

Kingsmeadow news

Year 9 - May 2026

This half term after Easter is usually the shortest and busiest of the year. This year was no exception. Year 7 Parents and Carers Evening, Year 8 Key Assessments, Year 9 Options returns, Years 10 and 12 coursework deadlines and, of course, Years 11 and 13 starting their final exams. All of this drives our expectations of academic excellence that students routinely strive for here at Kingsmeadow Community School.

We have seen all students enjoying success across the half term and have been sharing that success with you at home. I know that first hand from the number of praise postcards I have written, the congratulations letters I have signed and the positive phone calls I have made to parents and carers of students who have exceeded expectations. The teachers and pastoral leads of Kingsmeadow have been doing the same. These are jobs we are happy to be kept busy doing, as our students continue to excel in their efforts and achievements.

Even with this excellent level of academic effort, the staff and students of Kingsmeadow Community School have still found the energy and the time to get involved in so much more. We firmly believe in developing the character of young people - through our core values of Integrity, Resilience and Respect - alongside developing their academic profile.

A special mention goes to our students involved in Duke of Edinburgh - the largest cohort of students to do so at Kingsmeadow for at least ten years. We have seen students completing their Bronze Award expedition, as well as a practice expedition for Silver Award (which will lead to the full expedition before the end of this year). Completing a Duke of Edinburgh expedition takes courage, concentration and a huge bucket-full of resilience. Our students demonstrated those traits admirably - especially when faced with the most unpredictable of weather for May!

We have also seen students being successful outside of classrooms through activities such as: Junior Maths Challenge; a business breakfast at Vertu motors; beginning their UCAS statements; supporting a Year 3 and 4 sport and orienteering event; a Year 10 rewards trip to the bowling alley; being successful at the regional Athletics Championship (five of our students are going on to represent us at the county event in June). Not to mention the students who jetted off for the football-based trip to Barcelona over the half-term break.

Rumour has it that this half-term break might actually see the start of some summer weather. Let's hope so! Whatever happens, though, I wish everyone a safe, restful break and I look forward to welcoming all of our students back in June for the final half term of the year.



Mr Barrett
Headteacher

Learning about the importance of self-esteem and wellbeing

Self-esteem shapes our inner voice. How we think, what we believe we deserve, and how we respond to challenges have a huge effect on how we treat ourselves and others, and it also influences the kinds of choices we make in everyday life.

In their tutor sessions our Key Stage 3 students have been learning how self-belief and self-esteem can be influenced by a range of factors, including experiences at school, relationships with friends and family, social media, achievements, and setbacks. They have also learned that self-esteem can change over time, with moments when we feel confident and positive, and others when we feel unsure or critical of ourselves, and that this is a normal part of being human.

Importantly, our students learned that having a healthy self-esteem doesn't mean thinking we are perfect or better than others. Instead, it means having a balanced and realistic view of ourselves, and that we recognise our strengths while also accepting that we have areas to improve, just like everyone else.

Equally important is ensuring they understand that low self-esteem can sometimes lead to negative patterns, such as avoiding challenges, comparing ourselves constantly to others, or being overly self-critical. On the other hand, building stronger self-esteem can improve overall wellbeing, helping us to feel more confident, resilient, and able to cope with difficulties – matching our core value of resilience.

Students also learned of the importance of surrounding themselves with supportive people, and that spending time with those who respect and encourage us can strengthen how we see ourselves. The key message has been that improving self-esteem is a gradual process, not something that changes overnight, but by making small, consistent efforts, it is possible to build a healthier relationship with ourselves.



Hello from Mrs Diston, Head of Year 9

Our Year 9 students have embraced a period full of challenge, creativity and personal growth, demonstrating enthusiasm and resilience across a range of exciting experiences this half-term.

A particular highlight has been participation in the English oracy course, where students have developed confidence in verbal presentations and public speaking. Through thoughtful discussion, collaborative activities and formal presentations, students have strengthened their communication skills and learned the importance of expressing ideas clearly and respectfully.

Another memorable experience was the Duke of Edinburgh expedition to Thornley Woods. Students showed determination, teamwork and positivity throughout the expedition, supporting one another while navigating the outdoors and embracing every challenge along the way.

Students are also still enthusiastically talking about the recent Humanutopia event and the lasting impact of its messages around personal responsibility, confidence and self-belief. The sessions encouraged students to think carefully about their choices, relationships and aspirations, leaving many inspired to approach school and life with a renewed sense of purpose.

This half-term concludes with a celebration of the Peter Rabbit: Tales on the Tyne project, showcasing creativity and teamwork in abundance. Students collaborated brilliantly to bring ideas to life, demonstrating imagination and excellent teamwork throughout the project.

As I move on to new pastures I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to parents and carers for their support, and to my students for being amazing to work with. It has been a pleasure to see them flourish both inside and outside the classroom.



Embracing the benefits of Screen-Free Week

In an age where screens dominate nearly every aspect of daily life, our Key Stage 3 students are discovering the value of stepping away from their devices during Screen-Free Week, the growing initiative that encourages young people to take a break from phones, tablets, computers, and televisions, and replacing that screen time with more meaningful, offline activities.

For many students, the idea of going without screens, even for a short period, initially feels challenging. Devices are not only used for entertainment but also for communication, schoolwork, and social connection. However, as Screen-Free Week begins, students often find themselves exploring alternatives they may have overlooked.

One of the most noticeable effects reported by students is improved focus. Without constant notifications and digital distractions, many find it easier to concentrate on tasks and engage more deeply in conversations. Sleep quality also improves, as reducing screen use, especially before bedtime, helps the brain wind down more naturally.

By the end of the week, many of our students said they experienced a sense of accomplishment and a new perspective on their daily routines. Those who did return to using screens, have said they have done so with greater intention and awareness, leading to healthier habits, and a more well-rounded lifestyle.



Introducing Mrs Duffy, our new Head of Key Stage 3

We are delighted to introduce Mrs Duffy, our new Head of Key Stage 3. Mrs Duffy is dedicated to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and respected.

She said: "Key Stage 3 is an important time to build confidence, friendships, and a strong sense of belonging. I am passionate about supporting students' wellbeing, helping them to develop resilience, independence, and the life skills they need to navigate challenges both in and out of the classroom.

"I believe in building positive relationships with students and families, ensuring that everyone feels listened to and supported. By promoting positive behaviour, strong routines, and a caring community, I want every student to feel confident, happy, and ready to thrive."



Creativity, talent and teamwork raises funds to support local patients and families

Our students unveiled the design of their sculpture this week as it sets off on its Peter Rabbit: Tales on the Tyne adventure this summer.

The sculpture's final design is a culmination of ideas submitted by Key Stage 3 students as part of an art project aimed at encouraging creativity, self-expression and collaboration, whilst raising money for St. Oswald's Hospice.

Following the success of Great North Snowdogs in 2016, Elmer's Great North Parade in 2019, and Shaun on the Tyne in 2023, the school's finished piece will feature in the city's fourth art trail that celebrates St. Oswald's Hospice 40th birthday and Beatrix Potter's 160th anniversary.

The school's project began earlier this year when students brainstormed fundraising ideas and developed their designs before the school's Senior Leadership Team selected the elements that would be included in the final piece.

Mr Barrett, Headteacher praised the students for their hard work and imagination. He said: "This sculpture represents much more than art, it reflects teamwork, determination and the incredible talent of our students. I am so proud of our students' hard work to raise funds that will support the patients and families who rely on the care of St Oswald's Hospice.

"I am also delighted that so many people will get to see and enjoy our lasting piece of public art when it features as part of the free, inclusive Tales on the Tyne art adventure."

The Kingsmeadow Peter Rabbit design can be seen from Wednesday 15 July – Monday 14 September 2026, when iconic landmarks in Newcastle and North Tyneside will be transformed by the arrival of super-sized sculptures of Peter Rabbit.

Kingsmeadow creative writing student celebrates success after publishing first book of poetry

A Year 11 student has achieved an impressive milestone after having a collection of poetry published, proving that creativity and determination can lead to remarkable success at any age.

Natasha, who began writing poetry as a hobby, has spent much of her formative years developing poems inspired by everyday experiences, emotions, and the world around her. What started as a simple passion soon grew into a serious creative project, resulting in her full collection of poems ready for publication.

Encouraged by her teachers and family, Natasha submitted her work to a publisher and was thrilled when her work was accepted. The collection – Words From The Soul, features a range of poems that explore the themes of Nature and time; My friends, family and love, and Me and experiences.

Teachers have praised Natasha's dedication and talent, describing her achievement as an inspiration to other young writers.

Mr Barrett, Headteacher said: "I have had the pleasure of hearing Natasha perform her poetry at various events both in school and out in the community. Whilst it is a phenomenal feat to be published at such a young age, it is no surprise to me that her talent has been recognised."

He added: This goes to show how powerful young voices can be in the world of literature and I expect that her example will inspire other students to explore their creative ideas. I am so proud of what Natasha has achieved and of the support she has received through our Creative Writing Club."

The young poet said she hoped her book will encourage even more students to try writing themselves. "Poetry is a way to express what you feel and see things differently," she said. "If you enjoy writing, you should keep going and share your work."

With her first book now published, Natasha plans to continue writing and hopes to release more poetry.

We wish her even more success for the future.



Developing safer, family friendly digital habits

In today's connected world, children are spending more time online than ever before. From educational apps and online learning to games and social media, smartphones and tablets have become part of everyday family life. For many parents and carers, finding the right balance between freedom and safety can feel challenging. That is where parental control apps can help.

These apps are designed to help families create healthy digital habits. They can be downloaded onto both a parent's device and a child's device, giving parents tools to guide and manage their child's online experience while still respecting each family's individual choices around technology.

Rather than guessing how devices are being used, parents can better understand their child's online behaviour and support them in making positive choices.

Apps such as Google Family Link, Apple Screen Time, Bark, Qustodio and Net Nanny are designed to support parents rather than replace conversations about online safety. Instead of simply restricting access, they encourage families to work together to build positive and responsible technology habits and allow parents and carers to supervise their child's device usage through a central space that manages screen time, app usage, and digital wellbeing.

Another valuable feature of these apps is location sharing. Parents can see their child's device location on a map, helping families stay connected and providing reassurance when children are travelling, visiting friends, or returning home from school. Location features only work when the child's device is powered on and connected to the internet, and families can decide how and when these tools are used.

As children grow older and develop greater independence, digital apps also offer parents and carers a practical way to guide children's digital experiences while encouraging trust, independence, and healthy routines. With tools for app management, screen time controls, location sharing, and privacy settings, the app helps families create a safer and more balanced approach to technology.

Mr Thompson, Kingsmeadow Community School's Online Safety Coordinator said:

"Technology can be a powerful tool for learning, creativity, and communication and digital safety apps aim to help families use the technology in a balanced and thoughtful way rather than treating screen time as entirely negative.

"As children continue to grow up in an increasingly digital world, apps can support families in building positive habits that work for everyone."

Creating a stronger and supportive community through local partnerships

Following a successful first year of partnership working that is providing significant benefits to local people, Kingsmeadow is proud to announce that Dunston UTS FC Juniors has officially named the community school's facilities as home.

Graham Bannister, the Chairman of Dunston UTS FC Juniors said: "We're delighted to be working in partnership with Kingsmeadow Community School. The facilities have been fantastic for our teams, and the support and communication from staff has been second to none.

"Most importantly, this partnership is helping us provide more opportunities for local children to get involved, develop, and enjoy their football in a positive environment. We're really proud to be building such a strong relationship and look forward to continuing to grow together."

Since opening the Kingsmeadow Community Lettings service to local sports clubs the school's facilities have proven to be in high demand. The school offers high-quality spaces to local clubs and groups at an affordable rate of hire, and its facilities; set in beautifully tendered grounds, are supporting training sessions and match preparation for local groups that enables players to train effectively in a safe and well-maintained environment.

Mr Barrett, Headteacher said: "A key focus of our partnership strategy is to increase the provision of opportunities for local children to participate in sports activities. Through structured coaching sessions and inclusive activities, local people are being given the chance to develop their skills, improve their physical wellbeing, and engage positively with sport in a supportive environment, and I am proud that our school is enabling the local community to do that".

