

# SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

January 2026

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Phoenix School (Sheffield), and Forestwood (Bury) are DfE registered special schools, providing education for young people admitted to their co-located hospital services.

Our schools are regulated by OFSTED you can read their last inspection via the websites.

[Forestwood School](#)

[Phoenix School](#)

### New staff

Welcome to Lisa Belshaw who has joined Forestwood School as a Teaching Assistant

We also welcome two new members of staff to Phoenix:-  
Emma Graystone who has joined us as an Options Teacher and  
Mark Armstrong who is our new Maths teacher

## What we've been up to

The Young People at Phoenix school took advantage of the snow that fell the first week back – they made **snow ducks!** They were able to make observations about the different kinds of snow.

It was much harder to “release” the ducks from the snow which has crystallised and become harder...



Whereas the soft snow (which was also perfect for making snowballs!) allowed the ducks to be released much more smoothly.



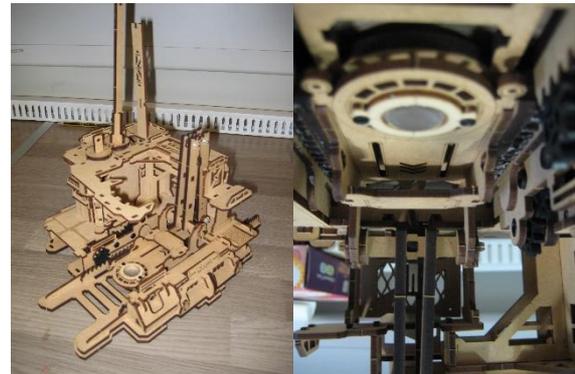
A fun time was had by all, but the very low temperatures soon brought us back inside!



Pupils at Phoenix School have been learning in a **kinaesthetic way by completing some 3D model making!**

Aiming high one pupil is currently completing a mechanical space shuttle that moves to activate launch and has lights built in as well.

It's a challenging task with over 400 model making pieces to assemble and an instruction booklet that requires a lot of concentration for some of the pages but teamwork does indeed make the dream work and over 100 pieces have already been assembled in preparation for a future space shuttle lift off.....watch this space!!!



This academic year, Forestwood School has **continued to build a strong professional relationship with Edge Hill University by welcoming students from their teacher training programme for short work-experience placements.**



Ella Rivers was the first student to join us. During her placement, she shadowed several members of our specialist education team, gaining valuable insight into the detailed planning, preparation, and delivery of learning for the complex students we support. Her time with us offered a meaningful opportunity to experience the high-quality, tailored education provided within our service.

### Ella's Reflections on Her Placement

"I completed a three-day placement at Cygnet as part of my degree, and it was a valuable opportunity to experience an alternative educational setting beyond my primary education course.

During my time here, I was particularly struck by how child-centred the teaching approaches are. The young people's interests are clearly taken into account when planning their learning. For example, one student really enjoyed the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books, so their English lesson was themed around this and included reading aloud from the text.

I also noticed how consistently the teachers motivate and support the children through praise, encouragement, and even award submissions. It created a really positive and engaging learning environment."

Forestwood School has introduced a new **classroom-cutting machine that enables students to explore three-dimensional structures through two key elements of art: line and form.** The Beaver Bot provides a safe way for students to independently cut cardboard pieces, which they then assemble into sculptural constructions inspired by artists' work. Architecture and the sculptures of Barbara Hepworth served as creative starting points, prompting students to produce line drawings, carry out visual analysis, and apply descriptive art vocabulary. Building on this foundation, students designed and developed their own three-dimensional pieces.



One of the students, took time to reflect on his creative process. He described the activity as calming, offering him space to think about the work he was doing. As he

shaped his design, he said: “You can have an idea of what you want to make and it can change along the way during the process, and that’s okay.” His approach highlighted the value of flexibility and self-reflection in hands-on projects.

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Our hard working staff are pupil centred, motivated, encouraging, inspirational, creative, caring, kind, compassionate (the list could go on and on!) and we want the staff to know that we value and appreciate them and the work that they do!

Doesn’t everyone like chocolate?! The ‘**I heard a Wispa**’ initiative allows staff to (anonymously?!) leave a Cadbury’s Wispa bar on the desk of any staff member that they choose with an accompanying note that states I heard a Wispa that..... (details of why they appreciate and value that person and the work that they do written on the note).

The chocolate joy is spreading to other staff in Sheffield outside of education as well!

