

# Larkspur Spring 2026



# Larkspur

## Community Primary School

### Headteacher Highlights



We have had such a positive start to the year here at Larkspur. The children have returned with a fantastic attitude and are already showing great commitment to our school rules and values. Our Christmas festivities were a huge success, and it was wonderful to come together with Larkspur House for the community Christmas Market. Thank you for all your support in making this such a special event.

As you will know from my last letter, the new year has also brought some staffing changes. Mr. Gray has stepped down from his role as Deputy Head to focus on supporting our SEND children and is also taking on the role of Family Support Worker. Miss Conway is now our Acting Deputy Head, with a clear focus on supporting our drive to raise standards across the school. Mrs. Davidson has settled beautifully into our Year 1/2 class, and we are delighted to have such a strong, dedicated team working to create the very best for our children.

We are very excited about the possibilities this new year will bring. We are hopeful that the school will benefit from the Pride in Place funding allocated to our area, and as the children

already have lots of exciting ideas about how this could be spent, we look forward to ensuring their voices are heard.

All of our current fundraising efforts are being directed towards developing a brand-new school library. But this will be no ordinary library, we are in the process of purchasing a London bus to convert into a truly inspiring reading space for our children. We cannot wait to share more updates with you as this project progresses... so watch this space!



## Larkspur **Highlights**



### **Safer Internet Day**

Key Stage 2 took part in Safer Internet Day by joining in with the BBC live lesson and activities. They found out a little about how AI works and how to use it safely and respectfully. They learned that AI must include accurate sources and must be unbiased. They also discovered that AI can be inaccurate and to always check the source of information before using it. Year 6 finished off the session by creating music with the help of an AI jamming programme.



### **Children's Mental Health Week**

Children's Mental Health Week took place during the week beginning 9th February. Mrs Bell launched the week with a whole-school assembly, introducing this year's theme, *'This Is My Place'*. The theme encouraged children to reflect on the places where they feel they belong and to consider how they can help others feel a sense of belonging too.

We know that feeling a sense of belonging — in our friendships, at school, within our families and in the wider community — plays a vital role in supporting positive mental health and wellbeing. When children feel that they belong, they are more confident, resilient and empowered to make a positive difference in the world around them.

Each class marked the week with activities linked to the theme. Some children created personal maps highlighting the places where they feel they belong, while others focused on spreading kindness by writing positive note cards with messages such as, "You make me smile," and sharing them with friends and staff across the school.



### **National Year of Reading**

This year marks the National Year of Reading, and we are excited to be raising the profile of reading for pleasure across our school. We have introduced weekly story assemblies, where children can vote for their favourite book to be shared, helping to foster a love of stories and a shared reading culture. We are also looking ahead to an exciting project to develop a new school library, creating a welcoming space that inspires all our pupils to read widely and often. With World Book Day approaching, we will be welcoming mystery readers into school throughout the day to surprise and delight the children. Each class will also enjoy sharing a story together and taking part in engaging activities linked to their chosen book. We look forward to celebrating reading together as a whole school community.

## Early Years



In Early Years, we have been learning all about winter. We have explored ice in water, observing how it looks and feels and talking about how it changes. The children have enjoyed reading non-fiction books about winter to help us learn new facts and vocabulary.

We have also been learning about winter animals and where they live, using the globe to find and talk about the different countries and colder parts of the world where these animals can be found.

Our younger children have been learning a new Makaton sign each week to support their language and communication development. This has helped them to build confidence in expressing their needs and understanding others. We have also been exploring treasure baskets in small groups, linked to our key themes. These sessions encourage the children to explore a variety of objects, helping to develop their vocabulary, listening skills, and curiosity through hands-on experiences.

## Key Stage One



This term KS1 have been learning how to make paper sculptures.

One lesson involved folding, rolling and sculpting paper to make a tree.

They were really impressed with the result as you can see!



## Key Stage Two



### Year 6

Year 6 have had a busy and exciting half-term packed with memorable learning experiences. We were lucky to be among the first 5,000 visitors to the Theatre Royal to watch 'Weird', a lively and engaging adaptation of Macbeth, which brought the play to life through fantastic songs and dancing—especially the much-loved “We Are the Weird Sisters.”

As part of National Storytelling Week, Year 5 and 6 joined a live lesson with rapper Alim Kamara, exploring how stories can be told through music and creating our own lyrics. We also took time to reflect during Holocaust Memorial Day, learning about the six million Jewish people who lost their lives and linking this to our history work on war.

During our Design Technology lessons, Year 6 have been looking at different structures. As our community are looking at ways to develop our local area, we looked at how we would like to improve our playground. We looked at a range of structures and discussed what makes them safe and enjoyable, and we then designed our own. Following our plans, we created models of our own playgrounds.

Year 6 were highly engaged during an important session with Suzanne from Northumbria Police, learning about legal and illegal substances and how to manage peer pressure, and impressed her with their thoughtful questions.

Finally, a session with Gordon from the British Red Cross helped us explore migration and empathy, where we considered why people move and how it feels to start somewhere new, finishing by writing welcoming letters full of helpful tips for newcomers to Gateshead.

#### **Year 5**

Year 5 have had a fantastic start to the Spring Term, with a range of exciting learning experiences. One of the highlights was a trip to the Theatre Royal to watch the new show *Weird*. The children thoroughly enjoyed the musical, which reimagines Shakespeare's *Macbeth* through the eyes of the three fun and mischievous witches.

Year 5 have also taken part in valuable workshops, including a visit from Suzanne from Northumbria Police focusing on knife crime, and a session with Gordon from the British Red Cross exploring resilience and dealing with change.

In English, the children have been immersed in their new unit based on *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, where they have begun writing suspense narratives. They particularly enjoyed stepping into the role of detectives through drama and role play.

In Design and Technology, Year 5 have been learning all about bridges. They researched beam and arch bridges, investigated their strength, and then designed, built and tested their own truss bridges.

#### **Year 4**

In English, the children have become true polar bear experts, researching and writing detailed information reports. Did you know that polar bears actually have black skin beneath their white fur? The class loved discovering fascinating facts like this! We have now moved on to writing our own myth narratives inspired by *Arthur and the Golden Rope*. The big question is: will the unlikely hero manage to capture the giant, evil wolf Fenrir? We can't wait to find out how their exciting stories unfold.

In Maths, we have been working hard to master the 3 and 6 times tables and will soon be conquering the 9 times tables. The children are practising daily in preparation for the Multiplication Check in June. Any extra practice at home would be greatly appreciated and really helps to build their confidence and speed.

Our Geography lessons have taken us on a journey to Italy (we wish it were for real!) where we have been learning about the country's landscape, climate and major cities.

In Design and Technology, the children have designed their own book sleeves and are looking forward to making them to help keep their books safe.

A real highlight of the half term has been our enrichment afternoons, where the children have enjoyed multi-sports and music lessons. We may well have some future athletes and musicians in the making!

### **Year 3**

This half term, Year 3 have been busy exploring a wide range of exciting learning opportunities across the curriculum.

In Maths, we have been developing our skills in column addition, including using regrouping to solve more challenging calculations.

In English, our new text *Rhythm of the Rain* has inspired us to make predictions, study the story's beautiful images, and use them as a stimulus to create our own kennings poems.

In Geography, we have been learning about different climate zones and using lines of latitude to locate them around the world.

Our Design Technology work has focused on eating seasonally, where we investigated and tasted a variety of ingredients in preparation for designing and making our own tart.

In RE, we explored the miracles of Jesus and discussed their meanings. In Art, we have been practising the basic skills of drawing shapes and adding shading to bring our sketches to life.



1 - Year 6 enjoying their British Red Cross session



2 - Check out our playgrounds!



3 - Check out our playgrounds!

## Spring Parent Consultation Meetings

Our Spring Term Parent Consultation Meetings, which will take place week commencing 16th February 2026, are now available to book on the Arbor App or Arbor Parent Portal. Staff are very much looking forward to updating you on how well the children are progressing in school.

**To book your appointment, please log on to the Arbor app or Arbor Parent Portal. If you are having trouble using Arbor, please see Mrs Shuker in the school office.**

**On Wednesday 18th February there are face to face appointments in school from 3.20pm – 6pm. Alternatively, there is also the opportunity to book a telephone appointment that week, times below.** We hope by offering both options it gives all parents and carers flexibility. Please book as soon as possible to secure your preferred appointments.

**Please read the following information carefully:**

- **Wednesday 18th February after school appointments are face to face in school.**
- Face to face appointments in school will include an opportunity to look at your child's books and leave them a little post it note to say how proud you are.
- Please note that appointments whether by phone or face to face will **be a maximum of 10-minutes** to enable teachers to have contact with everyone in their class.
- **Alternative day time appointments are telephone only** - please leave your preferred number to contact you on in the notes section of the booking form.
- **Two attempts will be made to call you at your chosen time.** If you miss or are unable to take these calls, the teacher will move onto the next appointment, and you will need to phone our school office to see if there is a possibility to reschedule.
- Please be aware that the call may show on your phone as an unknown/withheld number.
- **Please only make 1 booking per child per family.** If your plans change you may amend or cancel your original booking and re-book for an alternative time.
- If you have any problems using our booking system, or if you do not have internet access, please contact Mrs Shuker in the office, who will be happy to help and add appointments on your behalf.
- **Mr Gray, SENDCO and myself will also be available from 3.20-6.00pm on Wednesday 18th February should you wish to see either of us. You do not need to book an appointment.**
- There will be a crèche facility available on the evening in our computing suite for children aged 3 and above.

**Younger Nursery Stay and Play**

Parents/carers of our younger Nursery children with Miss Dodds and Mrs Reed are invited to a stay and play session on Monday 16th February at 10.45am.

## School Meals

As well as our three weekly rotating menu, we have some wonderful themed lunches to look forward to. Coming up we have:

- **Pancake Day - Tuesday 17th February**
- **Chinese New Year - Wednesday 18th February**
- **World Book Day - Thursday 6th March**

Our usual menu can be found [here](#).

If your child usually has a packed lunch, why not encourage them to try one of our delicious healthy lunches.

If your circumstances have changed and you may now be entitled to Means Tested Free School Meals, find out ore and apply [here](#). Even if your child currently received free universal meals in Key stage 1, when awarded Means Tested Free School Meals, you will also receive meal vouchers in the school holidays and access to free HAF clubs.







## PE Days

PE days remain the same going forward:

Year 1 and 2	Mondays and Thursdays
Year 3	Tuesday and Wednesday
Year 4	Swimming on Mondays, PE on Tuesdays
Year 5	Tuesdays and Thursdays
Year 6	Mondays and Wednesdays

All children should also wear PE kit on Fridays for Enrichment activities.

Please remember to write their name in PE hoodies to help us return lost property.



## Attendance and punctuality

We would like to congratulate the amazing children who still have 100% attendance this school year. We also have lots of other children whose attendance is above our target of 97% and many others who have improved their attendance considerably this term.

**All children need to arrive at school on time. Missing the first part of the school day means they are not ready for the day ahead. Please can all parents and carers support us in ensuring your child arrives on time.**

School attendance is essential. If your child has attendance less than 90%, they are classed as **persistent absentees** and their attendance in school is a cause for concern. You will receive a letter if your child is persistently absent or late for school advising you of steps that will be put in place if improvements are not made.

**A REMINDER holidays taken during term time are not permitted, will be unauthorised and you may receive a penalty notice of £160 per child per parent.**



## School Uniform

Thank you to all the children who are wearing their correct school uniform and bringing a coat to school everyday.

Please ensure children wear the correct uniform at all times:

### Coats

All children should have a warm coat, hat and gloves with them everyday to ensure that they can play and learn outdoors.

### **Uniform days**

- White polo shirt
- Royal Blue sweatshirt, jumper or cardigan
- Grey trousers or skirt
- Sensible black flat school shoes or trainers

### **PE days (see above for which days your child has PE)**

- White t shirt
- Royal blue shorts or black leggings/jogging bottoms
- Royal blue hoodie
- Trainers

Jumpers, cardigans and hoodies do not need to have the school logo but can be purchased from [Logos Unlimited](#) who also have a store at Team Valley.

**Please ensure that all items of clothing including coats and shoes have names written inside on the labels. Children's clothing is getting mixed up everyday as there are lots of similar coats and shoes.**

If you have an issue providing your child with the correct uniform, please discuss this with their class teacher.

## Sporting Success





Sporting opportunities across school continue to go from strength to strength. Our new Year 5 Sports Leaders have confidently begun delivering games on the playground at lunchtimes following their training at Gateshead Stadium, showing fantastic leadership and enthusiasm. Year 5 and 6 girls have also enjoyed their Friday lunchtime football club with Coach Dan.

Children across school have taken part in a wide range of events hosted by the School Sports Partnership, including a Year 5/6 netball tournament, an Early Years sports festival for Reception, a Year 3/4 basketball tournament at Cardinal Hume, and a KS2 boccia event, many of which were held at Gateshead Stadium. Preparations have also begun for the upcoming dance festival, with 20 KS2 children practising hard to perform at the Glass House.

We are looking forward to several exciting upcoming events, including Year 5/6 and Year 3/4 hockey, the dance festival, and the start of the Year 5/6 football league.

## Eco Council and School Council

### ECO COUNCIL

#### Eco Council Challenge – Making a Greener School!

This term, our Eco Council have launched an exciting new challenge to help make our school more environmentally friendly. Pupils will be working together on a range of activities designed to reduce waste, save energy, and care for our planet.

#### Our challenges include:

- **Bringing a reusable water bottle every day** to reduce single-use plastic.
- **Creating art and craft projects using recycled materials.** This helps cut down waste, reduces pollution, and saves money on resources – a win for everyone!
- **Organising local litter picks** to keep our community clean and tidy.
- **Planting wildflowers** to support bees and other pollinators.
- **Growing our own vegetables** to use in cooking lessons and D&T projects.

As part of our wider **Climate Action Plan**, we will also be looking at how we can **reduce waste in school, lower our energy usage, and cut down our carbon footprint.**

Next term, we will be encouraging families to **walk, cycle or scoot to school** to help reduce car travel and promote healthy habits.

Together, we can make a real difference. Watch this space for updates on our Eco Council's progress!

### SCHOOL COUNCIL

**Our school council organised an exciting Times Table Rock Stars Battle for this half term:  
Key Stage 2 Boys vs Key Stage 2 Girls!**

Everyone threw themselves into the challenge, and the leader board was constantly changing. One moment the boys were ahead, then the girls took the lead, and back and forth it went throughout the competition.

In the end, the **boys claimed the victory**, but it was a fantastic effort from both sides. Well done to everyone who took part and helped make it such great fun!

**Watch out for our next Battle—coming soon!**

**Red Nose Day Fun Pending ...**

We have also shared some exciting suggestions with Mrs Anglesea for a fun-filled **Red Nose Day**, and we can't wait to start planning a range of activities for everyone to enjoy!





## After-School Clubs



This term children have really enjoyed their after school clubs. They have learned lots of new skills and made new friendships.

School ran clubs have now finished for this half term. Larkspur House Clubs and KS2 Football will continue.

### **New Spring 2 Clubs**

**Our after school clubs for after February Half Term will be available to book now on Arbor.** They will run from W/C 2nd March for 5 weeks.

**If children sign up for a club, they must be committed to attending for the whole half term. They cannot choose whether to stay week by week.**

### **Monday**

- Times Tables Rockstars with Mrs Dixon – Key Stage 2

### **Tuesday**

- Stay and Play with Miss Graham - Reception and Key Stage 1
- KS1 Football with Henry or Dan - Key Stage 1
- Year 6 SATS Booster (moving to Tuesday) - Year 6

### **Wednesday**

- Football with JJ O'Donnell - continues for current Key Stage 2 members
- KS2 Larkspur House Club - continues for current members, contact Nathan to request a place

### Thursday

- Science Club with Mrs Bell - Key Stage 2
- Badminton Club with Henry or Dan - Years 4, 5 and 6
- KS1 Larkspur House Club - continues for current members, contact Nathan to request a place



## Family Learning Course



Learning and Skills



Thank you to everyone who attended our Family Learning Phonics course this half term with Sara from Gateshead Learning and Skills. This course concludes next week on Thursday 19th February.

After half term Sara is running a **Silk Painting Course for 4 weeks on Thursday afternoons at 1:45pm - 3:15pm for Key Stage 2 children and their parents/carers**. This starts Thursday 5th March and runs until 26th March.

You will learn how to paint on silk, use colours, make shapes and create designs. Later in the session, you will work with your child to make your own beautiful silk artwork.

This course is great for wellbeing, creativity and for spending special time with your child. Please wear old clothing!

**Sign up on Arbor under Clubs. Places are limited!**

## Dates for the diary

### February

**13th** - School closed to children for staff training day.

**WC 16th** - Parent Consultation Week - telephone and face-to face appointments

**17th** - Pancake Day

**18th** - Parent Consultation Day - appointments in school

**18th** - Chinese New Year

**23rd - 27th** - School closed for spring half term holiday

### March

**5th** - World Book Day

**WC 9th** - Science Week

**20th** - Red Nose Day

**WC 23rd** - Shakespeare Week

### April

**3rd - 17th** School closed for Easter holiday

## Contact Us

### Larkspur Community Primary School

Beacon Lough East

Gateshead

0191 487 5628

[larkspurcommunityprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:larkspurcommunityprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk)

Visit our website at: [www.larkspurprimary.co.uk](http://www.larkspurprimary.co.uk)

