future of farming and how his farm has had to adapt to survive. Hugh Richards took us on a virtual farm visit and introduced us to his herd of cow and his pride and joy... The bull named Samson.





Hospitality & Catering

We have been preparing ourselves for the NEA task which will happen in term two. Pupils have been researching ideas that they might like to create for their practical exam. The practical exam will be 3 hours long and pupils will need to bring in their own ingredients for their two selected meals.

Letters have been sent home explaining the process. Meanwhile the hospitality and catering pupils have also practiced their skills and covered level one and two skills by creating cheese and bacon omelettes and cheese and ham pizzas from scratch. They really did look very delicious!





Academic year 2026/2027
Important dates

Term 2 –

Friday 13th November – Children in need – Cake sale and Dress down day, details to follow

Wednesday December 2nd – Whole school trip – Pantomime – please return permission slips and payments by November 13th.

Friday 11th December – Student talent Show (students only to attend)
Friday 11th December – Christmas Jumper day

Monday 14th December – Parent / Teacher consultations – Details to follow nearer the time.

Tuesday 15th December – Whole school Christmas Lunch. on this day, school dinner will be Traditional Christmas roast and not the normal school menu

Term dates

Term 1 6 Weeks and 2 days	Wednesday 2nd September 2026 (Inset Day) students not to attend First day of Term 1: Thursday 3rd September 2026 Last Day of Term 1: Thursday 15th October 2026 Friday 16th October 2026 (Inset day) Students not to attend
Term 2 6 Weeks and 3 days	First Day of Term 2: Monday 2nd November 2026 Last Day of Term 2: Wednesday 16th December 2026 Finish at 12:30pm
Term 3 5 Weeks and 4 days	Monday 4th January 2027 (Inset Day) students not to attend First Day of Term 3: Tuesday 5th January 2027 Last Day of Term 3: Friday 12th February 2027
Term 4 4 weeks and 4 days	First Day of Term 4: Monday 22nd February 2027 Last Day of Term 4: Thursday 25th March 2027 @12:30pm
Term 5 7 weeks	First Day of Term 5: Monday 12th April 2027 Monday 3rd May (Bank Holiday) Last Day of Term 5: Friday 28th May 2027
Term 6 6 weeks	First Day of Term 6: Monday 7th June 2027 Last Day of Term 6: Friday 16th July 2027 Finish at 12:30pm

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