

BERKHAMPTSTEAD
SCHOOL
MAGAZINE

2019
SPRING TERM

BLAZER



Berky enrichment

IMAGINATIVE,
INSPIRING AND FUN!

Spring concerts

BERKY PUPILS PULL OUT
ALL THE STOPS

History Mystery

YEAR 2 SOLVE CLUES
TO BECOME KNIGHTS!



Thoughts from THE HEAD

Glance through this edition of the Berky Blazer and you'll see evidence of creative teaching and a passion for learning... everywhere!

The staff offer such a wide range of wonderful opportunities for the children... from the chicks in Kindergarten, to adventures in space in Reception, to Superheroes in Year 1, the wonderful History Mystery Day in Year 2 with its code-breaking, research and sleuthing challenges (and allowing me to dress up as King Richard). In Prep, the range of opportunities has included the annual 500 Word Story Competition, the Commandery History trip, the House Pancake Races, football, netball and cross-country fixtures - as well as the very successful Chess fixtures and Congress and the wonderful Spring Concert.

Our magical Spring Concerts, held at the Pittville Pump Room, once again showed that Music is at the heart of Berkhamstead. Every child from Year 2 to Year 6 had the opportunity to perform in this fabulous venue - and what performances! I make no apologies for asserting once again that there can be no school of similar size that comes close to us for inclusivity and musicality. The finale of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' was a delight... and was greatly enjoyed by both performers and audience.

We teach creatively and it pays off - it's evident in our excellent results. Yet again, half of our Year 6 have gained Grammar School places with 40% of these going to Pate's Grammar. Others have gained Scholarships and places at a variety of local independent schools while still others are heading to the reputable local academies.

What shines through for me, though, is the confidence gained and the self-esteem built through the trust and care the children experience from the staff and from each other. The children feel safe to express themselves, be themselves and have a go!

Most importantly, they have fun and enjoy all that Berky has to offer.

Richard Cross

Richard Cross
Headmaster



Spotlight on CERY'S MCCREANOR

Mme McCreanor is our specialist language teacher. She joined Berky in October 2016 and teaches French to every pupil in the School. She also teaches Spanish to the Year 5s and 6s and manages to sneak in a few other languages on special days too. Mme McCreanor is a Year 3 form teacher, responsible for the U9 girls' games teams and also teaches mindfulness during Carousel.



Here, some of her form ask the questions they've always wanted to know...

Have you always been a teacher?

Yes, I have. It is very much in my blood! My great grandfather was a teacher, and my grandparents and father were both head teachers. My sister and I have both become language teachers and then I married a teacher too!

What would you be if you weren't a teacher?

I really love art, drawing and creativity, so possibly something in that field. In my spare time, I have qualified as a reflexologist. I am not a person for sitting still and doing nothing, so I wanted to have something which would keep me busy when I eventually retire from teaching.

Do you have any pets?

Yes, we have a beautiful miniature Labradoodle called Meg. She is very affectionate and very lively. She likes to say 'hello' to absolutely everyone when we are out walking.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I don't have much spare time, but when I do, a long walk with Meg is one of my favourite activities, especially if it happens to be on a windswept beach in beautiful Pembrokeshire... Barrafundle perhaps or Newgale!

What are your earliest memories?

Some of my earliest memories are of long summer holidays spent in France. I started to learn French by speaking to the other children on the campsite and my love for languages grew from this.

What do you love most about Berky?

I first came to Berky as a cover teacher and after having been here for a few weeks I remember saying to Mr Cross that I didn't want to leave! I love the wonderfully enthusiastic children, the wonderful staff and the fantastic relationship between the teachers and the pupils! It felt like a very big and happy family. Berky is a very special place and you can feel it as soon as you walk in.

Do you like being a form teacher?

I absolutely do! I honestly think that I am the luckiest teacher alive! I am greeted with warm smiles and hugs from my form children every morning and then I am fortunate enough to teach ALL of the children throughout the week. And teaching MFL is very enjoyable!

If you weren't at Berky now, where would you rather be?

If I could be anywhere else in the whole world, it would definitely be on a beach! I would choose a very sunny beach in the South of France, with my own family (Mr McCreanor and our two daughters) and my lovely sister and her family. We always have so much fun when we are all together and it is such a bonus that she lives in France because we HAVE to visit her every year!



MUSIC NOTES

Berky pupils delighted their audiences at this year's annual Spring Concerts at the Pittville Pump Rooms at the end of the Spring term. Ensembles ranged from samba and choirs to jazz bands and keyboard orchestras.

The grand finale of the evening concert was the very impressive "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" sung by the entire Prep School in their multi-coloured T-shirts. See page 10 to read more.

News

FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL



ALL IN GOOD TASTE

Head chef extraordinaire Alex Risdale and his talented team have worked hard this term to provide the children and staff with delicious and nutritious meals. They have also gone the extra mile with special events such as a parents' taster morning and a very successful kale and celeriac taster event for the Pre-Prep children. Young tastebuds were challenged with dishes such as celeriac remoulade with Parma ham en croute, Tuscan kale and ricotta pasta bake. Chinese New Year at Berky was a triumph with hot dogs, popcorn and dumbbell marshmallow treats!



CHARITY NEWS

We have been extremely proud to continue to support Acorns Children's Hospice and WaterAid this term. Chosen by our School Council - which has representatives from Reception to Year 6 - the aim is to support one local and one global charity. Mel Hall from Acorns gave moving assemblies both sides of the road and was full of gratitude for what we had raised so far; she also inspired us to continue with our efforts. Fundraising events to look forward to include a Onesie Day at the beginning of the Summer term.

CODING CAPERS

This term, we were lucky enough to receive 15 Spheros for use in Computing lessons across the school. These little robots proved extremely popular with staff and children all having a go at using them - including a lovely session with Year 6 showing Kindergarten how they worked. Spheros have lots of sensors and they can be coded to react to sound, light and movement. They are robust, they can be dropped from a height and they can even be used in water. These robots are very capable and we are hoping to purchase a set of 15.

THE BRISTOL STANDARD AWARDED FOR THE FIFTH YEAR RUNNING!

Congratulations to our brilliant Early Years Department who have achieved the Bristol Standard award for the fifth year running! The Bristol Standard was devised as a self-evaluation document for Early Years settings to develop outstanding practice, and although we are already well aware of how note worthy this department is, it is wonderful to be recognised officially. Mrs Roddy-Watts and her loyal team are already turning their thoughts to targets for next year's evaluation, and plan to concentrate on a number of key areas. They intend to further improve the mental and emotional wellbeing of their children through mindfulness, develop the children's core and fine motor skills, and further promote curiosity, enquiry and creativity by investigating a variety of educational theory-led approaches. Well done. Early Years!

OFF-PISTE LEARNING AT BERKY

The first Friday in February was a tremendously exciting day for everyone as it had snowed in the night, and Berky had been transformed into a perfect winter wonderland! The whole School and Day Nursery made the most of it with snowman building, snowball throwing and even sledging at the Day Nursery! Our lovely kitchen staff treated the children to hot chocolate and marshmallows, and Mr Banks's Y4 maths class went off -piste with an impromptu outdoor maths lesson. The children were challenged to create a snowman out of any 3D shapes apart from a sphere, then measure the snowman's height and convert it into metres and millimetres.



BERKY GETS GREENER

Berky Mum and Eco-warrior, Sarah McInnes launched her campaign for Berky to get greener. Although environmental issues have always been close to our hearts, there is plenty more we can do to protect our environment, and so Mrs McInnes formed an Eco-committee - with representatives from each class in the school - to promote recycling and a more careful use of our planet's resources both in school, at home and in our local community. We are grateful that she has spearheaded the campaign, and her bi-weekly meetings are sure to be a great success with our eager young pupils. Her aim is for Berky to become an accredited Eco-School and be awarded a Green Flag.



KINDNESS CUP

Sally Lee was a much loved Pre-Prep teacher who sadly passed away two years ago. Bearing in mind her interest in - and influence on - encouraging the qualities of good citizenship and emotional wellbeing in children - we remember Sally with a special award given half-termly to a child in Pre-Prep who has consistently shown care and consideration for others. During the Spring term, it was awarded to Floyd R and Emily B.



MALVERN ART COMPETITION

The annual Primary Schools' Art Exhibition held at Malvern St James School has always offered a wonderful showcase of children's art, and this year was no exception. We sent them a diverse selection of art from all over the School, and were thrilled that Harriet C-W (R) Estella L (Y1) Charles C (Y2) and Hannah H (Y4) pieces were all Highly Commended. Michelle Bareham, Head of Art, commented, "It was wonderful to see the fantastic range of artwork by the children. I was very proud of all the work from Berkhamstead."



PTA NEWS

The Spring term is always quieter after the hectic Autumn term, but we have still hosted a couple of great events!

As tradition dictates, the Movie Night was postponed due to snow, but we reassembled a week later! All the children had a wonderful time relaxing in their pj's and onesies with their friends, snacking on popcorn and enjoying films together.

Cake@Break was another wonderful event - who doesn't love a cake! Thank you to all the budding bakers for providing the lovely treats for all to enjoy!

The annual House Pancake Races abounded with energy and enthusiasm as the Prep School children ran and flipped pancakes for their houses. Delicious pancakes were then served in the dining hall, with an array of tasty toppings. Donations were made for the pancakes and a great deal was raised for the school charities.

Due to the success of the events so far this year, we are delighted to announce that we have reached our target of £6000 for additions to the school playground! This is a fantastic achievement in such a short amount of time. As ever, thank you to the great team of PTA volunteers for all their hard work; we really couldn't do it without their dedication and enthusiasm.

Next term our fabulous Summer Fayre will take place - more details about this will be announced in due course.

Joey, PTA Chair





A 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION

'THE MORE COMPLEX THE WORLD BECOMES, THE MORE CREATIVE WE NEED TO BE TO MEET ITS CHALLENGES.' SIR KEN ROBINSON

The first school trip I ever went on was to Wimbledon in 1971 - I was fifteen and the trip was to celebrate the completion of 'O' levels. Up until then, my education had consisted almost exclusively of a daily grind of pen-and-paper lessons during which I sat passively at my desk being told exactly what to do and how to do it. As it happens, I enjoyed my primary school years... but then, I was an academic child, keen to please my teachers and well capable of fulfilling their expectations. I now find myself wondering what school must have been like for those less biddable or not naturally suited to that sort of educational diet.

Fortunately, education has evolved considerably since then, with an emphasis on investigative learning and learning through play. There is a much broader approach to introducing new concepts; including visual, aural and kinaesthetic elements to suit children's differing styles of learning has become the norm. Quite recently, though, there has been more of a focus on literacy and numeracy in schools; despite this, our curriculum at Berkhamstead continues to be broad, with numerous trips and plenty of visitors and exciting hands-on experiences within the classroom. As a long-standing member of the Berky staff, I have absolutely no doubt that the wealth of enrichment activities offered at our school is of immense benefit to every single child. It always amazes me to see children who are less engaged in a 'normal' classroom situation suddenly come alive and demonstrate surprising abilities when faced with activities and challenges in a more practical, hands-on context.

Education is not just about retaining facts and figures or being able to apply given formulae, it is more about promoting understanding and empathy, so it is a shame that children's 'success' is still measured largely by exam or test results, or even by how far they have got through the reading scheme; I am sure the results I obtained back in the 1960s have had no impact on my life whatsoever. However, I did have one teacher who was a great influence on me. Her name was Mrs Wood and she had a real passion for English and history; I vividly remember the day she organised a Victorian Exhibition at school and parents - unusually back then - were invited to attend. We all dressed up in authentic costumes to create tableaux of Victorian life. She also wrote a Nativity play based on Gloucestershire history which seemed to my eleven year old self to be a work of genius. Although much of my education is now a blur, I have never forgotten her or what she taught me.

Looking back over the last year, so much has gone on here at Berkhamstead to enrich the children's learning experience: our termly Blazer gives ample evidence of this. Trips to all manner of places are sure to continue, led by our team of subject specialists, each passionately keen to promote a love of their own subject. Within school, too, everyone is keen to arrange exciting visits and activities: music recitals and concerts abound, there are various drama productions and numerous visits - for example, from artists, authors, firemen and the police - and activities such as a mock wedding and a medieval cooking day.

The Prep have a full, tightly-structured timetable but this does not prevent plenty of enrichment activities; their weekly carousel hour provides opportunities for cookery, drama, mindfulness/ yoga, Samba Band and DT, staff run weekly clubs such as music, Chess and Art, there are Berky teams for sport, Quiz and Maths competitions. At the end of last summer term, we went off-timetable for the House Shout and a memorable STEM Day, the second one we have organised.

The Year 2 History Mystery (Mrs Wood - you would have loved this!) has been an annual event for nine years now. At first glance, it looks like an excuse for everyone to dress up and have a 'jolly' but there is so much more to it than that. Working cooperatively in small teams, the children spend the day solving a mystery related to the period of history they have been studying - for example, Castles, Victorians, Great Fire of London or Space Exploration. This is done through following clues, answering questions, problem solving, being observant and designing and constructing. The fun is obvious, the educational content - both academic and social - perhaps less so; much preparation and organisation is needed but, from the point of view of devotees such as Mrs Taylor, Mrs Owen and myself, the rewards for the children are immense.

In a world where secondary education is so narrow and exam-driven, it is wonderful that we can still continue to offer these kinds of activity, to offer the breadth and depth of curriculum. If only all children had the opportunity to experience the same.

**GILL AGG
DEPUTY HEAD**

BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

- History Mystery Day
- Crime Investigation Workshop
- Art Day
- General Knowledge Quiz
- Berky Chess Congress
- Malvern Art Show
- Platinum Award
- Pancake Races
- 500 word stories
- Stem Day
- Fundraising for charity
- Yoga and mindfulness
- Spring Concerts
- Recitals
- Kindergarten Wednesday Wander
- Cookery
- End of year productions
- Candlelight services
- Nativity Plays
- Business enterprise
- Fire service visit
- Nurse visit
- Police service visit
- Professional ballerina visit
- Senior school heads visit
- Charity Representatives visit
- Illustrator and author for World Book Day visit
- Indian lady to talk about Diwali
- Medieval Cookery Day
- Zoolab visit
- Freshwater Theatre visit
- Parents to read stories
- Yoga club
- Mandarin Club
- Maths Challenges
- Pantomime trip
- Orchestral and Jazz Days
- Drama Club
- Chess Club
- Art Clubs
- Numerous Sports
- Ballet
- Gardening
- Numerous Music Clubs
- Knitting Club
- Sketching Club
- Cheltenham Literature Festival
- Cheltenham Science Festival
- Corinium Museum
- Sulgrave Manor
- Black Country Museum
- Lower Moor Farm
- Language day at Malvern St James
- SkillZone
- Gloucester Cathedral trip
- We the Curious trip
- Museum in the Park
- Steam Museum trip
- Rainforest trip
- Rivers and ICT trip to the Severn
- Chepstow Castle
- Viney Hill residential trips
- Pittville Parks seasonal visits
- L'Artisan French restaurant
- Pond dipping
- Cotswold Farm Park
- Redwood Outdoor Learning Centre
- Commandery
- Warwick Castle trip
- Cheltenham Minster and St Matthews
- St Luke's
- Cheltenham Synagogue
- West Midland Safari Park
- Fairy Tale Farm



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BERKHAMPSTEAD DAY NURSERY
IS A **STEP AHEAD** OF THE REST!



**AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE
BERKHAMPSTEAD COMMUNITY,
OUR DAY NURSERY CHILDREN ARE
GIVEN THE BEST START POSSIBLE**

When Berkhamstead Day Nursery first opened its doors in April 2012, the premise was to create a Nursery offering exceptional childcare, a loving and happy environment, with top-notch staff - a Nursery that was a cut above the rest. The aim was for the Nursery to become an integral part of the Berkhamstead community, always reflecting the values of the highly reputable School, and simultaneously, hugely benefiting from access to Berky staff and facilities. Our children, for instance, visit the School for cookery lessons and use the Andrews Centre gym as well as the MUGA. They look forward to weekly music sessions with the brilliant Debbie Sallis who is the Head of Pre-Prep music at the School, and other teachers from the school, including the Head, Mr Cross, and Mrs Roddy-Watts, Head of Early Years who visit from time to time.

Seven years on, we are delighted with the links that have been established; we see them as hugely beneficial for our children, and we are always striving to develop them. These links are particularly useful for our oldest age groups - the Teddy Bears and the Wise Bears - the latter being our pre-school children. Nurseries have all too often been criticised for failing to ensure that children are ready to learn when they get to their primary school, but we believe that children who leave here - whether they continue with the Berkhamstead education or choose to move elsewhere - will take with them a solid foundation for learning.

Wise Bears attend the school's Early Years assembly once a week. The children are encouraged to sit quietly and listen, taking

the lead from the School's Kindergarten and Reception children. They develop bonds with the Early Years staff, get used to a school setting, and grow accustomed to seeing children wearing school uniform. The assembly is led by Mrs Roddy-Watts. Mrs Roddy-Watts introduced the 'Values Tree' to Early Years, and its 'Values Leaves' are Perseverance, Honesty, Politeness, Trust and Kindness. Leaves are awarded in assembly to children who have been living these values. When asked about the benefits of the Values Tree, Mrs Roddy -Watts enthused, "We teach children a range of values which help them to work with one another co-operatively and with tolerance and respect. They learn the importance of friendship and unity, to approach life with positivity and hope and to show empathy and acceptance towards others. These values make our community happy and harmonious, a fun place where children feel secure". Our Wise Bears are always chuffed to be awarded these leaves in assembly, along with the school children.

Wise Bears enjoy a weekly playtime in the School playground with Kindergarten once a week, and have also started visiting Kindergarten for regular playtimes. Here they benefit from the imaginative activities that have been planned for the children by an exceptional staff who boast a wealth of experience. Mrs Main - Head of Kindergarten - has 30 years' childcare experience across a wide range of settings. Other staff members are qualified teachers, others have degrees in childhood studies, and others possess specialities such as helping children with physical limitations. Mixing with the Kindergarten children and staff offers a range of benefits, including improving language and communication skills, and above all, it is great fun for our Wise Bears!



**BRILLIANT
NEW MANAGER**

Having worked at Berkhamstead Day Nursery for 5 years, I firmly believe it to be the best setting for children to grow, learn and develop. We ensure that every child's individual needs are met and supported, closely following their interests and learning style.

I am delighted to now be its Manager. We have close links to the School - its excellent facilities and its wonderful staff. This means the children have the best possible start to their education and development.

We follow the 'Curiosity Approach' and are witnessing changes in the children's learning. This approach encourages children to think creatively and critically, finding solutions to their problems, creating the "thinkers and doers" of the future. I plan to continue to embed this into our practice. I am also excited about developing the gardens.
Mollie Dodds



GO GO GO BERKY!

PUPILS PERFORM...
JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT -
AN OUTSTANDING FINALE TO THIS YEAR'S SPRING CONCERTS.



Once again, Berky pupils impressed and thrilled their audiences at the Spring Concerts in the Pittville Pump Rooms this year. Each ensemble was keen to demonstrate their musical performance skills. From the youngest Y2 pupils with their atmospheric 'Medieval Tale' through Y3 and Y4 Samba and Junior Choir singers, to some exciting music from Jigsaw, Berky Bows and the new BerKeys group and the older pupils in Percussion Ensemble and Jazz Band, we heard wonderful musical performances during the afternoon concert. In the evening Jazz Combo entertained as the audience took their seats and then Chamber Ensemble impressed everyone with their expressive pieces.

VoxBox sang 'Fernando' with great soulfulness and then had everyone on the edge of their seats with their lively rendition of 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. You could have heard a pin drop as Keyboard Orchestra held the attention for their arrangement of 'Children' and then it was prepared for a grand finale. The entire Prep had prepared 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' and, with its catchy tunes and clever rhymes, this was tremendously popular with the singers and audience alike.

MUSIC NOTES

We have had an exciting term with trips, workshops, concerts and exams. The first ever VoxBox trip to reward the commitment and hard work from our wonderful Y5 and Y6

singers was to see the pantomime 'Aladdin' at The Theatre in Chipping Norton. See page 14 for a report about this outing.

During the following week 17 Jazz players attended an inspiring workshop held by the National Youth Jazz Orchestra (page 17).

The Spring Recital was full of confident players performing solos. Some were beginners this year and they were thrilled to be involved for the first time and also observing more experienced players entertain the appreciative audience.



MUSIC EXAM RESULTS

Music exams have been taken by a range of instrumentalists and we are very pleased with the following results:

Initial Albie B (Guitar)

Grade 1 Lorien S (Piano*), Matilda E (Viola*), Lottie A (Cornet**), Jennella A (Flute**), Uma C (Violin**), Sophie G (Piano**), Eleanor T (Piano**), Oliver M (Drums*)

Grade 2 Freddie B (Guitar), Oli M (Guitar*), Viera M (Clarinet*), Lucy P (Clarinet*), Charlotte B (Cornet**)

Grade 3 Georgie J (Cornet*), Will S (Guitar*), Will C (Guitar*)

Grade 5 Jonathan B (Descant Recorder**), Griff L (Trombone**)

* Denotes pass with merit

** Denotes pass with distinction



KINDERGARTEN HAVE ENJOYED A WONDERFUL, FUN-PACKED SPRING TERM

Our spring topic of 'Percy The Park Keeper' was a huge success; the children loved the varied activities, and the staff enjoyed listening to the different role play scenarios that could be heard throughout Kindergarten. 'The Rescue Party' was one of the children's favourite stories and they acted out their own versions which included all the Kindergarten children needing rescuing rather than the rabbit!

The children noticed that the animals not only looked different, but they had different personalities, which led our learning to thinking about how we are all unique and what our strengths and weaknesses might be.

The children's enthusiasm for the topic inspired us to make hedgehog cakes using Matchmaker mint sticks for spines, fairy cakes and chocolate icing. Yum!

Our next topic was voted for by the children after talking about how we would observe eggs in an incubator and then care for the living chicks afterwards. We called the topic 'Changes in Nature.' Our activities have involved looking at the life cycle of butterflies and frogs and visiting the school's wildlife garden as well as an exciting day out at Redwood Outdoor Learning Centre to take part in their Forest School activities.

We have studied the artist Andrew Goldsworthy and found that his sculptures involve using brightly coloured flowers, ice, mud, and many other natural resources. Our representations of his work have been amazing! MM



RECEPTION'S TERM HAS BEEN EQUALLY BUSY, WITH PLENTY TO INSPIRE THEIR YOUNG MINDS

Reception children are naturally curious and want to know about the world they live in, so our topic, 'To the Moon and Back' gave them the opportunity to ask some really big questions. The children took a trip into space to find out about the Solar System. They loved looking up the names of the planets, finding out which order they are in, and discovering which is closest to the sun and which is furthest away. Discussions took place regarding whether there is life on the other planets and could we survive on Mars! One day, music was used as a prompt for art. The children listened to 'The Planets Suite' by Holst and we discussed the different styles of music they heard. They then made their own marks to represent

the different sounds. The children came up with some most interesting and individual interpretations! Reception even became astronauts one day, and learnt all about an astronaut's typical day. They used the NASA website to see clips of how astronauts carry out everyday tasks such as eating and sleeping. Sampling astronaut food was fun, but we all agreed that we preferred normal food! After their trip into space, the children returned to Earth and agreed they would like to keep their feet firmly on the ground this half term! They voted for their favourite stories which ranged from 'The Jolly Postman' to 'Rosie's Walk'. They explored story characters, created story maps and made up stories. The children were inspired by 'Rosie's Walk', and asked to make maps of the farmyard. They were provided with some pictures from the story and encouraged to add their own features to their map. One of the many highlights of our topic, 'Our Favourite Stories' was when their parents came into school and shared their own favourite story with the children.

Early Years couldn't end the Spring term without a party. All the children enjoyed the traditional party games and agreed it was a great way to end another successful term!
H R-W





Off we go...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR
OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS



VOXBOX

VoxBox visited The Theatre in Chipping Norton to see the pantomime 'Aladdin'. To see a show in this theatre is an extraordinary experience because the stage and auditorium have been created in an old Salvation Army building and it only seats about 200. The cast of professional actors were superb with a wonderful Dame and evil Uncle Abenazer. There was plenty of traditional audience participation ("Oh, Yes there was!") and a song, which VoxBox entered into with enthusiasm! PM



999!

The Gloucestershire Fire Service visit was a very exciting day for Year 1. Accompanied by a lady from Gloucester's Skillzone, the friendly fireman taught the children all about fire safety. The protective clothing worn by fire fighters fascinated our youngsters, and they were particularly delighted to see Mrs Langley-King transformed into their very own Berky fire fighter when she tried on all the special clothes! The afternoon got even better when the children went outside to find a fire engine parked in front of the Pre-Prep building! Everyone had a go at sitting in the front of the engine and trying on helmets. The most thrilling part of the visit was squirting water from the fire fighters' hose and hearing the rather loud siren!

A couple of weeks later, more real life superheroes came to visit Year 1. PC Silsby - a past parent - and his colleagues including old girl Lorelei-Jane led a fantastic Q&A session with the inquisitive children who asked questions such as 'Do you drive through red lights?' (Olivia), 'How many bad guys have you caught?' (Caspar) and 'Do you give the baddies food?' (Charlotte). Again, the experience was very hands-on for all the children as they were allowed to try on police uniform, handle police equipment and sit in a police car. The children were shown equipment that the police use and were also allowed to try the handcuffs on! LL-K

WE THE CURIOUS!

Reception had a lively launch to their topic 'To the Moon and Back' with their visit to We the Curious in Bristol. The children and staff could not fail to be impressed by the sheer size of the Science Centre; it is one of the UK's most exciting interactive attractions, offering an amazing world of hands-on discovery for the children to explore. The children visited the Planetarium where the presenters trained the children to be fully qualified Space Explorers - blasting off into space to visit planets within our Solar System before whizzing beyond our own Milky Way galaxy and playing fun games such as 'pass the planet' along the way! The children returned to Earth and school with a good understanding of our Solar System. H R-W



YEAR 1 BECOME SUPERHEROES!

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's the Year 1 children! What an exciting term we have had learning all about superheroes, from our favourite characters to real life superheroes! The term kicked off with an introduction to comic books; the children had a go at writing speech and thought bubbles in their very own comics. Next we went on to find out about real life superheroes who help us every day; visits from the police and fire service were a highlight, especially dressing up in uniforms and playing with lots of different equipment. Berky Bear popped in for a visit just before he flew out to New York to visit Spiderman; he told the children all about how New York was different to Cheltenham and showed them lots of pictures of some famous landmarks he was planning to visit. This inspired the children to learn the story of Spiderman and then write their very own superhero story. The children were amazed by the achievements of some real life superheroes in the past; many were excited to learn more about Florence Nightingale, Nelson Mandela and Neil Armstrong in their own time. The topic concluded with an out of this world superhero party for which the children dressed up as their favourite superhero, played games and had a yummy party lunch. LL-K



HISTORY MYSTERY

Some strange visitors came forward through the mists of time to greet the Year 2 children for this year's History Mystery. Noble Arthur, mystical Merlin, crazy Tom Fool and the valiant Knights of the Round Table explained that they would be undertaking an important quest – to become knights themselves and to discover the whereabouts of the legendary Grail, which Arthur and his knights had been seeking for hundreds of years.

Various trials were undertaken; following the clues left by the elusive Morgana le Fay, the children learned about what is required of a medieval knight, worked as a team to create a sturdy bridge to Camelot and underwent a test of memory while learning about a variety of historical artefacts. There was also a great feast at lunchtime, complete with boar's heads, authentic medieval music and hearty toasts.

Finally, there were mathematical puzzles to solve in order to release the sword from the stone. Summoned up by Merlin's magic powers, the true Grail was then successfully identified before a fanfare announced the arrival of King Richard IV; witnessed by the parents, he knighted each child, giving them chocolate 'treasure' and a certificate as a reward for their loyal service. GA



MEDIEVAL MERRIMENT FOR YEAR 2!

This term Year 2 have been immersed in historical facts, and in particular knights and castles. Two large knights appeared on the doors of the two classrooms, along with carefully crafted clay 3D castles that the children proudly showed to their parents. Mr Ackland kindly joined the Year 2 team to make bread on Medieval cooking day. Butter and jam were also made and a feast was enjoyed by all at the end of the day.

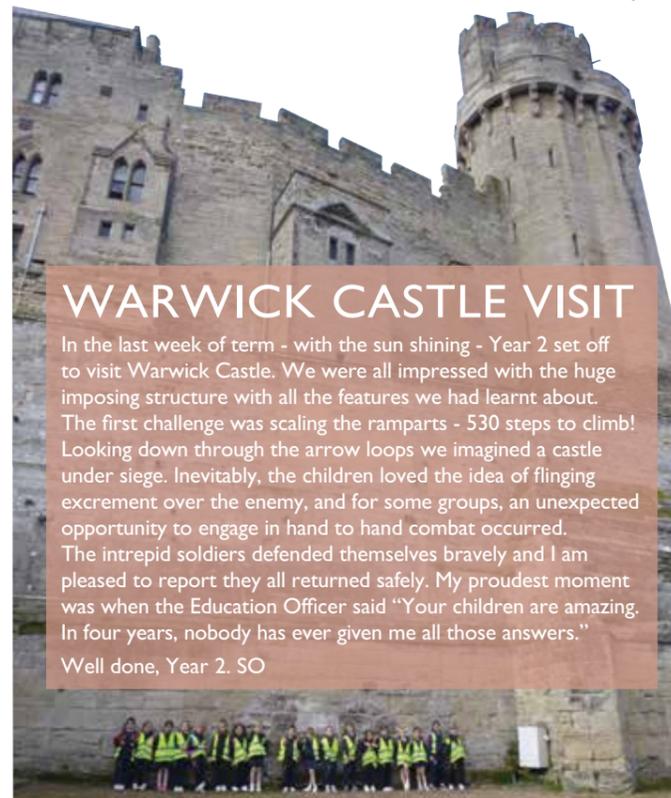
In the last two weeks of term, the Year 1 and 2 Choir entertained everyone with Mary Poppins songs (thank you Mrs Sallis), had the excitement of the History Mystery Day - this year based on the story of King Arthur - visited Warwick Castle, performed in the Spring Concert and, finally, spoke out clearly at the Mother's Day Service. Thank you Year 2 for all your endless enthusiasm and 'can do' attitude.

We look forward to an equally busy and exciting Summer term. SO



Off we go...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR
OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS



WARWICK CASTLE VISIT

In the last week of term - with the sun shining - Year 2 set off to visit Warwick Castle. We were all impressed with the huge imposing structure with all the features we had learnt about. The first challenge was scaling the ramparts - 530 steps to climb! Looking down through the arrow loops we imagined a castle under siege. Inevitably, the children loved the idea of flinging excrement over the enemy, and for some groups, an unexpected opportunity to engage in hand to hand combat occurred. The intrepid soldiers defended themselves bravely and I am pleased to report they all returned safely. My proudest moment was when the Education Officer said "Your children are amazing. In four years, nobody has ever given me all those answers." Well done, Year 2. SO

ALL THAT JAZZ!



Jazz musicians took part in a workshop at Cheltenham College run by members of the NYJO. These fabulous players led sectional rehearsals to develop improvisational pieces for a presentation at the end of the day.

All our players participated with enthusiasm and considerable skills and several contributed solo parts in the final piece. They were the youngest musicians taking part in the workshops and I was proud of their positive approach and ability to participate so thoroughly. Well done. PM



WORLD BOOK DAY

World Book Day was a wonderful event for the whole school as author/illustrator Clare Elsom spent the day with us! She delivered fantastic presentations to each of our year groups, explaining how she came to be a successful author/illustrator, before giving them some useful advice about drawing characters. A lucky pupil from each year group was given the chance to draw Barry the Pigeon alongside Clare as she explained how she brings her characters to life. Everyone then heard her read an extract from one of her super books, and the day ended with a book-signing and a chance to buy a copy of their favourite one. Clare clearly enjoyed her visit, and commented, "I had a FANTASTIC World Book Day at Berkhamstead School. I was so pleased I could talk to all the year groups throughout the day - what a lovely, fun and imaginative bunch of children. They were so engaged during the sessions I ran with them, and provided some top notch drawing talent! I came away from the day with a big smile on my face, and I hope everyone else did too".



PIKES AT THE READY!

The Year 5 children had a wonderful day at Worcester's Commandery experiencing life in Stuart times. Part of our day focussed on the Civil War; with children handling muskets and pikes, as well as trying on some amazing soldier's outfits. During Pike drill children marched as one to the haunting beat of the drum.

Our next workshop gave us an insight into the baggage train which travelled with the soldiers. The most popular character amongst the children was the surgeon, who operated on some willing Berky volunteers. There were some shocked faces when they saw that no anaesthetic was to be offered.

Finally we had the more relaxing task of making our own beeswax candles, as well as writing in Stuart style with quill pens. The Year 5s benefited greatly from the trip and were an absolute pleasure to take. PMc



News

FROM PREP

OPEN DOOR

We always encourage our pupils to think about people who are less fortunate than themselves, and often the children are inspired to raise money for charity. Some do this as part of the school's Platinum Award - the Berky version of the Duke of Edinburgh. One such pupil was kind-hearted Year 6 pupil, Millie W. She bravely led an assembly about homeless people in Cheltenham, and told her peers about the following week's cake pop sale she was organising to raise funds for them. The cake sale was a great success, and she made an astonishing £116.61 for the Open Door charity. Well done, Millie.



WASTE WORKSHOP

As part of their Geography topic 'The Environment', Year 4s took part in a really creative - and equally important - lesson, making waste 'pizzas' and 'dustbins' out of a variety of rubbish! The pupils had been learning all about the human impact on the environment, and the damage we do to our lovely planet. They had been looking at the 3R's (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle), and Miss Walter's annual waste workshop was designed to illustrate the dreadful amount of waste that ends up in landfill. Most of it - Miss Walter emphasised - should be recycled! Plastics, leaves, twigs, metal caps, polystyrene, material and spaghetti were just a few of the items the children glued into place to illustrate the point. Miss Walter was impressed with her creative Year 4s and commented, "They were incredibly imaginative, and I have never had such a variety of 3D creations. Their pizzas and bins are now displayed on one of the boards in the Geography room, and hopefully all the bits and pieces will stay in place! It was a fun and chaotic lesson". Berkhamstead School and Day Nursery plan to become far more environmentally friendly, and do even more to educate the children with its 'Berky Gets Greener' project. (See page 5).

HOUSE CROSS COUNTRY

House Cross Country took place at the Victoria Ground on a lovely, sunny day on the penultimate day of the Spring term. The Year 3 and 4 race was followed by our more experienced Years 5 and 6 athletes who raced an extra lap. We were so impressed with the Berky spirit shown by all our pupils - no-one gave up. St David's won the cup this year - Well done David's!



VISITING HEADS

The Prep School have welcomed visits from local senior school heads this term, including St Edward's Mrs Clayfield, Mr Salisbury from Dean Close and Mrs Huggett from Cheltenham College Prep School. All three delivered interesting and enjoyable assemblies and stayed to chat to parents afterwards.



CROSS COUNTRY

What a great effort from all those who took part this term - the final race held at St Edward's was a tough course! Most pupils beat their previous result and pushed themselves hard to achieve this. The Cheltenham College course is a flatter track, therefore pace was a key factor. The St Edward's course involves a big change in incline, with a variety of slopes and hills to contend with, nonetheless the team pushed through, working hard on all inclines.

There is some promising talent moving up through the year groups and I look forward to what next year's cross country will bring. Well done to all that took part.

Cross Country Colours: Jenseon A, Varnika B, Edith H, Daisy O, Hattie S, Noah W, Millie W, Anna T and Rebecca F.



CHESS

The Spring Term is traditionally a busy one for Berkhamstead's young chess players with matches, tournaments and congresses galore. The Berky Congress went ahead in January and a packed school hall witnessed plenty of fine and skilful play. Azlaan H and Griff L won the lower and upper school tournaments respectively; both chaps proved to be models of consistency and focus. Several other children (George J, Isla R, Isabel G, Nancy B, Georgia A, William J, Henry R, Lottie A, Noah W and Edith H) also qualified for the Gloucestershire Megafinal. As ever, there were plenty of prizes for everyone.

The chess team has continued its good form. Two matches against the Richard Pate School proved pivotal this season. A 3.5-2.5 league win over our closest rivals helped clinch the District League title (our fourth in a row) for Berky. However, a return match in the District Knock-Out Cup Final went the way of our opponents by a similarly narrow 4-2 scoreline. The core team of Edith H (captain), Griff L, Rupert G, Oli S, Jonathan B and Finian C has played with real grit and style all year.

The main chess club proved busy and filled with strong players. Edith H became school champion by topping the club's Division 1. There were also successes for Harry W (Division 2) and Henry Rea (Division 3). The Y3 chess tournament concluded with the following champions: Azlaan H and Barnaby W (Division 1), Isla R (Division 2) and Nancy B (Division 3). MC



News

FROM PREP

500 WORDS

Another of the 500 word stories and we couldn't wait to see what twists and turns the children would come up with to create the perfect tale. It is always a pleasure and a joy to read the stories in which the children are not held back by trying to write a specific story dictated by title, setting or opening line but a instead create story led by their own interests and imaginations. The children once again rose to the challenge with new worlds, exciting characters, devious plots and vibrant vocabulary spilling onto the pages. Choosing the winners was once again a difficult decision with much debate. All the children from Year 3 to Year 6 should be very proud of their stories as are their English teachers. Well done! BE



Year 6: Winner-Frankie R, Runner up-Sophie G Highly commended Finian C, Lizzie H, Noah W
Year 5: Winner-Griff L, Runners up-Alessio T and Isabel K, Highly commended Grace W, Jonathan B, Bella W.
Year 4: Winner-Bea Bea, Runners up-Harry M and Matilda E, Highly commended Hannah H, Jennella A, Isabella E.
Year 3: Winners-Zoe B and Zoe S, Runners up - Sophia E and Jacob F, Highly commended Nancy B and Thea C.

U9 FOOTBALL TEAM WIN HATHEROP CASTLE TOURNAMENT!

Despite the wet and windy conditions, our U9As played some excellent football at the annual Hatherop Castle tournament in March. Beating St Hughes, Rendcomb and Kitebrook in the group stage, our U9s played the winners of group one, St Edward's. This final match resulted in a draw and so the spoils were shared with St Edward's. Mr Mildren commented, "The boys played superbly throughout the wet blustery afternoon; they were a credit to the school and themselves. Well done boys."



MATHS CHALLENGE

A team of four Year 6 children (Noah, Oscar A, Sophie and India) took part in a maths challenge hosted by Cheltenham College. There were about 20 other schools present and the competition used resources from the UK Maths Trust. The questions were incredibly challenging and the children had to use all their skills of problem solving and reasoning, as well as their mathematical knowledge. There was a series of rounds requiring them to work in pairs, and as a team of four. Mrs Holland - Head of Academic Studies - was very impressed with the attitude of our pupils and commented, "They demonstrated excellent skills and persevered on those aspects which were not obvious. The buzz in the room from all these young mathematicians was electric. We knew we had done well but the children's faces were a picture when it was announced that they had achieved first place! They thoroughly deserved their victory." JH



Sports reports...

WHAT A WINNER!

This term, all our pupils from Years 5 and 6 had an opportunity to attend a training session at Cheltenham Town FC. The club's coaches taught a variety of skills, and it was wonderful being at the training grounds of a professional club and getting some idea of what happens each day.

We were very lucky to meet the Cheltenham Town manager and ex-Premier League player, Michael Duff, who spent time chatting with us all.

A couple of weeks later, Prep School children welcomed coaches from Cheltenham Town Football Club to an assembly. The club's excellent presentation was all about fair-play and the enjoyment gained through sport, and the children and staff were delighted when Whaddney the Robin - the larger-than-life CTFC mascot - made a surprise guest appearance!

We were grateful when the generous club treated 140 parents, staff and pupils to tickets to a league game against Macclesfield Town, and were convinced that the enthusiastic Berky support helped the Robins gain a 3-2 victory!





U8 | FOOTBALL

It is always great to see teams develop throughout a term, and this year's Buffaloes and Bisons were no exception. As always, we played 2 mixed ability teams, with the boys varying their positions in each match to get an experience of the game from different angles.

The boys played really well in their respective teams and always kept their heads up aiming for the win. Our positional, defending and attacking play all improved and we are very pleased with our results. A very pleasing season. Well done, boys!

U8 Bisons: George B, Richie D, Jacob D-T, Jacob F, Max H, Azlaan H, Eddie M.

U8 Buffaloes: Sam B, Arsalaan H, Ben J, Otto S, Felix S, Max Y, Barnaby W.



U9A | FOOTBALL

The U9As have once again shown a very enthusiastic approach to their training sessions and have grown steadily in confidence and skill. There has been a great team spirit, with the boys captained superbly by Patrick. They had an almost faultless season with just the four losses and the highlight of the season being a tournament win at Hatherop Castle. Freddie, our goalie, was always reliable and allowed our defence of Oli, Henry and Michael to make confident runs into attack. Top goal scorers were Patrick and Will with Harry, Albie and Rufus all contributing to our magnificent total of 35 goals for the season. The boys played superbly throughout the season, they were a credit to the school and to themselves. Well done boys.

Team: Harry A, Freddie B, Albie B, Michael C, Will C, Patrick D, Rufus H, Oli M, Henry R.

U9B | FOOTBALL

This was a very encouraging term of football for the Bs who worked hard in training to improve their skills and positional play. Good wins against Cheltenham Prep, Richard Pate and St Edward's and a further win at the Beaudesert festival proved that they had the skills to win matches. The boys swapped in and out of positions with

Mateo and Will S making a number of good saves in goal and the defence of Robert, Harry and Charles looking mostly secure at the back. Our attack led by Henry scored a number of goals with some excellent contributions from Will J on the left and Albie B-C on the right. Luke and Hugo battled hard in the midfield and were often unlucky not to score. Just four losses out of the ten games this season proved that this spirited and enthusiastic group were a hard team to beat. Well done to all the boys

Team: Robert A, Albie B-C, Charles C, Will J, Harry M, Luke R, Will S, Mateo S, Henry T, Hugo W.



U10A | FOOTBALL

This has been a challenging term of football for the U10A team, and they have learnt a lot. They have played some difficult teams, including some U11 teams, and the standard of football in all matches has been high. The first few matches were difficult with back to back losses, but I was impressed with the tenacity that the boys showed, and they worked hard to try and claw goals back. As the season progressed, their teamwork improved, and they began to work together to create scoring opportunities. The boys achieved a good win against Kings Worcester in a pacey match where lots of goals were scored. Next came Wycliffe; this was a challenging match with difficult conditions, but the boys played superbly and finished this match with a win. The final game of the season at Beaudesert was probably one of the hardest but it was also the one of best I had seen the boys play in. They went from being 2-0 up to it being 2-2 and they came under a lot of pressure from Beaudesert's set pieces. However, they persevered, retained control and worked together to score the winning goal. Well done boys, this season has been difficult for you at times, but you have made huge progress and played quality football.

Team: William B, Otto B, Max C, A Doughty, Jack E, Lincoln H, Theo J, Sebastien L, Griff L, Alessio T, Jonny W.

U10B | FOOTBALL

The U10B team had a brilliant season of football. They played with enthusiasm and energy often overcoming more skilful opposition through hard work and determination. Alex, Oli and Griff were tenacious in defending their goal and Ethan made some incredible saves to ensure victory in a number of games. Goals came from many players with Harry, Jonathan, Rupert and Archie combining well in the midfield and attack. The boys were quick to work out the defensive frailties of the opposition and adjust their positioning accordingly which led to many

a goal. It was a joy to coach this team and they should be very proud of their attitude and sense of fun in their football this term. Well done!

Team: Ethan A, Jonathan B, Rupert G, Archie L-B, Griff L, Oliver S, Alexander S, Harry W.



U11 | FOOTBALL

The U11 team have enjoyed a superb season. Each game has been very competitive and lots of goals have been scored. The boys have worked hard for each other and have moulded into a cohesive team.

The team has been built on a solid defence. Oscar A and Ed have always been dependable in this position. Noah has been outstanding, often in a defensive midfield role. Finian, George, Andrew and Jensen have shown great energy in midfield and created many opportunities for our strikers. Luke had a canny knack of being in the right position to score and Oscar H, who was the top goal scorer, attacked well down the left and struck some super left footed goals.

The boys have entertained our supporters in the manner they have played, scoring a total of 25 goals and gaining great victories against Wycliffe, Bowbrook, Rendcomb, Kitebrook and Hatherop.

They have been great fun to coach and have always played in the right spirit, showing a typical Berky attitude. Well done to all of the team.

Team (all awarded colours): Oscar A, Jensen A, Finian C, Luke F, Oscar H, Andrew P, George Rea, Ed S, Noah W.

Outstanding Player Awards: Noah W, Oscar H.

FOOTBALL STATS

	PLAYED	WON	LOST	DRAWN
U8 BISONS	8	6	1	1
U8 BUFFALOES	8	4	2	2
U9A	14	9	4	1
U9B	10	4	4	2
U10A	6	3	3	0
U10B	8	6	1	1
U11	10	5	4	1



U8 | NETBALL

What a season the U8s have had as their first netball season at Berky. It took a while for some of them to get to grips with positioning on court but in the last few games, the girls were playing some great netball. They were able to pass the ball with accuracy and a little power which allowed them to move the ball confidently down court. Both Red and Green team beat the Richard Pate School 2-1 and 4-0. Yellow had a great game but lost 0-1. Well done girls for your first netball season, great effort by all.

Team: Georgia A, Ellie A, Ellie B, Zoe B, Nancy B, Katy C, Thea C, Hannah D, Sophia E, Chloe E, Lucinda F, Maisie G, Isabel G, Kitty H, Vivienne H, Ena M-L, Primrose P, Isla R, Zoe S, Alice S, Hetty W, Sydney W.



U9 | NETBALL

Once again, I have been thoroughly impressed by the attitude and the sporting behaviour of the Under 9s at netball this term. The U9As have had a phenomenal season, with 4 wins, a draw and only 2 losses, both of which were actually very close matches. With a goal tally of 51 for and 32 against, it is easy to see how strong this team are and I am certain that they will go on to be one of the best netball teams at Berky.

The U9Bs have also had a superb netball season, developing tremendously over the season and it was wonderful to see the enjoyment they clearly had when playing netball. The final game at Dean Close was testament to this. Well done girls!

A Team: Jennella A, Lottie A, Rosemary B, Uma C, Matilda E, Aurielle M, Beatrice N, Lucy P.

B Team: Serena A, Anna A, Lilah C, Isabella E, Hannah H, Holly H, Matilda H, Bea-Bea M-D, Elodie O.



U10 | NETBALL

The season has been blighted by illness, injury and crutches for several players. Flexibility and adaptability have been our words of the season! Both teams managed strong wins against King's Gloucester and the 'A' team put on an excellent performance against Hatherop Castle. However, with a depleted squad, we were unable to match the strength of Cheltenham College or Richard Pate. The U10 tournament was tough this year and we were only able to field one combined team - although the girls played with true Berky spirit, it was a difficult task. A mixed season, but the girls have trained hard with smiles on their faces and improved their skills through the season - footwork and positioning have most certainly developed!

Team: Isla A, Daisy B, Poppy B, Charlotte B, Joy C, Hazel C, Darcey C, Cressie F, Becky F, Viera M, Phoebe M, Jasmine M, Kimora P, Eleri W, Grace W, Bella W, Eleanor T.



U11 | NETBALL

What a great season! We may not have won all games, but the girls have fought in some close games. There has been lots of movement in positions which is vital for their progression, it has also given other girls a chance to realise their strengths. The A team have had some good wins; against Cricklade 6-1, Rendcomb 10-4 and King's, Glos 9-5. We have had a few tough games where we were unable to keep up with the speed of the game, therefore not managing to get the shots in. Well done to the B team who have worked hard as a team; they won 9-3 against Rendcomb and 11-8 against St Edward's.

Team: Varnika B, Simran D, Beatrice D, Emily G, Sophie G, Edith H, Lizzie H, Georgie J, Eloise M, Daisy O, Frankie R, India R, Hattie S, Lorien S, Emma S, Anna T, Millie W.

Colours awarded to: Varnika B, Beatrice D, Simran D, Daisy O, Millie W, Hattie S, Sophie G, Georgie J and India R.

Outstanding badges: Varnika B, Millie W and Daisy O.

NETBALL STATS

	PLAYED	WON	LOST	DRAWN
U8	5	2	3	0
U9A	7	4	2	1
U9B	6	3	3	1
U10A	7	2	4	1
U10B	6	1	5	0
U11A	7	3	4	0
U11B	5	2	3	0





BERKY DANCERS ARE KEPT ON THEIR TOES

It is always wonderful to hear what our leavers are up to, and even better when they pay us a visit. We were thrilled to welcome back Rhian Williams during term. Rhian left in 2009 with a Scholarship to Elmhurst School for Dance, and is now a professional dancer. Her passion for ballet was ignited when she started lessons with Helen Gill, here at Berky, aged just three years old. Helen - who has been teaching ballet for 25 years - invited her old pupil to help with her classes one afternoon. Rhian joined in with the enthusiastic little dancers, and they were treated to demonstrations of ballet positions such as an arabesque. Rhian - who was delighted to be back - noticed quite a difference in her surroundings - when she started dancing here, there was no Andrews Centre, but instead the old gym. Teacher Helen Gill remembers splinters in the floorboards, rain coming through the ceiling, and no heating other than a portable gas heater! But Berky children have always been made of sturdy stuff, and Helen also recalls her 'very enthusiastic and hard working pupils'. Helen is proud of plenty of her former pupils, and particularly Rhian, and after the visit enthused, *'The joy Rhian draws from dancing has always been evident and this and her beautiful, inner quality shine through in her movements and expression which ALWAYS moves me to tears!'*

Helen Gill's classes are held on Wednesdays for children in Kindergarten, Reception and Year 1. Call the office for further details.



BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL AND DAY NURSERY

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