

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

March 2026

CONTENT

New staff and recognition	1
What we've been up to	2

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](#)

Recognition

- Forestwood have had some brilliant feedback from student teachers who have spent time in our school. You can see the feedback on their [website](#)
- Rachel Rix and Wendy Webster were invited to speak to Ofsted/CQC inspectors this month to provide feedback on the work we do with Bury Local Authority and received the following from Bury Local Authority following this:-

"Thank you so much for taking the time out to speak to Ofsted/CQC inspectors this week and for your contribution to supporting children with additional needs..."

- Forestwood also received some great feedback from a parent of a Young Person

Mum wanted to let us know how grateful she is for all education have done with XX. She said he finds school valuable and really enjoys coming to school. Mum went on to say she knows he struggles to focus at times but is always very positive about school and she wanted to say thank you to the education team for all they do.

What we've been up to

To celebrate **Safer Internet Day** this year, our pupils at Phoenix School took part in a series of activities exploring artificial intelligence and online safety.

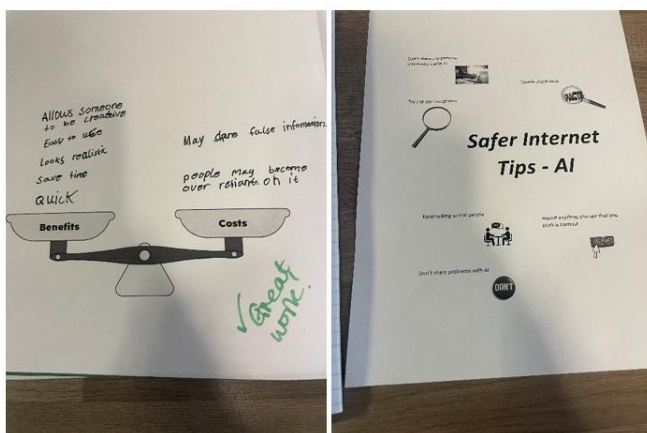
Together, they looked at how AI is used across the internet and how it can influence the information we see.

Students discussed real-life scenarios and thought carefully about topics such as privacy, misinformation, and how to recognise when something may have been created by AI.

They also developed their own practical strategies for staying safe, feeling confident, and making positive choices online.

We were incredibly proud of how thoughtfully and maturely our pupils approached this important subject.

They showed curiosity, insight, and a strong sense of responsibility, creating a supportive and respectful atmosphere throughout the day.



This year's theme

Each year there is a new theme for British Science Week and for 2026 it's 'Curiosity: what's your question?'



Forestwood School was buzzing with wonder and imagination as students celebrated **Science Week**, diving deep into curiosity-filled questions. The theme this year invited pupils to revisit those big "Why?" and "How?" questions that shape scientific thinking from an early age.

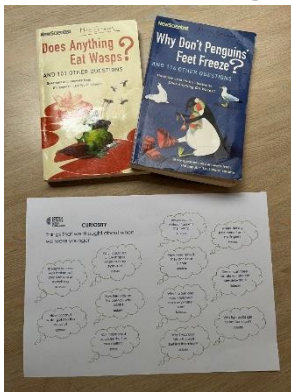
From the quirky to the surprisingly complex, classrooms were alive with conversation. Students explored questions such as "What eats wasps?" and "Why don't penguins' feet freeze?"—queries that opened the door to discussions about ecosystems, adaptation, and the incredible diversity of the natural world.

One of the most exciting parts of the week was the way students' questions reflected a variety of cultural backgrounds and childhood experiences. In some classrooms, learners debated "How does the water get inside coconuts?" which sparked fascinating conversations about plant biology, tropical climates, and traditional food knowledge from around the world. Another favourite was "Why don't fireflies get hot?" a perfect springboard into bioluminescence and the amazing ways living things produce light.

Of course, Science Week wouldn't have been complete without a bit of mind-bending mystery. Students found themselves wondering about perception and physics with questions like "How am I inside the mirror?" and "Why do I see circles when I rub my eyes?" These

discussions helped them explore the science of light, reflections, and how our brains interpret what we see.

Throughout the week, students demonstrated curiosity, creativity, and a genuine desire to understand the world more deeply. Through this they discovered that sometimes the best part of science is simply staying curious!



Pupils at Phoenix School have been working on producing **bonded hearts** during therapeutic education sessions.

The Bonded heart project involves pupils stitching 2 cotton fabric hearts to be used in the Baby intensive care unit in hospitals.



One heart stays with the new born baby and one heart is given to the parents. The hearts are then swapped between baby and parents to allow scent absorption and scent swapping to provide comfort for both parents and baby and to also aid breast milk pumping as the baby's scent helps the mother feel connected while pumping.

We were delighted to welcome back our friends from **Grimm & Co.**, the local creative writing charity who never fail to spark imagination across Phoenix School.

This visit's workshop theme was marketing a magical product, in this case a tin of beans.

Working alongside the wonderfully imaginative Grimm & Co. team, pupils designed their own magical creatures—the intended “customers” for this enchanted product. From there, they developed stories, illustrations, and descriptive writing to bring their ideas to life.

The creativity on display was outstanding. Both Phoenix staff and the Grimm & Co. team were genuinely impressed by the originality, humour and detail the pupils poured into their work. The session was filled with laughter, lively discussion, and a real sense of pride as pupils shared their magical inventions.

Workshops like this not only nurture writing skills but also build confidence, collaboration, and a love of storytelling.

We're already looking forward to Grimm & Co.'s next visit and to seeing where our pupils' imaginations will take them next.





Thursday 5th March saw both our staff and young people at Phoenix School 'Go All In' for **World Book Day!**

As well as having the opportunity to design gift vouchers or World Book Day bunting, our young people also got to have a Blind Date with a Book.

Designed to get readers to choose books they wouldn't normally read, this involved wrapping books in brown paper and including a 5-10 word description on the front. Readers could then only choose their book based on this short description.



Our young people loved choosing their books and being pushed out of their comfort zones, and of course, it wouldn't be a Phoenix School World Book Day celebration without some dressing up!

Staff and children alike loved guessing which characters the teachers had dressed up as and we can't wait to do it all again next year.

At Forestwood School, we know that joining education while in hospital can feel overwhelming. New routines, new people, and the challenges that brought a young person here in the first place can make school feel like "one thing too many." Yet time and again, we see students show extraordinary strength, honesty, and growth as they engage with learning at their own pace.

This new regular feature, **In Their Own Words**, gives our young people the chance to share their personal experiences of hospital education. These reflections, written during English lessons, offer a genuine insight into what learning here can feel like — the challenges, the turning points, and the unexpected positives.

We hope these voices reassure others who may be feeling unsure about attending education. Every young person arrives with their own story, and every small step forward is something to be proud of. Our aim is for Forestwood School to be a calm, supportive, and hopeful place where students feel safe, understood, and encouraged.

We are grateful to each young person who chooses to share their journey. Their reflections remind us why we do what we do.

Reflective Piece

Written by a Forestwood student during their English lesson

I don't pretend to be a perfect person, but right now I feel good about myself. When I first arrived at Cygnet, I was petrified of people and I didn't trust them.

I don't remember much of that time because I was really poorly. I gradually realised I had to talk to people to build trust. It took a long time, and I had so many incidents, but I really fought my way to be a calmer, more patient person. I hated education, I didn't want to learn. But then I made friends with kids in my group and I realised that education can be helpful – it got me off the ward, talking with my peers, and got to actually have fun while in my lessons. Now, I have 100% attendance. I'm going to use my education to finish my exams. I now know that aggression isn't always the answer and that I need to keep myself safe.

This term Forestwood School's Art & Creativity classes have been focussed on texture, and inventive thinking as students explored a range of 3D techniques designed to stretch their imagination and develop new artistic skills.

One highlight of the term has been the creation of **paper wigs**, inspired by a selection of artistic images and historical hair designs. Students began by constructing a head-shaped dome from recycled cardboard, forming the base structure for their piece. From there, each learner added strands, curls, waves, and sculptural shapes made from different types of paper.



5

The provision of a selection of paper, card, newsprint, and patterned paper allowed students to experiment with ways to build volume and movement.

To bring their designs to life, pupils applied a range of **texturing techniques**—curling, folding, twisting, fringing, and layering—resulting in impressive wigs that were not only playful but also demonstrated a solid understanding of form and craftsmanship. The finished pieces brought a brilliant sense of theatre to the classroom.

Another group of students focused on transforming their own **still-life pencil drawings of flowers** into three-dimensional artworks. Beginning with observational sketches, pupils studied the shapes, shadows, and structures of petals, stems, and leaves. They then used these drawings as blueprints, building 3D interpretations using mixed materials. This process encouraged students to think critically about scale, form, and construction as they brought their flowers “off the page” and into physical space.

Across all year groups, the emphasis this term has been on creativity, problem-solving, and the joy of making. The students have shown impressive perseverance as they experimented with new methods and worked both independently and collaboratively.

