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March Newsletter

Dear Belper Families,

We've had another busy and exciting month here at Belper School and Sixth Form Centre. Here is some of our news from the last month.

Exciting News: SEND and Inclusion Award Achievement

We are delighted to share some wonderful news – our school has been awarded the **SEND and Inclusion Award**! This achievement reflects our commitment to providing an inclusive, supportive, and high-quality education for all students.

This rigorous accreditation process ensures that our school:

- Identifies special educational needs (SEN) in a timely and effective manner
- Provides high-quality teaching and learning experiences for pupils with SEND
- Maintains strong leadership and management of SEND provision
- Offers ongoing, high-quality training for school staff
- Engages pupils and parents in decision-making regarding SEND support
- Demonstrates full compliance with the SEND Code of Practice and key legislation

We are incredibly proud of this recognition and remain dedicated to fostering an inclusive learning environment where every student can thrive. Thank you for your continued support in making our school a place where all learners are valued and empowered.

Year 9 Pathways Interviews

Over recent weeks, we've had the pleasure of interviewing every Year 9 student about their pathway choices. It was a real joy to hear many students speak so passionately about their future plans. For those still deciding, it was equally valuable to have meaningful conversations that we do not always have time for during the school day.

We are now in the process of grouping students and will share allocated subjects by May half term.

Year 8 Careers Inspiration Day

On 20 March, our Year 8 students took part in an engaging Careers Inspiration Day, organised by our Careers Coordinator **Richard Leach**. The students had a wonderful day and thoroughly enjoyed the activities that were organised.

"Eight organisations and businesses volunteered to give presentations and run activities for Year 8. Our students found out about a wide variety of exciting careers during the day. We would like to thank The Farming Life Centre, Terra Measurements, Bowmer & Kirkland, The Royal Air Force, University Hospitals of Derby & Burton NHS Foundation Trust, National Healthcare Trust, MSDS Marine and Ian Evans Music for making this day possible."
— Richard Leach, Careers Coordinator

Young Enterprise Success

We are thrilled to announce that for the first time in our school's history, a Belper School team will be representing **Derbyshire** at the **Young Enterprise East Midlands Regional Final** at the University of Warwick in May 2025!

Our winning team, **Second Shine**, triumphed over *Peak Pebbles*, a strong team from Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School – known for their success in this competition. It was a proud moment to see our Year 12 students' hard work and determination pay off.

Our second team, **All Boxed Up**, also did brilliantly – winning the **Team Work Award**. A huge thank you to **Adam** and **Carol** for their dedication in supporting and guiding both teams.

Please join us in wishing *Second Shine* the very best of luck in the regional finals—we'll keep you posted!

Japan Trip and Creative Mural Project

We were delighted to welcome back students who visited Japan earlier this term. You can read a full write-up from **Sarah** which is attached.

Following their return, the 16 students that attended the Japan visit had the fabulous opportunity to work with ThomFong, two practising artists who worked alongside the group to produce an enormous mural. The outcome reflects on the amazing experience they had together in Japan. The students learnt about the many careers there are available in the creative industries and worked incredibly hard to get the work done in such a short time.

First Tech Robot Competition – "More Than Robots" Club

Led by **Sarah Speight**, our new Robot Club has been busy all year preparing for the **First Tech Challenge**, which took place this week. Despite not winning, our seven-strong team (plus supporters back at school) put in an incredible effort – building a working robot, raising funds, and developing technical and teamworking skills.

They fully embraced the competition's theme, *Under the Deep*, even arriving in snorkels and goggles! We are so proud of how they represented Belper and are already looking forward to next year's event.

A Calm and Caring Space for Neurodiverse Students

Carolyn Wild was introduced to Rachel Rostrum at Education Personnel after sharing her vision to create a calm and welcoming space in school for students who need it. Rachel generously donated a wonderful sensory table complete with a bubble light and fibre optic cables, which have quickly become a favourite with the students. She also connected Carolyn with Rhys from Harpo Art, and together they volunteered their time over the half-term break to design and paint a beautiful woodland-themed mural. Their creativity and kindness have completely transformed the space. Support from the wider Belper community has been equally heartening, with donations of sofas, chairs, toys, and games pouring in—too many to name individually. As one student put it, “This room makes me feel special,” while another said, “It feels like someone really cares.”

Tracking Revision and Club Participation

Since the start of this half term, we’ve been using QR codes to track student attendance at after-school revision sessions. So far, our **Year 11s have attended 791 sessions**, showing great dedication as their exams approach.

We’ve also been tracking participation in our wide range of **extracurricular clubs**. This half term alone, students have participated in **790 sessions**—from Robotics and Duolingo Club to gardening and a huge variety of sport. Please encourage your child to get involved—there really is something for everyone!

Belper Community Energy – Whitemoor Home Energy Survey

We are pleased to support our friends at **Belper Community Energy (BCE)** as they launch their feasibility study.

Belper Community Energy (BCE) is a community benefit society exploring ways to improve energy efficiency, reduce costs, and promote renewable energy solutions. The Midlands Net Zero Hub has awarded BCE a Community Energy Fund grant to undertake a renewable energy feasibility study. The project will identify potential options for a renewable energy strategy in Belper, covering parts of the Whitemoor area. This area includes Belper School, Belper Leisure Centre and the residential homes surrounding the playing fields.

In April, residents in the designated area will receive a flyer by post from BCE, signposting them to an online survey about how homes are heated and insulated and the affordability of energy bills. Feedback from residents will help BCE shape future initiatives to meet the community’s needs. All responses will remain confidential. For anyone wishing to seek more information about the Whitemoor Feasibility Study or BCE, please use the BCE contact form to get in touch.

Faculty Focus – Science

This month's spotlight is on our wonderful **Science faculty**. Their work this year has included hands-on practicals, investigations, and creative lessons that bring learning to life. You can read more about what the department has been up to in the section below.

Thank You & Happy Easter

A huge thank you to all our students for their effort and enthusiasm this half term, and to you—our families—for your continued support.

Have a restful and enjoyable Easter break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back for the start of the summer term.

Warm regards,

Matilde Warden
Headteacher, Belper School and Sixth Form Centre

Toyota City 2025

In February 16 students from Year 10 travelled to Toyota City in Japan for a fortnight. This was Belper School's second visit to Japan and this time we were joined by students from Anthony Gell School. The highlight of the trip was spending 3 days at our partner school, Ryūjin Junior High School, where students each became a member of a different class. School life seemed strange at first but it quickly became clear that teenagers across the world are more similar than they are different!

Students experienced various aspects of Japanese culture. They ate traditional food, spent time in the countryside, visited shrines and temples and had a formal meeting with Mayor Ota of Toyota City. Students embraced the culture of gift giving and bowing, they learnt what to do at a shrine and mastered eating with chopsticks. In short, they were open to all new experiences and were fantastic ambassadors for Belper School and for the UK.

Science Newsletter

Science Faculty Newsletter

I took over the role as Head of Science in September having previously been Head of Year for 10 years. As I reflect on the year so far it is so exciting to look back on so many fantastic projects that have already taken place and we look forward to the ones already planned for the year ahead.

This year we have continued to improve the curriculum, making it more interactive for the students than ever before. We have also expanded it with the addition of **A Level Geology**. More students are taking separate sciences than ever before at Belper School, which is fantastic. To support this, we are opening up further opportunities for students to learn and engage in more scientific experiences with a view to developing more scientists in the future.

Within this newsletter I would like to take this opportunity to share just a few of the student achievements in Science. We've also included some of the exciting opportunities we have coming up for the students here at Belper School.

Andy Robinson
Head of Science

Science Newsletter

Year 8 Faraday Challenge

Last term, selected Year 8 students took part in the **Faraday Challenge**.

This was a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) activity day which aimed to inspire students to consider engineering and design as a career. It featured cross-curricular activities to help to develop the students' practical and employability skills, including team-working, problem-solving and creative thinking.

The Challenge was to give six teams of six students the opportunity to research, design and make prototype solutions to real-world engineering problems. This annual competition, with events covering the whole of the UK, sees teams competing to win a prize for their school.

The top teams at the end of the season are invited to the National Finals to battle it out to be crowned the

The students worked in teams of six to complete the challenge – against the clock and with limited resources

Faraday National Champions and win a cash prize of up to £1,000 for the school.

Huge thanks must go to Mary for organising the event, and to our A Level volunteers who helped out working within the ‘shop’. Each team had to decide on a range of various items to assemble their prototypes, taking into consideration budgeting constraints, to produce the most cost-effective solution.

Students managed the supply of parts needed by the students

New Course: A-Level Geology

In March, Emma took the A Level Geology students to Derby University to look at some of the resources they have there in order to model some of the key concepts they have been learning about in the classroom, including rock analysis and erosion processes.

Students looking at soil erosion in the Flume Tank at Derby University

Students were able to get hands on experience with a working flume tank, as well as examine and handle some more unusual fossil and rock specimens,

including a 36m geological core. There were able to use the petrological microscopes and examine microscopic fossils and minerals under the microscope and had chance to see Derby Universities electron microscope in action.

In September the Y13 students will be going to the Isle of Arran for a week of field work, where they will undertake their practical skills part of the course, they will be able to use their knowledge in mapping and analysing geological structures in the field. They will have the chance to examine sequences of rock they would otherwise be unable to see locally, dating back hundreds of millions of years to the formation of the UK.

Science Newsletter

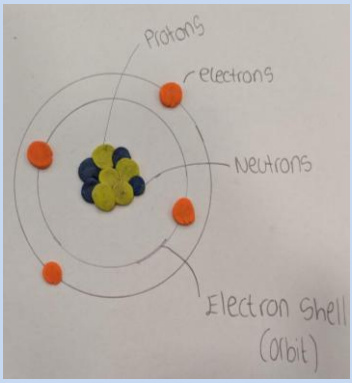
The Geology course covers a huge range of topics and areas including the history of our planet from its formation to today and the study of the evolution of life on our planet. The course also looks to the future, considering the locating and extracting of new materials. Defenses against geological hazards, from mud slides to earthquakes, are also studied, as well as the man-made clean-up of damage from mining.

In the classroom

Our aim is to bring the curriculum to life, enabling students to get hands-on experience of the many concepts they need to understand across all the Sciences. Here are some examples of what our students have got up to over the last few months including dissections, modeling and other practical skills. Some Year 11 and 12's have been dissecting samples in

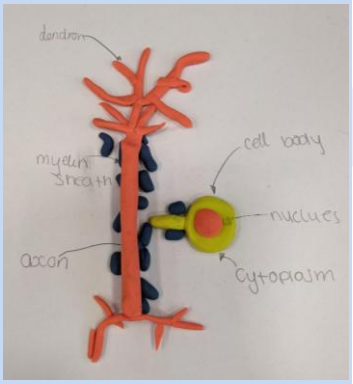
Students displaying their dissected sheep hearts

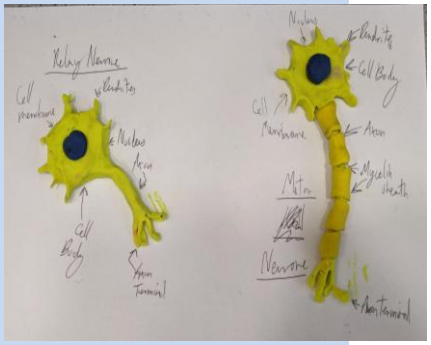
order to see real life examples of the anatomy of the organisms they have been learning about.



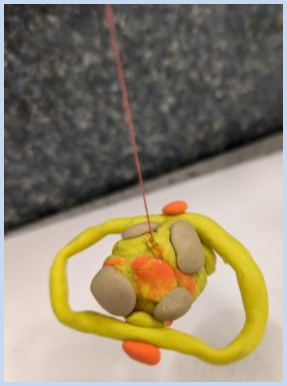
To the left, some year 10 students have been modelling atoms and neurons to help consolidate their learning of the nature of these different, tiny structures.

In year 9, students separated the DNA, (the thin white cloudy layer in the middle) from peas following a series of separation techniques in order to isolate the DNA.





Isolated DNA



All year groups have now had an assessment window and have been encouraged to reflect on their areas of strength and development. Year 11 have already been undertaking revision sessions throughout the year on Monday, Wednesday and Friday lunchtimes.

Science Newsletter

Space Centre Visit

Year 10 Separate Sciences will soon be going on a trip to the National Space Centre in Leicester. There they will have the chance to explore the exhibits and experience the immersive planetarium show. They will also take part in a private workshop where they will get hands-on experience at how we program mars rovers.

In the Future

We still have plenty more in the upcoming months, including the Year 12 and 13 Biology trip to Twycross Zoo to study animal behaviour and all years taking part in the Young Engineer and Scientists of Derbyshire Competition in July.

As we approach the end of year exams we would encourage the year 11 and 13 students to attend the lunchtime and after school sessions we are hosting to aid them in their preparation for these.