

The

BERKHAMSTEAD
School
Cheltenham

Times

25th November 2011

Diary Dates

25th November – 9 December 2011

Wed 30 th Nov	1.45pm – Rugby Tag Festival U8 at Hatherop Castle 2.30pm – Hockey U11A, U11B, U10 v Dean Close (A) 2.50pm – Rugby U11A, U11B v Richard Pate (A)
December 2011	
Fri 2 nd Dec	3.15pm – Hockey U8 v Dean Close (A)
Sat 3 rd Dec	11.00am – 1.00pm – PTA Christmas Fayre
Tue 6 th Dec	9.15am – Early Years Christmas Concert 2.00pm – Reception, Year 1, Year 2 Pantomime ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’ at the Everyman Theatre 4.15pm – Carol Singing at Bay Tree Court
Wed 7 th Dec	9.15am – Early Years Christmas Concert 2.15pm – Pre Prep Nativity, All Saints Church 2.30pm – Hockey U11A, U11B, U11C, U9 v The King’s School (A)
Thur 8 th Dec	Early Years Party Day Christmas Lunch 4.00pm – Carol Singing at Beechwood Shopping Centre
Fri 9 th Dec	Year 6 Trip to Steam Museum 6.00pm – PTA Christmas Disco
Mon 12 th Dec	6.30pm – Prep Carol Service, All Saints’ Church
Tue 13 th Dec	12.00 noon – Term Ends

Dear Parents,

It’s been a busy time with events and fixtures and the past couple of weeks have really reflected the essence of what Berky is about. Children have committed to a range of diverse extra-curricular activities and relished them. The superb concert yesterday evening saw the chess players return and join in for a piano piece at the end. Many children played their pieces in games kit after other commitments there – we are proud to be a well-rounded school producing individuals who relish performing on many fronts. We have also been busy showing prospective parents round – all have been impressed and most remark on the children’s conduct around the school; they are great ambassadors. We were delighted to have some of the Governors visit last Tuesday – they all commented on how well the pupils behaved and on the positive engagement in lessons.

Christmas preparations are in full flow with rehearsals and the exciting news is that we have acquired (via Mr Skinner) some of our own Christmas lights for the evergreen tree on the Pre-Prep side of the road. The grand switching on – not quite Oxford Street and without the celebrity to flick the switch – will be at 3.45pm on Thursday 1st of December. Please do stay after pick-up for a while to see them. I am very pleased that so many of the Prep children will have the opportunity to sing for residents at local care homes or in Beechwood arcade – thank you too for supporting these charitable events.

The Planning Application decision for our proposed Day Nursery will be taken at the local planning meeting on the 15th December. We have provided all of the information requested by the planners and hope that this will be successful. Once this has been decided, I will be in a position to provide you with more information about what will be on offer in our lovely new premises. There will be opportunity to have a look round and to see the extra land we have available for the use of all pupils; it is an exciting time for the school.

May I remind you of the Christmas Fayre on Saturday December 3rd. There has been a great bustle of planning behind the scenes from our fabulous Friends of Berkhamstead and it promises to be a super morning. The raffle prizes are terrific – well worth winning so please if you haven't already, do buy some and I look forward to seeing you there on the day – rumour has it that there will be presents for children – who have been good – available in Santa's grotto, by prior appointment! **RPC**

****STOP PRESS** - CHRISTMAS STAMP COLLECTION**

Congratulations to the children whose stamp designs have been chosen to be used this year; there were many fantastic stamps and we found making the choice extremely difficult.

The winners are:

Robert Caesar 6W, Harriet Taylor 6M, Remo Bassanino 5W, Jessica Coley 5M, Freya Clark 4M, James Irwin 4T, Leah Barton 3MC, Annie Carter 3CC, James Main 2A, Bella Pearce 2O, Amelia Jenkins 1L, Lovisa James 1WJ, Oliver Wiles RW, George de Burgh-Thomas RL, Daisy Shields N.

PREP

iPADS IN THE CLASSROOM

We have been really excited by the introduction of iPads in the classroom this term. It is certainly a quicker and cheaper alternative to a room full of computers but most importantly they can be used to work alongside our traditional teaching methods. The iPads can be used as a quick warm up in maths, as a word processing tool in English in addition to an accessible dictionary and an Internet reference tool in the humanities. They have been priceless in our creative curriculum for taking and editing photographs and creating music compositions. They are easy to print from and to store work and more importantly very easy to restore if they go wrong!

Many parents have asked for recommendations of apps which have been influential in the classroom. Our current top eight in the Prep are:

Pages
Comic Life
IFPoems
GarageBand
iDraw
Brain Challenge
PopMath
eClicker

in addition to pre-installed apps such as the camera. Similarly if you have any apps which you have found to be stimulating please let me know. **AJM**

PRE PREP AND EARLY YEARS

We are all enjoying the various Christmas activities including art and craft work and practising the words and music for our Nativity play. There have been some lovely stamp designs and choosing one from each class has been very tricky; however, seeing the chosen stamps in colour for the first time will be an exciting moment!

We have two extra helpers in school at the moment: Jess Lawson, an ex-Berky pupil, who is currently doing her final year of Early Childhood Studies and Nicki Haynes, who is considering becoming a teacher. Both are being tremendously helpful in school.

The iPads have been enormously successful and the children love them; they seem to have no difficulty learning how to use them and they are a great educational asset.

We look forward to seeing you at our Nativity Play on Wednesday 7th December at 2.15pm.

Excitement is building up in Early Years and there is much preparation behind the scenes for our Christmas Concert "Christmas Eve in the Toyshop". The children are enjoying singing the songs and it will be lovely to see you at the concert as this is a very special occasion for the children; they work so hard on their performances. Coffee and mince pies will be served after the Christmas Concert and you are warmly invited.

Miss Langley's parents are invited to watch the performance on Tuesday 6th December at 9.15 and Mrs Roddy-Watts' on Wednesday 7th December at 9.15. Please feel free to come and see staff if there is any problems regarding your child's concert costume.

Last week Reception learned all about the Hindu festival of Diwali! They listened to the story of Rama and Sita and made some fantastic diva pots and mehndi patterns! It was lots of fun. This week, the children are learning the names and properties of 3D shapes. We have experimented to see which shapes roll and build. The children have spent time looking around the classroom spotting objects that take the shape of cubes, cuboids, spheres and cones.

Nursery has been a hive of activity this week with lots of glitter, sparkly stars, glue, and paint being liberally used to decorate calendars, Christmas cards and clay decorations! During lunchtimes some of the children are sparkling due to glitter in their hair. It is lovely to see the children so absorbed in their creativity. The role play area has become a house preparing for the festive season. Lots of letters and cards are being written.

With only a few weeks left of the term, I hope these dates will help you with your planning.

Monday 5 th December	9.15 Early Years Dress Rehearsal
Tuesday 6 th December	9.15 Early Years Christmas Concert 2.00 Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 to the Pantomime
Wednesday 7 th December	9.15 Early Years Christmas Concert 2.15 Early Years children to watch Pre Prep Nativity at the church
Thursday 8 th December	Early Years Party Christmas dinner
Tuesday 13 th December	12.00 end of term

GA/HRW

FRIENDS OF BERKHAMPSTEAD (PTA)

Some festive news from the PTA. Firstly, we've agreed our current fundraising project with the school - a combined project to renovate the children's Cookery Room in the Pre-Prep basement. Used by both sides of the school, we can make a real difference to enrich these facilities for all the children. Watch out for more information as we finalise the plans and the fundraising targets!

We have two big events coming up over the next couple of weeks. You'll know that the Berky Christmas Fayre will be on Saturday 3rd December from 11 until 1pm in the Pre-Prep building. It is going to be a fabulous event with very many children already booked in to see Santa, exciting stalls and delicious festive food and drink. Please help us by having a final push on the raffle tickets and in helping your class prepare the prize hampers. We're also keenly in need of chocolate treats for the Chocolate Tombola - from small items to special goodies - with a box in the foyer for you to drop them off. Go on chocoholics; fight your personal addiction and donate something!

The other big event coming up is the Christmas Disco - at St Edwards Senior School main hall on Friday 9 December. You'll have seen flyers in book bags plus via Class Reps. Years 1-3 will be from 5 - 6.30pm and Years 4-6 from 7 - 8.30pm. Tickets for the disco include nibbles, drink and a selection box going home present. It's going to be a great evening as ever so please return the ticket slips to the office by Friday 2nd December and if you're able to help on the day in setting up, clearing away, or being present to help please get in touch!

Finally, since now is the peak time for Christmas shopping, please sign up to Easyfundraising if you're purchasing online. It's so easy and every purchase from your regular online retailers earns money for the PTA with no real effort whatsoever. Please please sign up - the link can be found on the PTA page of the website.

As ever your help and donations are hugely appreciated and will make a big difference! Thank you!

Adrian Bird
PTA Chair

Match of the Week

Hockey Reports

Under 11A and B Hockey v Richard Pate's

Both of these matches were very closely fought on a very cold afternoon. The B team had several forays into the Richard Pate's half with Nina, Hattie and Ellie leading the attack. The defence was held together by Gemma and Lindsay who cleared the ball very well between them. The final score was a slightly fortuitous draw 0-0 with Richard Pate's girls having 4 very good scoring attempts; fortunately the ball just whizzed past the goal posts on each occasion. The A team game was also a draw 0-0 but I felt we had the upper hand in this match and did everything but score. Maddy had her first game in goal for the A team and she did very well. In fact the whole team played strongly but just couldn't score! There were some lovely passing sequences in attack and strong defending. Well played all the year 6 girls. **LW**

U11B Hockey v Beaudesert

In this match the girls played against two Beaudesert teams and tried really hard in both matches. In the first the opposition were stronger than us but great defending by Corinne and Lindsay kept the score to a very respectable 2-0 to Beaudesert. In the second half very solid play by Roseanna and Hattie and super tackling and clearing by Maddie kept the game pretty even. Unfortunately Beaudesert scored the only goal of the half to give them victory. Lindsay was voted by the Beaudesert girls as player of the match for her super saves in goal. Well tried everyone. **LW**

Rugby Reports

U11 v King's Gloucester

King's 28 Berkhamstead 24

We travelled to Gloucester last Wednesday for a fantastic game. We started slowly and were a little off the pace at the start of the match, conceding three tries in the first ten minutes. However we slowly

worked our way back into the match and scored tries of our own through George, Robert(2) and Fraser. At one point we were 21-17 down and looked the team most likely to score when King's got a break away try. It showed tremendous character from the boys to come back from 21-0 down, to almost win the game. Well done to all of the team.

Dean Close tournament

This week we played three matches at Dean Close against strong opposition. We saved our best performance for the Dean Close game, holding them for long periods with some excellent defence. Although it was not to be our day, the boys gave everything as always and really enjoyed their rugby. George Warley was voted the Berkhamstead player of the tournament. Well done to George. **PMC**

U9 Rugby v Dean Close

DRAW 15 – 15

The U9 team played a terrific game against Dean Close last Friday when all the hard work they had put into training came to fruition. From the outset the boys showed accurate passing and support play as well as crucial tackling in defence. It was a tight game yet Matvei showed a great turn of speed to score two tries and Zac's elusive running led to his try. But it was the teamwork that stood out and if it wasn't for two or three try saving tackles from Dean Close Berky would have won the game. Well done to all the U9 boys. **RPC**

Chess Reports

These have been exciting times for the school chess team. A flurry of matches against old rivals has kept our keen woodpushers busy and challenged. Considerable strength in depth means that we have a largish squad of players to choose from and, with a decent number of Y4 and Y5 players experiencing 'A' team action, a fine future for the school team is assured. The first four matches of the season have remarkably ended with the same scoreline; St. Gregory's, Dormer House, St. Edward's and Charlton Kings were all dispatched (in the nicest possible sense) with pleasing 5-1 victories. The wins against St. Edward's and Charlton Kings proved especially rewarding as both schools are always tough to beat. A very youthful 'B' team gained 3-2 and 4-2 victories over St. Gregory's and Charlton Kings but lost 6-0 to a significantly more experienced St. Edward's side. A special mention should be made of our new chess captain Felix Bird (following in big brother Fred's footsteps) who has led the team with style and maturity. Well done, Felix and well done, team! **MC**