



The Drake News

28TH FEBRUARY 2025

Where a World of Opportunity Awaits

We Love Reading!

Thank you for all your wonderful entries. We loved seeing all the wonderful and unusual places you enjoy reading. Most of all we loved seeing so many of you enjoying reading! We will be displaying your photos in the library. This week it will be the turn of the staff!

And the winner is....Naomi!



I found lots of places to read when I went on holiday.



Every Day Matters



It is a statutory requirement for children to attend school every day.

This week's winners are... Hadid with 99.3%

Our New Creative Habit...



This half term we are learning to be disciplined. This means having the ability to improve and refine our work, reflect on how else we could have done something and to develop our skills and techniques.



Autism Specialist Accreditation

Dear Families,

Following a rigorous assessment week towards our Autism Specialist Accreditation with the National Autistic Society, **we are pleased to be able to share some feedback with you.**

Our assessment consisted of in-depth evidence collection through the following avenues:

- A self-audit and action plan
- A detailed presentation about our school
- Initiative and pupil case studies
- A comprehensive day of observations across the school, covering all year groups within the SRB and mainstream.
- An interview with a range of staff members across the school
- A parent survey and additional parent phone calls
- A pupil survey and conversations during observation sessions
- An analysis of key documents, reports, policies and our school website
- An analysis of many individual pupil documents and reports

We would like to take this opportunity to **thank all families who contributed by sharing their invaluable parent voice within the survey and phone calls.** This contribution is vital and enables us to move forward with continuous provision development for autistic pupils across the school.

It is important to note, that although we are excited to share this feedback with you, **we are not yet aware of our accreditation status.** In 4-5 weeks, we will receive our final report with an accreditation status of 'aspiring', 'accredited' or 'advanced'. Regardless of this outcome, **our unrelenting aspiration to develop our neuro-affirming autism practise will always be a priority.**

Thank you for your ongoing collaboration and parent partnership. We cannot wait to share our next steps with you.

Drake Primary School



Sensory Experiences

Strengths

- The SRB environment is low arousal, clear but not clinical and provides the pupils with multi-functional learning spaces.
- Environments supported children to regulate. Children had access to additional sensory resources (ear defenders, fidgets, chew), however these were rarely required due to the children remaining regulated during their learning and play opportunities.
- Children had alternative seating options available and used these to support regulation during learning.
- Teaching was very calm and clear. There were no competing voices from adults which supported a positive and focused learning environment.
- The senses were explored with children during conversations and within specific lessons. This included conversations at lunchtime regarding food preferences and during a lesson based on The Zones of Regulation and body sensations.

Areas of Development

- Could sensory options be used during some tasks to support motivation. For example, a sand tray during English learning as an alternative writing option.

Emotional Wellbeing



Strengths

- The whole school culture and implementation of the Relationships Policy
- The Relationships Policy has been successful in supporting emotional regulation and pupil behaviour. It is impressive being implemented within a mainstream school setting.
- It is evident that all staff take the time to explain information to children. This includes their choices, the process of activities and the reasons for situations. This supports pupils to understand expectations and make positive choices, without making them feel that they have done anything negative.
- Autistic pupils are consistently supported to understand and regulate their emotions.
- Scripts were consistently used by staff. These helped to remind children of their choices, acknowledging feelings and behaviour and ensured pupils were being positive friends to peers.
- The Zones of Regulation was implemented across the school and was evident in the consistent use of vocabulary by staff and pupils. Pupils asked staff members how they were feeling and directed them to move their own names on zones check-in's. This demonstrated that children are taught to understand and consider the feelings of others in addition to understanding their own emotions.

Areas of Development

- No areas of development were identified within this area.



Assessor Feedback

Social Communication, Interactions and Relationships



Strengths

- There is a wide range of universal tools across the school to support the social communication of autistic pupils.
- Strategies to support social communication were evident both within the SRB and within the mainstream classrooms and were being used effectively throughout.
- There is consistent support for autistic pupils to develop their social interactions and relationships. This includes the use of scripts, talk partners, visual communication supports and interventions such as Friendship Terrace.
- Children have a total communication approach available. This includes a child using a high-tech AAC device to communicate during an Attention Autism lesson. This enabled them to participate in the whole class conversation and activity with confidence.

Areas of Development

- No areas of development were identified within this area.

Functional Skills and Self-reliance



Strengths

- Visual timetables, schedules and checklists are used consistently to support autistic children to follow routines with independence.
- Radio Drake is a successful provision within the school and supports the self-reliance of pupils. This has been successfully accessed by autistic pupils who have hosted podcasts based on their interests.
- Pupils engage in their own targets. These were presented and available to them visually, using symbols. Both students and staff referred to targets, which supported the delivery of specific praise to pupils about their learning and holistic progress.
- The right levels of support were provided to children at the right time.
- The development of life skills was effective, organic and consistent. This includes children putting their own belongings away, collecting resources and following personal hygiene routines. This was consistently shown to support pupils to problem solve with high expectations, instead of adults completing tasks on pupils behalf.

Areas of Development

- Some challenging writing was observed, could this have been broken down into smaller chunks or made more sensory to increase pupil motivation?



What happens next?

Accreditation

In 4-5 weeks, we will receive our final report with an accreditation status of 'aspiring', 'accredited' or 'advanced'. Regardless of this outcome, our unrelenting aspiration to develop our neuro-affirming autism practise will always be a priority and shared with families throughout the journey. We recognise there is never a 'finished product', but that provision will always adapt and improve with new research, pedagogy and stakeholder feedback, with the voices of autistic pupils at the heart.

Autistic Young Experts Council and Autism Ambassadors

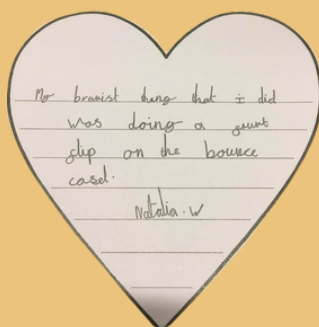
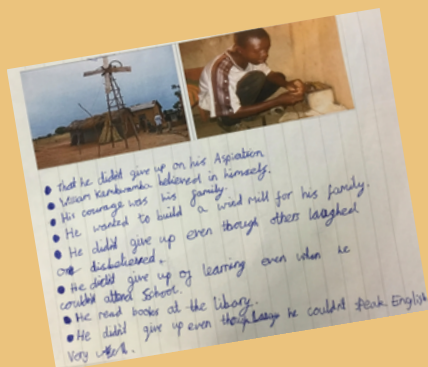
Our council and ambassador roles are being advertised around our school building and communication channels, with pupils having until 7th March to express their interest to Mrs Jones. Following this, council dates and plans will be made and shared with the pupils and their families. We even have rainbow infinity pin badges and wristbands at the ready!

Autism Acceptance Month

Our favourite time of the year! Autism Acceptance Month is in April and we will start to plan our celebrations, events and activities in the coming weeks.

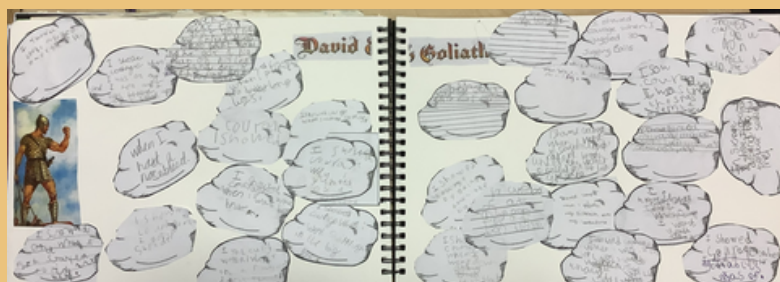
These will be planned alongside our young experts council and with welcome support from our families and wider community. If you have any ideas for this, please contact us to share your ideas.

Values and RE Day



Our values this half term are love and courage. We introduced each value in assembly and in class we thought about what each value means to us. We also thought about how inspirational people used love and courage in their lives.

I need courage to sleep in my own bed - Roman



I need courage to go on really tall slides on my own - Millie

Radio Drake



This week's podcast -

In the inaugural episode of their video game show, Gamegeddon, Harry and Noah discuss Jurassic Park Evolution 2 and Kirby and the Forgotten Land.

<https://drake-infant-school-and-nursery.primarysite.media/media/gamegeddon-episode-1-favourite-games>

Play Council



Play Council would like to say a huge thank you with your help at the bake sale.

They raised £151.50!

Play council want to improve the quality of play times with new resources. They are going to ask each class whether they would prefer new wet play resources or equipment for outside.

We will keep you updated on what they decide to buy.

Our YEARLY carbon footprint is...



ENERGY ⚡
187 kgCO₂e per pupil
This is similar per pupil to most schools on the Zero Carbon Schools programme

TRAVEL 📍
86 kgCO₂e per pupil
This is similar per pupil to most schools on the Zero Carbon Schools programme

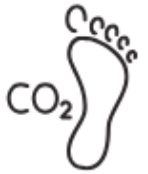
PURCHASING 💰
64 kgCO₂e per pupil
This is lower per pupil to most schools on the Zero Carbon Schools programme

FOOD 🍴
152 kgCO₂e per pupil
This is similar per pupil to most schools on the Zero Carbon Schools programme

Congratulations on calculating your annual carbon footprint!
Knowing your carbon footprint is an important first step.
What could you do to reduce it?

What is a carbon footprint?

A carbon footprint is the amount of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, released into the atmosphere by human activities. It can be calculated for a person, an organisation, or even a country, such as the United Kingdom.



What do the high, medium, low ratings mean?

See the table below for details of what is considered to be high, medium or low carbon emissions per pupil per year. This was calculated using data from schools participating in the Zero Carbon Schools programme 2023-24.

The ratings are most useful in comparing within the school and prioritising areas to take action.

The data is taken from a small number of schools, so having a red rating in any particular area is not necessarily bad, but could mean that there is a bigger potential for reduction than an area with a green rating.

Just by calculating your carbon footprint, you are ahead of the vast majority of schools in the country who haven't taken this step.

	High (kg CO ₂ e per pupil)	Medium (kg CO ₂ e per pupil)	Low (kg CO ₂ e per pupil)
Energy	More than 250	Between 150 and 250	Less than 150
Travel	More than 110	Between 50 and 110	Less than 50
Purchasing	More than 160	Between 70 and 160	Less than 70
Food	More than 180	Between 140 and 180	Less than 140

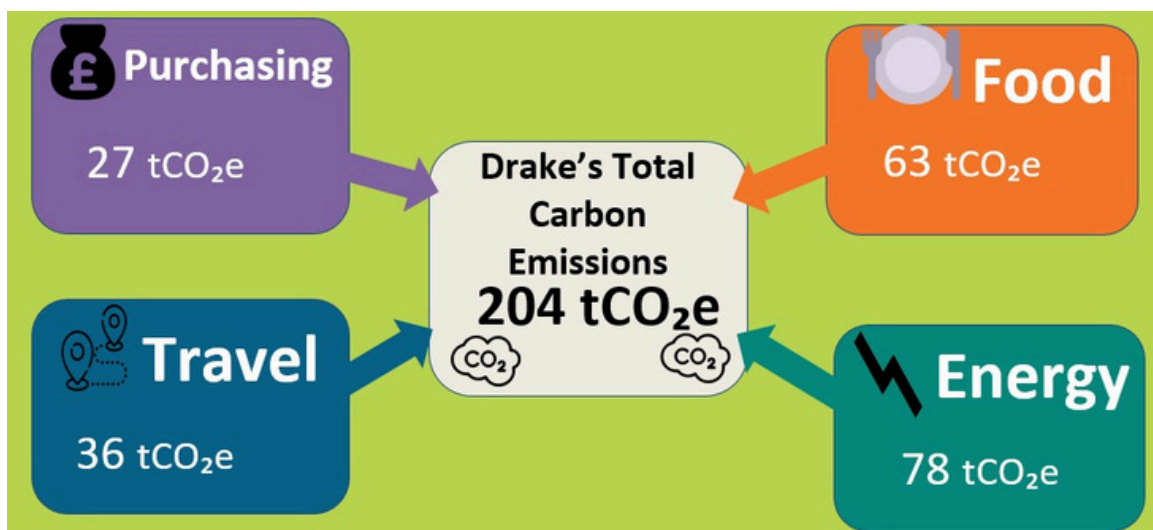
This carbon calculator was the first to be developed, by Green Schools Project, specifically for schools in the UK. We hope that you find it helpful to prioritise areas to make reductions through pupil projects and school-led initiatives. Continuing to take part in the Zero Carbon Schools programme will enable you to track your footprint year on year until you become a...



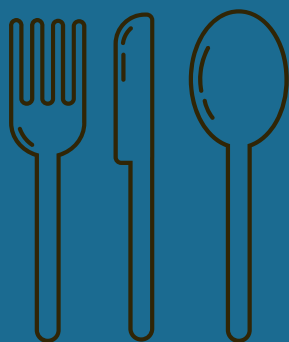
Eco Council worked with the 'Green Schools Project' to calculate the school's carbon footprint. A carbon footprint is the amount of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, released into the atmosphere because of human activities. These gases are called carbon emissions. Carbon emissions are usually measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). 1 tonne CO₂e = 1000 kg CO₂e. The next steps are to decide which carbon emission area (food, travel, energy or purchasing) will we aim to reduce, and create an action plan.

We found out that the biggest area of carbon emissions is from energy- that's how we heat our school and use electricity - Cai

Food creates carbon dioxide, when we grow food and transport it to our school. We try not to waste our lunch - Isla



SNAC Council Update!



The School Nutrition Action Committee is passionate about children getting involved with cooking and learning key skills. Following raising £85 on our Christmas stall, councillors have decided to use the money to purchase new knives for the cookery room.

To encourage children to improve their knife skills and become more confident, they are working on guidance posters that can be displayed in the cookery room and shared with our wider school community. Further information about this will be shared in our assembly at the end of this term.

Class Assemblies



Year 2 Monday 10th March 2.45 pm

Year 3 Tuesday 18th March 9.00 am

Year 6 Thursday 27th 9.00 am

Year 5 Thursday 27th March 2.45 pm

Year 1 Friday 28th 9.00 am

Reception Tuesday 1st April 2.45pm

Year 4 Thursday 3rd April 9.00 am

Aspire

PERFORMING ARTS

New to Thetford

Brought to you by a trained professional
Saturday mornings 11-11:45

SEN Session

A structured Music and Movement class, designed to stimulate the brain, aid sensory processing, develop communication skills, improve social and emotional development and more.

Class will be adapted and tailored to best meet the children's needs and interests.

With opportunities for relaxing and breaks if needed.

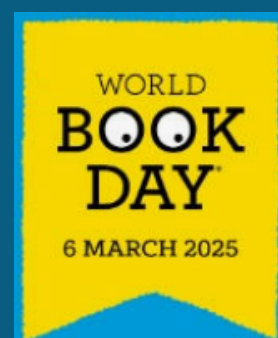
*Please note for this group an adult is required to stay for the session.



Abbey Neighbourhood Centre
Exeter Way, Thetford IP24
1EE

Please contact me Aylish on
socials or by phone on
07734818058 to secure your
child's place for January.
Limited spaces available.

World Book Day



We are dressing up for World Book Day this Thursday 6th March. Come as your favourite character and if you can bring the book that inspired your costume.

We will be having a special visitor and lots of book related activities throughout the day.

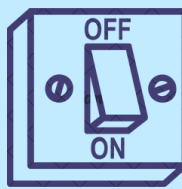
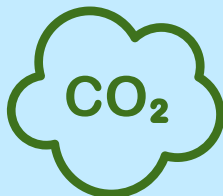


SCIENCE WEEK

POSTER COMPETITION

Design a poster of the theme:
***Sustainability / looking after
the environment***

Think about:



Give your entry to your teacher.
The Eco Council will judge posters
on ***Friday 14th March.***

***EYFS, KS1
and KS2
winners!***

