



Nettlesworth Primary School
Front Street
Nettlesworth
Chester le Street
Durham

3rd September 2026

Welcome to Class 5!

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to school everyone and a very big welcome to year 5 and year 6! I hope you have enjoyed your summer break and are looking forward to the new school year. We are so excited to see you all and are ready to learn lots of new exciting things! I am looking forward to all of the exciting things throughout the final year of your primary school journey.

In class 5 we are looking forward to having lots of fun learning new things and helping our year 6 children prepare for their transition to secondary school. This half term our topic is Darwin's Delights. We have lots of exciting things planned and more information will follow. Please keep an eye on our section of the school website to find out about all the exciting things we are doing in class.

Just a few notes for your diary. Homework will be given out on a Monday and collected in on Friday. Spellings are handed out on Wednesday in preparation for a test on a Monday morning. Planners will be given out to your child this week. Please return these daily. Reading books and diaries will be handed out this week, please keep an eye out for them. We encourage children to read at least once a week with an adult, please sign their reading diary as they will get a point towards their Bookflix card!

Finally, PE kits! Please send in a PE kit on a Monday and leave it at school throughout the week. We will return this home on a Friday. Our PE days change each half term depending on available coaches in school.

I am really looking forward to working with you all again! If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Many Thanks

Mrs Aspinall

Darwin's timeline

- 1809** Born in Shrewsbury, Shropshire.
- 1825** Attends University of Edinburgh Medical School but fails to become a doctor.
- 1827** Attends Cambridge University in the hope of becoming an Anglican priest.
- 1831** Sets sail on HMS *Beagle* for a voyage around the world.
- 1835** Visits the Galápagos Islands, where he observes many species of plants and animals.
- 1836** Returns to England on HMS *Beagle*.
- 1839** **January** Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, a group of the world's leading scientists.
May Publishes an account of his travels and discoveries on HMS *Beagle*.
- 1842** Moves to Down House in Kent, where many of his observations and experiments are carried out.
- 1859** Publishes his theory of evolution in *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*.
- 1871** Publishes *The Descent of Man* that describes the evolution of humans.
- 1872** Publishes *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* that explains how humans and animals express their feelings in similar ways.
- 1882** Dies at Down House and is later buried in Westminster Abbey.

Fossils

The only way information can be obtained about evolution and animals and plants that are now extinct, is to examine fossils. Fossils are the preserved remains or traces of ancient plants and animals. They develop over millions of years, as the soft tissues of a dead animal or plant are slowly replaced with minerals from underground water. These minerals gradually harden to stone and the mud and sand surrounding the body slowly turn to rock.



Mary Anning

Mary Anning (1799–1847) was an English fossil collector. She lived in Lyme Regis in Dorset, in an area known as the Jurassic Coast. Mary spent much of her time collecting fossils along the beach. Although she had very little formal education, she worked hard and taught herself about fossils. She became an expert at removing fossilised bones from rock to reconstruct skeletons. She made many important finds, including *Plesiosaur* skeletons, which contributed to the early development of palaeontology, the study of fossils.



Plesiosaurus skeleton

Glossary

- adaptation** A characteristic of a living thing that makes it suited to its environment.
- ancestry** The line of relatives from which someone is descended.
- evolution** The process by which living things gradually change over time.
- extinct** An animal or plant species that has died out and is no longer present in the world population, such as dinosaurs.
- fossil** The remains of a once-living organism preserved as rock.
- inheritance** The process of passing on characteristics, such as eye colour, from parents to their offspring.
- naturalist** A person who studies the natural world.
- natural selection** The process where organisms that are most suited to their environment are more likely to reproduce, and in doing so, pass on these adaptations to the next generation.
- natural world** The animals and plants that exist in nature and are not made or caused by people.
- species** A group of organisms that have common characteristics and can breed.
- variation** Natural differences between living things in a species.