

BERKHAMPSTEAD
SCHOOL
MAGAZINE

SPRING TERM
2025

BLAZER

SPRING CONCERTS

IN PERFECT HARMONY

BERKY
EARLY YEARS

A FIRM
FOUNDATION
FOR LIFE

BERKY CELEBRATES
WORLD BOOK DAY

INSIDE: DAY NURSERY NEWS | SPOTLIGHT ON ZACH LOVELL | INDIAN MUSIC WORKSHOP



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

It is a pleasure to present this term's edition of our Blazer magazine. The Spring Term is always a special time in our school calendar - a season of growth, renewal and fresh opportunities. Our pupils have been busy engaging in a wide range of activities, both inside and outside the classroom, and this magazine is a wonderful reflection of their achievements, creativity and enthusiasm for learning.

This term has been filled with exciting trips, enriching lessons and memorable experiences. From our highly successful participation in sporting events, such as being finalists in the IAPS Netball, to the fantastic performances in the Spring Concerts at the Town Hall, our pupils continue to shine in all areas. Our curriculum has been enriched by educational trips such as a trip to We the Curious, special theme days, such as Year 1 Space Day and visits from inspiring guest speakers including Lois Kingscott a local author, all of which have broadened the horizons of our children and sparked their curiosity.

I am immensely proud of the dedication and hard work of our staff, who continue to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment in which every child is encouraged to thrive. A special thank you must also go to our parents and guardians for their ongoing support, as well as to our wonderful pupils, whose enthusiasm and kindness make our school such a fantastic place to learn and grow.

As we look forward to the final term of the school year, I encourage everyone to take a moment to celebrate the successes of this term and to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of our magazine, which showcases our wonderful school community.

Michelle Bareham

Michelle Bareham
Head of School



...SPOTLIGHT ON... ZACH LOVELL



Mr Lovell joined Berkhamstead at the beginning of the Spring Term, as Year 5 form teacher, and teacher of maths, computing, games and design technology to the Prep children. He is a graduate of Hartpury Sports College, and has a degree in Sports Coaching from Southampton University. He completed his PGCE at the University of Gloucestershire.

What was your first job?

My first job was as a lifeguard, and I also helped out in the gym from time to time. After that, I helped manage holiday camps during the breaks while I was at university, before eventually starting up my own holiday camp company.

What did you want to be when you were younger?

When I was at primary school, I wanted to be a car salesman. However, once I was at Hartpury and started studying sports coaching, I realised I wanted to become a teacher. I wanted to give children positive memories of their school days.

Why did you want a job at Berky?

The moment I stepped into Berky, I knew it was a great place. The staff were welcoming and the children were polite and interested in me. The leadership team made me feel relaxed and at ease during my interview. I love the child-centred approach to learning here, where children excel in their strengths, and not just the core subjects like maths and English. The amount of sports and matches per week is fantastic! The wide range of extracurricular activities really stands out, and it's clear why the children love it here.

What do you enjoy in your spare time?

I play a variety of sports. I have a great group of friends who are also very sporty, so most weekends are spent either playing golf or watching rugby or football. I also enjoy cooking and having people round. Last year, I invested in a large smoker, and we often host gatherings where we set up an outdoor TV so we can watch the sport while enjoying some food.

What do you love about working at Berky?

My favourite part of working at Berky is the buzz. There's always something going on - whether it's a match, a trip, or a workshop - no two days are the same. The technology available truly enhances our teaching, and I'm confident that we're ahead of the curve when it comes to the changes that are likely to shape education in the near future.

Tell us about your teaching journey

One of my placements, while I was studying for my PGCE, was at Bourton-on-the-Water. They offered me a position, and after three years, I moved into a senior management role. A few years ago, I became their maths lead and helped to revamp the curriculum. Now, I'm excited about continuing my journey here at Berkhamstead.



FLIPPING BRILLIANT!

The much-anticipated House Pancake Races returned with a sizzle soon after half term, as pupils from Years 3 to 6 took to the track with enthusiasm and skill.

Onlookers were treated to a display of impressive pancake-flipping prowess, with each house cheering their competitors on in a thrilling contest. In the end, it was St Patrick's who claimed overall victory, securing the much-coveted frying pan trophy. However, all the houses showcased fantastic teamwork and determination, making it a truly exciting event.

A beloved Berkhamstead tradition, the annual House Pancake Races were introduced by Executive Head Richard Cross in 2010 - and, year after year, they continue to be a highlight of the school calendar!



...NEWS... FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL

LOIS KINGSCOTT

Reception and Pre-Prep were treated to a special visit from local author Lois Kingscott on World Book Day. She spoke about her journey as a writer and how her horse, Dave, inspired her storytelling. She read her delightful stories to the children, followed by engaging activities based on the stories she had read. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed her visit!



CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Chinese New Year was celebrated in style, with a delicious lunch prepared by Catering Manager Rob and his team. The festive feast featured soy-glazed gammon, sweet and sour tofu, egg-fried rice and stir-fried vegetables, followed by Chinese rice cakes with chocolate sauce and fortune cookies to complete the meal. Meanwhile, Kindergarten embraced the celebrations with various creative activities, including making vibrant Chinese dragon collages and dressing up in traditional costumes. It was a wonderful way to welcome the Year of the Snake!



MALVERN ART EXHIBITION

The Annual Junior Schools' Art Exhibition was hosted at Malvern St James Girls' School on Saturday 22nd March, and pupils from schools within West Midlands, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire were invited to exhibit their best art pieces to be viewed by over 200 guests. The art submitted ranged from Reception self-portraits to Year 5 Monet-inspired waterlily studies and Year 6 poppy canvases. This year's noteworthy results were Philippa C (RMS), Eliyas S R (3M), Chloe W (4T) and Beau R (5H) who all achieved Highly Commended certificates. We were thrilled. Well done to all our talented artists!



PRE-PREP LIBRARY MAKEOVER

The Pre-Prep library has undergone a stunning transformation, creating a warm, cosy and inviting space for our young readers. Whether enjoying a library session, relaxing during Teatime Club, or waiting for a school tour, children and visitors alike can now experience a beautifully refreshed environment.

Spearheaded by Mrs Meredith-Smyth, the makeover was made possible thanks to a generous contribution from the PTA. The walls have been painted in Farrow & Ball's elegant

Sage Green, complementing the natural wicker baskets used for book storage. Soft, ambient lighting and greenery further enhance the calming atmosphere.

To complete the makeover, we plan to launch a competition for pupils to design new literary-inspired artwork for the walls. We can't wait to see the creativity that will bring the finishing touches to this beautiful space!



SAFER INTERNET DAY

Safer Internet Day this year focused on the importance of protecting ourselves and others from online scams. Pupils across the school took part in age-appropriate activities, learning how to spot potential scams, stay safe online and support others in making smart digital choices. A valuable reminder that online safety is more important than ever!

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

The theme of this year's Children's Mental Health Week was Know Yourself, Grow Yourself, highlighting the importance of self-awareness and emotional expression. With the help of characters from 'Inside Out' and 'Inside Out 2', our pupils explored how understanding themselves can foster resilience, growth and development. Our Reception and Pre-Prep children took inspiration from Riley's Personality Islands, creating their own to reflect their interests, skills and what makes them unique. Meanwhile, Mrs Bareham's CWB Prep lessons continued to explore the Five Ways to Wellbeing - Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Learn and Give - discussing what supports and what challenges sound mental health.



KINDNESS CUP

Our Kindness Cups are among our most special and coveted prizes, awarded each half term to a Prep and a Pre-Prep pupil who consistently demonstrate care and consideration for others. This term, the Pre-Prep Kindness Cup has been awarded to Lucy H and Joshua S, while the Prep Kindness Cup went to Annabelle A and Georgie C. A huge congratulations to these exemplary pupils for their kindness and compassion!



PTA NEWS

During our first PTA meeting of 2025, we reminisced about the fabulous Autumn Term and Festive Friday, and what we could improve or repeat for the year ahead. Mr Cross hosted the Online Quiz, that so many of you joined, and it was lovely for us all to come together.

The School Disco is always one of the children's favourite events, and we were very excited that there was another great turn out at our Spring disco. All the children looked fabulous, there were lots of smiles and plenty of dancing.

We have three big events coming up for the Summer Term. Our Parent Summer Social, which is being held at Dunkertons on Friday 13th June (from 7pm) will give parents from the school and day nurseries the chance to come together.

We also have our BIG Summer Festival, on Saturday 5th July (1-4pm). We are really looking forward to both events, and of course our Summer Hamper Raffle.

All these events, along with Cake at Break - which continues to be one of the children's favourite days - and proceeds from the Uniform Shop mean we can continue to approve school requests.

We have been able to say 'Yes' to some wonderful requests for the children, including workshops across the year groups, some new outdoor toys and games for both Pre-Prep and Prep and more to come.



BERKY GETS GREENER

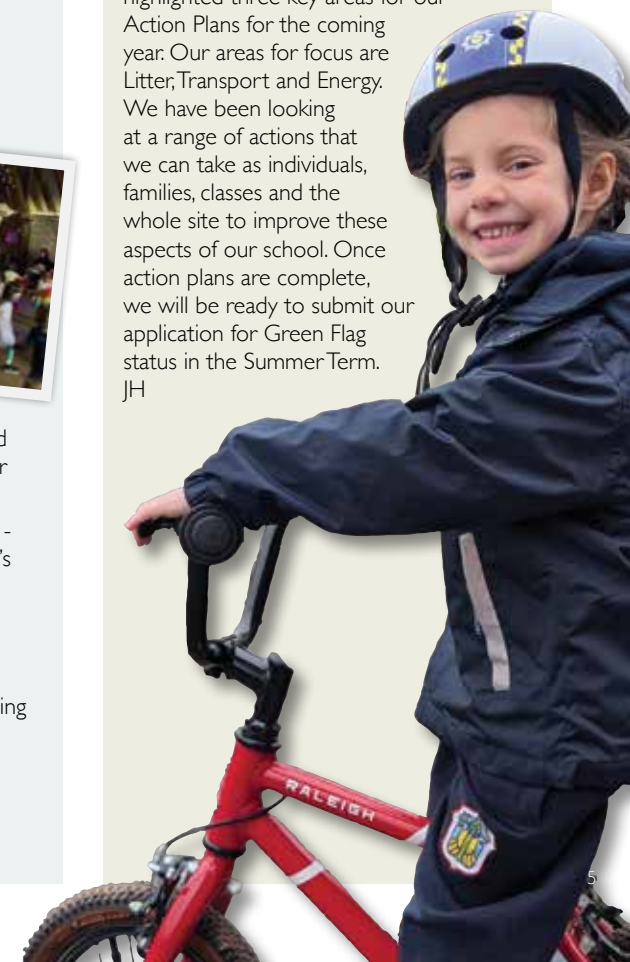
Our Berky Eco Committees have been very busy across the school this term.

A litter pick within the Prep School grounds generated 5kg of litter. Next term, we will move outside of the school gates and litter pick the local streets around the school. This will be part of the national Big School Clean Up initiative.

Newly elected members of the Pre-Prep and Prep Committees were welcomed by the Eco Leaders and immediately got to work by creating posters to remind all pupils of the importance of turning off lights, keeping our school litter free and turning off taps to avoid wasting water.

Just before the Easter break, the Prep School joined the national Big Walk and Wheel initiative that, over the course of two weeks, encourages children to undertake more active journeys to school by walking, scooting or cycling.

During fortnightly meetings, the committee have been outlining action plans as part of our Eco Schools Green Flag application. Following our environmental audit, the children highlighted three key areas for our Action Plans for the coming year: Our areas for focus are Litter, Transport and Energy. We have been looking at a range of actions that we can take as individuals, families, classes and the whole site to improve these aspects of our school. Once action plans are complete, we will be ready to submit our application for Green Flag status in the Summer Term. JH



EARLY YEARS MATTERS

BY GILL AGG

Research shows that brain development in the first five years is crucial for a child's future learning, behaviour and mental health. The brain's ability to form new connections - its neuroplasticity - is also greatest at this time, meaning that children's brains are especially receptive to new information, making it an optimal time for learning and development. Also, children's emotional and social development are closely linked to their cognitive development, and the way they develop emotional and social skills can have a great impact on their emotional stability, mental health and ability to form relationships in the future. Frighteningly, almost half of the attainment gap at 16 is already in place before children start school.

In the last few years, the enormous value and importance of EY (Early Years) education has been in the spotlight and in 2021, the Princess of Wales championed the cause by establishing her Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood. A report produced on

behalf of the Royal Foundation's Taskforce details the repercussions of inadequate funding and support and recommends that the business community does more to improve the provision for children under five; suggestions include increased support for families in terms of resources and flexibility with work, prioritising and nurturing young children's social and emotional skills and supporting initiatives which increase access to quality, affordable and reliable EY education and care.

Having opened its Nursery - now called Kindergarten - in the 1960s to offer the best possible pre-school experience for children aged 3-5, Berkhamstead has always recognised the crucial role of EY education. The Andrews Centre (named after our forward-thinking founder, Mrs Andrews) was opened in 2009 to create a bespoke EY building for Nursery and Reception, with an educational programme embracing the excellent objectives of the Early Years Foundation Stage

(see the Gov.uk website for these). In 2012, Berkhamstead opened its first Day Nursery in an adjacent building, extending its nurturing educational ethos down to the youngest children; a second Day Nursery opened this year in nearby Charlton Kings, giving even more children the chance of receiving an excellent all-round start to their education.

Neil Leitch, CEO of the Early Years Alliance, observed, *"For far too long, early education has been dismissed as childcare and educators as simply babysitters."* One has to admire the people who choose to make EY their career as the remuneration far from reflects the importance of their role. Even if the staff were mere babysitters, it would be a tough job; I spent a couple of days working in the Day Nursery and found it more than exhausting! However, our EY practitioners do so much more than babysit: they take pride in their work, carefully planning activities and providing resources to interest and stimulate young minds, thus delivering a truly first-rate experience. Led by Mollie Dodds (Director), Katie Hawkes (Charlton Kings) and Louise Jones (Pittville Circus), the Day Nurseries are influenced by the Curiosity Approach, which prioritises creativity and a holistic approach; moving away from the brightly-coloured, cluttered learning spaces of the past, both Day Nurseries are calm, homely and welcoming, resourced with real objects - for example, proper china cups - and toys made from natural materials. The children also enjoy exploring the outdoor spaces: the mud kitchen, climbing apparatus, sand and water play and planting areas. In addition, the Wise Bears (pre-school) are visited by specialist teachers from school for Music and French.

An alternative to the Day Nurseries is the school's Kindergarten, with its team of experienced practitioners led by Mrs Baker. Kindergarten and Reception children also benefit from specialist teaching for Music and French and learn RE with the school's Head of Games. Each day is an exciting voyage of discovery, developing the children's self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Outside, they have their own play area, as well as access to the brand-new Pre-Prep adventure playground and mature wildlife garden; there are several Forest School-trained members of staff who ensure that the children make the most of

the outdoor spaces, whatever the weather. In addition, the After-School and Holiday Clubs provide excellent wrap-around care.

The transition into Reception is seamless. The teachers visit the children both at home and in their pre-school setting; the children also visit their new classrooms and teachers several times before starting. The Reception year bridges EY and Pre-Prep/KS1 and, while still concentrating on learning through play, carefully introduces more formal educational experiences. The children are divided into two equal classes taught by Mrs Gargan and the Head of Early Years, Mrs Meredith-

Smyth; since she joined Berkhamstead, the latter has introduced several exciting new initiatives to Reception and Kindergarten, including Essential Letters and Sounds - which, along with daily reading practice, gets children off to a flying start with literacy - and the White Rose EY Maths and Science schemes with their emphasis on hands-on investigation and mastery.

Sadly, an increasing number of EY settings are having to deal with issues concerning children's behaviour and emotional well-being, resulting in an increase in SEND referrals. All the Berkhamstead settings have a strong culture of care; with the Key Worker system in the Day Nurseries and Kindergarten and the small classes (up to 18 children) in Reception, staff know the individual children really well and can personalise their care and education. They also eat lunch with them - a freshly cooked two-course meal prepared in our own kitchens. Happiness is paramount; Berkhamstead's 'open door' policy makes it easy for parents to speak with their child's teacher/Key Worker, thus nipping any issues in the bud - a close, trusting and supportive partnership with parents is quickly established.

In 2023, inspectors praised Berkhamstead's EY provision as 'outstanding'; the full report is available on our website. Hats off to the dedicated and wonderful staff in all the Berky EY settings - you truly go the extra mile and make a life-changing difference to the citizens of the future.

'EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO THE BETTERMENT OF SOCIETY.'

(MARIA MONTESSORI, 1870-1952)





SPECIALIST TEACHING

All Wise Bear children, across both our Charlton Kings and Pittville Circus settings, benefit from specialist teaching by Berkhamstead School staff. Head of Pre-Prep Music Mrs Sallis delivers engaging music sessions to all age groups at both nurseries on a rota basis, fostering a love of rhythm and song.

At Pittville Circus, French is taught by the school's Head of Modern Foreign Languages, Madame McCreanor, who brings years of experience and enthusiasm to teaching our Pre-School Wise Bears children. From April, Mrs Davies - another member of staff from the school, also a language specialist - started teaching French to the Charlton King's Wise Bear children.

Preparing our Wise Bears children for their next steps is a key priority. To help build confidence and familiarity with school life, Charlton Kings Pre-School children will take the school bus to join their Pittville Circus counterparts for the school's Early Years assembly - a wonderful opportunity to experience the wider Berkhamstead community.



WISE BEAR ROOM...

A BRIGHT NEW SPACE FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS AT CHARLTON KINGS



Following the opening of the rest of the nursery in January, we were delighted to introduce the Wise Bear room for our Pre-Schoolers in April. This bright, airy and inviting space has been thoughtfully designed to complement the rest of the nursery. With its calming sage green walls and Curiosity Approach-inspired furnishings, it creates a warm, homely and nurturing environment where children can thrive.

With a capacity for 16 children, the Wise Bear Room offers free-flow access to a dedicated outdoor area, where little explorers can engage with nature. The space includes planters filled with herbs and other sensory plants, a mud kitchen and a nature area for fun activities such as bug hunting. There are also plans to introduce vegetable planting, encouraging children to learn about growing food and caring for the environment.



INDIAN MUSIC WORKSHOP BRINGS A RHYTHMIC START TO TERM

The Prep children began the term with a vibrant Indian Music Workshop led by renowned musician Andy Warn. His passion for Indian music was truly infectious, captivating the children as they explored his fascinating collection of traditional Indian instruments.

This immersive, hands-on experience allowed pupils to experiment with unique sounds and rhythms, deepening their understanding of global music traditions. The workshop was a fantastic opportunity for creative expression, leaving the children inspired and engaged.

Thank you to the PTA for funding such a valuable and enriching day.



...NEWS... FROM PREP



MATHS CHALLENGE

Eight pupils from Years 5 and 6 proudly represented Berky at Cheltenham College's annual Primary Team Maths Challenge, competing against 22 teams. Mark B, Rowan J, Edith H, and Ioan C (Year 5) triumphed by winning their category, while Angus C, Atlas M, Remi T, and Jasper W (Year 6) achieved an impressive fourth-place finish in theirs. Berky has participated in this prestigious event for over five years, consistently finishing in the top three - a testament to our pupils' exceptional maths skills and teamwork. This year was no exception, as the teams demonstrated resilience, determination and true Berky spirit throughout a series of challenging rounds. Deputy Head Mrs Holland, who accompanied the teams, was immensely proud of their efforts, as were we all. Congratulations to all involved.

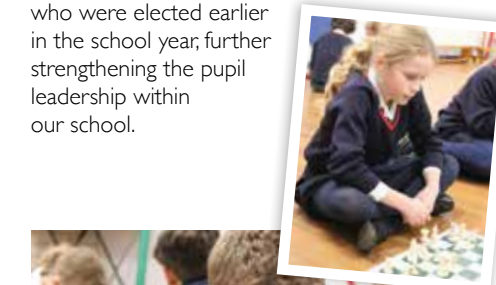


BOYS' HOCKEY

Boys' hockey has proved a great success this year with the Year 5 and 6 boys. Each Tuesday, the boys have worked hard to improve their skills and gained a greater understanding of tactics. It has been exciting to see the progress made over the term which was evident in the successful fixtures against Hatherop, Cricklade and Rendcomb. Well done to all the boys! P McC

HOUSE CAPTAINS

Congratulations to the Year 6 pupils, Melba F (St Andrew's), Evie W (St David's), Megan P (St George's) and Izzy B (St Patrick's), who were elected as House Captains at the beginning of the Spring Term. Being a House Captain is both a privilege and a responsibility, and, as always, the staff found it a very difficult decision given the many fantastic pupils in Year 6. However, we are delighted with the final choice and confident that these exemplary pupils will act as superb role models for their younger counterparts. They will join the four pupils who were elected earlier in the school year, further strengthening the pupil leadership within our school.



NATIONAL QUIZ

Well done to the members of our well informed general knowledge quiz team who have reached the online final of the National Quiz Championship for Schools again. In the semi-final, they scored highly, successfully answering questions about world history, music, geography, science, sport and numerous other subjects. A high score saw them through to the final which will take place in June. Congratulations to Angus C, Tamar C, Annabelle S and Thomas H. MC



U11 NETBALL TEAM SHINE AT IAPS TOURNAMENT

Our U11 netball team excelled at the IAPS Netball Tournament at Millfield, securing second place in the regional competition and earning a spot in the National Finals. Though they didn't secure wins at nationals, reaching this level was a fantastic achievement. Huge congratulations to the team for their dedication and skill!



WILDLIFE QUIZ

Berky's participation in the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's annual wildlife quiz competition has become a highlight of the school's calendar. This year's team (Nancy A, Magnus D, Ellie K and Eddie S) faced Isbourne Valley School in the first round of this event and emerged comfortable 39-30 winners. Our children proved expert in all matters flora and fauna, recognising owl pellets and rabbit skulls, identifying a wide range of birds, insects and mammals and successfully recalling the colours of wild flowers. We await news of our semi-final opponents. MC

YEAR 6 PUPILS INTERVIEW MAX WILKINSON

The Prep School was delighted to welcome Max Wilkinson, Cheltenham's Liberal Democrat MP, for an inspiring assembly of political discussion. Our Year 6 School Council leaders had the unique opportunity of interviewing him, asking questions prepared by all Year 6 pupils during their Citizenship and Wellbeing lessons.

Eager to learn more about life in politics, the children posed thoughtful questions and learned more about democracy and leadership. A huge thank you to Max Wilkinson for taking the time to visit and inspire the next generation of changemakers!



MUSIC NEWS SPRING RECITAL

Our Spring Recital in the Prep Hall after school this term was a delightful concert full of confident and varied performances. All the different families of instruments including strings, wind, brass, percussion and piano were represented with some very fine playing. Nearly half the performers had only started learning their instruments this year which shows some great new skills, preparation and confidence. Thank you to everyone who took part and entertained us so beautifully. PM

MUSIC EXAM RESULTS

Congratulations to the following musicians who have taken grade exams this term:
Grade 1: Emily O'K (Sax*), Ben S (Sax*), Hermione H (Clarinet**), Lucas dCV (Guitar*), Seth L (Trombone*)
Grade 4: Starlar H (Trombone**)

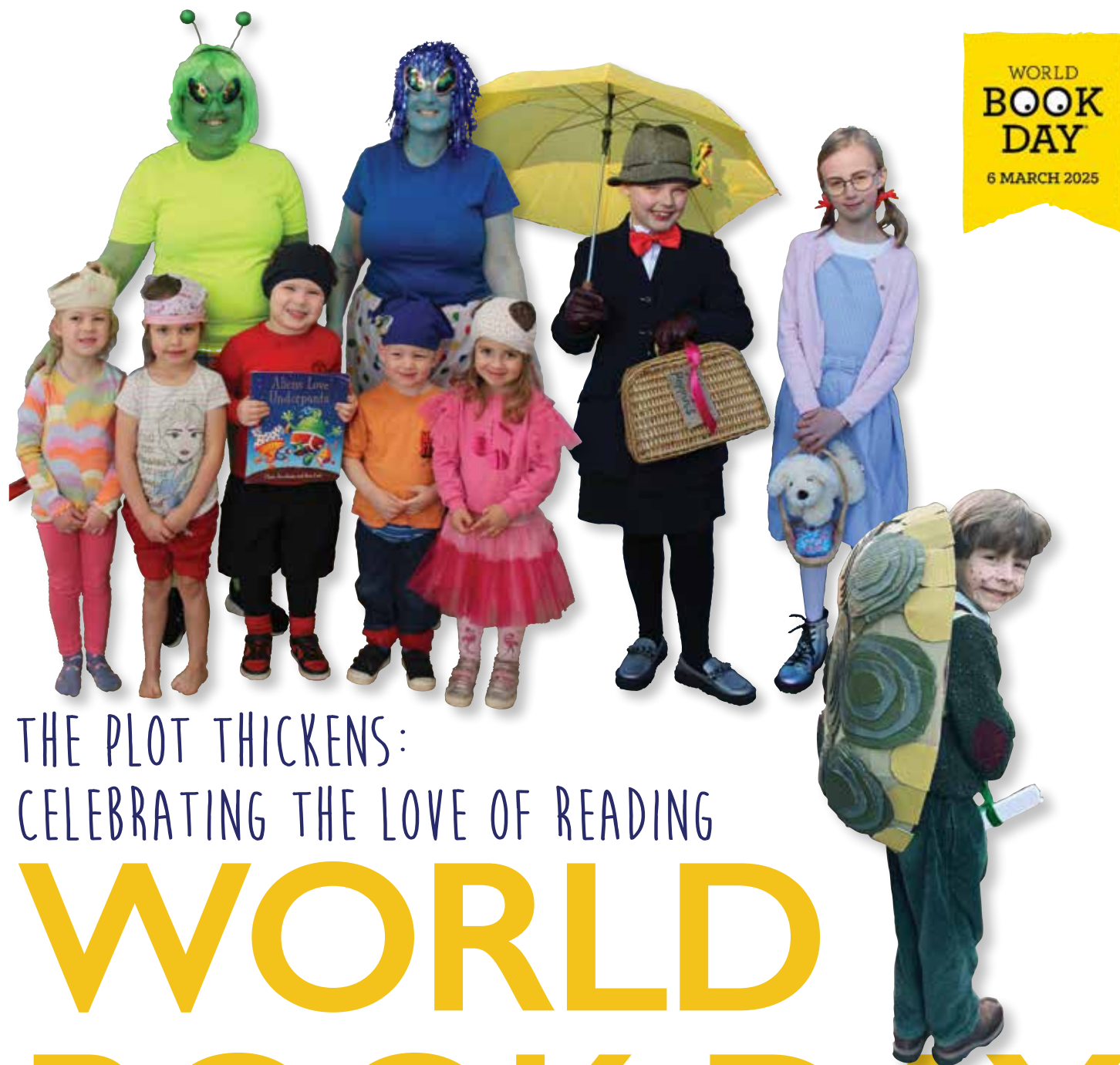
*Denotes pass with merit. **Denotes pass with distinction



CHECKMATE CHAMPS

The Spring Term saw lots of skilful and competitive match play in both chess clubs. A myriad of leagues reached their exciting conclusions. The results are as follows. In the Y5/Y6 Club, Rowan J was crowned Division 1 champion, while Anna H and Mark B topped Division 2 and Division 3 respectively. There was a remarkable four-way tie in the Y3/Y4 Club's Division 1 with Ollie S, Arlo R, Rupert S and Jonah B sharing the spoils. Eric S and Sasha B emerged as Division 2 and Division 3 champions. I was delighted with the standard of play. Next term sees the Berky congress, the Y2 Chess Club and the annual staff versus pupils' match. MC





THE PLOT THICKENS:
CELEBRATING THE LOVE OF READING

WORLD BOOK DAY 2025



World Book Day - one of our favourite annual events - was a wonderful celebration of stories and imagination, with pupils and staff from the school and day nurseries dressing up as their favourite fictional characters. The costumes were truly spectacular, featuring a host of Harry Potters, Roald Dahl creations, Where's Wallys and Hungry Caterpillars. And who could forget our Head of School, Mrs Bareham, as Little Red Riding Hood, Executive Head, Mr Cross as the wolf and Bursar, Mr Denmead as the wood cutter?

The day was filled with fun and literary activities, encouraging pupils to share their favourite books and rediscover the joy of reading. Thank you to our kitchen team,

who added to the magic with an Alice in Wonderland-themed feast, including 'Eat Me' shortbread for snack and a 'High Tea' lunch of ham, cheese and cucumber sandwiches, 'Drink Me' fruit smoothie, mini scones, Pom-Bears and cocktail sausages.

A big thank you to parents for providing such brilliant and imaginative costumes - it was certainly a day to remember!





A SEASON OF DISCOVERY:

KINDERGARTEN'S WONDERFUL SPRING TERM



The Spring Term has been full of new experiences and wonderful learning opportunities. The start of term brought some cold weather and inspired winter artwork. We spoke about the colours that make us think of the cold and used them to create beautiful winter scenes. Edna and Andrew Bear's Winter Adventure Week was a huge hit with the children. This special week allowed the children to explore a range of fun activities, including a hunt for Andrew Bear which took us on a trip around the school following clues to locate where he was hiding. We also enjoyed a teddy bears' picnic and made our own honey sandwiches!

Our weekly Forest School sessions have provided our little gardeners the opportunity to get their hands dirty, planting bulbs in our planters and giving the children an experience of nature's cycles. We can't wait to see the flowers begin to grow over the coming weeks. Continuing our theme of growing, we planted cress; the children loved taking responsibility for caring for their tiny plants.

The second half of term brought more fun and excitement to the classroom and outdoors. The children were delighted to discover some frogspawn in our pond. This ignited an interest in all things frogs and inspired our learning around life cycles.

The children were fascinated by 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle and enjoyed retelling it as a group. Mrs Baker became Kindergarten's very own butterfly for World Book Day!

We finished the term by visiting our cookery room to make Easter nests. The children had a wonderful time mixing the ingredients and decorating their nests with chicks and sprinkles. This fabulous hands-on session allowed the children to learn about weighing ingredients and working together as a team. It was so lovely to see how proud they were of their creations. GB



BLOSSOMING MINDS:

A SEASON OF GROWTH IN RECEPTION

The Spring Term is such an exciting time in Reception, where children often make the most progress in all aspects of their learning. We started Spring Term 1 looking at toys. This fitted in very well after the excitement of Christmas as the children were able to share what wonderful presents they got from Father Christmas. We talked about how their gifts have changed over the last few years, from receiving baby toys, toddler toys and now more advanced toys. The children enjoyed speaking to their families about the toys they played with as children, and we talked about how toys have changed and evolved in recent history. In Literacy, we used carefully chosen texts to support the learning, from the classic Shirley Hughes' 'Dogger' to Mini Grey's 'Traction Man!' In art, we created fantastic puppets out of wooden spoons, as well as our own toys out of recycled materials.

After the February half term, we felt the shift in the season as the days became brighter and warmer. We began our lovely topic exploring the changes we see in nature in the springtime. Our artwork, led by Mrs Hartley, focused on observational drawings of spring flowers using oil

pastels, as well as an artist focus on David Hockney. In our Understanding of the World sessions we investigated what plants need to grow well and we looked at the parts of a plant, dissecting and labelling a sunflower. The children were inspired by the Wildlife Garden makeover and we were excited to have our own planter! We came up with a lovely list of things we wanted to plant and we have popped in bulbs and scattered wild flower seeds ready for a burst of colour in the early summer. Z M-S





YEAR 1'S TERM HAS BEEN OUT OF THIS WORLD

5, 4, 3, 2, 1... **BLAST OFF!!** This term began with Year 1 children zooming into space! The children loved designing, painting and describing their own aliens, and used adjectives and alliteration to write super descriptions. The children's aliens also featured in their own stories, where they created their own ending to the story 'The Way Back Home'. Year 1 were fantastic authors, and they also wrote their own versions of 'Whatever Next'. They were very proud of their stories and read them to the Kindergarten children.

Space Day saw us all dressed up as astronauts, aliens and even planets! In space-themed costumes, the children were challenged to a range of activities. Using walkie talkies, two teams had to communicate special instructions to solve a puzzle and fix the rocket! Cookery skills were put to the test as the children made delicious moon rock cakes, measuring, weighing and following instructions. Yummy! Using AI, the Year 1 astronauts went through a portal and

explored Mars using a Mars rover as well as launching rockets inside the classroom! More rockets were launched on the Pre-Prep lawn. With the help of Mr Morphew, our Head of Science, the children witnessed an exciting range of air pressure rockets. Of course, they all had a go on the stomp rocket!

Following a creative first half of the term, we then set upon a fact-finding mission! The children found out all about the history of space exploration and were very surprised to discover that the first astronauts were fruit flies! The children were fascinated by the 1969 moon landing, and in particular the teamwork of Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins. The research continued as the children created their own non-fiction books all about the planets of our Solar System! The children enjoyed showcasing their knowledge in their Year 1 class assembly. AS



YEAR 2'S TERM OF DISCOVERY & CREATIVITY

Spring is the time for new birth and a newfound appreciation of nature, so what better time to kick off our Rainforest topic in Year 2! Across the term, the children have immersed themselves in their learning, discovering the four layers of the Amazon rainforest and their various flora and fauna inhabitants; Harpy eagles, jaguars and poisonous dart frogs have been the order of the day! They have studied the Awa tribe, deforestation and food chains, produced oil pastels of exotic plants and animals, used foam printing techniques to recreate the undersides of leaves and have even produced interpretative dance movements in homage to sloths and jaguars. The pupils have also been introduced to the work of Henri Rousseau and have completed artwork in his style, even continuing his famous 'Surprise' picture outside of his canvas.

In English, Year 2 have been developing descriptive skills through carefully chosen adjectival phrases, adverbs and similes while writing 'Lost and Found' stories, 'Wishing' stories and figurative poetry. In computing lessons, the children have coded on screen using the Scratch Junior app as well as physically using Lego Spike, creating and implementing their own algorithms, while starting to use iteration within their work. PE has included some planning and presentation of dance and gymnastics movements, while music lessons have allowed the children to explore rhythm and melody, using instruments while preparing for their performances at the Spring Concert!

While all this incredible learning has been going on, our lovely Year 2s have also just been growing as little people. We have seen developments of empathy, kindness and thoughtfulness, the willingness to make and learn from mistakes, and a more mature approach to managing some of those big, tricky emotions that can emerge when you're 6 or 7 years old! They have shown us how wonderful they can be and we're looking forward to what the Summer Term brings! KJ





The Spring Concerts were a feast of delights in the magnificent surroundings of the Town Hall this year. Every child from Year 2 to Year 6 was involved with all the younger children playing and singing in at least two items. The progression of skills demonstrated in the ensembles - from the beginners in Year 2 through Jigsaw and Berky Bows to the most experienced string players



in the Chamber Ensemble - was impressive. Complementary instrumental ensembles of Samba, Guitar Club, Berky Beats and Razzamajazz showed their considerable skills with great confidence and a sense of style.

Junior Choir (Years 3 and 4) performed songs from the Disney films 'Brave' and 'Moana' and were then joined on stage by a terrific Year 2 choir for their finale, 'Gospel Medley'. VoxBox (Years 5 and 6) performed for the first time as our newly - formed music theatre group with an African Medley of narration and songs from 'The Lion King'.

The evening concert ended with a tremendous performance of 'Songs from Oliver!' linked with clear narration by Year 6 - these were hugely popular with the children and parents with many singing along as they memorized the words.

Well done to all our musicians and singers for fantastic entertainment in both events. PM



RAISING THE ROOF

AT CHELTENHAM TOWN HALL

The glorious setting of Cheltenham Town Hall was, yet again, a splendid platform for thrilling musical performances from all our many ensembles. Musicians and singers from Years 2 to 6 performed beautifully in a wide variety of ensembles and styles.





...OFF WE GO...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR
OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS

CRICKLEY HILL

In the picturesque surroundings of Crickley Hill, the Kindergarten children enjoyed a magical day of outdoor learning, filled with nature-themed stories and exciting activities led by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. They explored woodland trails, discovered hidden cuddly animals and learned fascinating facts about local wildlife. With curiosity and enthusiasm, they searched for creepy crawlies, listened for birds and embraced the wonders of nature. The trip ended with a special picnic lunch back in Kindergarten, rounding off a fantastic morning of outdoor adventure and connection with the natural world.



COTSWOLD WILDLIFE PARK



DETECTIVE WORKSHOP

Year 6 were visited for the morning by Jenny Williams who previously worked for the police. She led our pupils on a variety of brilliant, hands-on activities demonstrating how science is used to capture criminals. The pupils learnt all about finger printing and chromatography, all the time developing science skills picked up in their lessons. The use of DNA from living cells such as blood or hair roots, dental records or skeletal information was also discussed. To conclude the exciting morning, the pupils were given a crime scene and had to explain what happened by investigating a variety of clues on a body such as mobile phone, invitation to a party, jelly baby in the mouth and many more. The pupils had a great time and entered into the spirit of things throughout the morning. TM

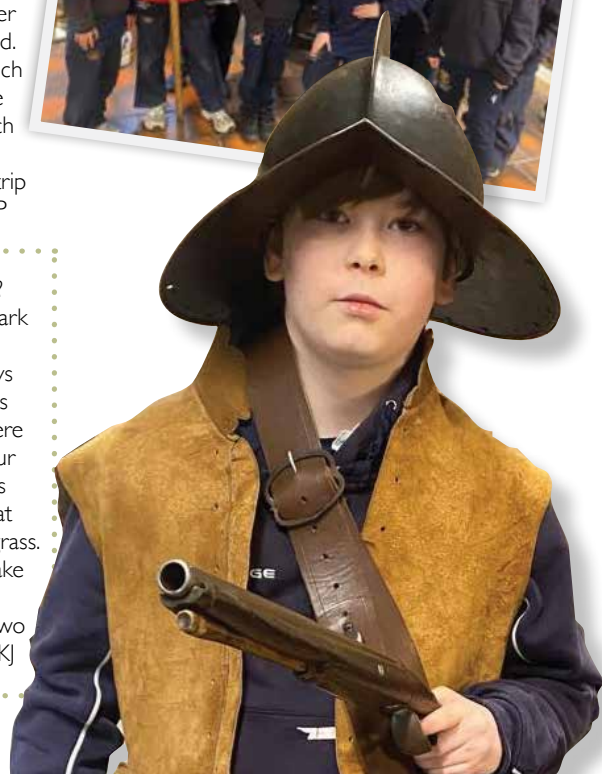


COMMANDERY

The Year 5s enjoyed a wonderful visit to the Commandery in Worcester this term. The children learned much about the Civil War and took part in lots of engaging activities. They got to handle weapons such as muskets and pikes, dressed up in armour and clothes from the Stuart era and learned about the challenges of war, including rather rudimentary medical care on the battlefield. We also toured the beautiful buildings which cover many periods of History. One of the favourite parts was the solar room in which it is said that you can feel the presence of the Duke of Hamilton. It was a superb trip which was much enjoyed by the children. P McC



Lions? Penguins? Sloths? Beautiful sunshine? The Year 2 trip to the Cotswold Wildlife Park had it all! The children started the day by visiting owls, vultures and Colobus monkeys before an expert talk from the zookeepers on all things Rainforestry - the park staff were impressed with the range of knowledge our budding naturalists already grasp! Onwards to a fun train ride, featuring much waving at passers-by, before an idyllic picnic on the grass. After lunch, an amble round the park to take in the sights of giraffes, clouded leopards, white rhinos and even the odd camel or two - life couldn't be peachier. A fabulous trip! KJ



SKILLZONE

Years 4 and 6 enjoyed exciting trips to SkillZONE, an interactive life skills village in Gloucester. As part of their Citizenship and Wellbeing (CWB) education, the visits provided invaluable lessons on personal safety at home and in the wider community. The pupils engaged

in immersive, age-appropriate scenarios designed to promote responsible decision-making. They explained the justice system in a magistrate's court, for instance, assessed risks in a dark alleyway, and learned about road safety, including the dangers

of distractions and the importance of pedestrian crossings. A thought-provoking experience, the trip reinforced key life skills to help pupils stay awake and make informed choices.



CHELTENHAM SYNAGOGUE

Year 4 were privileged to visit Cheltenham Synagogue, which is rarely open to school groups. They learned about the building's history and explored how it differs from All Saints', noting the absence of statues or images of God in keeping with the 2nd Commandment. They saw a Hebrew prayer for the royal family and visited the ark where the Torah scrolls are kept. The children enjoyed Jewish stories, including one about an apple tree that wished for stars - leading to the discovery of a star shape inside a sliced apple. They also had the chance to say a blessing in Hebrew and deepened their understanding of the Jewish faith. MT



MUSEUM IN THE PARK

Reception had a fantastic day at the Museum in the Park, taking part in the Toys and Games in the Past workshop. They enjoyed playground games like Cross the River, explored the museum, and discovered the very first toys - sticks! The children shared creative ideas for stick games and impressed staff with their knowledge of materials. After lunch, they played with replica toys and made their own thaumatropes, proudly taking them home. A wonderful day of learning and fun! JG

WE THE CURIOUS

Year 1's visit to 'We the Curious' really felt like a trip around the solar system! A visit to the planetarium blasted us into space as we explored very hot Mercury, our moon, red, dusty Mars and the icy rings of Saturn!

An afternoon workshop saw the children creating and firing rockets at a target with great excitement. They explored the effects of reduced gravity balancing a floating ball on a blower. Finally, the children explored a range of objects that astronauts use including an oxygen tank, space boots and goggles! They investigated and explained why certain materials were good for each object. Being an astronaut proved to be much harder than we expected! AS



ST LUKE'S CHURCH

Year 6 went to St Luke's Church where Rev Wheaton, a past parent of Berkhamstead, gave a talk about the topic of death from a Christian perspective. The children investigated the various plaques around the church and saw how people were remembered. The children were able to reflect on the inscriptions. Rev Wheaton reminded the children of the Easter story and the significance it has for Christians. MT



U8 | GIRLS' NETBALL

What a brilliant netball term! The progress we have made has been outstanding with all the girls fully committing and competing in every fixture. I have been impressed with the progress shown and we are starting to be deliberate in our play by making decisions based on the current situation of the game. We have worked hard on our basic skills with our passing strength improving and footwork getting much better. In every game we have played we have battled hard against any challenge resulting in lots of positive outcomes. I look forward to watching the progress of the team over the coming years. Well done, girls! IP

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



U9 | GIRLS' NETBALL

Once again, I have been impressed by the attitude and the sporting behaviour of the Under 9s this term. They have thoroughly enjoyed playing Bee Netball and have certainly shown dedication to all its values: Bee proud, Bee fair, Bee friendly, Bee strong, Bee yourself and Bee together. Many of our fixtures involved a 'round robin' style event where all teams played each other; but when scores were kept, we had a very strong season across all the teams with 6 wins, 2 draws and 3 losses. During training sessions, the girls have been developing their skills in the 5- and 7- aside formats too and have progressed tremendously over the season. It has been wonderful to see the enjoyment they clearly have when playing netball in all its forms and the house matches were certainly fast and furious. Well done, girls! C McC

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' NETBALL

This season, the girls have developed their skills and match play within the Bee Netball game. The rotations through the five positions have certainly challenged the girls' marking skills as they need to understand the role of all 5 players, rather than the one position they prefer! However, the girls have enjoyed many successes and developed their match skills. They have worked hard, individually and as a team, to improve their understanding and confidence when playing in a match – spreading out and using space to their advantage. I am sure when they come to play netball in Year 6, they will remember to drive onto the ball and look for those strong, long passes!

Well done to all the U10 girls - you have worked really hard this season and will go from strength to strength next year! JH

U10 Team: Nancy A, Isabella B, Eden 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' NETBALL

This season has been an exciting and rewarding one for our U11 Girls' Netball teams, with both the A and B teams showing great progress, determination and team spirit.

The B team had a strong season, growing in confidence and skill with every match. Their hard work and commitment paid off with some impressive results. The players have shown fantastic improvement, and it's been great to see their teamwork develop on the court. Their positive attitude and enthusiasm have been a real credit to them.

The A team had an exceptional season, showcasing outstanding teamwork, skill and sportsmanship throughout. Their strong passing, communication and game awareness helped them dominate in many matches. The highlight of their season was earning a spot at the National Finals, a huge achievement that reflects their hard work and unity as a team. Every player played a crucial role, and their ability to work together under pressure was truly impressive.

Overall, both teams should be incredibly proud of their performances this year. Their dedication, resilience and passion for netball have made this a memorable and successful season. Well done, girls! 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, Melba F, Charlotte H, Florence P-T, Allegra S, Evie W
Outstanding: Annabelle A, Polly B, Melba F, Charlotte H, Florence P-T, Allegra S, Evie W



U8 | BOYS' FOOTBALL

The Year 3 boys played some lovely matches throughout the term showing an improvement in their playing ability as they went along. Each match was hard-fought. At times we dominated the games but in others, we were under a lot of pressure. What impressed me the most was the resilience that boys showed when we weren't winning; they continued to play to the best of their ability. Well played, boys; bring on the cricket season. 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' FOOTBALL

The Under 9s had a really successful season. Within our training sessions, there was a big push on core fundamentals; close control, closing down and off the ball movement, alongside decision making and body positioning, aspects of the game the boys then applied within matches. The season started strongly with some fantastic results within a couple of triangular tournaments, welcoming Rendcomb and Hopelands to the Victoria Ground, before travelling away to Beaudesert, to play our hosts and Wycliffe. The goals flowed and the teams gelled, working together with some fantastic defending, ruthless attacking and some world-class saves - an ongoing theme of the season! Tricky fixtures vs Ashley Manor and RPS followed; a couple of losses for the As, while the two mixed Bs enjoyed more success, picking up some wins, a draw and a loss. Our final fixture away at RPS brought about a loss and a win for the two mixed B teams and a hard fought 2-2 for the As; enthusiasm, passion and commitment from everyone, and pleasing progress made all round. Well done, gents! KJ

U9 Team: Ralph A, Ezra B, Rocco B, Jonah B, Ned D, Guy D, Leo D, Archie D, Jack O, Arturo P, Jacob P, Devan P, George R, Sebbie R, Arlo R, George R-S, Rupert S, Eric S, Ben S, Oliver S, Felix T, Max T, Jack W, Walker W



U10 | BOYS' FOOTBALL

The U10 boys have had an outstanding football season, characterized by impressive performances and a fantastic run of results. They managed to win every match except one, showcasing resilience and a deeper understanding of the game as the season progressed. The boys' hard work in training - focusing on defensive tactics, creating space, and set-piece strategies - has paid off, allowing them to play with growing confidence and fluidity as a team.

A key highlight of the season was their participation in the Cheltenham College Football Tournament. Both our A and B teams excelled, finishing at the top of their respective groups. The A team went on to claim victory in the tournament, capping off a fantastic season with a well-deserved trophy.

Throughout the campaign, the boys showed great versatility, seamlessly adapting to different positions as needed. Their teamwork and support for one another, both on and off the pitch, were outstanding. They consistently displayed remarkable sportsmanship and were always willing to play in unfamiliar roles to help balance the teams and ensure fairness. ZL

U10 Team: Teddy B, Ioan C, Magnus D, Jacob H, Quinn H, Arthur H, Eddie H, Eddie S, Seth L, Max LG, George L, George H, Toby M, Ellis M, Milo R, Dion W, Atharv I, Mark B, Jonas D, Rowan J



U11 | BOYS' FOOTBALL

The U11 A team has enjoyed an outstanding season. They have had some spectacular victories, with notable performances against The Richard Pate School by 5-2, Ashley Manor 6-1 and a 2-0 victory against a very good Kitebrook team. The boys also played in the Cheltenham Prep Festival winning 4 and drawing 2 to win the Plate Competition. They had just the one defeat, losing 3-2 to Rendcomb.

The quality of the football has been superb. There is a lot of talent within the team and it was wonderful to see how they worked together and always played with both great energy and attacking intent, scoring a hatful of goals in the process. Defensively, we were solid at the back and kept a clean sheet in most matches. The boys have been great fun to coach and one of the best teams in my time at Berky. Well done to all of the team and many thanks to our supporters who were treated to some fantastic football.

U11 A Team: Hughie B, Olly B, Lucas DCV, Fergus G, Jack H, Miles H, Toby R, Charlie W, Jasper W

Colours and outstanding awards: Hughie B, Olly B, Lucas DCV, Fergus G, Jack H, Miles H, Toby R, Charlie W, Jasper W

The U11 B team have had an enjoyable season. As a group they have worked well together and always played the game with a smile on their faces. They have enjoyed lots of good matches and have made great improvement throughout the course of the season. A win against Cheltenham Prep and a convincing 6-1 victory against Kitebrook were two results that stood out. Well done to all of the boys, who have given their all and represented Berky superbly.

U11 B Team: Leo C, Angus C, Charlie F, Jack F, Charlie H, Tharusha J, Atlas M, Archie M, Henry P, Rishik R





PRE-PREP PUPILS AIM FOR THE STARS!

Year 1 celebrated Space Day in spectacular style with a packed itinerary of exciting, interstellar activities. The children- and their teachers - were over the moon to arrive in an array of fantastic costumes, transforming the Pre-Prep department into a galaxy of NASA astronauts, quirky aliens, dazzling planets and twinkling stars!

Turn to page 16 for the full story.



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



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