This academic year is a particularly significant one for Denefield School as we celebrate our 40th anniversary. We will be holding a number of events throughout the year to mark this important milestone.

In addition, we will also be undertaking 40 Acts of Kindness, one per week of the school year. This will enable us to continue to develop our students’ CHARACTER values whilst also helping the local community which has supported us over the past 40 years.

This is the story so far…
Act of Kindness number 1
Year 7 support week

Throughout the first week at school students in Years 8 to 13 were asked:

• to stop if they saw someone struggling and show them to their lesson
• to sit with a Year 7 student in tutor time and ask if they know where their lessons are/show them on the map
• if they saw someone sitting on their own, invite them over, be brave!
• to use tutor time activities to teach Year 7 students how to manage their time, model good behaviour and help each other with homework during extended learning
• to show Year 7 students a friendly face
• if you see anyone upset show them support and take them to student reception so they can talk to someone about their worries
Act of kindness number 2
Uniform donations

Week 2 saw students donating previously loved uniform back to the school.

The uniform will provide students with a change of spare clothing should they need it following misfortune and mishaps, in emergencies and if they have forgotten kit for that all important sporting fixture!
Act of kindness number 3
Donations to the West Berkshire Food Bank

The Food Bank is part of a nationwide network which provides three days’ emergency food and support to local people who are in crisis.

Denefield students collected non-perishable food items, such as long-life milk, hot chocolate, biscuits, and toiletries, including shampoo and shower gel to help those struggling with emergency care.
Act of kindness number 3
Donations to the West Berkshire Food Bank

A word of thanks…

Hello

Thank you for supporting West Berks Foodbank as part of your 40 year celebrations. We are so grateful to be the recipient of your Act of Kindness number 3. Your donations weighed 114.3kg which is the equivalent of 103 meals for people in desperate and challenging circumstances.

Please pass on our thanks to all who donated.

Kind Regards
Sue Stevenson
Collections Manager
West Berks Foodbank
Act of kindness number 4
Kindness

Time to consider others in our community and share some kindness, support and positivity with them. During week four we saw students draw a random name from within their tutor group and their mission was to explore how to perform an anonymous act of kindness for them.

From small gifts to make each other smile, to lending a helping hand with homework, or offering a seat on the bus, its cool to be kind!

Staff followed suit surprising each other with anonymous gifts and hospitality, there was a buzz of excitement and a flurry of emails as teachers received flowers, home baked goods and well wishes from a kindly benefactor.
Act of kindness number 5
Christmas Shoe Box Appeal

We are sending our act of kindness further afield and preparing to send shoe boxes full of Christmas presents across the world. The gifts will be sent to children in need, who without others generosity would not receive a Christmas present. It will enable children who have suffered, to feel valued and loved over the festive period.

Our mission during week five was to help change children’s lives, through the power of a simple gift with Operation Christmas Child.
Act of kindness number 6
Book Donations to the
Royal Berkshire Hospital Fracture Clinic

Week 6 provided the opportunity for students to collect and sort pre-loved books to donate to the adult and paediatric fracture clinic patients at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

It is students hope, not only to spread the joy of reading to patients and visitors, but that they might entertain and comfort those finding themselves in unfortunate circumstances.

The book trolley at Royal Berks Hospital also enables patients on wards to purchase donated books for a small fee; all proceeds go directly to support hospital projects.
Act of kindness number 7
The Autumn Fayre
raising money for our house charities

Roll up roll up roll up; week 7 saw the student ambassadors working tirelessly to create an exciting and enjoyable fundraising event to raise funds for our house charities.

The Spook-tacular Autumn Fayre was held on Thursday 20 October in the Main hall from 1-1.40pm. Students and staff were challenged to try their skills on the bottle flip stall, pit their wits against trick or treat boxes, feast on Halloween sweets and nibbles and wash it all down with a mysterious mocktail.

The Main hall was packed full of eager students ready to partake in the activities and donate to the house funds. So a huge thank you to all who supported, from the pumpkin bowlers to the face painters, your contribution was marvellous and with over £270 raised, the charities will be delighted!
Act of kindness number 8
Supporting the Poppy Appeal

In the Denefield character values we promote a sense of empathy in our students; we want them to leave our school showing compassion for others in our community.

By supporting the Poppy Appeal and raising money for The Royal British Legion, students can remember those who serve the country to protect our freedom.

A two minute silence, was held at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in the Da Vinci space to mark the end of the First World War. It was preceded by readings of remembrance.

This event enables students to understand the importance of remembrance so that sacrifices are never forgotten.
Act of kindness number 9
Community Clear-up

During week 9, with support from the local Parish, Denefield students undertook a litter pick in the local community.

The litter picking act of kindness saw 25 student ambassadors follow a route along Long Lane, down Knowlsley Road, across Warbreck Drive, through Cotwold Park, Condor Close and Talbot Way and then back through Cotswold Park, Longleat Drive and to the school site. Students removed fireworks and sparklers from the children’s play area; plucked cans and bottles from hedge ways and collected dropped wrappers from outside Tesco Express.

The planned looped route covered just over two miles and eight black bin liners of discarded rubbish was collected.

Well done team!
Act of kindness number 10
Children in Need fundraising

During week 10 students supported the national campaign Children in Need, helping to support the vision that every child in the UK should have a childhood that is:

• safe
• happy and secure
• allows them the chance to reach their potential

Students and staff paid £1.00 to wear non-uniform to school; tutor groups also ran games and competitions to raise extra money to help young people facing crisis.
Act of kindness number 11
Looking out for our homeless

Denefield managed to bestow two acts of kindness on our community during week 11.

Firstly, the Health and Social care students invited children in Years 3 and 4 from Brookfields School up to Denefield to teach them how to make mirror mosaics. Our students loved working with younger members of the community, helping them increase their resilience when developing new skills. The final outcomes were particularly impressive, as were our students who developed their tolerance and empathy when working with younger children.

Secondly, we had the opportunity to help feed the homeless in Reading by delivering food parcels to the Reading Minster in the town centre. Sandwiches, crisps, biscuits, cakes and baguettes were donated to enable those who would otherwise go without food, an evening meal.
Act of kindness number 12
Community Christmas Market

Christmas was well and truly underway on Thursday 1 December when Denefield held it’s annual community Christmas Market, and what a delightful evening it was!

The student ambassadors produced a beautiful, sparking array of festive games, gifts and gourmet treats for all those who came to visit. The Christmas café offered a candle lit retreat for guests to relax and unwind with cake, hot chocolate, mulled spiced punch and mince pies amid the bustling market. Whilst, the Bavarian BBQ warmed and fed those listening to the festive voices of the school choir, or watching the talented individuals perform from ‘Reading School of Dance’.

The evening was a fantastic success, a huge thank you to all who donated time, goods and supported the event. The event raised £1,237 for our house charities, a wonderful success!
Act of kindness number 13
Christmas cards to the community

During week 13 students continued spreading the Christmas cheer as they hand delivered Christmas cards to the local community.

The neighbouring houses each received Year 8 student Elise Brunsden’s winning Christmas card design that embraced the schools character values and festive spirit.

Students embarked on their postal duties with much joy and excitement, delivering the Christmas cards to the houses who border the schools parameters.
Act of kindness number 14
Secret Santa

Feeling in the festive spirit and with the promise of recharging batteries and spending some time with loved ones over the holiday break, during week 14 tutor groups and staff took part in secret Santa for the final act of kindness in 2016.

The task was to have a bit of fun by either making, recycling, upcycling or producing a small gift anonymously for another; spreading a little bit of excitement and Christmas joy around the school community on the last day of term.
Act of kindness number 15
New Year resolutions – be kinder to ourselves

Many people make their New Years resolutions with the intention of bettering themselves – ‘eat better’, ‘work harder at this’, ‘be better at that’. While it’s good to have goals, we can be incredibly hard on ourselves. We need to make sure we are always kind to ourselves and talk to people when we feel we are not coping, when we are worried or anxious about things in our lives - school/friendships/bullying/exams/self perception.

This year students are making the first act of kindness in 2017, to be kinder to themselves, to speak to staff and peers if they feel worried.

"The way you treat yourself sets the standard for others."

Dr Sonya Friedman
Act of kindness number 16
Donating

As we started the New Year, to continue our 40 Acts of Kindness, effort was focussed on raising funds for our house charities. By collecting unwanted Christmas gifts and items suitable for raffles and tombola's, the house team hope to be able to raise money to pass on to the house charities.

A special thank you, goes to our delightful sixth form students who raised money through cake sales to buy toys to donate to charity.

Thank you to all those who were able to donate gifts and prizes.
Act of kindness number 17
Laughter week

During week 17 the act of kindness focused on being kind to yourself; banishing the January blues and laughing.

They say laughter is the best medicine for the soul, so in response to this, the weekly tutor programme was collapsed to make way for a series of activities to make the students smile. This week, through a variety of bad jokes, comedy sketches and games, the tutor activities provided valuable time to make children laugh.
Act of kindness number 18
Anti-bullying message for our community

During the week 14 – 18 November 2016, the Anti-bullying Alliance promoted National Anti-bullying week. To mark the occasion, and demonstrate that, as a school, we are committed to the safety and happiness of our students, all tutor groups took part in a competition to design an anti-bullying mural for the school grounds.

With the message focussing on ‘power for good’ the winning designs were worked together by Lauren and Caitlin and work will begin shortly painting the winning design on the outside of the gym wall.
Act of kindness number 19
Appreciation week

There is so much in life we take for granted, sometimes unaware, we forget to thank and acknowledge those who help and support us routinely.

To recognise this, during week 19, students and staff took the opportunity to show gratitude to one another. Students were given post-it notes and challenged to write a message of thanks to someone in their lives; perhaps a friend, relative or teacher who had made a difference, but someone they usually forget to thank.

The challenge was then to slip the thoughtful note secretly into a place for the recipient to find… to make their day, to make them smile.

Mrs Knight and Mrs Wilcox of Norcot House, were particularly surprised and delighted when they received a card of gratitude and beautiful bunches of yellow tulips from one of their tutor groups JES… especially as they were in house colours too!
The final week of term three was celebrated with kindness and sugar!

Inspired by the immanent arrival of Valentine’s day, students wrote messages of positivity and happiness to one another. These messages will be displayed outside main reception to share kindness and consideration with our visitors.

House council also brilliantly raised over £150 for the House charities, through buying, sharing and gifting Krispy Kreme Doughnuts; leaving the end of term on a sugary high.
Act of kindness number 21
Pancake races

The time honoured tradition of pancake flipping was honoured during week 21, when forms paid money to enter the annual pancake races.

Tutor groups from each of the four houses selected 4 students and paid £2.00 per team, to see who could flip and race their pancakes to the finish line the fastest.

The final was fought closely; JWR for Sulham, SMP for Kentwood, JCE for Norcot and SHS Langley. However, Kentwood were crowned the winning team, pipping Sulham to the post and being awarded the prize money for their House Charities. Congratulations Kentwood!
Act of kindness number 22
World Book Day

Celebrating World book day and promoting reading was high on the agenda during week 22, as student ambassadors visited Downsway Primary school.

Dressing as their favourite book character and armed with their favourite books, as well as a desire to spread a love for literacy, Denefield students read aloud to the primary school children, sharing their passion for reading. It was then the turn of the children in Years 5 and 6 to read to their visitors.
Act of kindness number 23
International Woman’s Day

During week 23, our act of kindness coincided with International Women's Day. As such, Denefield supported the charity Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA); helping them to fulfil their vision to provide confidential support, refuge and accommodation for women and their children who are affected by domestic abuse and violence.

Students and parent/carers and staff donated goods to the charity’s Welcome Packs, helping women and children who seek refuge from BWA, to settle in, have a bath or a shower, make a cup of tea, get something to eat for themselves and their children; they often arrive with nothing more than the clothes they stand up in.

Donated goods included items such as:

- shower gel
- toothpaste and toothbrushes
- underwear
- nappies
- some basic groceries.
- shampoo
- nighties
- feminine hygiene products
- children’s pants and vests

A huge thank you to all who supported the campaign.
Act of kindness number 23
International Woman’s Day – letter of thanks
Act of kindness number 24
Bag packing in the community

During week 24, reaching out to the wider community, 15 students travelled in the school mini bus to Tesco on the Oxford road; however, they were not picking up weekly shopping, they were offering their support to help pack bags.

Students focused on supporting the less able members of the public sort their goods and carry heavy items in a bid to help customers shopping trips a little easier. They also took the opportunity to help staff, replacing damaged goods and returning unwanted items to the shelves… every little helps!
Act of kindness number 25
Charity Café

During week 25, Sixth Formers opened their common room doors and welcomed in parents for a bite to eat and some refreshments during parents evening. The Charity Café sold an impressive arrange of cakes and treats and tables were decorated with seasonal daffodils to welcome its guests.

Staff were also spoilt by a waiter service direct to their table, as piping hot mugs of tea and coffee were delivered to parched recipients for a minimal fee.

A huge thanks to our Sixth Formers for organising this welcome service and congratulations for raising over £60 for the House charities.
Act of kindness number 26
Compliments Week

When you give a compliment, when someone notices you, you’ll feel special, even if it’s just for a moment. That moment could be enough to carry you through the rest of the day and keep you happy and productive.

This is why week 26 was ear marked as an occasion to compliment one another, not just on physical features or dress sense, but on the things that matter:
- Choices
- Behaviour
- Manners
- Work ethic
- Showing the CHARACTER values
- Personality

The challenge was to try and compliment someone at least once a day, to see if we can recognise the good in others.
Act of kindness number 27
Primary School Easter Egg Hunt

In the final week before Easter, the local primary schools and nursery were invited to Denefield to take part in an egg hunting Easter Eggstravaganza.

Much eggcitement was created when Year 4 students from Purely Primary, Westwood Farm Juniors, Long Lane Primary and children from Denefield Nursery, spent the morning hunting for eggs and completing subject challenges design by our student ambassadors.

Students had to learn to dance, act, compete, and solve their way through the tasks to win chocolate prizes. Great fun had by all!
Act of kindness number 28
The Big Spring clean

With the arrival of spring, the lighter evenings and warmer weather, Denefield students took the opportunity to spring clean their wardrobes and rid cupboards of clutter.

For our 28th Act of Kindness, students took home charity bags to fill with unused or ill-fitting items of clothing. These items were then donated to Cancer Research, so that our unwanted goods benefited others, helping to raise money to fund vital research.
Act of kindness number 29
Staff Appreciation Week

Week 29 enabled us to take a moment to think about someone in school who had supported us, pushed us to achieve, forced us to overcome challenges - perhaps academic or personal ones - helped us improve, been a positive force in our lives, or a role model.

Students then paid back the effort and time staff spent helping them; as they had the opportunity to write thank you notes, as a way of acknowledging support given.

As members of staff, receiving these notes gave a wonderful feeling; knowing we are making a difference in young peoples lives.