



February 2026

Bernard Gilpin Primary School

Dream Believe Achieve

Hall Lane, Houghton-le-Spring DH5 8DA

tel: 0191 917 2999

web: www.bernardgilpin.com

Hello and welcome to the February edition of Bernard Gilpin Primary School's newsletter

OUTDOOR ACTION AND ADVENTURE AT DERWENT HILL



A group enjoying the scenic views at the top of their hill walk

The children also challenged themselves on a hill walk in the beautiful surrounding landscape, as well as orienteering, tackling the low ropes course and navigating the indoor climbing wall. Each group also took part in a night walk aimed at developing teamwork and taking on the exciting challenge of the high ropes course proved to be a real highlight for many of the children. A huge thank you to everyone for ensuring that the time spent in Derwent Hill was a wonderful experience and that many great and lasting memories were made: a massive well done to everyone involved throughout the week.

Children from Years 5 and 6 recently returned from a fantastic residential visit to the Derwent Hill Outdoor Education Centre. This excellent opportunity enabled the children to further develop their independence, resilience and respect for the environment in the heart of the stunning Lake District. Everyone involved had an action-packed week, with all of the groups taking part in a rotation of outdoor adventurous activities. Some of the many highlights for the children included canoeing to an island on Derwent Water, gorge walking, finding the courage to take on the challenge of the 'Big Swing' and toasting marshmallows on a campfire which they had built themselves using bush craft skills.



A group canoeing towards One Tree Island on Derwent Water



Enjoying the indoor climbing wall



Taking on the High Ropes Course



Braving the challenge of gorge walking



Big Smiles all round at Derwent Hill

THE LEARNING CONTINUES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM



Reception at Stowell Street in Newcastle



Year 1 at 'Locomotion' in Shildon



Year 2 problem solving at Sainsbury's

Reception visited Stowell Street in Newcastle, where they enjoyed studying the Chinese gate and visiting the supermarket to buy some food and decorations for a celebration back in school. The children also enjoyed sharing fortune cookies and reading the messages inside. The Reception children also went to the nearby Discovery Museum, where they took part in a variety of exciting challenges in the Science Maze.

Year 1 visited 'Locomotion' at the National Railway Museum in Shildon. They thoroughly enjoyed investigating a wide range of locomotives from the 1829 'Sans Pareil' through to the 1970's 'Advanced Passenger.' The children were able to climb into some of the locomotives and imagined what it might have been like to be the driver of a steam train in times gone by.

Year 2 visited Sainsbury's in Sunderland where they were able to apply their understanding of money in a real-life context. The children enjoyed navigating their way around the various aisles in the supermarket and used mathematical understanding to complete a number of problems relating to getting the best value for money on food products.

Year 3 visited the Great North Museum in Newcastle linking to their Science unit on Rocks. The children explored the geology gallery where they identified types of rocks, including crystals, fossils and ammonites. The children then took part in a workshop where they were able to handle examples of igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks and used magnifying glasses to look closely at their unique patterns and textures.

Year 4 visited the Beacon of Light in Sunderland where they took part in a cookery workshop linked to health and well-being. As part of the day, the children engaged in a range of character education activities designed to further develop their resilience, self-confidence and ability to work well as a team. The children also thoroughly enjoyed developing their culinary skills by learning how to prepare and cook pancakes, which they then took delight in tasting once cooked.

Year 5 visited Newcastle Castle where they ventured into the depths of the dungeon to take part in a Tudor 'Crime and Punishment' workshop, before further investigating this area of history by stopping off at Bessie Surtees' House, a local example of Tudor architecture. Back at school, Year 5 continued their Tudor learning by studying different aspects of life in England at this time including crime and punishment, architecture and the impact of King Henry VIII's reign on the country.

Year 6 visited Durham City to take part in an exciting local history trail; the children explored the cobbled streets, searching for clues about the city's fascinating past. They learned about the history of Durham Castle and the Northern Saints, as well as interesting characters such as John Duck, the 'Dick Wittington of Durham.' The trail was both fun and educational, helping to support the children's understanding of how Durham has changed over time. At the end of the trail, the children visited Waterstones where they were rewarded by choosing a number of new reading books for their class libraries.



Year 3 investigating rocks & fossils



Year 4 at the Beacon of Light



Year 5 at Newcastle Castle



Year 6 on the Durham History Trail

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK & SAFER INTERNET DAY 2026

As part of Children's Mental Health Week, all year groups took part in creative well-being activities linked to this year's theme of 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself.' The theme itself focused on how knowing ourselves better can improve self-esteem and overall well-being. Children also discussed the importance of talking to friends and trusted adults as part of Safer Internet Day, and how this can also help to improve well-being and safety. Please see the school website for more information on how we can support our own well-being through 'The 5 Ways to Wellbeing.'



The school basketball team at the Lambton Street Youth Centre

'GO RED' FOR HEART FOUNDATION

On Friday 13th February, a non-uniform day was held to raise money for The British Heart Foundation, a charity working to support people living with heart conditions, providing funding for research, and campaigning to raise awareness. As well as wearing red, pink and heart-themed clothing, the children learnt more about the work of the charity and how they help people across the UK. Well done to everyone involved for their efforts and for the generous donations received towards this excellent cause.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Half Term - School closes Friday 20th February 2026

School Re-opens - Monday 2nd March 2026

World Book Day - Thursday 5th March 2026

Parent/Carer's Evening - Monday 16th/Tuesday 17th March 2026

(Letters will be sent out after half term)

Easter Holiday - School closes Thursday 2nd April 2026

School Re-opens - Monday 20th April 2026

KS2 SATs week - Monday 11th May - Thursday 14th May 2026

Half Term - School closes Friday 22nd May 2026

School Re-opens - Monday 1st June 2026

Summer Holiday - School closes Tuesday 21st July 2026



We are continuing to use the Reading Plus and Lexia education programmes both in school and at home. Please encourage your child to continue use these online learning tools for 30 minutes per week as part of their weekly homework. Both of these programmes are invaluable in assisting the children's progress in reading across the school.

HAPPY HALF TERM

After another successful, exciting and learning-filled half term, we would like to wish you all a safe and restful half-term holiday. We look forward to seeing you back in school on Monday 2nd March 2026 for another exciting half term.

SCHOOL BASKETBALL

The school basketball team continued their season by competing in a number of fast-paced games held at Lambton Street Youth Centre. The team thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of playing against several other well-established teams from the local area and they were highly competitive in all of the games they played - well done to all of the players involved.

HIGH-FIVE NETBALL

The school netball team have been participating in the Sunderland Primary School Netball Association high-five netball tournament, which took place at the Beacon of Light. The children have performed exceptionally well in all of their matches played, winning all of their games so far. All of the children have represented themselves and the school superbly, showing fantastic team-work, effort and spirit throughout - well done to everyone involved.



Children wearing red and pink for the British Heart Foundation Charity

VALENTINE'S DISCOS

The recent Valentine's Discos in school were a great success; the children's enthusiasm for the event was matched by their fantastic moves on the dancefloor. Thank you to all those who helped to make the event enjoyable and a special thank you to members of the School Council for helping to provide the music and to serve drinks and snacks to the party goers during the entertainment.

CLUBS ARE BOOMING

Monday	STEM	Lego	Football
Tuesday	Yoga	Basketball	Cinema
Wednesday	Bernard's Master Chef	Fitness	Football
Thursday	Drama & Music	Art & Design	Netball
Friday	Dance	Gaming & Computing	Basketball