

# NEWSLETTER

News updates from Buzz Learning Independent Specialist School and College

Dear Learners, Parents, Carers, Friends, and Families at Buzz Learning

It gives me great pleasure to share with you our latest newsletter as we approach the Easter holiday. The newsletter gives us an opportunity to share with you the successes, achievements and experiences that our learners have had this term.



## Positive Noticing

We've introduced a practical strategy called Positive Noticing in Buzz. This idea was developed by Paul Dix, a teacher, leader and trainer with of experience in working with challenging behaviours.

*“Positive Noticing is a simple, practical and highly effective strategy that can be used as an everyday relational strategy, any time, any place. The idea behind it is to catch learners doing the right thing and marking it with positive acknowledgement. This not only shows kindness but it teaches behaviour.*

*You get more of the behaviour that you notice most.”~ Paul Dix*

**POSITIVE  
NOTICING** It starts with you

*Be All You Can!*

You can read below, the positive noticing shared by David Leatherbarrow, Chief Executive Officer for Outcomes First Group, during his recent visit to Buzz.

*“I was really impressed by the interaction between teachers and pupils and the positive way pupils embraced learning. J, K and C all explained what they were learning about and how they felt about it. It was wonderful to listen to their experiences and I was impressed by their knowledge and confidence. Well done everyone.”*

### **Reward Trip to Whickham Thorns**

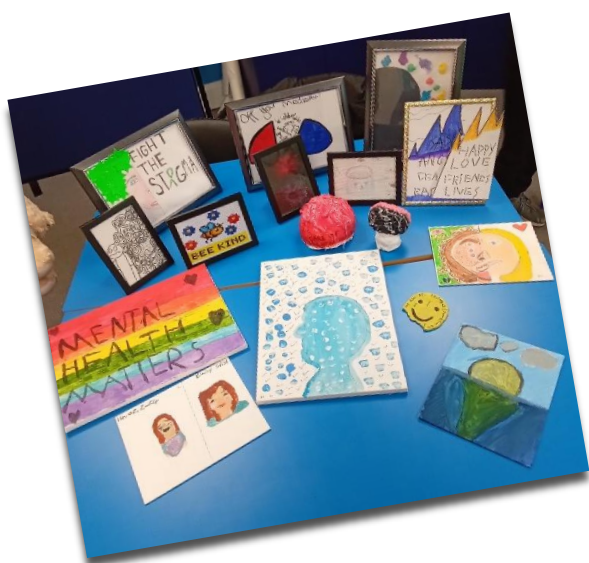
Buzz has recently introduced a new school initiative to recognise those learners who, regularly follow school rules and expectations, and who will often go above and beyond what is required of them. This half term, school learners who achieved enough stamps in their ‘Passport to Success’ were rewarded with a trip to Whickham Thorns Activity Centre. The day was a celebration of improved behaviour and attitude. Learners enjoyed activities such as Snow-tubing and Archery and all thoroughly enjoyed their day!



*Be All You Can!*

## Mental Health and Wellbeing focus

There have been many highlights over this spring term. However, the learners' dedication to raising awareness surrounding mental health and wellbeing, is a particular commitment we are extremely proud of. School learners created an art piece to raise funds for our chosen mental health charity, Place2Be. They also created a show piece to display in the window at Buzz for all to see and to continue raising awareness.



## Sports News

This term learners across both school and college, have represented Buzz in various sporting events. A mixture of college and school learners went to the Riverside Bowling Centre in Sunderland, to compete against other schools in a bowling competition. Everyone had a fabulous time, working as a team and celebrating each other's successes. Two learners were also awarded certificates for individual scores of over 100!

*Be All You Can!*



Buzz learners also attended an U16 football competition at GOALS, Gosforth where our team competed against 10 other schools, in a very physically challenging event. The team experienced some wins and some losses, but the event was a great success and our learners behaved exemplary, with staff from other schools commenting on our behaviour and attitudes. A shout out to our fantastic goalkeeper, whose goalie skills were on point that day!

### **Commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day 2024: 'Fragility of Freedom'**

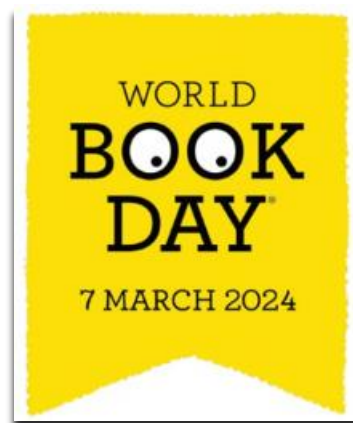


School and college learners attended two special, vigil-inspired events at the Newcastle City Library and Skimstone Arts Centre. They had the opportunity to pay their respects to those people who experienced terrible injustice, became victims of war, having lost loved ones, their possessions and being forced to flee their homeland in order to survive. Displays, recordings, poetry and live music were an integral part of the event. We are thankful for the warm welcome the host provided us with. The recording of the event is available to listen to: <https://www.skimstone.org.uk/>

*Be All You Can!*

## Focus on Reading and Literacy

We are proud to announce that a new phonics, accredited programme is now available at Buzz Learning: Rocket Phonics (via Hodder Education). We continue to provide our learners, who benefit from its resources, with individual booklets to further practise letter recognition and formation; building sentences and apply punctuation rules, correctly. Half-termly assessments are undertaken to ensure learners are making good progress, alongside termly reading assessments. Reading interventions are taking place daily, with learners spending 10-15 minutes reading independently or with staff. Please, feel free to let Buzz Learning know if you would like your child to bring their reading book(s) home to practise reading even further. We can provide a paper-based reading log to record progress.



At Buzz Learning, we are very proud of our learners for their wonderful stories and designs, created to celebrate World Book Day as well as entering the 'Super' WoW competition, alongside other schools around the UK. Buzz learners have won the competition, and selected book prizes will be provided, to congratulate them for their hard work. Learners have clearly demonstrated that their creative skills have generated new ideas, bringing stories to life, via a range of dialogue, imagery and figures of speech. Well done!

The Orwell Youth Prize 2024 is coming to Buzz Learning! Learners have volunteered to prepare for the national entry this year, competing against many UK schools, from Year 7 to Year 11. This year's theme, understandably, is the meaning of **Home**, asking young writers to consider what 'home' truly means to them. Learners are working towards submission deadline, and we wish them all 'the best of luck' in qualifying for the finals!



*Be All You Can!*

## Careers and Work Placement

Our learners have had a busy term participating in careers events, activities and work experiences. Our Supported Interns have been industriously developing their essential skills and impressing Buzz staff and placement supervisors with their burgeoning confidence. Due to their diligence and resilience, we expect that some of the interns will be offered employment.



Many school and college learners participated in work experience at Asda throughout January and February and some volunteers from school and college sold raffle tickets at a coffee morning at Hirst Welfare raising nearly £100 for Children's Mental Health week.



*Be All You Can!*

Garry and Kumar from Koast Radio visited Buzz in February to demonstrate how to make voice recordings and add sound effects and music to the track. Learners practised this and had a lot of fun in the process.



Buzz learners visited the Apprenticeship Fair at Concordia Leisure Centre in Cramlington in February, where they interacted with employers and training providers, gathering information and knowledge about the many opportunities available to them in the local area.

### **Spotlight on... Mrs Pankhurst**

We would like to give a warm welcome to Mrs Laura Pankhurst, our new SEN Teacher at Buzz...

*Hello everyone,*

*I am delighted to introduce myself as the newest member of Buzz Learning.*

*Teaching has always been a passion and I can't wait to encourage your love for learning. My class will always be a place of care, compassion and a safe space for you to thrive in.*

*I can't wait to see how we bloom together.*



*Be All You Can!*

## Mental Health and Wellbeing News

### MELVA programme

We are delighted to let you know that Buzz is participating in the MELVA programme.

The MELVA programme is part of our whole school approach and commitment to cultivating mental health and wellbeing.

MELVA is a mental health education through storytelling intervention for Key Stage 2 (7-11 years) and older young people in SEND settings. This award-winning creative, web-based programme is designed to improve children and young people's knowledge and understanding of mental health and wellbeing and is a fun, high impact way to deliver parts of the RSHE curriculum.

The MELVA programme focuses on early intervention for children and uses recognised and recommended mental health first aid strategies, communicated in a child-friendly and accessible way. MELVA is for all children, not just those who are struggling. It focuses on teaching children the basic skills and understanding they need to keep themselves well, whatever challenges they might face in the future, supporting the development of resilience pathways, positive emotional responses, and relationships.

You can find out more about MELVA and watch the programme trailer via: [www.melva.org.uk](http://www.melva.org.uk)

You can also find out more about the creators of MELVA – children's charity Mortal Fools via: [www.mortalfools.org.uk](http://www.mortalfools.org.uk)

We are really excited to be a MELVA school for this academic year alongside 70 school settings across the North.



*Be All You Can!*



## Youth Mental Health First Aid

Well done to the Buzz staff team who recently completed their Youth Mental Health First Aid training. This is such a fantastic achievement which further demonstrates our whole school approach to supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing.



A big thank you to Amanda, from Cygnus Support who delivered our training and provided the support to enable us to have the whole staff team trained as Youth Mental First Aiders.

Amanda is the co-ordinator working with the parents and carers of children and young people attending the Trailblazer schools within Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Hexham, or who are home schooled. Amanda is also offering a range of support to parents and carers to help them manage their own emotional wellbeing and build their confidence and skills so that they feel more able to support their children's emotional health. The support can be through:

- one-to-one sessions, over the phone or in person, so that parents have space to talk
- peer groups for parents and carers to talk with others going through similar experiences
- workshops focusing on wellbeing in a positive and informative way - Amanda is working with the Educational Mental Health Practitioner team and the Trailblazer schools to facilitate these
- practical tools and techniques to help build a useful personal toolkit
- signposting to other services for specialist help and support that may be needed.

If you as a parent or care-giver feel like you or your family are struggling and could do with some help, please reach out as a first step and contact Amanda by telephone or text on her direct number 07377 265036 or email [amandasayers@cygnussupport.com](mailto:amandasayers@cygnussupport.com)

Cygnus Support is one of the voluntary sector partners in the Be You programme.  
Meet Amanda Sayers



## Thank you!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents, carers and families for your support this term and also our amazing learners who continue to make us proud with their commitment to learning and to making progress.

A big thankyou to Buzz's staff team who always go above and beyond for our learners. Your commitment to making Buzz a great place to learn is invaluable.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to Ms Therese Timlin who, after 20 years at Buzz, is retiring at the end of this term. Buzz Learning was established by Therese in March 2004, and her dedication and hard work over the years have been instrumental to Buzz's success. On behalf of the Buzz team, we wish Therese a very happy, healthy and fun-filled retirement-the best of luck to you on your next chapter.

Whatever your plans are over the Easter break, I hope you all have an enjoyable break and I look forward to welcoming our learners back on **Monday 15th April 2024**.

As always, if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please contact me –  
gemma@buzzlearning.co.uk

**Best wishes**

**Gemma McCutcheon, Head**

*Please remember to follow our Facebook or Twitter page or join our Class Dojo for regular news and updates of learner achievements and fun activities.*

You can also contact us via our website: [www.buzzlearning.co.uk](http://www.buzzlearning.co.uk).



**Skills Builder**  
*Gold Award*

*Be All You Can!*