

Newsletter



We have had another incredible half term filled with aspiring, achieving and thriving! We hope you have a wonderful Christmas holiday and that you get to spend some quality time with your families.



Holidays

We will welcome students back on Monday 5th January 2026!

We hope you have a wonderful break spent with family and friends.

Spring 1 Term Dates

Spring 1 term: 5.1.26 - 13.2.26

*Half term break: 16.2.26 - 20.2.26.
Students return on 23.2.26*

Things to do during the holidays

[Holiday activities and food](#) | Nottinghamshire County Council:

The Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) will continue to support the wellbeing of children between 5 and 16 years by providing a variety of activities and food during school holidays. They offer activities and food for children who receive benefits-related free school meals during the spring (Easter), summer, autumn (October) and winter (Christmas) holidays across the county.

[Nottshelpyourself - Things to do:](#)

Notts Help Yourself is a fantastic resource containing links for you to find places to go and day trips which may be appropriate to your child(ren).

<https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/localoffer.page?newdirectorychannel=9-6>

Autumn 2 highlights

With so many amazing things happening every day, we have chosen a few highlights!



Some of our KS3 pupils took part in a Table Cricket Competition. They all played very well and were supportive of each other and opposing teams. New skills were put to practise, fun was had and we came 8th overall.



We revolutionised our Computing with 40 new iPads and a subscription to Purple Mash!



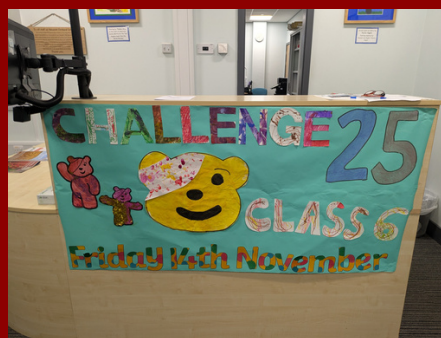
We welcomed students from Newton Bridge Academy to use our amazing facilities including our workshop.



Class 11 created home-made gifts and brought sweets to our local Hospice.



We had visitors all the way from Uzbekistan to learn about how we deliver high quality, specialist education.



For Children in Need we completed our 'Challenge Yourself to 25' with many students completing 25 laps around the track.



Class 7 went on an adventure to Belton House and were excellent ambassadors of the Orchard!

We welcomed over 20 local mainstream Primary school SENCOs to school for a tour of our facilities and to offer advice and expertise for how to support young people with SEND in their schools.

When parents and carers finally have the chance to spend some quality time with their child over Christmas, many face a familiar struggle to prise their young one's attention away from their phone, console, tablet or computer. Fun family bonding over the festive period, however, doesn't have to exclude devices. There are sackfuls of Christmas activities and ideas online which grown-ups and children can enjoy together. We've compiled our own 'nice list' of seasonal suggestions for how to...

MAKE THE MOST OF THE ONLINE WORLD THIS CHRISTMAS

1 EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

Budding bakers will relish helping out in the kitchen with some tasty festive treats. Spend some time together researching child-friendly Christmas recipes online (the BBC Good Food site is an excellent place to start), and then you and your little elves can rustle up gingerbread santas, marshmallow snowmen or reindeer shortbread. The only thing that's more fun is eating your creations afterwards!

WHEN THE SNOWMAN BRINGS THE SNOW...

2 THE OLD SONGS ARE THE BEST?

We've all had that Christmas compilation CD that was almost perfect, if it wasn't inexplicably missing one of your best-loved tracks. In this era of music streaming, however, your little helpers can assist you in compiling a definitive playlist of all your favourite seasonal songs - no more pining for The Pretenders or wishing for Wizzard.

3 DECK THE HALLS

There's no such thing as 'too many' Christmas trimmings! Let your child channel their excitement into some creative crafting, and you'll make memories as well as your own DIY decorations. There are loads of step-by-step guides online (including video walkthroughs on YouTube) for seasonal showpieces like paper plate angels, handprint wreaths and cupcake wrapper Christmas trees.

4 A WINTER'S TALE

Everyone enjoys a story at this time of year: after all, the whole celebration is based on an engrossing yarn. Sites such as Audible are an excellent way of entertaining excited young ones, with classics like Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and seasonal short stories by Enid Blyton alongside more contemporary Christmas tales by the likes of Tom Fletcher, JK Rowling and Ben Miller.

5 BROUGHT ME SOME CORN FOR POPPIN'

Snuggling up against the winter weather with the family (and a generous helping of chocolates) to enjoy a well-loved movie is a delightful Christmas tradition. The usual streaming services have some classic candidates on offer: *Home Alone* and *The Santa Clause* are on Disney+, while Amazon Prime has *Elf* and *The Grinch*, and Netflix goes with *The Princess Switch* and *The Christmas Chronicles*.

6 GUESS WHAT I FORGOT?

Friends and family pitting their wits against each other on Zoom, Teams or Skype really took off during lockdown, so why not revive the tradition over the holidays? Your questions could be on the biggest news, sport and showbiz stories of 2021, or be Christmas themed, or you could stick to classic general knowledge. Ideal for those days between Christmas and New Year.

7 A WORLD OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW

From turkey on the beach in Australia to roller-skating to church in Venezuela, Christmas is celebrated in a variety of ways worldwide - curious youngsters might enjoy discovering other nations' festive traditions online. Google's Santa Tracker is a brilliant (and free) starting point, with games, activities and animations to help children enjoy learning as they count down to the big day!

8 THE NEAR AND THE DEAR ONES

Between time constraints, distance, the weather and Covid precautions (or a combination of all four) for many families it just won't be possible to physically spend time with everyone they'd ideally like to this Christmas. Video calling technology, of course, takes some of the sting out of the disappointment by virtually transporting loved ones into your living room.

9 KIDS FROM ONE TO 92

If Santa's brought your young ones a console this year (or they already had one), it's a perfect excuse for some quality time while they gleefully trounce you at FIFA or Mario Kart. Digital versions of traditional board games like Monopoly and Cluedo are available on most platforms, too; get the whole household together for a modern take on some old-school family fun.

10 CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THOSE FACES

People used to express their gratitude for a thoughtful Christmas gift with a thank you card or a dutiful phone call. Not in the digital age: now your relations can see first-hand on video calls how delighted the children are with their presents - and even how they look in that slightly questionable hand-knitted pullover.

