

BERKHAMPTSTEAD  
SCHOOL  
MAGAZINE

AUTUMN TERM  
2024

# BLAZER

## BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

OUR NEW DAY NURSERY  
OPENS ITS DOORS!

## PERFORMING ARTS:

ENRICHING EDUCATION,  
INSPIRING CREATIVITY

## CHRISTMAS PRODUCTIONS

OUR PUPILS SHINE  
IN THE LIMELIGHT

INSIDE: BERKY CLUBS | SPOTLIGHT ON GEMMA BAKER | PRE-PREP PLAYGROUND UNVEILED





## ...THOUGHTS... FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

As we near the end of the Autumn Term, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the wonderful progress and achievements of our school community. The term has been filled with vibrant learning experiences, from exciting lessons to enriching extracurricular activities and trips such as the residential trip to Viney Hill, the Steam Museum, Cheltenham Literature Festival, Bristol Zoo Project, The Wilderness Centre, Chepstow Castle and We the Curious - all aimed at nurturing your child's growth and curiosity. We say goodbye to Mr Dan Banks and thank him for the wealth of knowledge he brought to the school in computing, games and maths and we look forward to welcoming Mr Zach Lovell to our community; he joins us from Bourton-on-the-Water School where he has been Maths Lead.

The autumn months have brought the warmth of shared traditions, including school events and community gatherings such as Festive Friday, hosted by our wonderful PTA, and the Candlelight Carol Service at All Saints' Church. These events have strengthened our partnership with you as families. We are always eager to share what is going on in school, and the Book Looks and Curriculum Evenings are an important part of being able to share what your child is learning.

Next term, we are all excited about being able to use the new playground installed in Pre-Prep. The children have been transfixed watching the diggers and workmen constructing the new trim trail and structures. We have all had to be patient and wait for it to be completed. Thank you for your patience with this; I am sure that you will agree that it has been worth the wait.

As the days grow colder, we remain committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where every child can thrive. Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to a new year and another term of success and joy ahead.

*Michelle Bareham*

Michelle Bareham  
Head of School



## ...SPOTLIGHT ON... GEMMA BAKER

Mrs Baker is our Head of Kindergarten. She joined Berkhamstead in September 2022 as a Teaching Assistant in Reception and began her new role as Head of Kindergarten at the beginning of this academic year. Mrs Baker's daughter Eden is in Year 5 at Berkhamstead, and her son Lawson left Berky in 2023.

### What did you do before Berky?

I worked for 15 years as the manager of a local day nursery. This role allowed me to develop my management skills whilst creating a nurturing environment for the children in our care.

### Why do you love working in Early Years?

I love working with Early Years children because of their incredible sense of curiosity and imagination. Their natural enthusiasm and ability to learn through play is just wonderful. I find it really fulfilling to nurture young minds and it is a privilege to guide them through their formative years. You never know what each day will bring; each moment is unpredictable and filled with questions that keep me on my toes!

### Why did you want a job at Berky?

Berky is a wonderful school. My sister attended Berkhamstead and the same key values are still in place today. I love how the school creates a supportive community where both children and staff thrive. I believe that a nurturing, caring environment is essential for learning, and it is excellent that Berkhamstead recognises this. It is a privilege to be a part of such a special place.

### What did you want to be when you were younger?

When I was younger, I dreamed of becoming an actress or dancer as musical theatre has always been a passion. I performed in many shows as a child, including the role of Molly in Annie at the Everyman Theatre. This truly ignited my love for the stage. As I became older, I started to help the younger children at my drama school and quickly realised I preferred teaching to performing. The joy of guiding others and sharing my passion for the performing arts became far more rewarding than being in the spotlight myself. I now manage Stagecoach Performing Arts, and I absolutely love it. It's incredibly rewarding to watch the children's confidence grow.

### Who is your favourite children's author?

I would have to say Julia Donaldson. I love how her stories capture the imaginations of the children. 'Room on the Broom' and 'The Gruffalo' will always be favourites of mine.

### What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Having grown up in a musical theatre-loving family - and with an actress sister - I enjoy going to the theatre as much as possible. As a family, we love to walk our dog Inka together and spend lots of time outdoors.



## CHILDREN SHINE IN 'CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD' NATIVITY

This year, our Reception classes joined forces with Years 1 and 2 to present the heartwarming nativity, Christmas Around the World. Each class represented a different country, with Reception beautifully showcasing Poland and China.

The performance was brought to life with wonderful costumes and the stunning backdrop of All Saints' Church, creating a magical atmosphere for all who attended. To read more about this enchanting production, turn to page 18.



# ...NEWS... FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL



## BERKY GETS GREENER

This term, we welcomed newly elected members to the Pre-Prep and Prep Eco Committees. The committees have met fortnightly and have been tasked with ensuring that all pupils are aware of the recycling that takes place in school and encouraging pupils and their families to take part in the 'Berky Eco Pledge'. Many pupils have already been successful in gaining their eco badge this term, with lots more applications pending for the committees to review.

The committees are also working to complete the school's application for Eco Schools Green Flag status. This is the highest Eco School award achievable. The pupils are completing the Environmental Review to highlight areas that can then be used to create our action plan for the coming year before submission in the Summer Term.

Following our air quality survey last summer, the school has planted 37 Japanese Privet trees along the school boundary as part of the Pre-Prep playground redevelopment. JH



## CHARITY NEWS

After discussions with their classmates about which charities to support this year, the School Council reps voted to support WellChild and Save the Rhino. Fundraising activities so far have included carol singing at Waitrose, Christmas Pyjama Day and the Christmas Stamp Competition. Thank you to everyone for contributing so generously to these worthy causes.



## LEST WE FORGET

On 11th November, children and staff came together to honour those who fell in the First World War and other conflicts since. From Reception to Year 6, pupils observed two minutes of silence, reflecting on and paying their respects to the fallen. Throughout the school, children created meaningful tributes. Year 6 created stunning textured poppy artwork in acrylic, while our Early Years children made handprint wreaths and egg box poppy fields. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 participated in a carousel of poppy-themed activities, including poppy weaving, biscuit making, art and photo editing. These activities provided a thoughtful and creative way for the children to commemorate Remembrance Day.

## PTA NEWS

What an Autumn Term the PTA has had! We kicked off with the Berky Quiz night, fabulously written and hosted by the one and only Mr T; it raised over £900! An especially BIG thank you to Mr T, who has written the PTA Quiz a phenomenal amount of times - you will be so missed. We're hoping we can entice Mr T back for guest appearances!

It was then full steam ahead with the Festive Friday planning! Everyone looked brilliant in their Christmas jumpers, and the family sing-along really got us all into the festive spirit. With generous donations and our raffle, this event raised over £2,000.

Every penny raised goes back to the school for events for the school community, as well as being able to say 'yes' to school requests for donations. This term we have funded workshops all over the school, a big donation to the Pre-Prep playground, a new rug for Kindergarten and the Christmas class gifts.

We are in the process of planning the Spring Term events, with the Online Quiz, Pancake Races, Prep Bingo and a Spring Disco for everyone to look forward to. These events would not be possible without the PTA team of volunteers, so a huge thank you to you all.

On behalf of the PTA, we wish you all a very happy 2025.

**Lottie and Charlotte**, PTA Co-Chairs



## BUILDING BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

## CHARLTON KINGS DAY NURSERY SPECIAL!

Berkhampstead Day Nursery, Charlton Kings has undergone a complete transformation...

After an extensive search for the perfect property for our second day nursery, we were thrilled to find Lexham Lodge - a beautiful, detached Grade II listed building in Charlton Kings. Similar in style to our Pre-Prep building, it offered both charm and bucketfuls of potential. Latterly used as office space by the NHS, it needed a full refurbishment to transform it to a warm, welcoming environment for our youngest learners.

After completing the purchase in March of last year, we wasted no time in beginning the makeover. A dedicated team of contractors - spanning flooring, windows, roofing, electrics, plumbing and heating - set to work to reimagine every room and space. The interiors were then thoughtfully decorated using a palette of heritage-inspired Farrow & Ball paints: 'Romney Wood' grey and 'Sage Green' for the classrooms and communal areas, while 'Hague Blue' has created a dark and tranquil setting in the cot rooms and sensory room. Homely touches including wicker and wooden furniture, floor lamps, cozy rugs, and accessories such as floor lamps, rugs, pictures and real kitchen utensils and china tea sets give the nursery a

warm and comfortable feel, just like its sister setting in Pittville Circus. Both nurseries are working towards their Curiosity Approach accreditation, further enhancing the nurturing, child-centred ethos of our spaces.

The transformation extended beyond the interior. The building's exterior has received much-needed TLC, including extensive work on the roof and windows. The garden, once unloved, has been revitalised into an exciting and engaging outdoor space. It now boasts a pirate ship complete with sandpit, a sensory nature garden, and a pergola that serves as a calm, shaded area for outdoor learning and creativity. Future additions, such as water walls, a mud kitchen, and planting areas are also in the pipeline, ensuring a variety of sensory and play-based learning opportunities for the children.

We are excited to welcome families to see our new nursery. Four beautifully designed rooms - Bear Cubs, Cuddly Bears, Fuzzy Bears, and Teddy Bears - will be opening in January, with Wise Bears, for pre-schoolers set to follow in the spring.

To schedule a tour or to find out more, please call **01242 523263** or email [admissions@berkhampsteadnursery.co.uk](mailto:admissions@berkhampsteadnursery.co.uk). We can't wait to show you around!

## EXCEPTIONAL TEAM, EXCEPTIONAL CARE

We are thrilled to introduce the dedicated and talented leadership team heading our brand-new Day Nursery: Manager, Katie Hawkes and Deputy Manager, Daniel Berry. Together, they bring a wealth of experience and a shared passion for creating the very best start for every child.

Katie Hawkes has been a valued member of the Berkhampstead family since she joined as a Nursery Practitioner at Pittville Circus in June 2016. Her natural leadership skills and commitment to high-quality childcare quickly led to her promotion to Room Leader, and by 2019, she had stepped into the role of Deputy Manager, overseeing special educational needs provision. Katie enthuses, "I love the home-from-home feel of our nurseries and take great pride in the range of opportunities we offer to our children. Managing our new provision in Charlton Kings is a tremendously exciting next step for me."

Joining Katie as Deputy Manager is Daniel Berry, who was appointed in the summer and has spent the past few months training for his new role. Daniel has been working in childcare since 2018 and holds several childcare qualifications. He is passionate about early childhood education: "Katie and I have already developed a strong working relationship, and her support and guidance have been invaluable. Having previously been involved in setting up and launching a new setting, I'm excited to be part of such an opportunity again."

With Katie and Daniel at the helm, our new nursery is in the best possible hands. Their combined experience, enthusiasm and commitment to creating a nurturing environment will ensure that Berkhampstead Day Nursery, Charlton Kings, delivers an exceptional start for every child.





# ...NEWS...

FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL



## HARVEST FESTIVAL

Harvest Festival, held on the final Friday before half term, was a wonderful celebration, marked by beautiful singing from all our pupils and eloquent readings from the Prep School

## BERKY CHANGEMAKERS

This term, the Berky Changemakers focused their efforts on raising awareness and supporting children in care, reflecting this year's theme. The term's highlights included an inspiring visit from Shabir Haidary, who shared his story of resilience and courage. Now a professional boxer and instructor, Shabir's journey began at just 13 years old, fleeing Afghanistan. Over a year, he endured a challenging journey that brought him to safety in Gloucester - arriving in the back of a refrigerated lorry. His experiences offered powerful insights into the lives of young refugees, illuminating the hardships they face and the realities of life in foster care in the UK.



## ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

The highlight of Anti-Bullying Week was undoubtedly Odd Socks Day, when everyone - even Mrs Bareham and the teachers - came to school in mismatched socks or jazzy tights! Odd Socks Day celebrated individuality in a fun way, raising awareness and reminding children to embrace what makes them unique. This year's Anti-Bullying Week theme, 'Choose Respect', inspired assemblies, discussions and activities throughout the week, focusing on the importance of kindness, respect and speaking out against bullying. While these values are central to everyday life at Berkhamstead, this week offered a special opportunity to spotlight our commitment to creating a respectful and caring school community.



## KINDNESS CUP

Congratulations to Elsa K (1S) and Freddie S (2J) who have been awarded the Sally Lee Pre-Prep Kindness Cup this term, and to Eddie H (5H) and Tamar C who have been awarded the Gill Agg Kindness Cup, which is the Prep School equivalent.



## KINDERGARTEN: A TERM OF DISCOVERY AND JOY!



We have had a wonderful start to the school year in Kindergarten, welcoming back familiar faces as well as new ones. The children have been enjoying our topic of 'Marvellous Me', which has encouraged them to talk about themselves and their families at home. We have drawn self-portraits and thought carefully about facial features such as eye colour and hair colour. The children's ideas and interests have inspired their play, and they have particularly loved playing families in our home corner.

Our Autumn Walk around the local area sparked huge interest in searching for autumn treasures; the children loved collecting these and bringing them in to use in their play. We made collages with leaves, counted with conkers and used magnifying glasses to look at all the beautiful details of our treasures. The children created autumn tree artwork with cotton buds and paint, encouraging them to develop their fine motor skills.

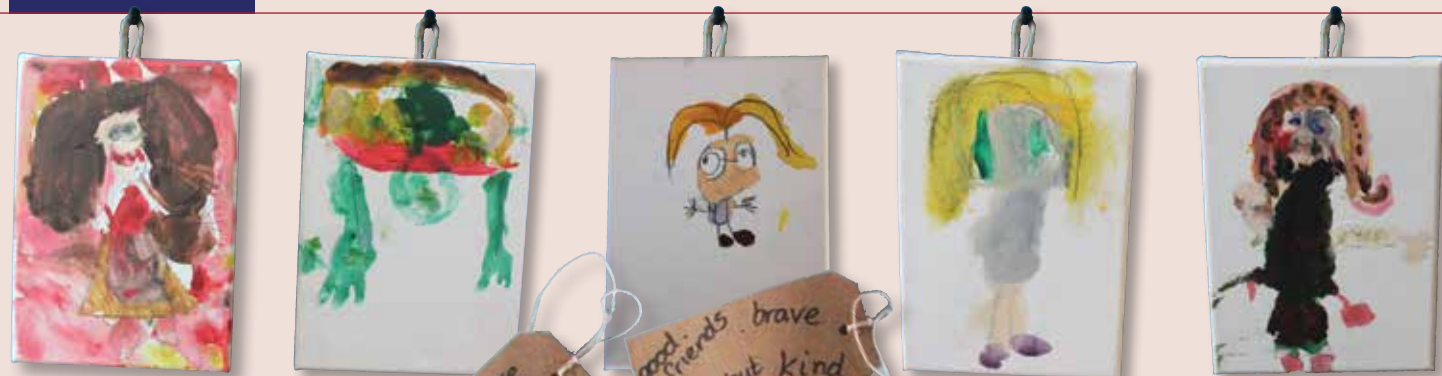
An absolute highlight this term has been 'tea' making. In our outside area we have created tea and various potions in the tuff tray, finding delight in pouring our creations from the teapots into the cups and back again. We used different scented teas such as maple, cinnamon and mixed fruits and the children loved talking about the unusual scents and smells.

We have been appreciating cultural diversity this term through the celebration of festivals such as Diwali and Thanksgiving. To celebrate the Festival of Light, the children took part in many craft activities, including creating firework pictures using chalk, drizzly glue and glitter. To mark Thanksgiving, we had a special Circle Time and encouraged the children to share one thing that they were thankful for.

The excitement was building as we raced towards Christmas, and we enjoyed making special cards and calendars to take home for our families. The children loved baking a Christmas pudding biscuit to decorate with icing and sprinkles. LS







## RECEPTION'S JOYFUL START TO SCHOOL LIFE

The Autumn Term has been a busy and exciting time for the Reception children as they have settled into full time school life at Berk. We are so proud of the children for the way that they have embraced the new routines and we have loved watching friendships and self-confidence develop.

In the first half of term, the focus was on getting to know the children and it was wonderful to share family photographs, talking about what makes their family, culture and traditions special. We also spent time talking about how we have changed since we were born, enjoying a lovely afternoon sharing our gorgeous baby photos!

In literacy we shared many familiar stories, including favourites from Julia Donaldson, Michael Rosen and Oliver Jeffers. We flew to the moon as we explored 'Whatever Next' and explored wonderful ways to capture our own piece of space - from using a fishing rod to bouncing high on a trampoline - when reading 'How to Catch a Star'.

After the half term break, the children were keen to share their spooky Halloween tales and together we made our own magical potions, casting an 'Iggity Ziggity Zaggety Zoom!' spell - this time in the hope for it to snow! The children have also loved exploring other winter festivals, including Bonfire Night, Diwali, Thanksgiving and, of course, Christmas.

Art sessions with Mrs Hartley have been a real highlight of the term. We have made stunning clay Picasso-style sculptures and looked closely at our unique features to create beautiful canvas portraits. Our delightful Christmas angel decorations certainly sparked and we hope they took pride of place atop many a Christmas tree! Z M-S

On Positive Noticing Day, the children thoroughly enjoyed coming up with wonderful compliments for their friends.



## CHELTENHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL

All of our Prep School pupils attended excellent events at the Cheltenham Literature Festival. Years 3 and 4 were captivated by former Children's Laureate Michael Rosen as he introduced his new animal adventure, The Incredible Adventures of Gaston Le Dog, and Years 5 and 6 were entertained by award-winning author Christopher Edge, who spoke animatedly about his latest book, Black Hole Cinema Club. Christopher Edge is a familiar face at Berk, having led engaging workshops for our Prep children over the past two years. His session at the Festival was equally interactive and enjoyable.



## CARDIFF GURDWARA

In November, the Year 6 children went to Cardiff Gurdwara to learn more about the Sikh faith. As they entered, as a mark of respect they removed their shoes. Sikh helpers placed and tied head scarves on the pupils' heads. We watched and listened to an interactive talk given by Parampreet Singh, one of the volunteers at the Gurdwara. The children answered his questions intelligently and asked searching questions in return. The children then went upstairs to the prayer room. On the way they got to see the room that is kept for the Guru Granth Sahib. In the prayer room they were able to listen to more information about the Gurdwara and see the Guru Granth Sahib in place. After this, the children came back to the Langar for lunch. At the end of the sessions, Param tested their knowledge with a quiz and the children once more answered well and gave the Sikh greeting. The children and accompanying teachers gained a lot from the visit. MT

# ...OFF WE GO...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR  
OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS



## WILDERNESS CENTRE

Year 4 enjoyed a sunny day at the Wilderness centre. After a brief introduction, the pupils dived into the teamwork activities. They worked together to create a slingshot to fire a beanbag into the target. It was wonderful to see the children congratulating each other for good work and ensuring everyone had multiple turns. They also demonstrated excellent concentration to hit the target when firing their air rifle with many of them finding the bullseye. Another of the activities

required them to search the site for hidden items where they had to draw a picture or collect an item from that area. Our final activity required the teams to complete a course without touching the floor. It was great to witness the pupils problem solving and working together to fill in gaps or to create bridges to achieve their goal. It was also fantastic to see the pupils' camaraderie when completing all of the activities to the best of their ability. IP



## WE THE CURIOUS

After having been closed for several years due to a fire, it was a pleasure to be able take Year 5 to We The Curious in Bristol. The trip's main aim was to reinforce our topic about space. We saw a 3D show in the planetarium all about life on other planets. We The Curious has plenty of hands-on experiments over the two floors that our pupils were able to investigate. Favourites included the iPod in a vacuum (the only way you could hear it was to bite down on a metal bar so you could hear through your bones), creating life sized bubbles, entering a room at a steep angle thus affecting your balance and walking in a large hamster wheel. We The Curious is a great place to visit and well worth taking the family to a day out. TM



## VINEY HILL

At the start of term, Year 5 went on their residential trip to Viney Hill in the Forest of Dean. The objective of the trip is to improve their team working skills and encourage children to take part in activities with others in the year group who they might not know well. Year 5 were lucky with the weather with three dry days and the sun even appeared on the Thursday. Activities included tunnelling, climbing, crate stack, Jacob's Ladder, bush craft, low ropes, archery and a night walk. There was a campfire on the last evening with toasted marshmallows and the sky cleared up so the children could see the stars. The children approached every activity with a positive attitude, and everyone had a go at everything. Well done, Year 5 - it was a fantastic trip. DB



# FROM SAVANNAH TO THE POLES: YEAR 1'S JOURNEY ACROSS CONTINENTS



From warm sunny climes to the coldest depths, it has been a term of contrasts. Year 1 has spent their time learning about Africa and the Poles. Using world maps, the children have identified where the Equator is, learning that the countries closest are the warmest and those furthest away are the coldest. They started English writing lists based on reading 'An African Adventure' and 'The Great Explorer'. This was followed by work from 'Handa's Surprise', which was their inspiration for enthusiastically tasting a variety of exotic fruits and using wonderful adjectives to describe their taste and appearance. An important part of our topic has been learning about Nelson Mandela. The children were eager to find out all about his fight for justice and equality.

The children have loved learning about the range of animals found in Africa, the Arctic and Antarctica; from the length of a King Cobra snake to the speed of a cheetah - and were stunned to discover they travel at a whopping 60mph. Unfortunately, we couldn't organise a trip to Africa, but the children experienced a jam-packed visit to The Bristol Zoo Project. In computing the children have been learning about internet safety, moving on to planning simple routes and programming these on

Blue-Bots. Maths has seen lots of adding and subtracting of numbers up to and within 10, as well as recognising and naming 2-D and 3-D shapes.

One of the highlights this term must be Year 1's celebration of Diwali - what an amazing day, creating rangoli and henna patterns, and having the opportunity to try on a beautiful selection of Indian outfits. Mrs Amlani visited to teach the children how to cook a delicious potato curry and tasty chapatis.

This has been a term full of warmth and fun. C M-L



## MEANWHILE, YEAR 2 HAVE REMAINED CLOSER TO HOME & EXPLORED THE UK

The Autumn Term is a truly exciting time in Year 2; lots of getting used to routines, getting to know each other and getting set for the year ahead! The children have settled into their Year 2 classes beautifully and are already showing signs of developing the independent learning behaviours that will grow and flourish across their last year within the Pre-Prep side of the school.

Children have started our Year 2 voyage by exploring the United Kingdom during geography lessons, unpicking mathematical fundamentals of place value and addition and subtraction during maths, and delving into alternative sounds within their daily phonics lessons.

They have let their creative juices flow in English by planning and writing journey stories, taking their characters to exotic locations, and have also designed fantastical animals, writing information texts about them while utilising the Year 2 skills of selecting relevant, exciting adjectives and developing use of conjunctions to create complex sentences.

Speaking of creativity, within both art and computing, children have created and presented their work. Within art, they sought highbrow inspiration from LS Lowry to produce landscapes and seascapes, guided by Mrs Smith's artistic nous. Within computing, they had somewhat lower-brow inspiration from Mr Jones's classic 'dad' jokes (such as "what does a cow do over the weekend? Go to the MOOOOvies"); children came up



with their own jokes and presented them on iPads using the Book Creator app. During one rather exciting computing lesson, JAMBOT3000, the Jam Sandwich robot (aka Mr Jones with a colander on his head) visited the class to ask children about their best Jam Sandwich algorithms; children guided their new metal teacher to make the sandwich before using imperative verbs within their writing to create recipes. Perhaps JAMBOT3000 will return one day soon!

Alongside all this excitement, and so much more, the children have been working hard, being kind and having fun. The perfect start to what promises to be a brilliant year in 2J and 2S! KJ





# THE PERFORMING ARTS

## A WASTE OF TIME?

BY GILL AGG



Many years ago, I was harangued by a parent who felt very strongly that putting on a Year 2 music and drama production was a total waste of time which would be better spent on academic work. During the performance, he emphasised his point by sitting at the back marking children's work (he was a teacher), rather than watching the fantastic result of all those 'wasted' hours. He didn't even applaud at the end. The question is, was he right?

Along with an enviable reputation for academic success, Berkhamstead has an excellent reputation for encouraging the performing arts, demonstrated annually by the healthy number of performing arts scholarships to secondary schools. Mrs Andrews, our founder, had a particular interest in music, and happily this emphasis continues to the present day. With plenty of opportunity for study and performance on many instruments, Berkhamstead has provided an excellent start for musicians at every level, including professional. Roger Vignoles, a distinguished pianist and accompanist, was taught by Mrs Andrews herself when he attended Berkhamstead; apparently, she chided him for not practising enough! More recently, Ashok Gupta laid the foundations for his musical career as a pianist, repetiteur and conductor here. Others, including my son, have gone on to have a successful musical career while countless others have been given a lifelong hobby.

The list of ensembles organised by Mrs Mitchell (Musical Director) is extensive: Jigsaw (beginners), Berky Bows (intermediate), the award-winning Chamber Ensemble (advanced), Razzamajazz and Jazz Combo, Guitar Group, Berkeys, Samba Band and African Drumming, Berky Beats, Junior Choir and VoxBox (Y5/6). In Pre-Prep, there is the opportunity to participate in ukulele, recorder, percussion or violin ensembles, all run by Mrs Sallis (Pre-Prep/EY Musical Director). The Spring Concerts, held at Pittville Pump Room or the Town Hall, are a highlight of the school year: the high level of the performances never fails to astonish. Other performances include the Prep Carol Service at All Saints Church, the termly Prep Recitals and the Leavers' Recital at the Parabola Arts Centre.

The problem is that there is so much to squeeze into the school timetable. Of course, the academic subjects - including relative newcomers Computing and Citizenship and Well-Being (CWB) - are a priority. However, music gets two timetabled slots each week and drama, too, is included, led by Rebecca Vines - herself a Berky alumna; as well as being an accomplished actor, Miss Vines directs, adjudicates and writes, regularly participating in prestigious events such as the Edinburgh Festival. She runs the Prep Drama Clubs and has joined Mrs Mitchell's choir, VoxBox, to encourage strong vocal skills and explore the dramatic side of performance. She is also available for private lessons, working towards LAMDA exams and preparing children for the various Speech and Drama classes at the

Cheltenham Festival of the Performing Arts: the Berky medal and trophy haul from the latter is truly impressive.

Performing in public is encouraged from the earliest age. The younger children have the option of Ballet lessons with Miss Gill - Dance is also included as a module in P.E. - and a Musical Theatre Club often runs either in term-time or as a holiday club. At the end of the Christmas term, various Nativity plays are staged in which children experience speaking in front of an audience. Years 1 and 2 also enjoy the Choral Speaking and Verse Speaking classes at the Festival... and yes, that wonderful Year 2 Summer Production still happens!

The Prep children work on public speaking for various occasions: the Harvest service, Year 6's readings at the candlelit Carol Service, the Easter service (all at All Saints Church), and at the beginning of the Summer term, in readiness for the Festival of the Performing Arts. Berky representatives also participate in the annual Oracy Competition in which interested children compete by preparing a speech on a subject of their choice and delivering it at a special assembly; the winners go forward to the county heats. Last but not least, the Year 6 play - usually a musical comedy incorporating singing, dancing and countless hilarious jokes - is an event loved by all. Again, Berky alumnae have gone on to successful acting and directing careers - Sophie Isaacs and Gabriella Sills, to name but two - but all the children benefit from the wealth of experiences provided.

Some children just can't get enough of performing! For them, there is also the opportunity provided by 'Berky's Got Talent' - a competition judged by the School Council leaders resulting in a line-up of around twelve varied 'acts': musical, spoken (including comedy), dance, gymnastics, puppetry, magic... the list is endless and the standard high! Towards the end of the Summer Term, the audience sits outside to enjoy this extravaganza, which is enhanced by a refreshing iced lolly, courtesy of the PTA.

For those who question the worth of the performing arts, I say emphatically that these subjects are immensely valuable, both at the time and for the future: they engage and inspire, encouraging empathy and self-expression and enabling exploration of difficult issues and emotions. They excite the imagination, enriching the educational experience. They develop transferable skills: communication, cooperation, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership and creativity. They develop children's confidence to perform and present to an audience - a skill sought after by today's employers. Above all, the performing arts are fun to be a part of!

And if you still remain unconvinced, LAMDA and music exams at Grade 6 and above earn UCAS points - at the higher levels almost the equivalent of an extra A-Level. Not to be sniffed at, I'd say.





# CLUBBING TOGETHER

## UNLOCKING NEW SKILLS & PASSIONS!

At Berkhamstead, we believe in providing our pupils with a wide range of opportunities to explore their interests and talents. Our extensive timetable of clubs allows the children to follow their passions with enthusiasm and perseverance, making a valuable contribution to their all-round education.

As the children progress through the school, they are offered an age-appropriate programme of activities that grow with them. In Kindergarten, pupils can enjoy ballet and football, while in Pre-Prep, clubs such as Nature Rangers, Funky Fingers and Multi-Skills are on offer. By the time they reach Prep School, students can dive into chess, yoga, and a variety of music clubs.

These activities aren't just fun - they challenge our pupils to step outside their comfort zones, collaborate with others, and build self-confidence. Here's a glimpse of the exciting clubs we've had running this Autumn Term!



### PREP CLUBS... RAZZAMAJAZZ

We have two bands - our Big Band 'Razzmajazz' of 18 musicians and our smaller Berkly Blues. Razzmajazz is for wind and brass players with one year's experience who play alongside more experienced players in the rhythm section on keyboard, bass, percussion and drums. Our bands are directed by experienced, professional musicians Miss Becca Holman, who plays brass, and Mr Matt Chestney.

### JIGSAW

This is our group for string players who are absolute beginners. Jigsaw has 12 pupils playing violin, viola, cello and bass, and is directed by Mrs Judith Weeks. Mrs Weeks teaches and plays violin, viola and piano and performs with Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra.

### BERKY BOWS

For string players with a minimum of one year's experience, Grade 1 - 2 level, Berkly Bows boasts 19 players and they are directed by Miss Pippa Ginns, (violin and viola) and Mr Mike Bacon (cello and bass). Miss Ginns is Head of Strings at Cheltenham College and performs in the Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra. Mr Bacon is a professional cellist performing with a Quartet at the Edinburgh Festival and other events. He also teaches at Cheltenham Ladies' College and Cheltenham College Prep.

### CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

This ensemble is a small Chamber group of our top players. We have seven players in this group who rehearse pieces composed and arranged for them by their director Mr Jon Trim, who has had many pieces for orchestras and ensembles published. Mr Trim also teaches and conducts several local adult and student orchestras and is a tutor for the National Children's Orchestra.

### CYCLING PROFICIENCY

Cycle Stars provide the opportunity for children in Years 5 and 6 to develop their cycling skills and become safer cyclists on the road. It takes place after school, in the playground, so the children can develop their skills in safety. The course is over four weeks, spending two weeks on improving bike handling skills and confidence of young riders. The final two weeks focus on road safety which includes traffic awareness, communication with other road users, road positioning, junctions and roundabouts. On completion, the participants are presented with a certificate of achievement.

### SAMBA & AFRICAN DRUMMERS

All our pupils in Years 3 and 4 have sessions with percussion specialist, Mrs Debbie Sallis. Her lessons encompass Latin-American Samba and African-style drumming and improvisation - which lead to thrilling performances in the Spring Concerts. Mrs Sallis is a member of

the Music Junction, a community-based music school, and she leads percussion workshops locally for adults and schools.

### BERKY BEATS

Our energetic kit drummers and percussion players from Years 4 - 6 join forces in this ensemble to play arrangements of lively, exciting music. Their performances are always creatively developed by the pupils themselves with percussion specialist Mr Tom Peverelle directing.

### GUITAR CLUB

Prep School guitar players are taught to play recent - and not so recent - pop songs in a fun learning environment, with Mr Dan Lewis and Mr Marc Tittley.

### JUNIOR CHOIR

All our Year 3 and 4 pupils take part in the Junior Choir where they learn many useful and fun warm-up routines for developing good techniques of posture, breathing, articulation and pitching. They sing rounds and simple part songs, which develop listening and ensemble skills. The Junior Choir performs at the Carol Service and Spring Concerts. The group is directed by Mrs Mitchell, who sings with Gloucester Choral Society, the Three Choirs Festival Chorus and Ex Collegio. She also plays clarinet in the Capriol Orchestra, conducted by Mr Trim!

### VOXBOX

Our popular VoxBox group is for Year 5 and 6 pupils who are keen to develop their vocal and acting skills further. Directed by Miss Rebecca Vines and Mrs Penny Mitchell, the singers enjoy lively warm-ups, part songs, and descants. They learn to sight-sing and take independent harmony parts and are developing drama skills for musical theatre. VoxBox singers have been invited to perform in public many times including for our annual Carol Singing charity event.

### HOCKEY (GIRLS) & RUGBY (BOYS)

An after-school club for all the Prep children that ran until half term. The club will resume after the February half term with football for the boys and netball for the girls.

### HOCKEY

An after-school club for girls and boys in Years 3 and 4 - which takes place all year round - and is delivered by the RO Coaching team. The children build on their basic skills and begin to learn the importance of decision making through gameplay. By understanding when to use the skill first, we can improve our application in a match (As we often say, "Decision before skill").

### GIRLS' FOOTBALL

A lunchtime club for girls in Years 5 and 6. The club takes place on the MUGA, and is run by Mr McCreanor and Mr Banks. The girls learn to master basic football skills ready to participate in the annual Cheltenham Primary Schools Competition.

### SENIOR CHESS

Senior Chess Club for Years 5 and 6 is a popular lunchtime activity, with over 30 pupils pitting their wits against one another. Mr Cole organises leagues with all abilities playing one another within the first few weeks, but then the pupils are placed into divisions based on ability and performance.

### JUNIOR CHESS

Another lunchtime Chess Club - this time for children in Years 3 and 4. Traditionally, older pupils help Mr Cole coach the 40 children who attend this club.

### STEM

A brilliant after-school activity for our oldest pupils in Years 5 and 6. The club - which is run by Head of Science, Mr Morpew - gives the children the opportunity to explore aspects of science, technology, engineering and maths in a really fun, engaging and hands-on way.

### FENCING

Fencing is an after-school club for Year 6 pupils, taught by Mr Kevin Nelson. Over the course of a year, our oldest pupils are taught all three fencing weapons, foil, sabre and epee, and with each, they earn their British Academy of Fencing Bronze Proficiency Awards.

### YOGA

During this after-school club, children from Years 3-6 improve their strength, balance, attention and coordination through fun yoga games and poses. Through breathing and relaxation exercises, they learn the tools to cultivate a calm mind to help them manage stress in their daily lives. The club is run by Jay from The Yoga Glow UK.

### RUNNING

Mr McCreanor's popular club takes place before school on a Friday morning, and is available to all pupils in Years 3-6. Children with an interest in running develop their fitness and race tactics, ready to compete in inter-school competitions and House events.

### MANDARIN

Mrs Thorn's club is a fun, after-school activity for children from Years 3-6. The children learn about Chinese culture and language through fun games and songs. Mrs Thorn is a native speaker and is a fully qualified teacher who has taught Mandarin for many years.





## GARDENING

This Year 3 club - run by Mr and Mrs Taylor - ran until half term and took place in the Jubilee Garden. Tasks for the green-fingered youngsters included weeding and preparing the vegetable bed for winter; planting broad bean seeds and preparing flower beds ready for planting. Weeding and deadheading the lavender has also kept the children busy.

## KNITTING

A popular lunchtime club for pupils in Years 3-6. Mrs Taylor - with the help of Mrs McCreanor - teaches our young knitters the craft. The knitters are knitting squares to make a blanket for the Cheltenham Animal Shelter.

## DRAMA

Drama Club has now grown to run four times a week, taking place through lunchtimes and after school; and is taken by LAMDA teacher Rebecca Vines. The fun sessions for Years 3-6 cover all elements of the dramatic spectrum, including choral verse, physical theatre, musical theatre, acting and mime. We currently have a wonderful group of learners who are working towards examinations and public performance pieces.

## ART

Year 3 and 4 children explored wellbeing painting by creating pebbles decorated with special thoughts and memories. Our young artists also created 3D decorations to dress the Prep Christmas tree.

## PRE-PREP CLUBS... SUPASTRIKERS

A football club for Kindergarten and Reception, which takes place within the school day, and includes fun games and basic football skills. Each session starts with the 'Big Ball' and then a warm-up, followed by structured games. The sessions always finish with 'Foam Ball Time' which teaches the children good hand-eye coordination.

## AT SOCCERCAMPS

Years 1 and 2 benefit from fun warm-up games, skill-based exercises and finish with mini matches. Trophies are awarded at the end of term for best attitude, best shooting and best dribbling!

## HOCKEY

An after-school club for Year 2, which takes place throughout the year, and is run by the RO Coaching team. The children learn basic skills such as dribbling, how to receive the ball and 'team vision,' (teaching the children to be aware of their teammates' positions).

## HELEN GILL BALLET

Ballet for Early Years children (during school hours for Kindergarten and after school for Reception). The classes - which have an emphasis on fun - focus on expression, performance, elevation, dynamics, musicality, rhythms, formations, space awareness and

basic ballet technique suitable and safe for these age groups. Reception also enjoy tap dancing in their sessions. Parents are invited to performances in the Summer Term.

## NATURE RANGERS

A super after-school Year 2 club that ran until half term. Forest School-trained Mrs Main - with Mrs Hext - based each session on the children's interests with activities such as mini-beast hunting, digging in the pit for worms, observational drawing and making nature-inspired sculptures out of playdough.

## MULTI-SKILLS

The aim of this club is to develop the children's sporting skills, including agility, balance and coordination, through fun and engaging games and activities. These include team and individual games, running, throwing, catching, jumping and travelling, all with the aim to develop gross motor control. The club is run by Mr Jones and Mrs Hyde.

## FUNKY FINGERS

This is a brilliant Year 1 after-school activity, designed to boost the children's fine motor skills. Led by Head of Early Years, Mrs Meredith-Smyth - with the help of Mrs Moore - the children have great fun with resources such as Hama beads, Geo Stix, scissors, peg boards and elastic bands. Jewellery making has also been popular.

## READY STEADY BOW!

This super Year 2 club introduces the children to the open strings of the violin, and is led by Head of Pre-Prep Music, Mrs Debbie Sallis.

## CRASH! BANG! WALLOP!

This is a samba band designed for our Pre-Prep children, which introduces them to the vibrant rhythms and energetic pulse of this lively genre. The children gain hands-on experience of traditional samba instruments, including surdo drums, tambourins, agogo bells, and shakers. It is expertly led by Mrs Sallis.

# ...NEWS... FROM PREP



## MUSIC NEWS

### DEAN CLOSE WIND AND BRASS DAY

One Tuesday in October, a group of 11 Prep musicians attended a Wind and Brass Day at Dean Close School rehearsing and preparing for a concert of pieces with a sporting connection at the end of the day. Our players rose to the challenge of sight-reading five new pieces and rehearsing intensively in various sections on 'The Great Escape', the theme from Formula 1, 'Sweet Caroline' and 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' - a truly rousing sound and great experience for all our players. PM

### AUTUMN RECITAL

The Autumn Recital was a feast of delightful solos on a wide range of instruments. Prep children performed on violin, cello, double bass, piano, guitar, drum kit, clarinet, flute, saxophone, cornet, trombone and harp - a wonderful variety of music from beginners to more experienced players. It is always lovely to see the children's appreciation of each other at these events. Well done to all who entertained us so beautifully. PM

### NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ORCHESTRA

We are delighted that some of our most experienced musicians have gained places in national ensembles for 2025. Remi T (Y6) and Starlar H (Y5) both achieved places in the highly prestigious National Children's Orchestra on harp and trombone respectively, and Edith H (Y5) has won a place in the National Children's Choir of Great Britain.

Congratulations to all three girls on their very impressive achievements.



### MUSIC EXAM RESULTS

Congratulations to the following musicians who have taken grade exams this term:  
Debut - Oliver B (Acoustic Guitar\*\*), Jack F (Bass Guitar\*)  
Grade 1 - Florence P-T (Clarinet\*), Olivia M (Violin\*)  
Grade 3 - Ioan C (Violin\*)

\*Denotes pass with merit \*\*Denotes pass with distinction



## YEAR 6 GO-GETTERS!

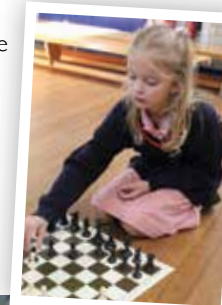
Our Prep House Captains are chosen by the staff for their excellent leadership qualities and their ability to serve as inspiring role models for their peers. Elected at the start of the school year, with second House Captains chosen at the start of the Spring Term, they play a crucial role in fostering team spirit and motivating their housemates. Congratulations to this year's House Captains: Annabelle A (St Andrew's), Polly B (St David's), Charlie F (St George's), and Lara C (St Patrick's).

House Captains take on important duties, including leading inter-house competitions like the popular 'House Shout' and distributing commendations during assembly. The House system is a core part of life in the Prep School. Upon joining in Year 3, each child is assigned to a House and proudly receives a badge from their House Captain to wear on their blazer. Throughout the year, House competitions take place, and it is a great honour for House Captains to receive the winning trophies on behalf of their teams.

We also extend our congratulations to this year's Year 6 Eco-Warrior leaders, Jack F and Henry P, and our School Council leaders, Jasper W and Olivia M. We have every confidence they will excel in their leadership roles.

## CHESS NEWS

The Autumn Term saw plenty of chess played at Berkhamstead. Two lunchtime clubs are thriving: on Tuesdays the Y3/Y4 club meet while on Thursdays the Y5/Y6 players come together. The players all play in mixed ability 'round robin' leagues; after Christmas the leagues will be based on ability so the more accomplished players will face each other while their relatively less experienced peers will have their own leagues to contest. During half term, Mr Jones organised a Berkhamstead chess event which was well-attended and successful. In the new year, we can look forward to the annual Berkhamstead Congress and the House Chess tournament. We have many fine and promising players here at Berkhamstead and it is a pleasure to watch them all develop their skills. MC





# KINDERGARTEN PRESENTS...



## OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS STORY

Dressed in an array of amazing costumes, Kindergarten had a wonderful time performing their nativity to their families. Over previous weeks they had worked hard to learn the songs that told 'The First Christmas Story' and they sang these beautifully during both performances. Guided by Mrs Webb, the children all took part in creating the spectacular backdrop showing the town of Bethlehem, including houses, trees and stars.

A big thank you goes to Mrs Sallis, for helping the children to create a Christmas performance to be proud of! LS



## PRE-PREP PRESENTS...



## CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

This year children from Reception, Year 1 and 2 relished taking part in our 'Christmas Around The World' showcase at All Saints' Church. Representing children from Poland, China, Malawi, USA, Australia and Ireland, the children sang their hearts out and spoke with such confidence. They loved learning about how different cultures celebrate this special time of year and exploring similarities and differences with their own family traditions. AS





# ...OFF WE GO...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR  
OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS



## MUSIC HANDS

At the end of the Autumn Term, we were delighted to welcome the charismatic 'Mr O' from Music Hands back to Berkhamstead. This time, our music maestro introduced Year 5 to iPad music apps such as GarageBand and Figure. The workshop focused on composition and production, encouraging the children to blend their computing skills with their musical knowledge. The results were outstanding, with the pupils composing and performing some truly impressive pieces.

A huge thank you to Music Hands for an inspiring day, to Mr Banks for organising it, and to the PTA for generously funding this enriching experience.



## THE BRISTOL ZOO PROJECT

Year 1's trip to the Bristol Zoo Project was jam-packed. The children were given an informative talk about different habitats in Africa and how animals have adapted to live there. They also looked at artefacts and handled items such as a snake's skin, animal furs, an ostrich egg and feather, an elephant tusk and a tortoise shell. Highlights included visiting the giraffe enclosure and learning that they have blue tongues, and seeing the hilarious geladas. After lunch, we pretended to fly to Madagascar and we also enjoyed walking through the lemur enclosure. C M-L

## LITTLE CITY GLOUCESTERSHIRE

We were delighted to welcome Little City Gloucestershire this term with their child-sized city role play. The Early Years children loved visiting the different areas and it was super to hear their imaginations running wild with different role-play scenarios.

The hairdressers and emergency services areas were a firm favourite amongst the children, although there was so much to choose from! The children gained plenty from the visit through developing their understanding of the different roles within our communities, using their imaginations and widening their already wonderful vocabulary. JG

## STEAM MUSEUM

As part of our studies on World War II, the Year 6s were evacuated to Swindon for the day.

We had two workshops which were practical and hands-on.

The first workshop gave the children the opportunity to sit in an old railway carriage and experience the journey, as well as to handle a variety of artefacts including the contents of an evacuee's suitcase. They were then taken off the train by the Billeting Officer, who tried to allocate them to families. Some had success and some did not and this brought home the emotions that children would have gone through.

Our second activity was about air raids. We saw and heard an air raid siren in action and then we were ushered into the communal air raid shelter. We heard the constant hum of planes overhead as a reminder of the danger, as we examined the various artefacts from the 1940s.

The Year 6s had a wonderful day and all looked the part, dressed as evacuees. P McC



## CHEPSTOW CASTLE

The Year 4s travelled to Wales to enjoy the splendid Chepstow Castle. We had an informative tour of the castle, learning about the architecture and its development over the years. We examined the castle defences and saw how challenging it would be to try to capture such a structure.

The afternoon saw us try on different types of armour, as well as having a live demonstration of longbows, crossbows, swords, daggers and spears. The children saw the danger and effect of these weapons.

This visit really enhanced the children's learning about Medieval times and they were excited to see the scale of the castle, as well as handle some of the artefacts. P McC

## PREP CAROL SERVICE

# A Truly Magical Celebration

Once again, our Prep Carol Service was held in the beautiful All Saints' Church just before the end of term. All the Prep children were involved, singing a variety of traditional and modern carols with the congregation raising their voices too. Year 6 led the service, beginning with a candle-lit procession as they sang 'I wonder as I wander out under the sky', setting the scene for the biblical narration of The Nativity. Every pupil read with some beautifully appropriate poems and readings expressing the wonder, joy and spiritual message of Christmas. Well done to all the children for a tremendously uplifting start to the celebrations of Christmas 2024. PM







U8 | GIRLS’ HOCKEY

The girls have performed brilliantly across the course of this term and each and every one of them has made thoroughly good progress with their skills and match play experience. During games lessons, they have worked on ball control, passing, finding space and also on engaging the opposition; all skills that have then been applied successfully within matches. The Under 8s have enjoyed an unbeaten season and have consistently shown a supportive, determined attitude, regardless of whoever they are playing. Many of the girls are new to the sport and are finding their best positions, but everyone has had a chance to shine in a variety of spots across the hockey pitch and have shown their versatility and willingness to take on the challenge of competitive sport. A massive well done goes to all the girls for an amazing term’s hockey! KJ

**U8 Team:** Sasha B, Lizzie C, Nina C, Georgie C, Rosie D, Layla F, Sophie H, Frankie I, Maddie LG, Kitty L, Meriem T, Eleanor W



U9 | GIRLS’ HOCKEY

This has been a most successful term of hockey for our Under 9 girls’ teams! Right from the beginning, we started strongly with a win and a draw at Beaudesert and two wins at King’s and then continued to build upon this, going from strength to strength and winning the majority of the remaining matches!! The girls have made drastic improvements to their fitness, their stick skills and game-play over the season and will be a force to be reckoned with in the coming years. They are a great bunch of girls too and I have been very impressed indeed! CMcC

**U9 Team:** Olivia B, Eleanor C, Betty D, Maddy E, Lilian L, Tilly M, Jessica P-T, Florence P, Florence R, Annabelle S, Lada S, Astrid S, Eden S, Lucy W, Annie W, Chloe W



U10 | GIRLS’ HOCKEY

The girls began the season with a loss to RPS, but this provided them with the fire to play better. Out of all the matches the girls played, their results on average saw them winning more than losing. They have worked hard to improve and understand positional play, passing the ball into space and driving it up the pitch into attacking positions. Our defence has been solid, with several girls trying the goalkeeper position. As the season has progressed, their skills, confidence and team spirit have grown. Well done ladies, a season to be proud of! JH

**U10 Team:** Nancy A, Eden B, Isabella B, Tamar C, Alanah F, Anna H, Edith H, Starlar H, Hermione H, Jemima H-S, Amelia I, Eleanor K, Iris M, Amara M, Alayna M, Chloe R, Beau R



U11 | GIRLS’ HOCKEY

What a year! It has been a pleasure to experience some great hockey and teamwork. I have been blown away by the grit and determination of some of the girls. All the girls have listened well and tried so hard to improve their individual skills. They have played with huge determination and endeavour, and have deserved better results at times. All the girls in the squad have interchanged positions well and have become very versatile as the season has progressed. Both A and B teams had a strong start against King’s Gloucester. The A team started to really flow as we edged towards the IAPS tournament; they began to get set positions and start to learn their set plays. During the IAPS tournament, the girls showed what they were capable of, going through the tournament into the cup play off, where it is the top 8 from 20 teams. They got knocked out by the winners in the end. Both teams went to Cheltenham College U11 Hockey Tournament. The As finished third in their group with the Bs winning the B tournament overall. It has been a brilliant year for hockey, and I have enjoyed every minute. CK

**U11 Team:** Annabelle A, Polly B, Izzy B, Lara C, Rosie E, Melba F, Charlotte H, Olivia M, Emily O’K, Megan P, Florence P-T, Hannah P, Isla R, Allegra S, Remi T, Evie W, Yaz Y.  
**Colours:** Annabelle A, Polly B, Izzy B, Lara C, Rosie E, Melba F, Charlotte H, Olivia M, Emily O’K, Megan P, Florence P-T, Hannah P, Isla R, Allegra S, Remi T, Evie W, Yaz Y.  
**Outstanding:** Allegra S, Annabelle A, Florence P-T



U8 | BOYS’ RUGBY

All of the boys had a great season of tag rugby. Throughout the term they listened well in lessons and improved many areas of their game. In the matches you could clearly see the progression that the boys had made in terms of their own skills and working as a team. They always managed to keep themselves focussed in the games and, when mistakes were made, they were able to discuss them afterwards and say how to improve themselves.

We have been very proud of the boys this term and are looking forward to football with them next term. Very well done! TM

**U8 Team:** Douglas A, Hugo B, Gabriel C, Louie D, Heath G, Max G, Zac H, Thomas H, Tobias L, Elliott L-O, Harvey M, Rufus P, Franklin R, Finley S, Eliyas SR



U9 | BOYS’ RUGBY

The boys have had a steep learning curve this year during rugby. With the introduction of tackle, the boys have had to learn to keep themselves safe whilst bringing down their opposition. I have been extremely impressed with the progress they have made and their desire to improve. Over the course of the season, they have scored a glut of tries with some outstanding team efforts involving great offloading and superb support. Defensively, they learnt to keep a strong defensive line whilst moving forward to apply pressure to the attacking team. When we have played our fixtures, the boys have always followed the true rugby spirit of being respectful and polite to both the officials and their opposition. Over the next two years, I look forward to watching them become a fantastic team. I am a very proud teacher. IP

**U9A Team:** Ralph A, Ezra B, Rocco R, Jonah B, Ned D, Guy D, Leo D, Archer D, Jack O’K, Arturo P, Jacob P, Devan P, George R, Sebastian R, Arlo R, George RS, Rupert S, Eric SS, Ben S, Oliver S, Felix T, Max T, Jack W, Walker W



U10 | BOYS’ RUGBY

The U10 boys have had a superb season on the rugby field. They have worked hard, listened in training and used their new skills with great success. The U10A team were unbeaten this season and they showed true Berky resilience when coming from behind in some of their matches. They pass the ball between them well and I have been impressed with how well they move the ball when in attacking play. The last couple of games demonstrated how much progress they have made with two great wins against King’s Gloucester and Beaudesert. The 10B team have won most of their matches and I have been pleased to see their confidence grow. Their tackling is stronger, and they have scored some great tries. This team did very well at the Dean Close Festival, winning most of their matches.

Well done boys, it has been a fantastic season and I have thoroughly enjoyed coaching you. DB

**U10/11 Team:** Ted B, Mark B, Ioan C, Jonas D, Magnus D, Jacob H, Quinn H, Arthur H, George H, Edward H, Artharv I, Rowan J, Seth L, George L, Max LG, Ellis M, Toby M, Oliver S, Eddie S, Milo R, Dion W



U11 | BOYS’ RUGBY

The U11A team have enjoyed a fantastic season. They have had many fine performances, with victories against Hatherop, Richard Pate, Ashley Manor, Cricklade, Beaudesert and King’s. However it is in the losses that you often learn more and a couple of defeats to Dean Close and Rendcomb taught the boys a lot. They have grown as a group and developed into a team who support and encourage each other and they played a fantastic brand of attacking rugby on the way. I was also impressed with the way they defended. There were times when their collective effort and doggedness was what brought us victories.

The B’s have also enjoyed a fine season. With a mixture of defeats and victories, the boys have gelled together and really improved the standard of their play. They had fine victories against Hatherop and Richard Pate and in all of their matches they were a threat with ball in hand. However, it was in defence that they made great progress. This was particularly noticeable in their last two matches against Beaudesert and King’s. They really pulled together against physical teams and showed real grit and determination. Well done to all of the boys! P McC

**U11 Team:** Hughie B, Olly B, Leo C, Lucas dCV, Angus C, Charlie F, Jack F, Fergus G, Jack H, Charlie H, Miles H, Tharusha J, Atlas M, Archie M, Henry P, Rishik R, Toby R, Charlie W, Japer W.  
**Colours awarded to:** Hughie B, Olly B, Lucas dCV, Angus C, Jack F, Fergus G, Jack H, Miles H, Toby R, Charlie W, Jasper W  
**Outstanding Player Awards:** Lucas dCV, Jack H, Jasper W





## NEW PRE-PREP PLAYGROUND UNVEILED

After months of anticipation, the new Pre-Prep playground is finally here. Designed with input from staff and expert playground contractors, this inviting space is set to make playtime even more exciting. Over the summer, we held collaborative meetings to ensure the playground would suit the children's needs and interests, and the result is a space that's perfect for active play and creative fun.

The playground features a trim-trail, a slide, a recycling station and the Berky Creative Cabin. This special cabin is filled with open-ended, reusable materials like crates, tubes, fabric and costumes - perfect for imaginative play! It also offers a great way for children to learn about sustainability by reusing everyday items. To top it all, we've planted 37 beautiful Japanese Privet trees along the boundary fence. These trees - some of which have been sponsored by generous local businesses - will help improve air quality, provide shade and play a part in reducing the school's carbon footprint.

We couldn't be happier with how it's all come together!



The Blazer is printed on carbon balanced and FSC certified paper using vegan based inks.



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