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February Newsletter

Dear Belper Families,

Welcome Back! It is always lovely to see our students return from the half-term break feeling rested and ready to learn! After a few heavy downpours earlier this week, it is wonderful to see the first glimpse of sunshine and the early signs of spring, and we are excited for what the new season will bring.

Here is our news from the past month.

Update on the Academisation Process

As you may be aware, last year, along with ourselves, a cluster of schools from Belper applied to join the Embark Federation. Our cluster includes Pottery, Long Row and Milford Primaries. Here is a joint letter from the Headteachers at our schools regarding the ongoing academisation process:

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Subject: Update on the Academisation Process

We hope this letter finds you and your families well. We are writing to provide you with an update on the academisation process currently underway for our group of schools.

As many of you are aware, the decision to join an academy trust is driven by our collective commitment to providing the best possible education and opportunities for our children. The transition to academy status is a significant step that aims to enhance the quality of education, improve resources, and ensure sustainable development for our school communities.

You may also be aware that our schools have jointly identified The Embark Federation as the trust that can best support our school communities. The Embark Federation's wonderful ethos, family focus, and the support they bring to each of our schools align perfectly with our vision for the future. With their help, we are confident that we will continue to achieve our goals and provide the highest quality education for our pupils.

The Embark Federation is a Derbyshire trust working for our local communities. It has developed a fantastic reputation across the county and nationally. This has meant The Embark Federation is experiencing high demand across the county. In turn, the process of gaining official Department for Education (DfE) approval is taking a long time, and consequently, the timelines to join a trust for all of our schools have been extended. As the fastest-growing trust locally, Embark and the DfE are committed to managing this process carefully for all schools, in order to provide the best possible support for each school as they join.

As a group, we remain committed to ensuring a successful transition to the right academy trust for all our schools and communities.

Next Steps:

For the time being, our schools will remain local authority schools and continue to receive support from the county council, as well as each other. We are also in the fortunate situation of being able to work with The Embark Federation on a lot of school improvement priorities, as well as being able to send pupils out of school on many enrichment activities. We will continue to engage in this way over the coming year.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this period and look forward to sharing future updates when they are available.

Yours sincerely,
Matilde Warden

Headteacher, on behalf of:

- Belper School
- Pottery Primary School
- Long Row Primary School
- Milford Primary School

Farewell to Valued Staff Members

This past month, we have said sad goodbyes to two valued members of our school community. Carol Holmes, who has been with the school catering and cleaning team for an incredible 34 years, and Amanda Bull, who is leaving us after 19 years of service from the same team. Carol was our longest-serving member of staff, and both ladies will be deeply missed. We thank them for their dedication and wish them well in their next chapters.

Student Trip to Japan

We currently have 16 students and 2 members of staff on a trip to Japan, visiting our friends in Toyota City. They are having an incredible time! Here is a photo of them following a three-day visit to Ryujin Junior High School, where they have received a wonderful welcome and made many new friends. There will be more details in next month's newsletter.



'It Must Be Love' Music Event

Our music department and sixth-form students put on a fantastic night of entertainment earlier this month with **'It Must Be Love'**. The audience was treated to incredible performances from bands and individuals from the Sixth Form, Year 11, Year 10, and even two members of staff! It was a brilliant evening, with many students performing for the first time and doing themselves proud. Well done to everyone involved!

Young Enterprise Success

Each year, Sixth Form students have the opportunity to take part in Young Enterprise as part of their enrichment offer in Year 12. For the second year in a row, Belper School, were victorious and winner of the prestigious "Best Trade Stall" award winner for Derbyshire region. The winning team, "All Boxed Up" pipped fellow Belper team "Second Shine" at the post to take the award in Chesterfield on Thursday 27th February. Both sides beat the competition from Young Enterprise stalwart teams from Ecclesbourne, Queen Elizabeths Grammar School, Lady Manners and Dronfield Henry Fanshawe school.

Young Enterprise leader, Adam Walton, was extremely proud of both teams. He said "Both teams and participants did Belper School proud. Their dedication, customer service and attitude was absolutely commendable. It was an absolute pleasure to see them in action in Chesterfield".

Both teams head to the county final presentations at the end of March where they will pitch to judges. We are hoping to break our duck and see at least one of the teams, and maybe both, reach the East Midlands regional finals in May.



GCSE Revision Evening

A huge thank you to everyone who attended the revision evening last night as we begin our final push towards the GCSE examination window. We hope you found it useful, particularly the information about our online platforms that students can use for revision. Special thanks to Hannah, John, Adam, and Paul for their contributions to the evening. If you need any further information on supporting your child's revision, please don't hesitate to contact us at belperschool@belperschool.co.uk.

Spring Dress Code Reminder

As we start to enjoy some more pleasant weather, we understand that students may be planning their spring wardrobes. Please be reminded of our school dress code:

- **Tops** should be appropriate for school and not display any aspect of underwear or expose the midriff.
- **Footwear** should be suitable for school activities. Flip-flops and open-backed or open-toed shoes should not be worn. Crocs may be worn but should be in 'Sport Mode'.
- **Legwear** should be appropriate. Very short gym shorts should not be worn.
- **Coats** should be removed in lessons, including jackets and other outer garments. Jumpers and hoodies may remain on.
- **Hoods** from coats or hoodies should not be worn up inside the school building.
- **Piercings** must be removed for PE lessons. Students should not wear piercings that cannot be removed to school.

We have already noticed crop tops and strappy tops being worn, so just a reminder to save these for after school and weekends. Thank you for your support in this matter.

(P.S. – Since our last newsletter's request regarding pyjamas, we are pleased to report that no one has worn them to school!)

Upcoming Events

- **Week commencing 10 March – Year 9 1:1 pathways meetings:** Each student will receive an appointment with a senior leader to discuss their pathway choices.
- **6 March – World Book Day:** Information has been shared by Tamara in assemblies – An opportunity for our students to 'Be Involved'!
- **13 March – Year 10 Parents' Consultation Evening**
- **14 March – Attitude to Learning reports sent home**

The English Faculty newsletter can be found below. Please enjoy reading about what they have been up to so far this year! Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to a productive and exciting second half of the term!

With best regards,



Matilde Warden
Headteacher

English Faculty Newsletter

February 2025



Stewart Summerell

Associate Assistant Headteacher
Head of English Faculty

Head of English Faculty Welcome

Hello everyone and thank you for taking the time to read the English Faculty newsletter for the academic year so far. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Stewart Summerell, and I have had the pleasure of being Head of the English Faculty for over 10 years. I am immensely proud of the curriculum we have created for the students incorporating English Language, English Literature, Media Studies, and our most recent addition, Film Studies.

In this month's newsletter I am going to highlight some of the amazing things that have taken place so far this year, and what exciting opportunities still await the students in our care.

Forthcoming Events

World Book Day

Thursday 6th March 2025

Key Stage 3 (Years 7 – 9)

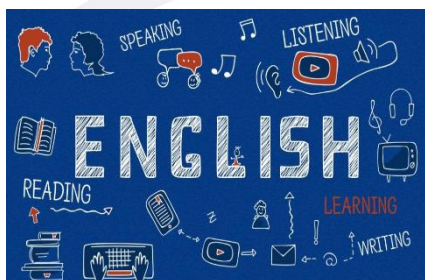
Our KS3 curriculum continues to develop, with an additional lesson this year devoted to the introduction of the new oracy curriculum, alongside the embedded library literacy lesson students take part in each fortnight, and the wide and diverse content we cover.

A major highlight of the year so far has been the introduction of the new oracy curriculum at KS3, exploring the four key strands of oracy: physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social and emotional. All students have a timetabled oracy lesson each two-week cycle allowing them to develop their skills, and confidence through structured talk. Overseen by our amazing literacy co-ordinator Tamara Smith, it has been very well received by the students, as well as external visitors who commented on how well spoken our Year 7 students were on a recent Secondary Mastery Specialist Maths Program visit.

Shobha and Nicola were amazed at the level of oracy amongst students displayed in all the classes we visited, with notable confidence when it came to healthy challenge, developing ideas and addressing misconceptions.'

Secondary Mastery
Specialist Maths Program
External Visitor





Key Stage 4 – (Years 10 and 11)

Our KS4 curriculum has also recently undergone some changes. All students take English Language and English Literature as core subjects at GCSE, but now students have the opportunity to study Media Studies and our latest addition Film Studies as part of their pathway. Both of these have proven very popular amongst students due to the excellent course design and the management of Steven Millar – our subject leader.

Another exciting development is the introduction of a different core text at GCSE English Literature – with A Christmas Carol being taught as the 19th century text across the whole of Year 10. This has led to high level of engagement and encouraging outcomes in the early assessments.

Year 11 have started their final run into the main summer series of exams, with the mock outcomes indicating another set of positive results for the students. As always, the English faculty team have gone above and beyond offering a wide range of revision, and study sessions catering for all levels of attainment and aspiration. The sessions are well attended and allow the students to become the best version of themselves and achieve the grades they need to go onto what they intend to do in September.

We again plan on offering the students the opportunity to take part in exam breakfasts before the English Language and English Literature exams, where they will receive final advice and support, as well as a croissant or pancake for energy, as they partake in their final exams

GCSE Key Exam Dates

English Language Paper 1

Monday 23 May – 9.00 a.m.

English Language Paper 2

Friday 6 June – 9.00 a.m.

English Literature Paper 1

Monday 12 May – 9.00 a.m.

English Literature Paper 2

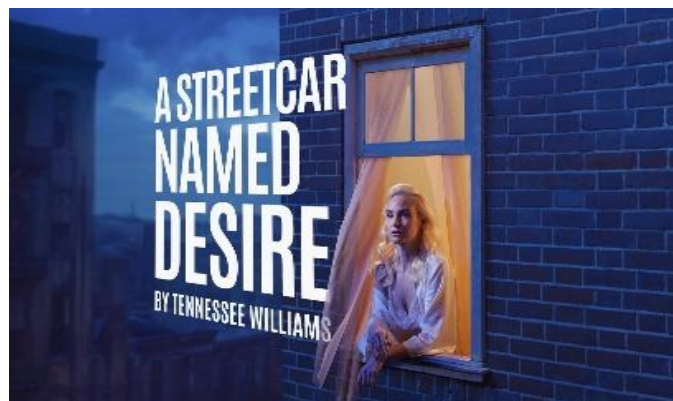
Tuesday 20th May – 9.00 a.m.

Key Stage 5 – Sixth Form

Our KS5 courses continue to offer students the opportunity to study A-Levels in English Language, English Literature and Media Studies, with the plan for Film Studies A-Level to be offered for the first-time next year due to the success of the course at KS4.

The Year 13 students are busy finalising their coursework and readying themselves for the final few months of learning before the summer exam series in May. The A-level team are optimistic that the students who put the hard yards in over the final stretch of the courses will achieve what they need to go onto their post-18 pathway.

The Year 12 students are now fully immersed in the world of sixth form, and the demands and expectations that come with it. They have completed two internal assessments to date, with early indicators suggesting they could be one of our highest achieving academic cohorts in recent years.



Forthcoming Events

On Wednesday March 12th 25 Year 12 and Year 13 English Literature students will be going to see a production of Streetcar Named Desire at the Crucible Theatre at Sheffield.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The faculty offers a range of trips and extra-curricular activities across all year groups. Below is a small sample of what the students have been able to do, and exciting activities still to come.

World Book Day Belper School – Thursday 6th March

Including:

- Fancy Dress Competition
- Guess The Character Competition
- World Book Day Bakeoff
- Create a potato literary character
- World Book Day Quiz
- Author visit and QA



The Globe Theatre



The Carnegie Book Award Bookshop Visit

