

BERKHAMPTSTEAD
SCHOOL
MAGAZINE

AUTUMN TERM
2020

BLAZER



Christmas Productions

OUR PUPILS SHINE
IN THE LIMELIGHT

Berky Enrichment

IMAGINATIVE,
INSPIRING AND FUN!

Eco Matters

DREAMING OF A
GREEN CHRISTMAS!

INSIDE: SPOTLIGHT ON JAMES AGG | DAY NURSERY NEWS | KUBO ROBOTS



Thoughts FROM THE HEAD

What an extraordinary term! Despite the COVID restrictions and the incessant hand washing and sanitisation, the children and staff have worked incredibly hard in the classroom and have made great progress. We were not going to deny the children all the wonderful events that normally occur in the Autumn Term as you can see from this edition of the Blazer.

We received great news of Grammar School results and Independent School Scholarships - over the last 9 months, our Year 6 rose to the challenge of remote learning and then returned to normal school with enthusiasm and determination. We are incredibly proud of the Year 6 pupils who have worked so hard towards their entrance examinations and their Music, Art, Sport and Drama assessments.

Nativity plays, Drama Productions and the Candlelit Carol Service were without an audience but the children performed brilliantly - for the camera! You will see a glimpse of these in the pages beyond but watching the films was a joy. And we were delighted to be able to share these with the children, the parents and extended family as well as the local Care Homes. I know the residents really appreciated watching these - and may have watched them over and over again!

Of course it is the remarkable Berky staff who too rose to the challenge of this year and this term. Their creative talents and dedication know no bounds. I am sure that they too will reflect on 2020 with pride and look forward to a really positive 2021.

Richard Cross

Richard Cross
Headmaster



Spotlight ON JAMES AGG

I was a pupil at Berky from 1995 to 2001 and have taught 'cello and bass here for 11 years; life as a peripatetic teacher is interesting as I get to visit many different schools and perform in their concerts. As a Berky pupil, I especially enjoyed all the musical opportunities I was given, such as singing with the Flowers Band - a brass band which regularly performed at the Bacon Theatre - and the Abba Tribute Band which performed at the Town Hall. One of the highlights for me as a nine year old was conducting the School Orchestra in a performance of the Toy Symphony at the Town Hall. I also used to perform at the Competitive Festival (now the Festival of the Performing Arts) each year and bring back a nice, shiny cup!



What do you do in your spare time?
Because I am interested in history - particularly the architecture - I visit National Trust properties whenever I can. I enjoy mechanics and have built a kit car; I also do all the repairs on my own car. I enjoy DIY challenges. I enjoy cycling and recently completed the 'Cycle 300 Challenge' for Cancer Research; since then, I have completed the Le Col Giro Challenge and the Bose Frames Tempo Challenge. I also own a blue tandem in the hope that my wife will be encouraged to join me in cycling every so often. I enjoy hi-fi and home cinema and am for ever developing my ultimate set-up to enable me to get the most out of watching the many films and TV series I like. Last but not least, I have two elderly rescue chihuahuas.

Who were your childhood heroes?
Isambard Kingdom Brunel - for his outstanding contribution to architecture and engineering. Brunel laid the foundation for all that we take for granted today in these fields. I also greatly admire Johann Sebastian Bach for his astonishing musical genius.

What skill would you most like to have that you don't have already?
Definitely welding and wood carving. I would be better equipped to tackle many mechanical and construction tasks and could make ornate items of furniture.

Have you any claims to fame?
Fame is perhaps a little strong but when I was 11, I appeared as a Gryffindor pupil in the film 'Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets'. I have performed in many famous jazz venues including Ronnie Scott's, the 606 Club, the Vortex and the Soho Pizza Express, all in London. I have backed many highly regarded artists in the USA, some of which are multi Grammy Award winners. I also featured in a video playing alongside Laurence Juber who was Paul McCartney's guitarist in his post-Beatles group 'Wings'. I am an endorsed artist with the instrument manufacturer Ohana.

What do you like most about Berky?
The wealth of opportunities it offers to every child. My sisters were academic and flourished at Berky but I flourished equally as a musician.



RATS! THE MUSICAL
Preparing a full-blown musical during Carousel hour each week was a tall order, especially while also observing social distancing, filming little snippets in no particular order and trying to create a show worthy to be viewed by the school community by the final week of term. However, there was a dynamic team at work: Mrs Mitchell - rehearsing the singing, Mrs Sallis - organising percussion, Mrs Rees - behind the camera and in charge of editing the snippets to form something to satisfy the perfectionism of the play's creator and director, Mrs Agg. Most importantly, the children grew significantly in enthusiasm and confidence as term flew by, everyone playing their parts and honing their acting and singing skills. Much fun was had by all!

News

FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

Anti-Bullying Week kicked off in style with everyone - including the Head and the teachers - wearing odd socks or jazzy tights to support Odd Socks Day! Odd Socks Day was all about encouraging the children to celebrate their individuality, and was a really fun way to introduce Anti-Bullying Week. The Prep children watched a virtual odd socks assembly organised by the Anti-Bullying Alliance, and on the other side of the road, Mrs Roddy Watts gave a brilliant assembly to Pre-Prep on why being different should be celebrated. Her sweetie props proved popular with the younger children! Meanwhile, Mrs Main organised a 'friendship web' for our smallest pupils in Kindergarten whereby each child was asked to say something kind about one of their friends - needless to say the children's comments about one another were delightful! This all-important anti-bullying message is fundamental to everyday life at Berkhamstead, but was highlighted in particular all this week.

VIOLIN WORKSHOP

Mr Trim led a Violin Workshop for Year 2 one Wednesday in November. Each child had an instrument to play along with pizzicato and bowed notes, joining in with some songs and chants. Mr Trim got everyone singing and stamping to accompany the violinists and the children demonstrated good concentration and obviously enjoyed the experience. PM



It is always exciting when a new committee is formed and this year's Berky Gets Greener team are proving a particularly keen bunch of eco-warriors. There are two committees, one made up of pupils from Prep and the other from Pre-Prep; they are led by Luke R and Hannah H. in Year 6 with Mrs Agg, Miss Walter and Mrs Toma overseeing proceedings. During lockdown, the meetings took place on Microsoft Teams, but at last, this term, the pupils from Reception to Year 6 have been able to meet, socially distanced in their year group bubbles.

There has been much animated discussion and plenty of good ideas; clearly all the pupils are passionate about making Berky even greener and doing their bit to help save the planet. As well as an ongoing awareness of good habits such as switching off classroom lights and recycling as much as possible, recent initiatives have included an online second-hand Christmas jumper sale, an eco-themed 100 word Christmas Story Competition and the brilliant Green Day! The latter involved everyone dressing up as an animal, a plant, a recyclable object or in green in order to raise awareness of green issues. While the Pre-Prep and Early Years children created eco-friendly Christmas decorations, the Prep took part in decorating their classrooms with recycled bits and bobs for an in-house competition - great fun! Lunch that day was a delicious vegetarian bolognese and local English apples for dessert.

KINDNESS CUP

One of our most special and coveted prizes, the Sally Lee Kindness Cup has been awarded to a Pre-Prep pupil every half term since it was introduced in March 2017. It is given to a child in Year 1 or 2 who has consistently shown care and consideration for others, and we are delighted that we now have a Prep School equivalent. This one has been named in honour of Deputy Head, Mrs Agg, who cares deeply about our pupils' emotional wellbeing and is a firm believer in encouraging good citizenship. The first recipients of the Gill Agg Kindness Cup were Year 6's Mateo S and Elodie O, and recent winners of the Pre-Prep cup have been Luis MR, Melba F, Allegra S and Alanah F. Well done to all these exemplary children!



CHARITY NEWS

A key part of our role in school involves encouraging the children to think about those less fortunate than themselves and how they can make a difference in the world around them, so one of the most important jobs of the School Council is to choose the two charities to be supported for the academic year. Representatives from each class report their class's suggestions, and the committee, which is led by Mrs Bareham, vote for one local and one global charity. We are delighted that the children chose to support the Cheltenham Food Bank and the UN Refugee Agency, and we anticipate plenty of exciting fundraising ideas from the eager team!

Our lovely kitchen staff baked a Children in Need cupcake for every child in the School and £177.96 was raised for this worthy cause.

Pre-Prep School Council reps voted to support the Gloucester Quays Toy Appeal, a project that organised the donation of Christmas presents for children whose families would otherwise not be able to afford anything. Thank you to everyone who so generously donated.

We are so proud of this kind-hearted Year 6 pupil who was so touched by the work of Cheltenham Food Bank, that not only did she ask her neighbours to donate provisions, she spent all of her own saved up pocket money on items herself. Just look at the response from her neighbours - she was inundated!



Kindergarten made these gorgeous eco-friendly Cheerio candy cane decorations for their feathered friends

PTA News

Well, it's been a strange term for many and that includes the PTA. With Covid-19, many of our wonderful events have had to be cancelled or put on hold, which is such a shame as they are always so well enjoyed and attended.

Not to be defeated, though, we arranged a few events to lift spirits and delight the children! The children thoroughly enjoyed Cake at Break with some wonderful treats produced by the school catering team. There were great reviews of fluffy cake and oodles of icing!

The wonderful Mr Tittle adapted the annual Parent Quiz and brought it virtually to our homes for the whole family to enjoy. What a fun and fiercely competitive evening it was! The questions were fantastic and there were some great team names! An enormous thank you to Mr Tittle and Mr Cross for hosting the quiz so brilliantly and to all those who joined from home!

With the Christmas Fayre unable to go ahead, we tried to bring some Christmas spirit to the children within school. We put in a special order with Santa and he visited the Pre-Prep

children (social distanced of course!) and delighted them each with a gift. Not to be left out, the Prep children also received a Christmas tree sapling each to grow at home.



We do hope the children will enjoy watching their trees grow each year and are able to use them in the family home for many years to come. Do take a picture of your tree planted in the garden and send it in!

With the help of Mrs Bareham and her team, the children also produced some really beautiful Christmas cards for families to purchase; they really did look wonderful and we hope you enjoyed sharing these with your family.

With the money raised from the events, the school are looking to purchase equipment to record and share performances of the children throughout the year to ensure no one misses any of the special performances Berky puts on. I am sure you will agree this is a great idea and one we will all benefit from using.

Next term, if restrictions are lifted, we hope to run more events and fingers crossed we will be able to host our wonderful Summer Ball and Summer Fayre in the Summer Term.

Joey Bowden
(PTA chair)



Out of this World

A really exciting week in the Day Nursery calendar, this year's Space Week proved the perfect opportunity for our staff to do what they do best: stretch young imaginations and encourage fantastic creative play. All five of our rooms contributed to the celebration of this special week in October and the Nursery quickly became awash with all manner of exciting arty, space-inspired paraphernalia. From the Cuddly Bears' loo roll rockets, the Wise Bears' telescopes fashioned out of tubes and silver foil, the Teddy Bears' Planet Earths made from blue and green tissue-covered paper plates to homemade glittery play dough and shaving foam planets, the Day Nursery that week was a particularly exciting place to be. Singing was also inspired by the Space theme, and Circle Time was even more upbeat than usual with songs such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star!' and 'Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer!' - the children couldn't help but have great fun learning all about Space! And who can forget the Wise Bears' role play area which was transformed into an amazing space station, complete with a control panel for the young astronauts to blast themselves into Space? The children loved it - it was definitely a week which was out of this world!



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

The Wise Bears and Teddy Bears were treated to a very interesting visit by a lovely lady called Laura, who taught the children all about Diwali. Dressed in the most exquisite, jewel-coloured sari, she had brought with her lots of beautiful objects to bring the Festival of Lights to life for her young audience.



CHILDREN IN NEED

Children and staff had fun dressing up and taking part in all manner of 'spotty' activities for BBC Children in Need week. As well as plenty of Pudsey-inspired fun, the staff organised lots of extras which included face painting, a Pyjama Day and fancy dress. The kitchen also kindly made a fairy cake for each child to take home. We are delighted to report that we raised £370.79 for this very worthy cause!

C'EST BON ICI!

Wise Bears children benefit from weekly French classes with the School's language specialist Madame McCreanor. Her sessions are a joyous blend of movement, singing, giggling and fun - Guillaume her puppet dog is always by her side to help the children learn to count and demonstrate simple actions such as 'danser' and 'rouler'. Bravo, Wise Bears!



We have welcomed old and new friends back to Kindergarten this term and feel so blessed to have such an amazing group of children; they have loved our topics of 'Friendly and Fun' and 'Cold Lands' coming up with lots of their own inspirational ideas to add to our plans.

For 'Friendly and Fun,' we have been learning all about Kindergarten life, the routines and different environments in school. We have found out lots about each other and the children have formed really strong friendships through play. One highlight was everyone working together to create a helicopter from wooden bricks of all shapes and sizes and then spending the day playing together, sharing the resources and revisiting the activity throughout the day. We studied the Italian artist Arcimboldo and created different funny faces using pictures of vegetables, fruit and flowers; we also chose our favourite fruits and placed them in an artistic way to make fruit faces. We even got to eat the fruit at the end. Yummy!

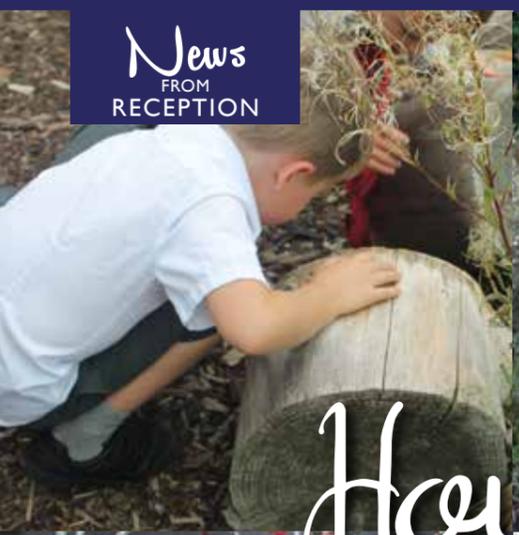
For our chilly topic 'Cold Lands,' the children used their senses when experimenting with ice and paint; as the ice melted it created different effects and patterns. Using tools, the children cracked open balls of ice to find creatures hiding inside. We looked at a world map and a globe to find polar regions and researched different habitats to make a Kindergarten non-fiction book.

In technology, we programmed Beebots to move in the right direction to find a penguin or polar bear on a snowy landscape and our role play area turned into a frosty explorer's hut. MM



Making friends and loving learning!

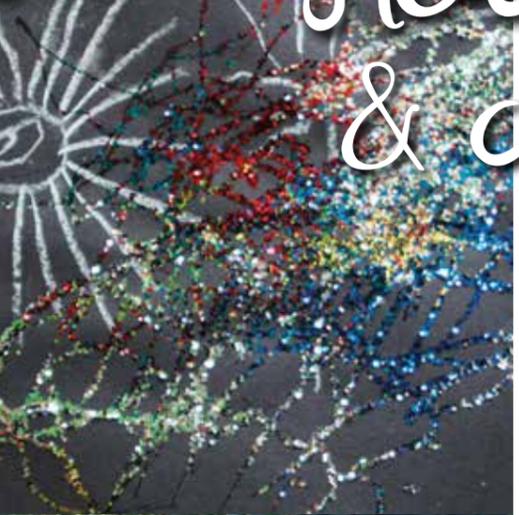




Ohh we go...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR
OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS

Houses, homes & celebrations!



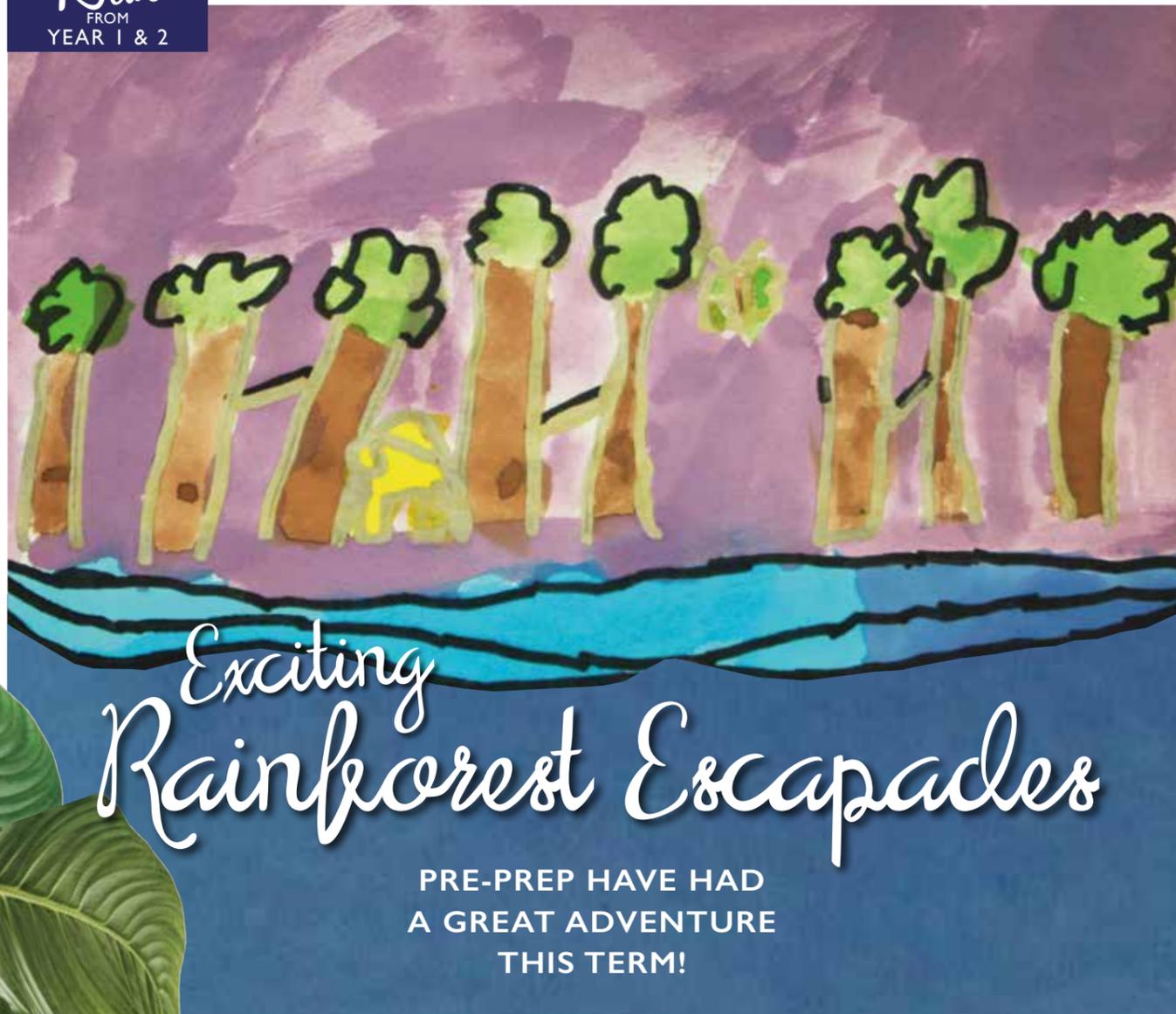
Reception started the year with the topic 'Home and Away' which involved talking about our homes and families, finding out about homes in Victorian times and learning about homes from around the world. We all enjoyed a walk around the local area and looking for any local landmarks such as the church, football ground and park. In art, the children painted pictures of the adults that help us around the school. They have also created shoe box rooms: drawing plans, deciding on the materials they wanted to use and then decorating the shoe box. We introduced 'Google Maps' and took a look at the school from a bird's eye view; we also had a look at what our houses look like from the sky.

For the second half of the term, the topic was 'Light and Dark', and the children enjoyed learning about nocturnal and diurnal animals, different time zones around the world, and exploring electricity. They have also learnt all about the Hindu celebration of Diwali. In art, they used clay to make star-shaped tea light holders and, as Diwali is the Festival of Light, they have also made paper lanterns. We have enjoyed all the Christmas activities and celebrated with a Party Day during the last week of term. This included making Christmas cards and party hats and making pine cone decorations to hang on our trees. AH



VINEY HILL

At the start of this term Year 5 went on their first trip of the year to Viney Hill. This year was slightly different because the trip was held as two day visits rather than a residential. This trip is all about teamwork and taking part in activities with children within the year group that they might not know well. Activities included shelter building, climbing, crate stack, orienteering, bush craft, low ropes, archery and an evening walk. The weather was superb, and the children had a great time. I was impressed with how well the children within each group were working together by the end of the trip. Well done, Year 5, it was a successful trip! DB



Exciting Rainforest Escapades

PRE-PREP HAVE HAD A GREAT ADVENTURE THIS TERM!

Lots of mapwork helped the children to understand where the Amazon rainforest is located. They discovered all about the Equator and the effect it has on Brazil's weather.

As part of our English, the children found out about the features of non-fiction books. The iPads have been used to find facts about rainforests. They were

fascinated by some of the facts they found! The children then created their own information pages.

Throughout the department, there was an impressive array of rainforest art - pen and ink studies inspired by Amazonian Indian artist Nixiwaka Yawanawa and vibrant paintings of rainforest creatures and plants. Year 1's DT Day was also an opportunity for creative minds to run riot as they were tasked with creating rainforest-inspired dioramas complete with moving animals! Collage, oil pastel and chalk have also been explored!

Year 1 studied famous explorers. The children looked at a book called 'Great Adventurers' by Alastair Humphreys and learnt about explorers like Amelia Earhart and Benedict Allen. They were thrilled to receive a very special video message from Alastair Humphreys himself! He told the children all about his adventures and why he likes exploring the world. He asked them to think about what they would take in their explorer backpacks on a trip to the jungle; some of them wanted to take their special toys from home, but they also thought it would be a good idea to take flare guns, first aid kits and salt to help

clean any wounds they might get. Of course, biscuits and food featured high up on their lists too!

To the huge excitement of the children and staff, we adopted two gorillas; 2L are the proud adoptive parents of Chimanuka and 2T of Mugaruka. They are a pair of rare eastern lowland gorillas and they live in the rainforests of Kahuzi-Biega National Park in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Chimanuka is the leader of a harem of twenty female gorillas; he was the victim of a poacher's snare which caused the loss of one of his hands. The children were then very excited to discover more about gorillas. AS



BROAD HORIZONS

WE ARE PROUD OF THE WIDE-RANGING ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES ON OFFER AT BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

There cannot be many schools that take broadening the curriculum quite as seriously as Berky does, but we believe that a thorough education should include equipping children to be responsible and capable citizens; with that in mind, for an hour a week, the Prep children really love their activities which are both valuable and enjoyable and this time is very much looked forward to. Depending on the skills and interests of the staff involved each year, subjects are chosen to encourage the learning of useful life skills and the children have the opportunity to take part

and bites and stings, burns, choking and head injuries. She has also discussed how to go about calling for help when necessary. If you have an accident, you will now be in safe hands!

It is always worthwhile learning to cook from a young age and the children really love their after-school sessions. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, Mrs Mitchell has been unable to run this activity this term but usually, every year group learns about food hygiene and preparation and the children soon become confident cooks. They have to work cooperatively, reading and understanding the

Mrs McCreanor's Fun Spanish has been a very worthwhile addition to the Carousel repertoire for Years 3 and 4. It is well known that it is easier to learn languages when you are young so it makes sense to introduce a third language at this stage. As with Pre-Prep's French, this is done through Spanish stories, rhymes and games. These fun sessions ensure that when more formal Spanish begins in Years 5 and 6, the children already have a strong 'feel' for the language.

Last but by no means least, the children participate in eight weeks of Drama each year.



in each of these for eight weeks before moving on to the next activity in the rotation - hence the name.

Mr Banks has proved to be full of good ideas for Carousel. In the past, he has introduced the older children to the 'Fiver Challenge' to develop their entrepreneurial skills. All sorts of schemes were hatched, resulting in sales of homemade toys, keyrings and bookmarks, drinks and attractively packaged sweets. The children proved to be very enterprising and astute in their investments. More recently, Mr Banks has run Design Technology sessions; making battery-operated fairground rides using dowel, card and MDF involves thinking about functionality and cosmetic details as well as learning to use various tools safely. Always having an eye on the latest resources available, Mr Banks is also using the 3D printer purchased by the PTA and Strawbees, a construction set useful in promoting STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics). A course of First Aid should be on everyone's 'to do' list. Miss Keegan has taught the older children the basics of first aid this term, covering many common ailments such as asthma attacks,

recipes and weighing and mixing the ingredients. There is also the added benefit of something delicious to eat at the end!

In an increasingly stressful modern society, mindfulness activities such as Yoga play an important part in maintaining well-being, giving children effective methods to keep themselves calm and combat anxiety. Yoga is taught by Jay, a professional Yoga teacher. There are also many physical benefits to be gained such as increased strength, flexibility and coordination and an improvement in concentration.

Mrs Sallis's Samba Band is always very popular; Years 3 and 4 learn focus and collaboration from this exciting music-making, watching intently in order to know what to do next. It is especially valuable for those who don't play an instrument or who don't play in an ensemble. The Samba Band performs at the annual Easter Concert and the children's huge enthusiasm for this activity is always very evident. This year, instead of Cookery, the older children have been taking part in group Music Composition work with Mrs Mitchell. Again, this demands a great deal of collaboration as well as creativity and the results have been ringing round the Prep building!

The huge value of Drama is often overlooked in favour of more academic aspects of English; however, it encourages many useful life skills, the most obvious being how to speak clearly and confidently in public. Participation in Drama involves self-control and discipline and the ability to cooperate with others; it prepares children very effectively for a world which is increasingly team-oriented. Drama develops empathy through thinking deeply about the characters portrayed - their motives and ways of thinking. All these skills enhance the children's approach to subjects which require insight into human nature and interaction - such as English and History - thus helping to create responsible and sensitive citizens for the future. Finally, Drama is physically active, creative and fun!

This term, the Year 3 children - who missed out on the Year 2 Summer Production due to the lockdown - are using their Carousel time to work on my musical 'Rats!', the idea being to record it for Christmas viewing by the rest of the school community. The children have absolutely loved this opportunity to immerse themselves in acting, singing and playing. Covid or not, the show must go on! GA

News

FROM PREP

CHESS MOVES

Despite Covid-19, chess continues to thrive at Berkhamstead. During lockdown our keen chess players continued to meet up, play friendlies and participate in tournaments via the ChessKid application. Since our return to school in September the need for socially distanced bubbles has meant that four different chess clubs now meet - one for each year group. There are pros and cons for this arrangement. Each club can only meet fortnightly but the competition is compelling and the clubs are much smaller, calmer and easier to administrate. We all look forward to some normality returning though; we miss playing other schools and doing battle with children from different year groups at the Berky clubs.

Before lockdown, the school team was poised to win both the district league and the district knockout cup outright. We will now be sharing those trophies with St. Gregory's (our prospective cup final opponents) and Richard Pate (the only school who could mathematically overtake us in the league). I congratulate Rupert G, Griff L, Oli S, Jonathan B, Ethan A and Harry W on a successful but frustratingly truncated campaign. At Speech Day, the Howard Cup for Chess was awarded to Rupert G and the Cole Cup for Chess was presented to Oli S; both prizes were richly deserved. MC



RACKING THEIR BRAINS

On an exciting morning, way back in February, the Berky Quiz Team won its regional heat and qualified for the National Schools Quiz Final. The grand final was supposed to take place in a West End theatre last summer but Covid's intervention meant the greatly anticipated trip to London was shelved. Instead, the final took place online in October and our team of four gathered (slightly anticlimactically) in the school hall. However, the final proved enormously enjoyable. Forty-seven eager school teams from the length and breadth of the United Kingdom assembled remotely and were bombarded with questions about history, geography, science,



INTERNET SAFETY

Internet safety is incredibly important to us here at Berkhamstead, and we believe that teaching your child to be internet savvy in this digital

world is as essential as teaching them to swim. With this in mind, children here are taught to be safe on the internet from Kindergarten; the messages are reinforced regularly and built on as the children get older.

Visits from outside speakers and special assemblies are a regular feature of our CWB curriculum; this term, for instance, Year 4 benefitted from a brilliant online and fully interactive assembly called 'Be Internet Legends,' a collaboration between Google and Parent Zone. Using iPads, the children went on an adventure exploring a virtual land called 'Interland' to learn about issues such as cyberbullying and creating secure passwords. Meanwhile, Year 6 children were visited by our SchoolsBeat police officer, PC Fiona. She came in to talk about their online life and the importance of keeping personal information private. One of the activities required the children to look at made up online profiles to observe the mistakes other children had made. She also talked about 'PEGI' games ratings and impressed on the children the importance of not meeting up with strangers and reporting anything online that makes you feel uncomfortable.

MUSIC NEWS

We were thrilled to be able to start some of our music groups as the term progressed. Using our largest rooms, Chamber Ensemble, Berky Bows, Percussion Ensemble and Jazz Combo all started their rehearsals again. As always, the groups are new this year and vary according to the instrumentalists' level of competence. This is the first year that we have added clarinets to the Chamber Ensemble and, judging by their beautiful performances of Silent Night and We Three Kings for the filming this week, they sound very well-blended and enhance the lovely string sound. Berky Bows is a mixture of experienced and new members with tremendous strength in Cellos and Double Bass and they have learnt an energetic 'Drunken Sailor' piece during the term. Players in Jazz Combo have started developing their improvisation skills and Mr Peverelle is directing a new percussion ensemble. Next term we hope that Jigsaw and the new Razzamajazz groups will also start to play together. PM



MUSIC EXAM RESULTS

Prep test piano:
Initial Grade:
Grade 1: Holly H (Viola*), Anna A (Violin*),
Grade 2: Bea Bea M-D (Guitar**),
Grade 3: Will J (Guitar**), Will S (Cornet**),
Will S (Cello**),
Grade 5: Bea Bea M-D (Singing**), Will C (Guitar**), Will S (Guitar*)
*Denotes - Pass with Merit **Denotes - Pass with Distinction

Y6 CURRENT AFFAIRS

Y6 have a discussion lesson on Current Affairs each week which encourages them to develop their listening and speaking skills. As well as giving them an opportunity to discuss issues of the day, or choices that might affect their own lives, they work in groups learning to put together reasoned arguments. We have a debate on each topic with 'For' and 'Against' teams presenting their view point, an opportunity to refute the opposite team, questions and comments from 'the floor' and, finally, a free vote.

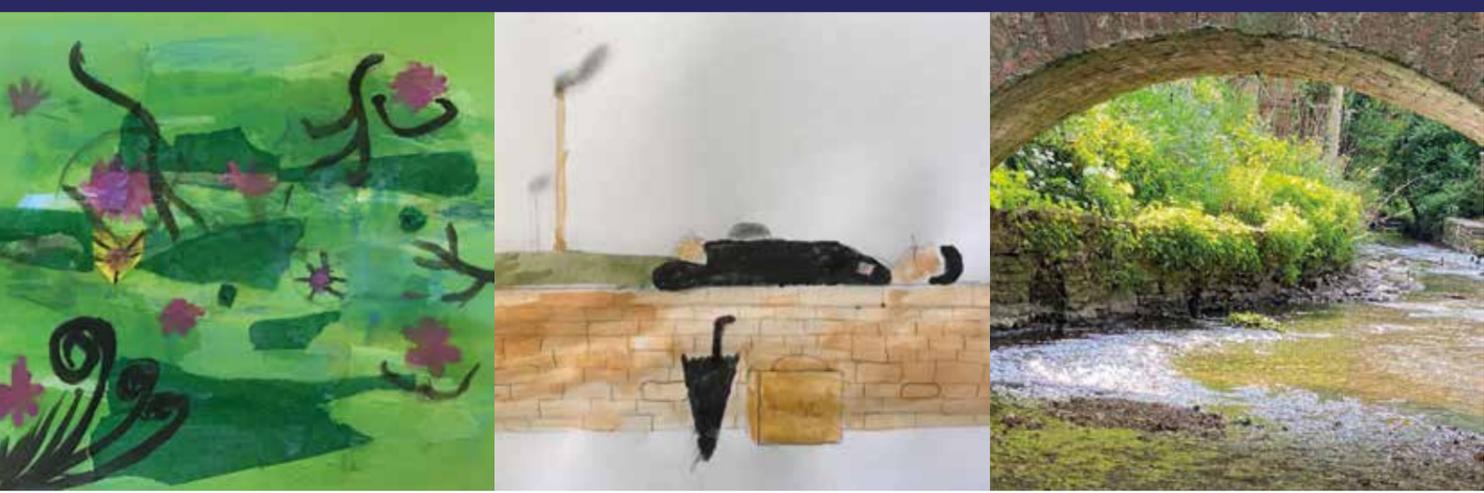
Topics so far this term have included 'We should ban cars from cities' and 'Competitive sport should be taught and encouraged in schools'. Future thorny issues may include the future of the monarchy, compulsory voting, advertising, supermarkets vs independent stores, space exploration, footballers' wages, school uniform, taking exams and many other hot topics. PM

HOUSE CAPTAINS

Our Prep House Captains are chosen because we deem them to be excellent role models, who will do a superb job of leading and motivating their house mates. Congratulations to Lottie A (St Andrew's), Matilda H (St David's), Oliver M, (St George's) and Beatrice Norbury (St Patrick's). Second House Captains will be elected in the Spring Term.

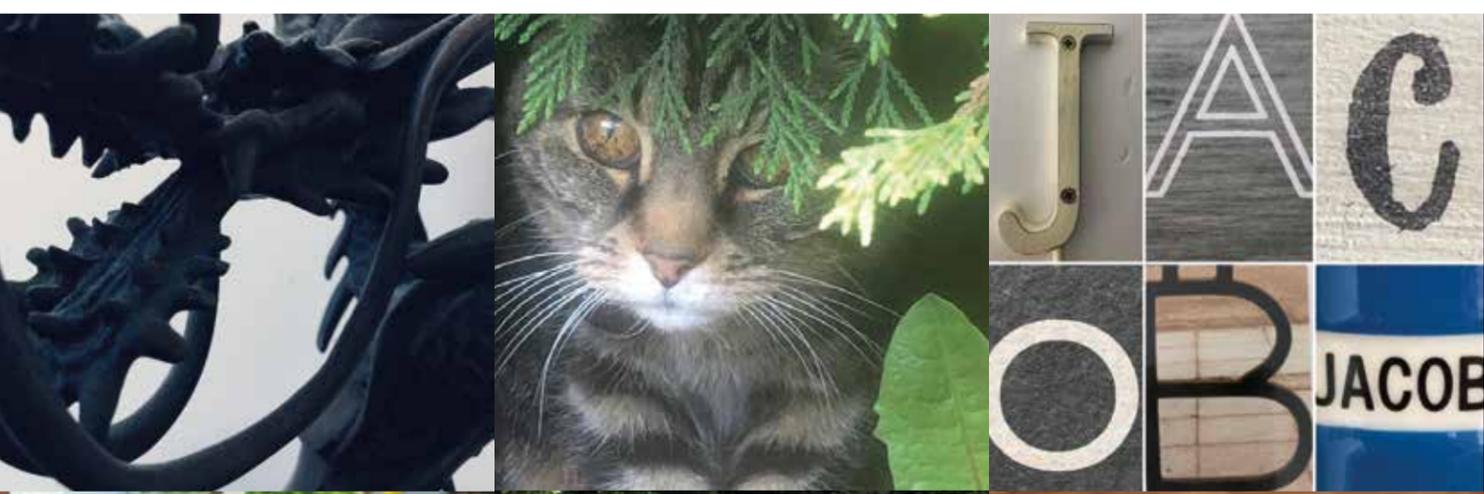
"Taking exams"
"School uniform"
"Footballers' wages"
"Competitive sport"
"Future of the monarchy"
"Supermarkets vs independent stores"





PREP ART IN LOCKDOWN

DESPITE BEING FORCED TO LEARN FROM HOME, CREATIVITY CONTINUED TO THRIVE IN OUR PREP SCHOOL'S ART DEPARTMENT DURING LOCKDOWN



Reflecting the situation of the other subjects here at Berk, Head of Art Mrs Bareham continued to provide her pupils with art classes online and taking place in virtual classrooms instead. Teaching was now delivered via Microsoft Teams and, mirroring a real life art room situation, Mrs Bareham's lessons often began with her demonstrating artistic techniques, such as drawing and painting. The inspiration for Year 3's learning was Impressionism, Year 4's topic was 'figures' (inspired by Keith Herring and Lowry) - and they also produced artwork to celebrate World Oceans Day - Year 5 concentrated on self-portraits and Year 6 immersed themselves in the creation of masks and art to celebrate VE Day.

consider whether the photograph was a close-up or not. One of her most popular projects was all about letters. She asked the children to search their surroundings for the letters that made up their names, and she was thrilled with their resulting creativity. She enthused, "I was really impressed with what the children produced in lockdown, and I was delighted to be able to introduce photography lessons. That said, I share my colleagues' relief at getting back into the classroom - it is wonderful to be back!"



The Prep School children enjoyed their topics and produced truly beautiful art, but Mrs Bareham found that the children got through their work more quickly at home than they would have done in the classroom. Many pupils were devoting plenty of time to art, possibly as an antidote to a rather unsettled time caused by the pandemic. And rather than let the situation stunt her pupils' learning, the ever-resourceful Mrs Bareham - typical of a Berk teacher's ability to adapt to change - embraced the opportunities that learning from home offered; she encouraged her pupils to make the most of their extra time and artistic inclination and to express themselves by learning a new visual art form - Photography! They were allowed to use whatever camera they had at home, so some children used parents' phones and iPads and others had access to cameras.

SHOWCASING PUPILS' WORK

Our annual Summer Art Exhibition showcases a piece of work from every pupil in the school and is always a crowd-pleaser. Although - along with a host of other Summer term events - it couldn't take place this year, Mrs Bareham put together two online art exhibitions comprising pieces from every pupil from Years 3 and 4, and from the older pupils in Years 5 and 6. The latter included work from this year's talented Art Scholar Viera M.

Inspired by the impressive photographs taken by our pupils in lockdown, we also ran a Photography Competition. Every child in the school could enter; Mrs Agg and Mrs Taylor had the difficult (but hugely enjoyable) task of judging the superb work, everyone was given a prize and certificate for entering, and the four winners were awarded a canvas of their photograph. An album of all the entries is on display in the Pre-Prep library.

Photography competition winners: Gaia G, Isaac R, Chloe M, Henry R
Highly Commended: Ellis M, Jacob D, Ellie B, Ethan A



Mrs Bareham's lockdown photography lessons were all about composition. She taught the children how important it is to consider how the elements of a still life photograph are put together to make the picture more interesting. She covered angles, and the children had to think about whether they were taking their picture from above, below or face on, and to



Lights, Camera, Action

A BERKY NATIVITY... 2020 EDITION!

The Pre-Prep Nativity play has always been a highlight of the festive season and both the staff and children were disappointed not to be visiting All Saints' Church to perform the Christmas story. When we told the children that we would be making a recording of their nativity, they were eager to make the very most of the experience and worked with staff to get their ideas on film. The result was 'A Berky Nativity... 2020 Edition', which tells the story of the birth of Jesus as it would be reported on the news. Filming took place in school and performers from Year 1 and 2 took on many roles, including news presenters and grumpy inn keepers. As always, Mrs Sallis' musical score brought the story to life and added that bit of sparkle that Berky nativities are known for. As a special addition to the Nativity, Year 2 were honoured to be able to make a recording of the enchanting book, 'A Time for Magic', written by one of the lovely Year 2 parents. All involved worked so hard to produce a Nativity unlike any we have seen before. LL

Meanwhile, in Early Years...

Traditionally Kindergarten and Reception join forces to perform an all-in-one Early Years nativity, but this year, Covid-19 meant that the two youngest year groups had to remain in their own bubbles and also be filmed rather than performing to a live audience. The result was the live streaming of two joyous nativities - Kindergarten treated us to 'A Wiggly Nativity' and 'Whoops-A -Daisy Angel' was Reception's brilliant show! Head of Early Years Music, Debbie Sallis - and indeed, the rest of the Early Years team - are to be applauded for all their hard work in drawing out such wonderful performances from their young cast.





Ohh we go...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS



STEAM MUSEUM

It was with great delight that I received the news that the Year 6s were able to go on their trip to Steam Museum. In the weeks leading up to it, the children learned about various aspects of World War II and had made their own gas mask boxes, ration books, ID cards and evacuee labels in preparation for the trip.

All of the children looked wonderful dressed as children from the 1940s as we set off to Swindon. Whilst there, we enjoyed two super work shops. One was about the role of women during the war and the second was about the use of the railways during the war years. The children were very engaged and added to their knowledge about that period in History.

In the afternoon, we explored the rest of the museum. Using iPads the Year 6s recreated images of evacuees on railway platforms and trains which they thoroughly enjoyed and did a wonderful job of this. We also had time to do some role play with all of the staff and children, so the children could experience what it would be like arriving in an unfamiliar place as evacuees and the challenges that it would bring. There was also some fine singing of songs from the war by the children, whilst we were in the station waiting room.

All of the children and the staff thoroughly enjoyed the trip and Year 6 were an absolute credit to Berk. P McC



PREP'S CANDLELIGHT SERVICE in the car!

Since we were faced with a Carol Service without a congregation this year, our thoughts turned to how we could give the children, especially Y6, their annual experience of leading this very special service - a highlight of the year. Fr Robert and the team at All Saints' Church were very enthusiastic and supportive about filming in the church, and so the plan was developed, using a media company to record all the carols, readings, prayers and procession that always make

up our traditional service. We will not forget this strange, difficult year, and yet there have been opportunities to create new memories and experiences and, undoubtedly, the filming day was one of these. The children behaved impeccably, sang beautifully and looked very professional and their recording is there for ever. PM



RAINFOREST

Off we set on a murky, foggy day to the tropical rainforest in Berkshire! Our guided tours on the amazing adaptations of the plants and the animals of the rainforest were fantastic, made all the better by the Year 5's superb questions and answers. The toucan, Goeldi monkeys, pygmy marmosets remain firm favourites but there was great excitement in our free time when Cinnamon the two-toed sloth was seen clearly moving amongst the greenery at a very leisurely pace! Apparently, her usual area where she camouflages herself so well had been pruned, which she was not very happy about, so she had been seen out and about much more than usual. The huge fish tank with stingrays, catfish and tambaqui fish was also mesmerising. It was lovely to see the enormous interest and enthusiasm shown by the Year 5s on this trip. Well done to you all! LVV





PREP SCHOOL HOCKEY

I have been proud of how all the Prep School girls have got back into the swing of games, and pleasingly I can tell that some have been practising during the lockdown.

This term has given us time to concentrate on our ball control! There has been some great progression with our play, but we are missing the match

play against other schools! The extra time has allowed the girls to play regularly on both grass and astro, allowing them to try new skills and have time to work on them within their year group bubbles.

Netball has been implemented this term with the older age groups; the girls have worked really hard in

netball and we have had some good progression. They have worked hard on their skills and really improved some of the basics; fingers crossed matches will start soon! CK



PREP SCHOOL RUGBY

This term has seen the boys approach rugby in a slightly different way. We have been focussing on non-contact rugby and it has given us the ability to work on key skills, such as passing, avoiding contact when in possession and creating space for team mates. We have made great strides in these areas and this was seen in some wonderful house matches, where the boys had the opportunity to display

these skills. This led to free-flowing, high scoring and entertaining matches.

The boys have adapted brilliantly to the challenges this term and, although they would have loved more contact, we have had some fantastic sessions.

Well done to all the boys from Years 3 to 6. PMcC



BERKY PUPILS ARE ON THE BALL

Throughout the School we offer a wide range of activities in PE: gymnastics, dance, invasion games and basic ball skills. During the first half of term, all age groups have been looking at health-related fitness and athletics-based activities. Getting out in the fresh air and running around again has been vital for lots of the children. Each age group then moved onto their sports - Year 3 have played basketball, focusing on dribbling and ball control, Year 4 have loved their superhero-themed dance sessions, Year 5 have enjoyed POP Lacrosse and Year 6 have concentrated on health-related fitness, allowing them to design their own training sessions.

Meanwhile in the Pre-Prep, Year 1 and 2 have looked at hockey with Year 2 moving on to basic netball skills, with rugby and football to follow! Early Years are continuing their work on aiming, throwing and catching throughout a range of games and mini competitions. CK





ROBOT ROLLICKS!

Our Computing department doesn't stand still for long, and with the Prep School's Mr Banks in charge, this comes as little surprise. Mr Banks is Head of Computing and is passionate about his speciality. He is continually on the look-out for exciting resources to enhance our pupils' learning, and it was when he and Mrs Holland visited an education show in London that specialised in technology that they met the Kubo Robots representatives. Our teachers quickly identified the learning opportunities that these cute little robots would offer our children, so excitingly, from the beginning of this term, we now own ten adorable Kubo Robots! They are brilliant for hands-on learning about the craft of coding and they introduce concepts such as Routes, Functions, Subroutines and Loops. Along with Reception's Mrs Gargan, Mr Banks is now a Kubo advisory teacher, and pupils throughout the school have been benefitting from them. Needless to say, they have proved hugely popular with our young computer programmers. Other recent technology purchases include two 3D printers (Mr Banks plans for his Year 6s to make mobile phone holders) and a massive 75 inch screen; more of these will be being installed in other classrooms too.



BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL AND DAY NURSERY

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