FAMILY NEWSLETTER / AUTUMN TERM

A Brilliant Start

Thursday 22nd October 2026



A message from Mr Reeves

As this first half term comes to a close, I wanted to let you all know that we have had a brilliant few weeks. We have seen so many successes, from new starters settling in well to children making great progress against their targets. We have had sporting success in Goalball, Football and Boccia - as well as a magnificent show that dazzled and entertained pupils and adults alike.

It is our mission to try and help the children at our school to thrive and we are very grateful for all your support as we work to ensure everyone can achieve their potential.

If you ever have a query then calling the office to make an appointment is always an option, and you can also message class teachers on SEESAW if you are curious, worried or just want to find out more. Parents Evenings are coming up and I encourage each of you to ensure you book your slot for this. Attendance at parents evening is always very good and it makes a difference to the children to know you are coming in and talking to the teachers about their successes and ways to help.

At parents evening our SENDCO Mrs Balcon will be present and will have a limited number of slots to meet separately with any parents who would like to discuss Special Educational Needs or any support beyond what is ordinarily available.

We hope you all enjoy this autumnal half term and will see you the first Monday in November.

Best wishes, Mr. Reeves | Headteacher



KEEP FOR REFERENCE

Dates for your diary

Key events and reminders for the remainder of the autumn term.

OCT	**Thu 22 Oct**	Halloween Disco · Reception–Year 6
OCT	**Fri 23 Oct**	Sponsored Basketball Day
OCT	**26–30 Oct**	Half-term holiday · School closed
NOV	**Tue 17 Nov**	Parents' Consultations · Day 1
NOV	**Wed 18 Nov**	Parents' Consultations · Day 2
NOV	**Wed 18 Nov**	Reception Open Evening · 6.00 pm (September 2027 starters)
NOV	**Thu 26 Nov**	Flu Immunisation Programme · Reception–Year 6
NOV	**Fri 27 Nov**	CAYP: Come As You Please · Bring a bottle
DEC	**Fri 4 Dec**	Christmas Fair · 2.00 pm; **school closes at 2.00 pm**
DEC	**Fri 18 Dec**	Last day of term · School closes at 2.00 pm
JAN	**Mon 4th Jan**	First Day of Spring Term



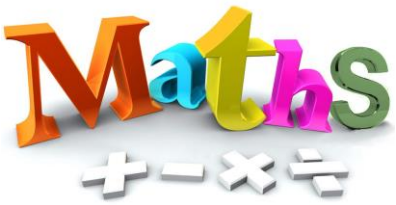
Team Points: a four-horse race

Nightingale take the early lead!

Pupils earn points for effort, good manners, contributing to discussion, reading at home and Mathletics. Putting in extra effort and having great manners can make a big difference each week and lead to your team being in the lead.

LEARNING AT FAIRMEADOWS

Times Tables: a maths superpower!



Did you know that times tables are one of the most important mathematical skills your child will learn? The ability to quickly recall multiplication facts helps children become more confident mathematicians and lays the foundations for success across the entire maths curriculum.

Times tables are used in almost every area of mathematics, including division, fractions, decimals, percentages, ratio and algebra. When children know their multiplication facts automatically, they can spend more time focusing on solving problems and understanding new concepts rather than working out basic calculations.

For our Year 4 pupils, secure times table knowledge is essential for success in the Multiplication Tables Check (MTC), where children are assessed on their rapid recall of facts up to 12 × 12. It is also a crucial skill for our Year 6 pupils as they prepare for their SATs, where fluency in times tables supports many areas of the maths papers.

Most importantly, strong times table knowledge provides a solid foundation for mathematical learning throughout primary school and beyond. A few minutes of practice each day can make a huge difference!

Supporting your child at home

A few fun, effective ways to practise:

- **TT Rock Stars**
- **Hit the Button**
- **Times tables songs on YouTube**

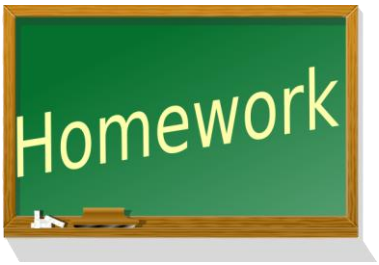
Little and often is best: just five minutes a day can help children develop speed, accuracy and confidence.

Need some extra help?



Every child learns at their own pace. If times tables are something you are worried about or would like extra support with at home, please speak to your child's class teacher or contact Mr Steer (School Maths Lead). We are always happy to help and provide advice, resources and ideas for practice.

Homework: a little can go a long way!



Homework doesn't need to mean hours around the kitchen table! At school, we keep home learning simple and focused on the key skills that make a real difference.

Our main homework activities are Mathletics, regular reading and practising phonics words. These are all designed to revisit and strengthen learning that children are already doing in school.

EEF evidence suggests that homework can support learning, particularly when it is high-quality, manageable and closely linked to classroom teaching.

A little and often makes a difference: ten minutes of reading together, phonics practice or Mathletics helps children revisit learning and build confidence. Thank you for supporting learning at home.

PUPIL ACHIEVEMENTS

Learning in Action & Celebrating Success

Reception gymnastics

This half term in PE, our Reception children have been developing their gymnastics skills using the large apparatus, climbing frame, benches and mats. Through climbing, balancing, jumping and travelling in different ways, children are building their strength, balance and coordination in a fun and engaging environment.



These activities are an important part of developing gross motor skills, helping children to gain confidence in moving their bodies safely and with control. As they explore different equipment and challenges, they are also learning to take turns, assess risks and persevere when trying something new.

It has been wonderful to see the children growing in confidence and demonstrating excellent determination as they develop these key physical skills.

Sporting Stars and Exciting Opportunities!

It has been a fantastic few weeks for sport at school, with our pupils representing us brilliantly in both football and goalball competitions.



Our boys' football team enjoyed a fantastic 3-1 victory away at Pennine Way. The team played exceptionally well, showing great teamwork, determination and sportsmanship throughout the match. We were also delighted to see so many parents and family members there to cheer the team on. Your support makes a huge difference and was greatly appreciated by everyone involved.

We also took four teams to a Goalball competition, where our pupils demonstrated excellent skill, teamwork and resilience. We are incredibly proud to announce that our teams finished in 1st place and 3rd place, which is a fantastic achievement. All of the children represented the school superbly and should be very proud of their efforts.

If your child enjoys football and would like the opportunity to represent the school in future fixtures, we encourage them to join our Football Club. The club is open to both boys and girls, and attendance is one of the best ways to be considered for upcoming school teams and competitions.

Well done to all of our talented athletes. We look forward to seeing even more sporting success in the coming weeks!

We will remember them



As a school, we will be marking Remembrance Day with a two-minute silence. This special moment gives our children and staff time to pause, reflect and remember those who have served and sacrificed for others.

Keep an eye out for poppies and other Remembrance merchandise, which will be available from the school office.

Halloween Disco! Huge Thanks!



£650 WAS RAISED FOR SCHOOL FUND AT THE Halloween Disco. DJ Ali smashed another rousing set that had the ghouls and goblins getting down and doing the zombie shuffle! The Wolfman was the Halloween celebrity in attendance and added a certain hirsute class to the affair.

Every penny will be used to improve school and provide opportunities for all children so thank you again for your support.

Sponsored Basketball



The sponsored basketball challenge has taken place today and it was Come as You Please. Keep your eyes peeled on Parent Mail to contribute to CAYP and send in any pennies for the sponsored basketball as soon as you can after half term. Sponsored Basketball money will be reinvested into the sports equipment and playground resources the children use every day.

WORKING TOGETHER WITH PARENTS

Come in, catch up, get involved

Parents' Consultations | 17th & 18th November

Our Parents' Consultations will take place on 17th and 18th November. These meetings are an important opportunity to meet with your child's teaching team and find out how they have settled into the new school year.

It's a chance to celebrate the positives and progress they have made so far, as well as talk through any questions or concerns you may have.



Please check ParentMail to book your appointment. If you would prefer a telephone consultation, you can request this instead.

We look forward to seeing you and sharing how your child is getting on.

Additional SEND conversations

Mrs Balcon, our SENDCo, will be available during both afternoons. Separate appointment slots are limited; please speak to the school office if you would like to discuss additional SEND support.



Reception Open Evening | Wednesday 18 November, 6pm

Do you know a child who will be starting school in September 2027? Our Reception Open Evening will take place on Wednesday 18th November at 6pm, and we would be delighted to welcome prospective parents and carers to come and see what makes our school such a special place.



Visitors will have the opportunity to meet our staff, explore our Reception classrooms and learning environments, and find out more about the exciting experiences we offer our youngest learners. It is a fantastic chance to see our school in action and ask any questions about starting school. If you know friends, neighbours or family members with children due to start school next year, please encourage them to come along. Booking forms will be available soon, so keep an eye out for further details.

We look forward to welcoming our future Fairmeadows families.

INCLUSION & WELLBEING

Supporting every child

Sensory tools in school



At Fairmeadows, we are committed to helping all children feel comfortable, regulated and ready to learn. Some pupils benefit from sensory tools such as stress balls, ear defenders, wobble cushions or chew tools to support their concentration, attention and emotional regulation.

Sensory tools are not toys. They are used as learning supports for children who have an identified need, including some pupils with SEND, autism, ADHD, sensory processing differences or anxiety. They are only provided when there is evidence that they help a child access learning more successfully.

Any request for a sensory tool can be made by parents, staff or the child themselves. The school will consider the child's needs, monitor the impact of the tool during a trial period and only continue its use if it is shown to be beneficial.

Our Sensory Tool Policy, which was shared via ParentMail last month, outlines the approved sensory tools available in school and the procedures for their use. Children should not bring toys or sensory tools from home unless this has been agreed by the school as part of an identified support plan through the SENDCo. All sensory tools used in school are provided by us to ensure they come from approved suppliers and meet appropriate safety standards.

All sensory tools are carefully selected to be safe, appropriate and supportive of learning. Their use is regularly reviewed and alternative strategies may be recommended where a sensory tool is not the best solution. If you would like to learn more about the sensory tools we use and the criteria for accessing them, please refer to the Sensory Tool Policy available on ParentMail or contact the SENDCo for further information.

Getting ready for autumn



The seasons are changing and the beautiful autumn colours are appearing all around us. With the colourful leaves also comes cooler weather!

Please remember to send your child to school with a suitable coat each day, and hats, gloves and scarves as the temperature drops.

Please name everything, especially coats and hats. Our lost property can grow very quickly at this time of year!

Thank you for helping us keep everyone warm and comfortable while they enjoy the outdoors.

SCHOOL LIFE

Food, festivities & community

New school dinner menu next term



Our new school dinner menu starts next term, with lots of tasty choices for the children to enjoy. You can take a look at the full menus on our school website.

As the weather gets colder, having a warm, healthy dinner in your child's tummy is a great way to see them through the afternoon! There are plenty of lovely choices on the new menu, including roast pork with all the trimmings, cottage pie, chicken pasta bake, beef bolognaise, meatballs, salmon fishcakes, BBQ chicken wraps and fish & chips. There are also vegetarian choices every day, along with jacket potatoes and sandwich bags.

If your child normally brings a packed lunch but fancies giving a school dinner a try, our staff will always be happy to help them change their option.

Why not take a look at the new menu together and see what takes their fancy? 🍴😋

Christmas Fair | Friday 4 December, 2pm

We're looking forward to our Christmas Fair on Friday 4th December at 2pm!

Next term, the children will be busy making something special to sell at the fair. There will also be lots of other stalls to enjoy, including our sweet stall, raffle and tombola.

We'll also be welcoming some fantastic external stalls, including Butterfly Bakehouse, Gobbies, Olive & Co, Kaz' Crafts and more! Would you like to have a stall at our Christmas Fair? Please let the school office or Mr Boulter know.



ATTENDANCE AND HEALTH

Every school day counts

As we move further into autumn, coughs, colds and seasonal bugs inevitably start making an appearance. We know that children do become genuinely unwell and there will always be occasions when staying at home is the right thing to do. However, wherever possible, regular attendance makes a real difference.



Derbyshire County Council reminds families that every day of absence is a day of learning missed. For example, 95% attendance equates to around 9 days of absence, while 90% attendance means around 19 days missed over the school year.

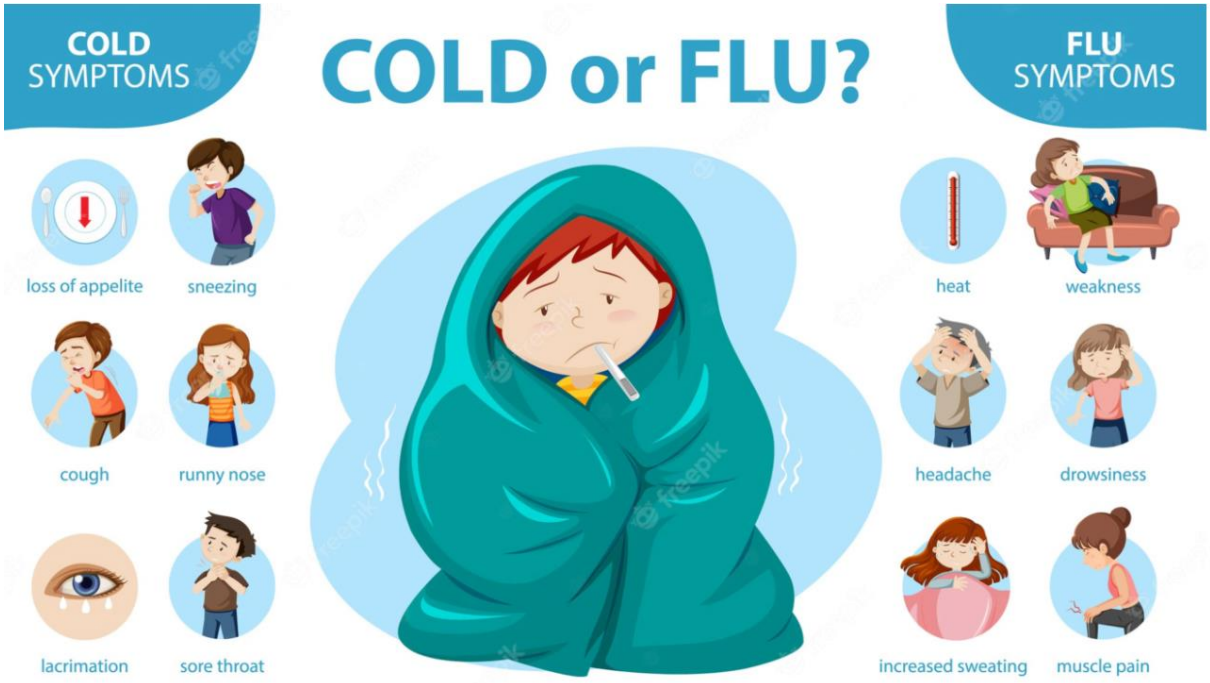
Coughs, colds and staying well

Current Government and health guidance is clear that children with mild illnesses such as a runny nose, sore throat or slight cough can usually still attend school, as long as they are otherwise well and do not have a high temperature.



If your child has a fever/high temperature, they should stay at home until they are feeling better and the fever has resolved. For diarrhoea and/or vomiting, children should remain at home for at least 48 hours after the last episode.

Good handwashing, using tissues for coughs and sneezes and allowing fresh air into rooms can also help reduce the spread of infections.



ATTENDANCE AND SAFETY

Working together to keep children safe

A reminder about attendance fines

The national rules around penalty notices for unauthorised school absence remain in place. A first penalty notice is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. If a second fine is issued for the same child within a three-year period, this is £160. A parent can receive a maximum of two penalty notices for the same child within a three-year period. Further offences may result in court action rather than another penalty notice.

Derbyshire County Council operates its penalty-notice arrangements in line with the Department for Education's national framework, and notices may be issued per parent, per child.

We would therefore strongly encourage families not to book holidays or other avoidable leave during term time. Derbyshire also asks families to avoid making appointments during the school day wherever possible.

Please talk to us

Attendance is not simply about numbers or fines. If your child is struggling to attend school for any reason, please speak to us. The Derbyshire approach emphasises working with families to understand barriers to attendance and putting appropriate support in place.



Thank you, as always, for working with us to give our children the very best chance to learn, build friendships and make the most of every school day.

If they are well enough to be here, we would love to see them! 😊

Parking around school

We've had a few concerns raised about parking at drop-off and pick-up times, particularly where cars have been blocking residents' driveways.

Please can we ask everyone to park considerately, leaving driveways and access points clear at all times. We know mornings and home time can be very busy, but taking that little bit of extra care makes a big difference.



Most importantly, thoughtful parking helps us keep the area around school safe for our children and families.

Thank you for your support and consideration. 💙

PRESCHOOL AT FAIRMEADOWS

Places available from January 2027

Please share this information with families who may be looking for preschool places and wraparound childcare.



01283 211019 • info@fairmeadows.derbyshire.sch.uk • www.fairmeadows.net

OUR SCHOOL | SUMMER 2026 OUTCOMES

Celebrating progress, planning our next steps

A simple guide to how Fairmeadows pupils did in summer 2026, and where we are focusing our efforts to help every child thrive.

86%
YEAR 6 READING
75% nationally in 2026
Following successful review

86%
YEAR 6 MATHS
75% nationally in 2026
11 percentage points higher

74%
YEAR 4 TIMES TABLES
Scored a perfect 25/25
2025 national: 37%

2026 RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Assessment	Fairmeadows	England	The picture
Year 6 reading*	**86%**	75%	11 points above national
Year 6 mathematics	**86%**	75%	11 points above national
Year 6 writing	**68%**	73%	An improvement priority
Year 6 combined RWM†	**64%**	63%	Previously reported figure
Year 1 phonics	**73%**	82%	Strengthening early reading
Phonics by end of Year 2	**87%**	89%	Close to national
Reception: Good Level of Development	**50%**	72.3%	Up from 45% in 2025

PROGRESS MATTERS: NOT JUST TEST RESULTS

Progress measures how much children learn from their earlier starting points. Expected progress is 0.

Measure	Reading	Writing	Maths
2026 progress	**+6.6**	**+4.72**	**+7.67**

INCLUSION IN ACTION

School analysis showed that 50% of Year 6 pupils with SEND met the combined reading, writing and maths expected standard, against a provisional national SEND comparison of 26%. This is one example of the progress we strive to secure for every learner.

WHAT WE ARE WORKING ON NOW

We are proud of our strengths in reading, mathematics and multiplication fluency. We also know that early language, Reception outcomes, phonics and writing need to be stronger. These are central priorities in our school improvement work, alongside personalised support for pupils who need it.

Sources: Fairmeadows school assessment data and governors' assessment report (2025–26); school TATS evidence paper (October 2026). National: Department for Education KS2 (10 Sep 2026), phonics (8 Oct 2026), EYFS (22 Oct 2026), MTC (20 Nov 2025).

DfE KS2 • DfE phonics • DfE EYFS • DfE MTC