

BERKHAMPTSTEAD
SCHOOL
MAGAZINE

AUTUMN TERM
2019

BLAZER



Assemblies
THEIR RELEVANCE TO
OUR COMMUNITY

Stem club

A CELEBRATION OF
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY
ENGINEERING & MATHS

Christmas

IT'S THE MOST
WONDERFUL TIME
OF THE YEAR



Thoughts from THE HEAD

It has been a wonderfully busy term filled with fun, activity and hard work. The children have risen to all the challenges set and over recent weeks it has been a thrill to see them in nativity plays, carol services and all together in our final assembly. If you were to ask the children what the school motto is, I am certain that they would be able to tell you. They would also be able to explain what it means and, most importantly, what they do to make sure that it is more than just words. 'Perseverantia Vincit' or 'Perseverance brings success' is an important part of what Berky is about and Mrs Andrews, the School's Founder, was very astute in choosing this as the motto... it is as relevant now as it was in 1945. This starts in Early Years where the 'Values Tree' celebrates those children who persevere, who are kind, honest, polite and can be trusted.

This term we have seen this in abundance. The children and staff have worked hard to learn more about the environment and there are now many pupil initiatives to make us more eco-friendly. They have been on numerous trips and visits to learn about how what we learn in school applies to the real world. In chess, the A team remain undefeated and are on track to win an unprecedented 5 league titles in a row! They have developed their mathematical skills and language skills which includes developing a love of a foreign language through the specialist French teaching. At the youngest ages, they start to learn about themselves and to develop a curiosity - in the Day Nursery using aspects of the 'Curiosity Approach' has had a very positive impact. Year 6 pupils achieved fabulous results in the Grammar School tests and many others have sat Scholarships and Entrance exams for the Independent Schools. In the Prep, they have played over 100 fixtures just this term! The highlight always, though, is the awarding of the Sally Lee Kindness Cup which this term was awarded to Mollie R and Jasper W.

As the pages that follow in this edition of the Blazer demonstrate, our children are always keen to do all that they can to persevere, be kind and thoughtful and to learn so much about themselves and the world they live in. I hope that you will enjoy reading of their many exploits during the Autumn Term.

Richard Cross

Richard Cross
Headmaster



Spotlight on STEVE MILDREN

I've taught at three schools over the past 30 years. Most of this time was spent at St Aubyn's where I ran a girls' boarding house and Blundell's Prep School where I taught a variety of subjects as well as running a very busy Games and PE department. I spent some time at Queen's College, Taunton, running a sixth form centre and a large girls' boarding house with my partner. I've been at Berky now for two years coaching games to Year 4 boys and I love it.



What do you do in your spare time?

As well as spending time in the gym, swimming, cycling and running, I also paint. I went to art college and always thought I'd be an illustrator - but I fell into teaching instead. However, now I have a little more time, I enjoy drawing and painting again.

Who was your childhood inspiration?

A 400m hurdler called David Hemery. I was never much of a hurdler, but he inspired my love of running and playing sport.

What is your favourite sport?

I really don't have one. I love playing, coaching and watching all sports, although if I was really pushed, it would have to be rugby.

What might you like to have done if you weren't a Sports teacher?

As a child I used to watch a TV programme called 'Casey Jones' about an engineer on the 'Cannonball Express'. I still can't imagine there being a better job than being an engine driver on a large steam train.

What was your first job?

In my teens I worked in the garden department at a large Woolworths store. I knew nothing about horticulture so they eventually moved me to the tills and I wasn't very good there either. Suffice to say, the job didn't last very long!

What skill - that you don't have already - would you like to have?

I'd love to be able to play the piano. I know a lot of games teachers who say the same thing! We have seven pianos in our house and I can just about play Chopsticks!

What do you admire most about a Berky child?

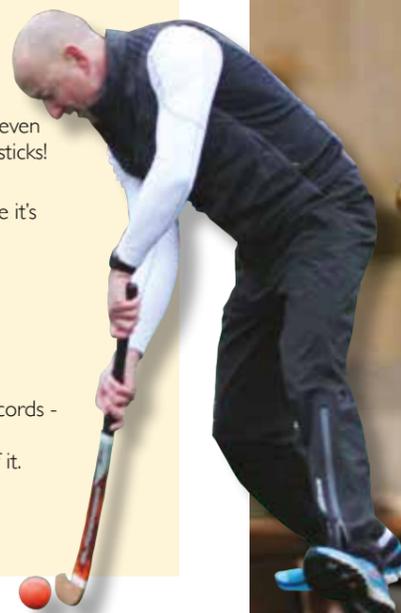
Their enthusiasm - it's infectious, and even at my age it's just a pleasure to see.

What do you love most about Berky?

That's easy: the children and the staff, of course. Out of the three schools I've worked in, they have been the best here.

What is your favourite children's book?

Non-fiction, it's got to be the Guinness Book of Records - I love stats. Fiction, there is only one - 'The Hobbit'; I've read it at least 20 times and never get bored of it.



THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS!

Christmas is always a magical time of year at Berky, and this year was no exception. The children had rehearsed hard to treat their family to some super performances including Pre-Prep's fabulous 'Hey Ewe' performed at All Saints' Church (as shown). Our stunning local church was also the venue for the Prep School's enchanting candlelit service. As tradition dictates, Year 6 took the lead, processing down the aisle carrying candles and, amongst the beautiful carols sung by various Prep School choral ensembles, our eldest pupils spoke clearly and eloquently to tell the Christmas story. Early Years' "A Star Over Bethlehem" was great fun and we were proud of our youngest pupils as for some of them, this was the first time they had ever performed. Well done, all!



News

FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL



ALL IN GOOD TASTE

Not only have the kitchen worked hard this term to provide their usual delicious, home-cooked meals and - new this term - mid-morning snacks for the Prep School, but they have also put on fabulous special events such as themed days and 'Taste the Menu' events. Japanese Day was a triumph, and armed with chopsticks, the children sampled an array of exotic dishes including sushi and maki pickled ginger and dipping sauces, miso marinated sweet potato and miso marinated salmon. The Japanese feast was simply delicious!

Head chef Alex and Catering Manager Amy have also been sharing their culinary skills with cookery masterclasses for some of our Prep School children during their carousel lessons. Years 3 and 6 had great fun learning how to make the most delicious yoghurt flat bread, either with pumpkin seeds, olives or cheese, there was hummus to accompany the bread. The lessons took place in the School kitchen, so the children also had an opportunity to learn about the industrial equipment.

LEST WE FORGET

Children and staff in the School came together on 11th November to pay tribute to all those who fell in the First World War, and in other conflicts since. In the Prep School, brass teacher Mr Hampton signalled the start of the two-minute silence by playing 'The Last Post', and the children then took a moment to reflect and pay their respects to the fallen. Meanwhile, across the road, Reception joined Pre-Prep for their own two-minute silence, and our smallest children in Kindergarten showed their own respects by making poppies with Mrs Cole and remaining silent for a minute.



CHARITY NEWS

After some deliberation, the School Council voted to support Age UK and the Pamoja Tayari School in Mombasa, Kenya this year. Fundraising activities so far have included carol singing at Waitrose, the Christmas Jumper Day and the Christmas Stamp Competition.

Thank you to everyone for contributing so generously.

KINDNESS CUP

Sally Lee was a much loved Pre-Prep teacher who joined Berkhamstead in 2003, and sadly passed away in February 2017. Bearing in mind her interest in - and influence on - encouraging the qualities of good citizenship and emotional well-being 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 Autumn term, it was awarded to Mollie R and Jasper W. Well done!



BERKY GETS GREENER

Our Berky Gets Greener eco-committee - superbly led by Year 6's Jack E - have been tremendously industrious this term, and plenty of eco improvements have been made throughout the School. We signed up to a brilliant scheme run by a company called TerraCycle, and have saved our crisp packets, bringing them into School to be sent for recycling, rather than ending up in landfill. It's a heart-warming thought to think that our crisp packets will end up as watering cans and even furniture, rather than damaging our lovely planet. Conscientious Eco-warriors from each form have monitored classrooms ensuring lights and computers are switched off when not in use, battery recycling is taking place around school, and a welly boot swap has been initiated. For the Christmas Fayre, creative pupils in the Prep School turned their hand to Christmas paper making, and decorated recycled brown paper to sell. Our committed team also ran a second-hand book stall at the Fayre, with profits going towards a new eco/mindfulness garden in the front of the Prep School. Further afield, we have been delighted to form a partnership with a School in Kenya called Pamoja Tayari. The School Council chose to raise funds for them this year - this initiative is part of the global citizenship part of the Green Flag Award. Berky Mum and Berky Gets Greener kingpin, Mrs McInnes, has been delighted with what the children have achieved this term, and enthused, "It's been wonderful to see how committed the children are to looking after the planet; their passion and drive never fails to amaze me! This term has seen many changes in the way we recycle and reuse around School, and we are well on the way to achieving our Silver award".



PTA NEWS

WHAT A WONDERFUL FIRST TERM IT HAS BEEN DESPITE THE RAIN!

The start of term saw the annual quiz night. It is always a fun night with top questions from the amazing Mr Tittle, and a delicious fish and chip supper. Hannah and Fiona put on a wonderful event, and much fun was had by all!

There was a great turn out of parents at our first PTA meeting of the year. Many people were willing to support the PTA and the wonderful work done for the benefit of all our children. Thank you to all those who came along and volunteered their support; it is always greatly appreciated.

The fireworks event was truly spectacular and the fireworks just kept on going! A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to make this event so great. A big thank you to Graham, Nick and their team who worked tirelessly setting up the display and providing us all with a fabulous evening. The Simpsons fish & chips were a big hit and their fairy-light clad van looked fabulous at the front of school. Thank you to Simpsons for their support, it is greatly appreciated. Thanks, too to all the parents who supported the 'front of house': Paul, Ciara, Helen, Angela and of course the wonderful teachers and grounds team for bringing it all together.

Clearly Berky children are very well behaved as Santa visited the Christmas Fayre again and delighted a record breaking number of children with a gift. The wonderful Mrs Agg and Miss Henderson were elf assistants to Santa and the children all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The hampers looked amazing and were a big hit with everyone. Well done to Sarah for pulling it all together so well.

The Christmas disco rounded off the term. It's always an exciting evening for the children and thoroughly enjoyed by all; especially Mr Cross when he hits the dance floor!

A huge thank you to this term's volunteers who have put together many wonderful events, especially to our class reps who have really done an amazing job. Your support has been tremendous and I thank you for this.

The Spring term will see Movie Night (fingers crossed it won't be snowed off for the third year running!) and we have a whole host of wonderful family events taking place in the Summer term; keep your eyes peeled for further information.

As always, please do get in touch if you would like to be involved in an event; we always welcome any support you are able to offer.

Joey, PTA Chair
pta@berkhampsteadschool.co.uk



Enriching lives

THE BENEFITS OF BRINGING CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY TOGETHER



THE CHILDREN HAVE FORMED LOVELY BONDS WITH THE RESIDENTS AT OAKHAVEN

A chorus of nursery rhymes isn't what you would expect to hear on walking into an elderly people's home, but Oakhaven has its residents doing just that, and Berkhamstead Day Nursery children are there to lead the way. Every month our very own Head of Pre-Prep Music Debbie Sallis takes her enthusiastic group of Wise Bears to the residential care home, and runs her lovely Berky Bear music classes there. The pensioners take great delight in singing and playing along with the young children, and the sessions are clearly beneficial to the wellbeing of both our children and their seniors. The sessions are always happy affairs and the residents seem to be rejuvenated by our young children who love showing the seniors what to do! Both generations look forward to their times together.

But it is not only their love of music that our Day Nursery children share with the elderly at Oakhaven, it is craft sessions too. Joint activities this term have included Autumn crafts and Christmas card making. And our tiniest members of the Day Nursery - the Bear Cubs visit too, for plenty of love and cuddles, often with their parents.

Mollie Dodds, Day Nursery Manager, is a huge advocate of the collaboration, and enthused, "The children have formed lovely bonds with the residents at Oakhaven, and display great empathy and kindness on their visits. Their language and communication skills improve, and it is wonderful for the children to be part of their local community. Offering the children a variety of new experiences and enhancing their social skills is important to us". The collaboration has been so successful that plans are for other rooms in the Nursery to get involved too, and also for the residents to visit us here at the Day Nursery.



KINDERGARTEN

In Kindergarten the children's topic has been 'Bears' and they have been acting out the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears; playing with porridge oats, making bear faces with play dough, counting and sorting bears and creating some lovely collage bears for our display. We all had fun making dens and caves when reading the story 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'.

We have introduced a new programme of 'Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle'; an early writing programme that uses gross motor skills to create a journey where children use movements to music. Each week the activities change; the children have had lots of fun pretending to paint their bodies to become familiar with left and right and name body parts, they have moved in time to music developing coordination, core strength and used large arm movements to develop early writing skills whilst having lots of fun!

Also new to Kindergarten is our tortoise Winston and the children adore him! We are most grateful to Berkhamstead PTA who very kindly raised funds for us to purchase him. There are many benefits for children caring for pets; they can teach children valuable life lessons like responsibility, trust, compassion, respect and patience.

Andrew Bear's Winter Adventure was a great success although he was quite mischievous - hiding in the School grounds and leaving picture clues for the children to follow. We eventually found him guarding our snack and a drink of hot chocolate. The children then participated in fun activities such as making salt dough Christmas decorations, icing cakes and making party hats and glittery stars. MM



THE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY THEIR TOPIC, 'BEARS'



ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

STOP PRESS... OUTSTANDING INSPECTION

We are delighted to report that following an ISI Compliance Inspection, our Early Years Foundation Stage (School and Day Nursery) was rated Outstanding in all areas! Congratulations to everyone involved.





RECEPTION

The beginning of the Autumn term is always exciting as it is a time to get to know all our new children, and so our first topic was 'All About ME'. Activities ranged from the children using their five senses to explore our school grounds, making a fruit salad, and discussing what they would like to be when they grow up. Ideas ranged from being a police officer to a space person! 'Play dough disco' has been a popular introduction to Reception. The aim is to get children ready for writing by warming up the muscles in their hands through different movements and exercises. The children's fine motor skills have noticeably developed as a result of this. And just like Kindergarten, we also introduced 'Squiggle Whilst you Wiggle' to our afternoon regime.

The second part of the term is always exciting and busy leading up to Christmas, and our topic was 'Happy Endings'. We looked at a number of stories, and there were fantastic opportunities to retell stories using story maps, pictures, story actions and puppets. The children loved exploring materials to create houses for the pigs, they used a variety of construction kits to build a bridge strong enough for the goats to cross and they also made and decorated gingerbread men.

The term ended with the annual Early Years Christmas Party day. The morning was filled with games and dancing, and a very special visitor...Father Christmas! This was followed by a party lunch in the classrooms. What a great way to end a very busy term. It certainly proved to be a term filled with very happy endings!

HR-W



Off we go...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS



LIVING RAINFOREST

During our guided tours at the 'Living Rainforest', I was so impressed with the enthusiasm of the Year 5s. They were bursting to ask and answer questions about what they were seeing, we could have spent hours with the guide, not just our allotted 50 minutes! As always it is a fascinating place and it gives the children an insight into the steamy tropical climate as well as a selection of animals and plants that live there. Free time in the afternoon allows the children to revisit all the different areas. The pygmy marmosets, the Channel billed toucan who was most definitely showing off in the morning, the 6 banded armadillo and the blue poisoned dart frogs were very popular and of course could Cinnamon the sloth still be spotted amongst the greenery? The children behaved impeccably, and I can tell from the follow up lessons that they really enjoyed it. Well done to all the Year 5s. LW



FAIRYTALE FARM TRIP

The Reception children experienced a magical day at Fairytale Farm mixing classic fairy tales, animals and adventure play, the children loved everything! At the enchanted 'Christmas Fairytale' event, the children journeyed from the South Pole to the North Pole and visited a Fairytale Castle along the way. They met some elves, visited the Toymaker's cosy log cabin and saw Santa's sleigh ready to launch into a clear night sky of twinkling stars. They then walked through the Secret Forest to meet Father Christmas himself in his beautiful Grotto. Other Christmas activities included Christmas cookie decorating and a festive-themed hunt. The children were sent home with a 'Merry Christmas' send off from the resident elves. HR-W



VINEY HILL

At the start of this term, Year 5 went on their first residential to Viney Hill. This residential is all about team work and pupils taking part in activities with other children within the year group that they might not know well. Activities included shelter building, climbing, crate stack, tunnelling, bush craft, low ropes, bridge building and a night hike. The weather was superb, and everyone had a go at each activity. I was impressed with how well each group worked together by the end of the trip. Well done, Year 5, it was a successful trip! DB



STEAM MUSEUM

Year 6, resplendent in their 1930s clothes, were evacuated to Swindon. They "walked in the shoes" of children from WWII and experienced the difficulties they would have encountered. They spent time in a communal air raid shelter, listening to the air raid siren and the sound of bombs from the Blitz. They then examined artefacts and got a sense of the difficulties of the time. They even sang songs from that period to raise the spirits. Next was an opportunity to sit in a railway carriage, examine the contents of a child's suitcase, and try on a gas mask. Back to modern times, we used iPads to photograph the children and filtered them to give a 1930s look. This was great learning experience for the children. PMCC

SCIENCE FUN

Years 5 and 6 enjoyed a fantastic couple of hours at a 'Science Spectacular' event organised by Cheltenham College. Plenty of exciting experiments were demonstrated - including firework dissection, phenol whips and combustion in liquid oxygen - and the event was fully interactive so some of our pupils were lucky enough to get hands-on with the experiments. Thanks to Cheltenham College for inviting us. TM



LITERATURE FESTIVAL

The Literature Festival was another resounding success for the Prep department. This year the Year 3s took part in a workshop and learnt all about how books were made. The children were used in the interactive demonstrations. Year 4 went and saw the fantastic Chris Riddle who talked to them about his influences - most notably wine gums - as well as sharing with them his love of illustration. Year 5 were taken into the magical world of dragons and wizards by Cressida Cowell who explained to the children how her childhood summers on a remote and isolated Scottish Island had influenced her award-winning books. Candy Gourlay discussed her book 'Bone Talk' with Year 6 whilst explaining the importance of her culture and her own heritage when writing. This was an important and thought-provoking message. All the children enjoyed their trips and it was wonderful hearing the subsequent discussions. BE



This term, Pre-Prep have been visiting the coldest places on Earth - the polar regions. The differences between the Arctic and the Antarctic have been explored. The children were keen to find out about the people that choose to live in these frozen lands and how they survive in such cold temperatures - brrrrrr!

Year 1 started talking about cold things and were keen to discuss ice-cream! Of course, this led to an ice-cream tasting session and some fantastic, imaginative ice-cream designs. Arctic based stories led the children to write fantastic character profiles and descriptions using adjectives and similes. The children were amazed when 'Oona', an Inuit from the story 'Arctic Adventure' came to visit them at school. The children found out all about life in the Arctic and then had a go at 'hot seating', where they enjoyed 'being' Oona, and answering questions from the rest of the class.

Year 2 enjoyed imagining they were Captain Scott when a tent appeared in the classroom with a small journal and other artefacts from the time. We all agreed it would have been freezing and wet in the sleeping bags and clothes from a hundred years ago.

Pre-Prep have all loved finding out about which animals could live in the Polar regions, and they all know why polar bears and penguins cannot be friends! They have been fascinated by polar bears with their amazing fur, arctic hares with small ears and the arctic foxes who change the colour of their fur depending on the season. These polar animals have inspired some fantastic art work! AS



PRE-PREP'S ENRICHMENT WEEK

'Enrichment Week' just after half term was truly unforgettable! Diwali Day was led by Rishik R, and the children found out all about the meaning of Diwali and its traditions. The children dressed up in traditional costume, Year 1 made and tasted lassi - made from banana or mango - and Year 2 made traditional fudge sweets. Other activities included making traditional Rangoli patterns using a range of rice and pulses, and beautiful Mehndi designs were created.

Guy Fawkes night on the 5th inspired Year 1 to write super firework senses poems which included several examples of onomatopoeia. Meanwhile Year 2 had great fun creating paint splashing firework pictures, inspired by American abstract expressionist painter, Jackson Pollock.

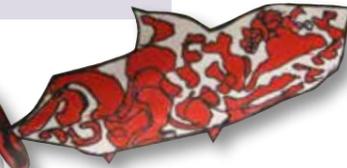
Mid-week, the children enjoyed a trip to Bristol Zoo for the 'Polar Experience', and it was another memorable day for us all. (See page p9 for a report).

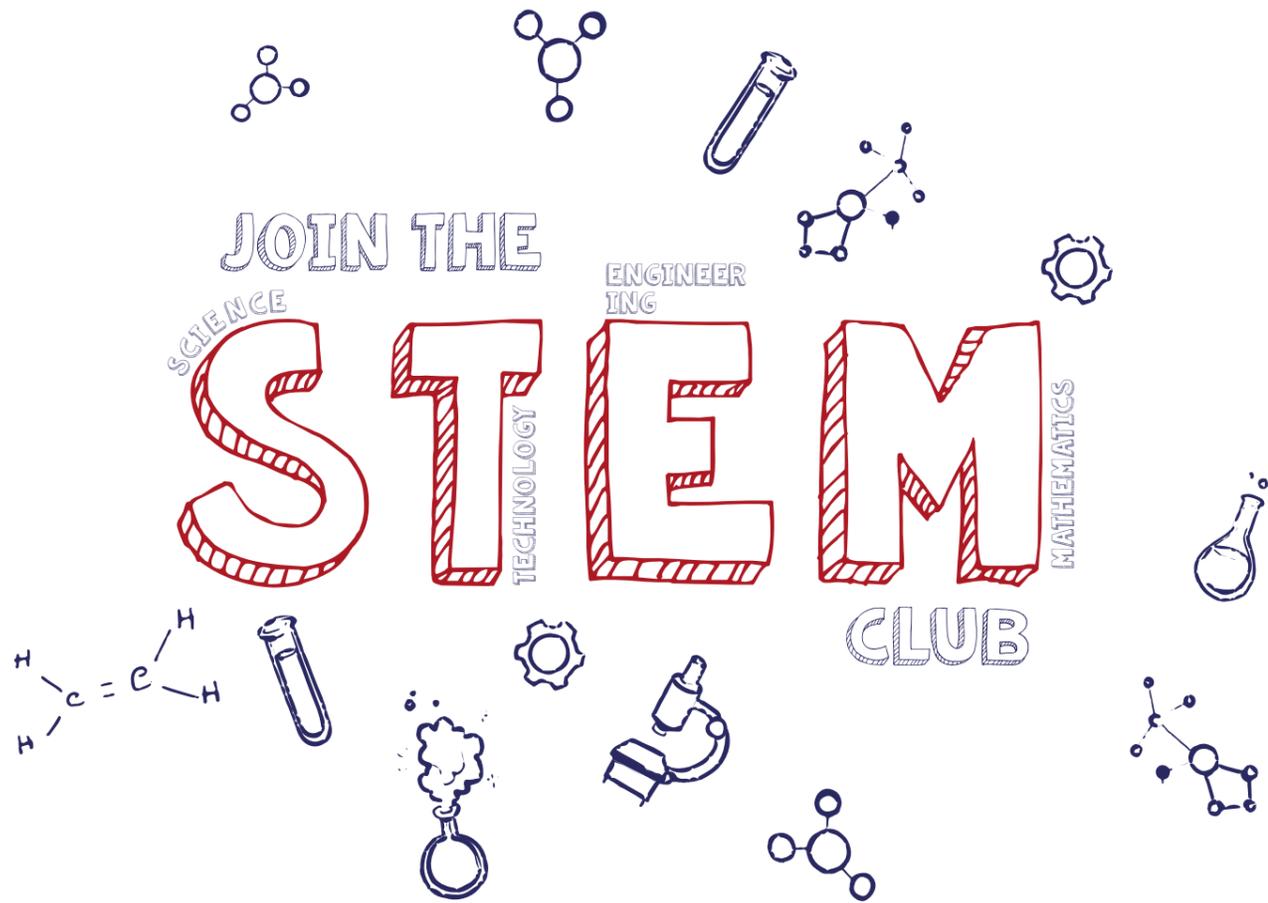
Towards the end of the week, Pre-Prep children transformed into scientists for the day. The term's Polar theme continued with various experiments involving ice. The children predicted, experimented and evaluated. Year 1 tried to find the fastest way to melt ice while Year 2 found ways to stop the ice from melting. Year 1 also tried insulating their hands with fur, feathers and blubber to understand how Arctic animals keep themselves warm.

The week ended with a Drama Day for Year 1 and a Maths Day for Year 2.

We have witnessed Year 1's fantastic use of voice, body language and facial expressions, and our delightful Year 6 helping Year 2 brush up on their maths skills by playing games and completing challenges with their younger counterparts.

Well done for working so hard this week, Pre-Prep! AS





THE COUNTRY HAS A SHORTAGE OF PEOPLE WELL QUALIFIED IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHS SUBJECTS, AND IT IS OUR AIM TO INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF STEM LEARNERS

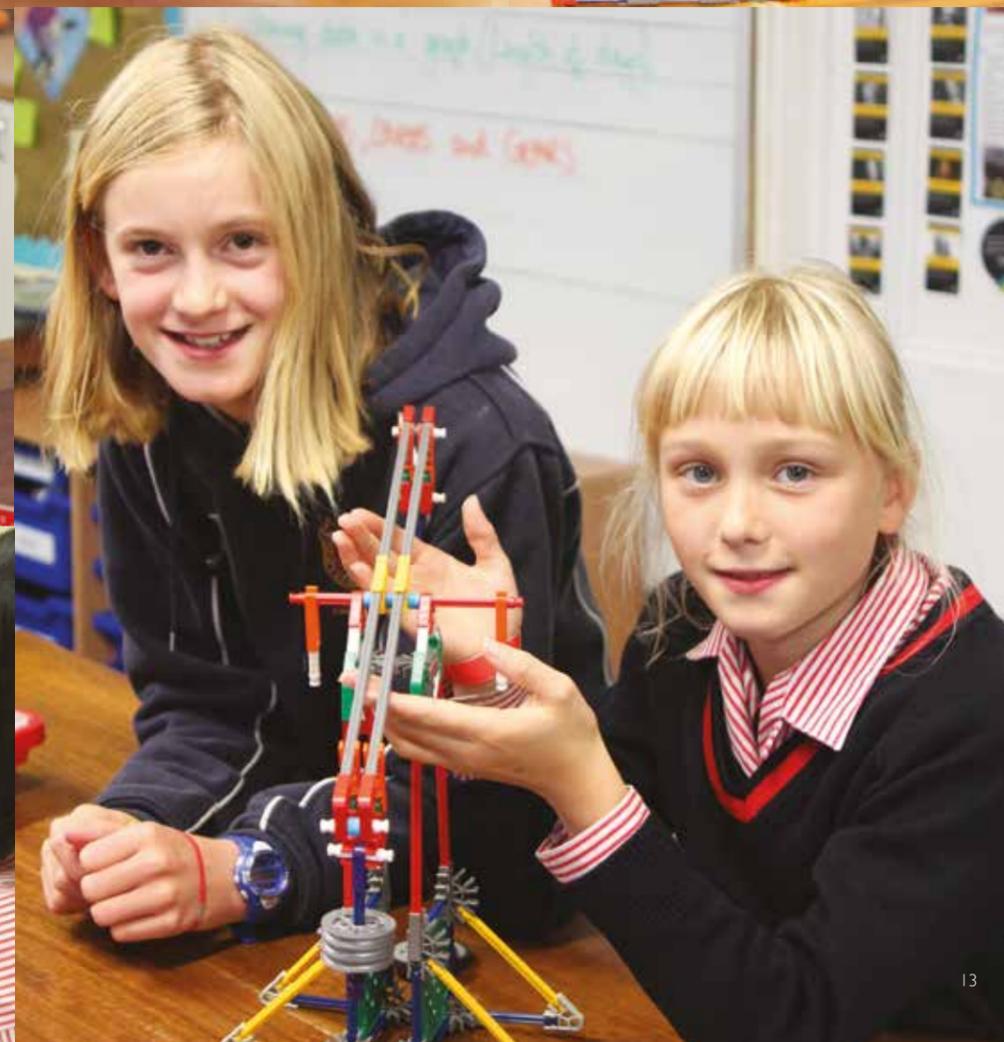
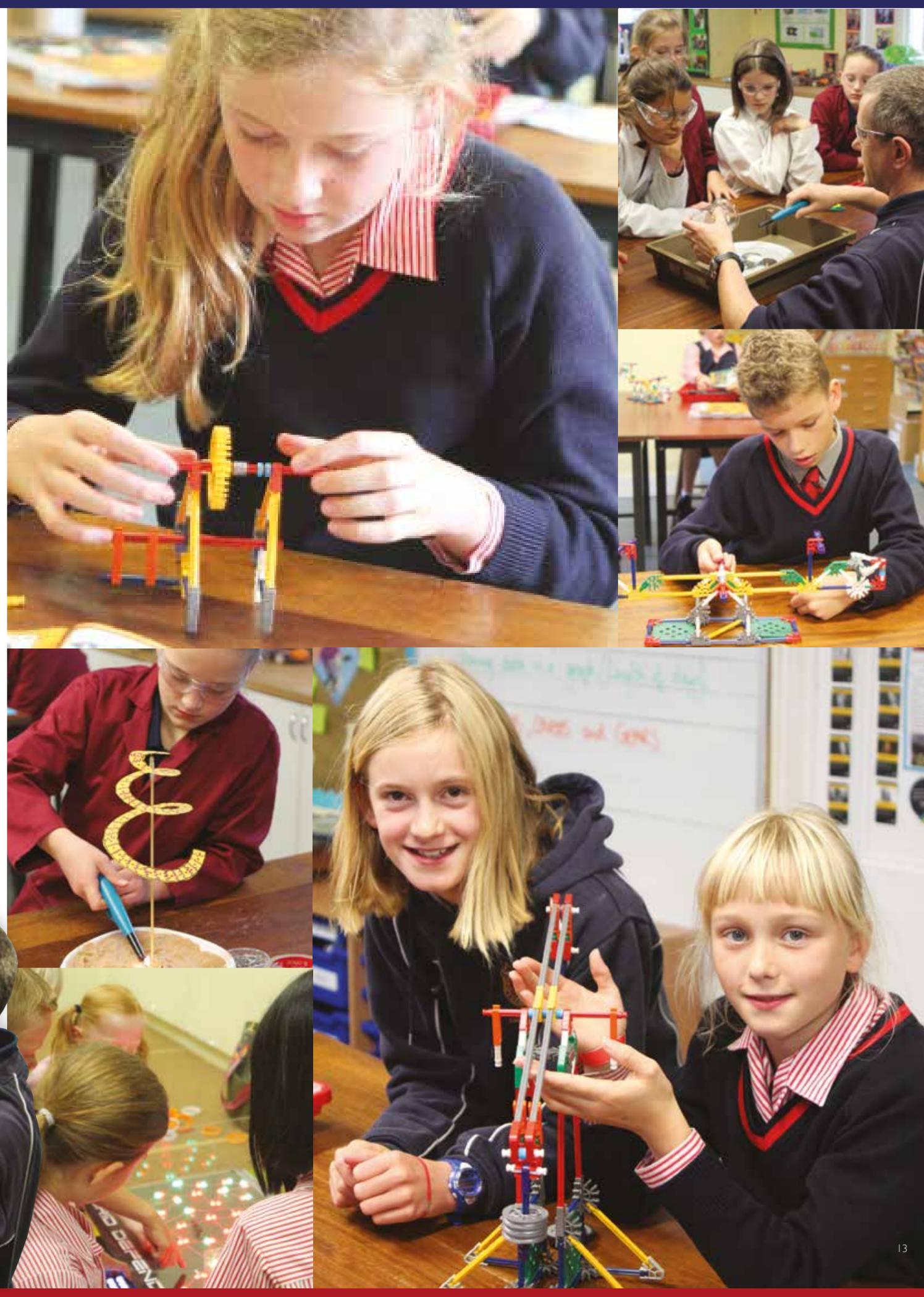
As enthusiastic advocates of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), we were really excited to launch a new after-school STEM club this term. In the past we have organised dedicated STEM days and have been lucky enough to welcome volunteers from GCHQ and NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre), and other high profile companies to School to inspire our young people to engage in STEM activities. These ambassadors have brought with them bags of expertise and enthusiasm, not to mention all manner of exciting high tech equipment for our pupils to tinker with! And on these special, off-timetabled days, the playground has been awash with pupils and teachers eagerly dismantling old electrical equipment such as vacuum cleaners, computers, irons and kettles in an exciting quest to see how these everyday items are put together and how they work.

Since these mornings have proved such a talking point with our pupils, we were confident that an after-school club would be a popular addition to our busy timetable of extra-curricular activities. The club is aimed at our oldest pupils in Years 5 & 6, and the sign-up was indeed as popular as predicted. So the Head of Science Mr Morpew had to organise his sessions on a termly rota so that everyone who wanted to participate could. The children have turned their hands to a number of really fun practical investigations such as making balloon car rockets, thermal spinners and K'NEX models, and along the way have developed a huge enthusiasm for the

subject, as well as a valuable set of life-long skills including problem solving, working as part of a team, reasoning, and critical and creative thinking.

Mr Morpew has been delighted with the children's enthusiasm for his club and commented, "Pupils always enjoy finding out scientific things for themselves. The pupils who have been in STEM club have thrown themselves enthusiastically into the challenges presented. Hopefully we are helping to foster a love for STEM subjects for the rest of their lives." Plans are already being made for another dedicated STEM day to take place during the Summer term.

Any parents who have an activity suitable for our pupils, and are willing to come in for the Summer STEM day, please see Mr Morpew.



SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

ARE THEY A WASTE OF TIME,
OR TRULY BENEFICIAL TO OUR COMMUNITY?
DEPUTY HEAD GILL AGG EXPLORES
THEIR RELEVANCE



A GOOD 'SING' FIRST
THING IN THE MORNING
IS OF IMMENSE PHYSICAL
AND MENTAL VALUE



It is a long-established tradition, usually at the start of the school day, to spend twenty minutes or so in assembly - a gathering together of class, year group, department or whole school - but does assembly have any real value these days?

Whether or not the children (and staff) have any religious leanings, there are some obvious reasons why assemblies are a useful part of school life. From a practical point of view, it is a convenient time for notices and instructions for the day to be relayed. On a deeper level, it is an opportunity to come together as a

group, instilling a sense of belonging in everyone involved. Perhaps most importantly, it is a time to be mindful - to enjoy a moment of stillness and calm before the many activities involved in a busy school day.

Mr Cross - who takes Prep assembly on Monday and Pre-Prep assembly on Tuesday - always delivers meaningful and relevant assemblies, making good use of pictures and short film clips to illustrate valuable life lessons on a variety of subjects. These are usually concerned with such things as positive character traits and behaviour, personal wellbeing, world

and environmental issues or charismatic people. The children are always invited to answer questions and contribute their ideas and they do this with confidence; we teachers are constantly amazed at the depth of their perception and understanding. Mr Cross also knows the immense value - both physical and mental - of a good 'sing' first thing in the morning, and he himself joins in with gusto!

Assemblies are varied throughout the week. On Fridays, the Prep teachers get the chance to talk about issues that interest them; this term, for example, Mr Cole has given a fascinating talk

entitled 'The Hero Rats of Cambodia' (if you don't know about these mini-superheroes, try Googling them - it will alter your perspective on these otherwise despised creatures!), Mrs Holland has talked passionately about three inspirational young people - Katie Stagliano, Jordan Romero and Greta Thunberg - and Mrs Drewitt has highlighted invisible disabilities and the need for kindness and tolerance towards others.

Assemblies also offer the opportunity to celebrate children's achievements both within school and elsewhere. Broad though our curriculum is, we don't include activities such as riding, martial arts or Irish dancing so we like to recognise and share these other talents and admire the trophies and medals children have been awarded for their efforts elsewhere. Children love to receive certificates as they are a Commendation for almost anything special they have done and these are handed out by their House Captains at Wednesday's assembly; the Prep's Bonus system means that there is almost always someone who comes up to receive a Bonus badge...and there are ten to achieve over the four Prep years, culminating

in the much-sought-after blue and red striped Berky badge for 1,500 bonuses. The Thursday assembly, too, is a celebration as match reports are read out and teams applauded, and sometimes there is the opportunity to hear a Writer of the Week's work read out.

In my Friday Pre-Prep Celebration assembly, I read a story with a message - my favourite characters Frog and Toad regularly feature here! Again, even the very youngest children's thoughts and comments on the story can be surprisingly perceptive. We sing 'Happy Birthday' to the relevant children and one child from each class is singled out for a special award: 'Wow' certificates and the honour of taking Berky Bear home for the weekend for the youngest children and Certificates of Achievement for the Year 1 and 2 children. At the end of each half term, the Sally Lee Kindness Cup is given out to a child who the teachers feel has consistently shown genuine consideration and care towards others; this is probably the most important award we make and the children who have received it (and their parents) have invariably been overwhelmed by the honour.

Sometimes, guest speakers lead an assembly. They could be Heads of other schools, representatives of charities, successful

sportsmen and women or representatives of the creative arts; all offer an inspiring and thought-provoking start to the day and act as positive role models for the children. This term, we have welcomed a Police Constable from Schools Beat - who arrested Mrs Bareham temporarily - and, in the lead up to the general Election, the Cheltenham representatives of the three main political parties - Alex Chalk, George Penny and Max Wilkinson - who were subjected to four searching questions set by the children prior to our own Berky election on December 12th.

My favourite assemblies, however, have to be the ones taken by the children themselves; it is so impressive to see them explaining about 'Berky's Got Talent' or, as in the case of Darcey and Bea-Bea this term, the charity for which they wish to fundraise. Our very first Eco Warrior Leader, Jack, assisted by other members of his Eco-Warrior team, has spoken passionately about what we can do to save our planet more than once this term, each time using a powerpoint presentation he has prepared. The confidence the children gain from public speaking such as this is immense.

Twenty minutes a day well spent, I reckon!

News

FROM PREP



ELECTION SPECIAL

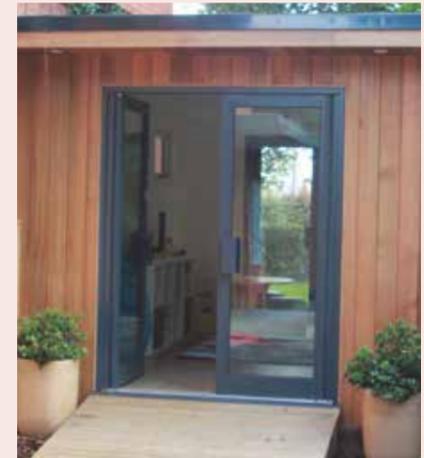
The Prep School was delighted to welcome three candidates hopeful of being elected the next MP for Cheltenham, to three separate assemblies one week in November. Conservative candidate Alex Chalk, Labour candidate George Penny and Max Wilkinson for the Lib Dems addressed the Prep pupils and staff, and faced a number of gritty questions posed by our hardish-hitting Year 6 political journalists. The four questions asked of the politicians were the same, and they had not seen the questions beforehand. No stone was left unturned by our incisive pupils: "Why should we vote for you?" "What does your party consider the most important thing?" "What is the biggest mistake your party has ever made?" and "What do you strongly believe in?" Having considered the answers carefully, Years 3-6 took part in their own mock election on December 12th. Everyone voted and the Liberal Democrats won the majority, followed by the Conservatives and Labour.



WELLBEING POD

After what seemed like an endless wait, (Mrs Bareham fought a long and brave battle with the council), the 'Wellbeing' pod was installed on the Prep side during the Summer holidays, and was up and running by the time the children came back to school. Clad in cedar wood, it is a handsome beast, and sits prettily alongside the Prep building. Inside is lovely too, a tranquil space, furnished with items paid for by last year's Year 6 leavers.

The pod provides a quiet space for pupils at break time - an occasional escape from the hustle and bustle of the playground. Or sometimes it proves a useful space for children to talk through their disagreements with one another or with a teacher. Its use is carefully monitored by the teacher on playground duty. Only five children are allowed in it at a time, and they must explain to the teacher why they would like to use it. And although its primary purpose is for the children's wellbeing, it is a private space for parents to talk to teachers too. Mrs Bareham is Head of Pastoral Care and is thrilled with the installation. But true to form, she is keen to further develop the area. Plans are in development for a wellbeing/eco garden to be laid behind the pod, and she and her school council are planning a competition to design this. Thank you to the PTA for so generously funding this wonderful space.



CHESS SUCCESS

Another term, another busy chess scene at Berkhamstead. Both the Y3 and Y456 clubs have been thriving and more chess sets had to be purchased to cope with all the extra numbers playing weekly.

The first business of the year was to select a chess captain. Rupert G and Griff L had rotated their positions at the top of the team last year so it was an easy decision to name them as joint captains. Three matches were played before Christmas. A brace of league fixtures away versus Charlton Kings and St. Gregory the Great resulted in two wins - an ideal start to our District League campaign. One Knockout Cup match was played and our 5.5-0.5 win against Holy Apostles has secured our team a semi-final berth against Richard Pate. Well played to Griff and Rupert as well as Oli S, Jonathan B, Ethan A and Harry W for all their efforts and endeavours for the A team so far this year.

Next term sees key matches in both chess clubs, several congresses including the annual Berky congress and the business end of the season for our skilful A team. MC

HOUSE CAPTAINS

Our Prep House Captains are chosen because we deem them to be excellent role models. They do a superb job of leading and motivating their house mates. Cressie F and Becky F are House Captains for St George's, Alex D and Otto B, St David's, Darcey C and Jasmine M, St Patrick's and Ethan A and Griff L are House Captains for St Andrew's. Congratulations!



MUSIC NEWS

In September, 41 new instrumentalists started lessons with our peripatetic music teachers in school, bringing the total learning in Prep to 101. In October the most advanced string players were invited to a marvellous Orchestral Day at Dean Close School led by the inimitable Carducci Quartet. This is a tremendous day of hard work in sectional rehearsals culminating in a thrilling performance for parents in the Bacon Theatre. Once again, Berky pupils demonstrated considerable strengths in concentration and perseverance and we were the largest yet youngest group from a visiting Prep school. The end of the term saw huge success in music examinations - a remarkable demonstration of excellent preparation by teachers and thorough practice by pupils. We are also thrilled that Griff L (Trombone) has gained a place in the National Children's Orchestra U11 for 2020. Well done to all our musicians!

MUSIC EXAM RESULTS

- Debut Grade:** Michael C (Guitar*)
- Grade 1:** Rupert G (Piano*), Mateo S (Double Bass*), Otto S (Trumpet*), Patrick D (Drum Kit**), Will J (Cornet**), Hannah D (Violin**)
- Grade 2:** Ethan A (Violin**)
- Grade 3:** Charlotte B (Cornet), Henry R (Cello*), Will S (Cello*), Bea Bea M-D (Singing**)
- Grade 4:** Will S (Guitar*), Will C (Guitar*)
- Grade 6:** Grace W (Violin*)

*Denotes - Pass with Merit **Denotes - Pass with Distinction





Off we go...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS



WE THE CURIOUS

We The Curious is one of the UK's largest science centres and is home to the country's only 3D Planetarium. Here Y5 pupils tell us what they thought of their visit.

'At We the Curious you can do so many experiments and find out a lot of new things! I definitely recommend going.' Lottie A

'I dipped a metal ring into some detergent. Then I pulled it up over my head and I had a bubble the size of me all around myself.' Henry R

'I like the magnetic sand because it was cool when it made a sand bridge. It was also cool that you would pull it off and it would just fall apart. Even though the sand was annoying when it was stuck between my fingers, I thought it was one of the best things.' Connor S

DINKY STREET

Kindergarten children went on an exciting visit to Dinky Street; a play centre with a difference! This fun experience allowed the children to expand their vocabulary and through pretend playing with others they could re-enact stories, organise and give thought to their play.

Each room is set out as a different role play area to

explore: a hairdresser's salon, builders' yard, supermarket and doctor's surgery. The children loved pretending to be in real situations that are familiar to them, we heard lots of interesting conversations and watched wonderful imaginary play. MM



CHEPSTOW CASTLE

The Year 4s had a wonderful trip to Chepstow Castle. We learned about the various ways of attacking castles and the children were able to re-enact an attack using a model trebuchet. They also had the chance to handle some of the armour such as mail shirts and helmets, as well as handle a variety of weapons. We then toured the castle seeing the various defensive attributes of the castle such as murder holes and arrow loops. We even got to see and touch what is said to be the oldest castle door in Europe. The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves and really added to their historical knowledge. PMcC

BRISTOL ZOO

Pre-Prep's trip to Bristol Zoo for the 'Polar Experience' was certainly memorable. The children were greeted by a Polar Explorer. They were surprised to discover that she was wearing 6 layers of clothing! Everyone was excited to handle a variety of polar artefacts including reindeer antlers, arctic fox fur, a whale bone and an extremely long narwhal tooth! The highlight had to be meeting Misha, the polar bear! The children were keen to dress up as penguins to help them discover how penguins work together to keep warm. They loved pretending to feed their baby penguins too - yuck! AS

RIVERS & ICT TRIP

Following an enormous amount of rain, I was sure this year's Year 6 trip was going to be quite spectacular in many respects. This was evident from our first stop to see the River Severn at Broadoak. The river was swirling and flowing incredibly fast and carrying lots of debris. The children armed with their iPads took pictures and videos of river features at each stop and had to describe what they could see. Our next stop, Cannop Ponds, was negotiated without anyone slipping over in the water; and then on to Symonds Yat which as always was amazing. The fantastic Autumn colours illuminated by brilliant sunshine and the River Wye in full flood were quite a sight. Our last stop was overlooking the Severn estuary and old M48 bridge from the viewpoint and then back to Berkyl. I hope the Year 6 children enjoyed the trip and appreciated the wonderful countryside we have around us. LW



STARRING EARLY YEARS

★★★★★
 "A TRULY BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE. FANTASTIC SINGING AND MOVES! LOTS OF SMILING FACES - A JOYFUL PERFORMANCE"
 MISS KEEGAN, HEAD OF PE

★★★★★
 "THE CHRISTMAS STORY WAS RETOLD CLEARLY AND CONFIDENTLY - AN ENCHANTING PERFORMANCE."
 MRS AGG, DEPUTY HEAD



A STAR OVER BETHLEHEM

Our Christmas Concert 'A Star Over Bethlehem' was a huge success due to the children performing so wonderfully with their narrating and singing the lovely songs which re-told the traditional Christmas story. Kindergarten children made wonderful shepherds and sheep, angelic angels and very sparkly stars! Reception children undertook the narration very well and all spoke in clear voices and learnt their lines by heart. All parents and staff were very proud of them. HR-W





STARRING PRE-PREP



“THE CHILDREN WERE DAZZLING! BAAAA-RILLIANT PERFORMANCES BY ALL, VERY WELL DONE EWE LOT!”
MRS JOHN, PRE-PREP TA

“PRE-PREP LEAVE AUDIENCE SHOUTING FOR MYRRH”
MR COLE, PREP TEACHER



HEY EWE

What do you get if you mix a curious sheep, sleepy sheep and their shepherds, busy town folk, trendy angels, some wise men and their camels and an expectant mother, a father and their donkey?... It's Key Stage 1's lively production of 'Hey Ewe'. The children sang their hearts out and spoke beautifully in the Church to retell the Christmas Story from the perspective of a very inquisitive little sheep! Year 2 children accompanied Mrs Sallis with a range of instruments, while Year 1 children provided a rousing choral contribution to the performance. All the teachers were extremely proud of the children, who had the audience tapping their feet and clapping along to the catchy tunes. It was a lovely way to finish off a fantastic term! LL-K



“A MAGICAL CANDLELIT SERVICE! A JOY TO HEAR THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CAROL BY OUR VERY OWN GILL AGG - IT BROUGHT A TEAR TO MY EYE!”
MISS LATHAM, PRE-PREP TA

STARRING PREP



“BERKY PULLS OFF AN AMAZING EVENING OF CAROLS. ANOTHER MEMORABLE CHRISTMAS CONCERT BY CANDLELIGHT”
MRS HOLLAND, DIRECTOR OF STUDIES



CANDLELIT SERVICE

Ding Dong! Merrily on high...” In the glorious surroundings of All Saints’ Church, Berky voices rang out at the annual Carol Service. Year 6 began their beautiful candle procession to the altar singing “God is with us, Alleluia!” and the atmosphere was set for a memorable service of carols and readings narrating and reflecting on the story of the Nativity. All the biblical verses and secular poems were delivered clearly and confidently by every pupil in Year 6. The carols performed by Junior Choir with percussion accompaniments were interesting and varied in style. VoxBox sang out with great vitality in ‘Saviour’s Day’ but the greatest moments of awe and wonder were inspired by Mrs Agg’s very moving carol ‘The Christmas Star’. Telling of how the star led Wise Men to worship in the stable at Bethlehem, this beautiful composition included obbligato parts for cello and glockenspiel with 2 part voices - a truly inspiring piece. PM





U8 | RUGBY

Both the Buffaloes and the Bisons had very good seasons. Each team improved as the term went by with all of the boys developing their handling, passing and tagging skills. The difference between winning and losing a tag game is minimal so we must be proud of our results. Next term brings us football where increased team work will do us well for our matches. A good term of rugby, well done! TM
Bisons: Freddy B, Sebastian C, Tom C-G, William H, Floyd R, Benjamin S, Isaac S
Buffaloes: Ben A, Charles C, Harry H, Cameron J, Bertie L, Gideon T, Joseph W



U9A | RUGBY

Despite 3 games being cancelled this term due to the poor weather, we still managed to play a very good fixture list of games. Captaincy was shared weekly with all boys working together as a unit and always supporting each other. Wins at RPS, Hatherop, St Edward's, Wycliffe and King's showed the boys' development as a strong team, often playing games at a very high tempo and scoring tries from several phases of play. Retaining possession at the breakdown improved as did their passing and tackling despite the latter not always being used effectively. Our best results came at the Dean Close Festival; despite drawing against Dean Close and Cheltenham College Prep, we showed that we could mix it with good teams possessing much larger squads. The As have been a pleasure to take on fixtures this term and they should be extremely proud of their achievements. Well done, boys. SM
U9A Team: George B, Richard D, Jacob D-T, Max H, Benjamin J, Felix S, Otto S

U9B | RUGBY

The Bs once again proved an old adage that the strength of every good A team lies in the strength of your B team and the Bs certainly had players that could have, and will, I'm quite certain, make that step up in the coming years. Wins at RPS, Beaudesert, Hatherop, St Edward's and Dean Close and only one loss to St Hugh's proved that this was a side that possessed players who could pass well, tackle and score tries. They often played some very entertaining

rugby, developing and strengthening their skills throughout the season, and should be very proud of their excellent results this term. The Bs have been a pleasure to take on fixtures this term and they should be extremely proud of their achievements. Well done, boys. SM
U9B Team: Reuben A, Samuel B, Oscar C-S, Jacob F, Eddie M, Barnaby W and Max Y



U10A | RUGBY

The U10A team have had a fantastic season of rugby and they have really improved from the first match they had at King's, Gloucester. They have demonstrated good teamwork and their ball handling and tackling has improved significantly. Rucking has been a new skill for them, and I have been impressed with how quickly they learnt this and used it when needed in matches. The Rugby Festival at Dean Close was a success and here the boys demonstrated just how far they have come when they were able to compete with bigger schools, with bigger boys, and play well against them. Kitebrook was the last game of the season and this was the best game they played in. The rugby was superb: brilliant passing, excellent teamwork and strong tackling. I was impressed with the boys and the result was well deserved. There have been some great performances from all members of the team; they've been hungry for success in every match and even when they've been down they've worked hard together to try and bounce back to victory. Well done, boys, you should be proud of how well you have played this season. DB
U10A Team: Freddie B, Michael C, Will C, Patrick D, Oliver M, Henry R, Albie B, Henry T, Harry A, Will J, Harry M, Mateo S

U10B | RUGBY

The Under 10B team have had a fantastic season. They have come up against some very strong opposition but have persevered and definitely improved as the year progressed. Strong direct running has had our opponents on the back foot during all fixtures which resulted in great wins against St Edward's and RPS whilst also gaining a draw against a determined Kitebrook side. Our tackling has improved since September and our defensive line is more secure and solid, restricting our opponents to limited chances. The players have bonded together, working well as a team, and can now look to make further improvements next year as they will face fresh challenges. A pleasing year and one they can all be proud of. AK
U10B Team: Robert A, Albie B-C, Charles C, Rufus H, William J, Harry M, Luke R, William S, Mateo S, Conor S (chief supporter) and Hugo W



U11A | RUGBY

The U11A team have enjoyed an outstanding season. They have been unbeaten throughout and played some superb running rugby. They have improved greatly from September, playing a fast rucking game and have demonstrated the ability to offload and create many try scoring opportunities. The boys scored an amazing 76 tries in 10 games. Defence has been excellent, with each of the boys showing total commitment. They have been well organised and developed great technique and tactical awareness.

Along the way there have been close games which the boys always found a way to win. Victories against Richard Pate and St Edward's stand out. In both games it was a very even contest, with only one score separating the teams. Also strong in the memory was the superb rugby they played at the Dean Close Festival with wins against Cricklade and Cheltenham Prep and a draw against Dean Close. Each of the boys has brought something to the team. Jonny and Lincoln have been excellent in attack and have proved elusive in the open spaces, scoring lots of tries. Otto, Jack, Ellis and Alex have been superb in defence, putting in some tremendous hits and often turning over opposition balls. Griff, Will and Alessio have been strong taking the ball forward and disruptive in rucks and mauls. Seb and Max have both been superb. They have consistently scored tries, made strong runs, hit rucks and tackled anything that moves. This is just to mention some of the boys' skills and abilities. More than all of this has been how supportive they have been of each other and the excellent spirit with which they have played. The boys have been an absolute pleasure to coach, always willing to listen and learn and always great fun. Well done, boys! PMcC
U11 Team (all awarded colours): Otto B, William B, Max C, Alex D, Jack E, Ellis F-M, L Hunt, Sebastien L, Griff L, Alessio T, Jonny W
Outstanding awards: Sebastien L, Max C, Lincoln H, Jonny W

RUGBY STATS

	PLAYED	WON	LOST	DRAWN
U8 BISONS	12	6	1	5
U8 BUFFALOES	12	5	4	3
U9A	10	5	2	3
U9B	9	7	1	0
U10A	12	7	4	1
U10B	7	3	3	1
U11A	10	9	0	1
U11B	10	8	2	0

U11B | RUGBY

The U11 boys have worked hard all season in training and have grown in confidence and skill. They have shown character and determination all term and have been one of the best U11 teams we have had at Berky. They all know their strengths and use these wisely on the pitch. The key ball winners are Harry and Oli with their great rucking and mauling respectively. The top tacklers have been Ellis (who was promoted to the A team) and Alex. Skilful running has come from them all but Ethan, Rupert, Otto (who also represented the A team for a few games) and Jonathan have all shown fast running ability and scored many tries. The most improved player is Archie who in recent matches has broken down defences superbly with his elusive running. They all played unselfishly, always looking to get the pass away that would allow a teammate to score. In the tournament at the end of term, the team came up against some top opposition including Cheltenham College and Dean Close and won well. Superb! RC
U11B Team: Ethan A, Jonathan B, Otto B, Ellis, F-M, Rupert G, Archie L-B, Oliver S, Alex S, Harry W



U8 | HOCKEY

The Year 3 girls had a good start to the hockey season, and progressed well, working hard to improve their game. Many have settled into positions, naturally falling into defence or out on the wing. I have been impressed by the teamwork during many of the matches and the positive attitudes the girls have shown to their learning. We managed two wins whilst playing Richard Pate School towards the end of the season when we had gained a greater understanding of positions. All the staff have been impressed with how hard some of them have worked to transfer their skills. We drew a couple of games against Dean Close and Richard Pate with our third team. Well done, girls, I look forward to next year. CK
U8 Squad: Cressida B, Emily B, Eleanor B, Sophia B, Emma C, Nina C, Esi D, Valentine D, Esha D, Georgia E, Polly E, Emilia F, Alina G, Frankie H, Carly H, Tatty H, Chloe H, Amelia J, Yvie L, Chloe M, Esther M, Alba N, Erin P, Daniela R-L, Alexa S, Violet W



U9 | HOCKEY

I have been thoroughly impressed by the attitude and the sporting behaviour of the Under 9s at hockey this term AND all teams have had a great season. The U9s have played 10 matches overall and attended 1 tournament (where we were winners of our group and second overall). The girls started the season strongly with excellent wins at Beaudesert and Dean Close. A further win was achieved at St Edward's. The losses did outnumber the wins, but it is very much to the credit of all the Berky girls that their team spirit remained strong and their support of each other was excellent. CMcC
U9 Squad: Georgia A, Ellie A, Zoe B, Ellie B, Nancy B, Thea C, Katy C, Hannah D, Sophia E, Chloe E, Lucinda F, Isabel G, Maisie G, Vivienne H, Kitty H, Isla J, Ena M-L, Katy P, Primmy P, Isla R, Zoe S, Alice S, Hettie W

HOCKEY STATS

	PLAYED	WON	LOST	DRAWN
U8	9	2	2	5
U9	10	3	0	7
U10	11	5	3	3
U11	11	1	3	7



U10 | HOCKEY

Both teams have enjoyed some successes. The A team have enjoyed quite a successful season with three strong wins, one drawn match and one loss against a very strong Richard Pate squad. The B team have enjoyed wins against RPS and St Edward's, two drawn matches and two losses. The girls worked hard to develop some set play and were really beginning to understand positioning on the field. As the season progressed, so did their teamwork and they have become a tight squad, playing in different positions when required. A great season girls! JH
U10 Squad: Serena A, Anna A, Lottie A, Jennella A, Rosemary B, Lilah C, Uma C, Isabella E, Matilda E, Hannah H, Holly H, Matilda H, Aurielle M, Bea Bea M-D, Beatrice N, Elodie O, Lucy P



U11 | HOCKEY

Both the U11 teams had a good start to the season playing St Edward's and working well in their teams. The U11A worked hard during the St Edward's game, winning 3-1; it looked like a promising start. We had a couple of draws throughout the season, games that were hard but our defence played a vital role, keeping a clean sheet for us! The teamwork was great throughout all matches; although we lost a couple of games the results didn't reflect the game, we just couldn't finish off our shots. The B team had a steady start to the season, working well in their game against St Edward's earlier in the season. Cheltenham College Prep School was a good game: lots of movement up and down the pitch. Well done to all the girls, it has been a good season. Good luck next year in your hockey, girls. CK
U11 Squad: Isla A, Daisy B, Poppy B, Charlotte B, Joy C, Hazel C, Darcey C, Cressie F, Becky F, Isabel K, Viera M, Phoebe M, Jasmine M, Kimora P, Eleri W, Grace W, Bella W
Colours awarded to: Isla A, Charlotte B, Joy C, Becky F, Jasmine M, Eleri W, Grace W and Bella W.
Outstanding badges: Isla A, Becky F, Grace W



SPHEROS - A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

We are tremendously grateful to our wonderful 'Friends of Berkhamstead' PTA, who generously funded a set of 18 'Spheros' at the beginning of the Autumn term. Spheros are tennis ball-sized robots that pupils can program using mobile devices such as iPads, and they can move in any direction, spin, flip and change colour. They are proving a brilliant learning resource for children all over the School during their Computing lessons, and the Day Nursery children have benefitted from them too. Mr Banks, Head of Computing, enthused, "The Spheros are fantastic. They are packed with sensors and give children the opportunity to code something physical and see the results rather than just seeing what happens on screen." Many thanks to the PTA.



BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL AND DAY NURSERY



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