



BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL



**FRIDAY 9TH JANUARY
SPRING TERM**

NEWS FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Parents

Welcome back, and a very Happy New Year to you all. I hope you enjoyed a wonderful break and that the children have returned to school rested, refreshed and ready for a fun and productive Spring Term.

On behalf of the staff, I would like to thank you for your continued support last term, as well as for the thoughtful cards and generous gifts we received at the end of term - they were greatly appreciated.

We are delighted to welcome a number of new pupils this term. William M, Lucia H, Lily G, Aidan K, Ivy B, Persephone W and Hana B-T have joined our Kindergarten, Jack G has joined Reception, and James G, Elspeth W and Rafferty R have begun in Year 4. While starting at a new school can bring a few nerves, we are confident they will soon feel happy, settled and very much part of the Berkys community.

We are also pleased to welcome a new member of staff, Kelly Rogers, who has joined our Kindergarten team. Kelly is a qualified primary school teacher and experienced Early Years Practitioner, and her son has joined Year 4. We wish her every success in her new role. We also extend our warmest congratulations to our bursar, Tom Denmead, his wife Philippa, and big brother Reuben, on the arrival of baby Evie on 19th December.

A special thank you goes to Jess and the maintenance team for their hard work over the Christmas holidays in overseeing the Prep playground project. We are thrilled with the smart new playground surface, which, due to the recent cold and wet weather, will not be in use until Monday to allow the adhesives to fully set. The smaller playground has been resurfaced with 'Play-Grass' artificial turf, featuring a green area for football and a smaller blue section designed for basketball, complete with goals and protective post covers. This upgrade has improved the appearance of the Prep playgrounds and will enhance the children's enjoyment at breaktimes. None of this would have been possible without the incredible generosity of our PTA, who part-funded the project; we are very grateful for their continued support.

DIARY DATES

THE WEEK AHEAD

Wednesday 14th January
2.15pm U11 & U10 Boys' Football v King's Gloucester (H)

Friday 16th January
2.30pm U9 Girls' Netball v The Richard Pate School (A)





BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL



NEWS FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL CONTINUED

We are extremely pleased with the achievements of our Year 6 pupils this year. From a cohort of 38 children, our pupils performed very well in a year when a vast number of children from schools across the county and beyond sat the grammar school entrance test. An eye-catching 17 pupils who chose to sit the test achieved the qualifying score for local grammar schools including Pate's Grammar School, Sir Thomas Rich's School, Denmark Road High School, Ribston Hall High School, Marling School, The Crypt School and Stroud High School, with places allocated in March. In addition, our oldest pupils have been awarded an incredible 19 scholarships to independent senior schools, spanning academic, art, drama, music and sport.

We are very fortunate in Gloucestershire to have a wealth of excellent senior school options, including state academies, grammar schools, and independent schools. At Berkhamstead, we take great pride in preparing each child for the school that is right for them. Pupils benefit from dedicated critical thinking lessons each week from Year 3 and are carefully supported in preparing for both grammar school entrance and scholarship applications. Parents receive clear guidance throughout the process, including a Future Schools Evening for Years 4 and 5, which this year will take place on Monday 2nd March. Mrs Jenny Hannett, Head of School Transition, works closely with families to ensure each child's next steps are well supported. Additionally, the heads of local secondary schools are invited to Berkhamstead to deliver assemblies for pupils and parents, with a chance to chat to the heads afterwards over coffee. Dates have now been confirmed for our summer holiday grammar school entrance practice sessions for Year 5 pupils: 29th July, and 5th, 19th, and 26th August.

Before Christmas, we carried out an Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS) pupil survey with our Prep pupils in Years 3 to 6. I am delighted to share some of the results, which reflect the strength of our school: 99% of pupils said that adults at school care for them, 98% said their teachers encourage pupils to behave well in lessons, and 97% said they feel confident to try something new even if they get it wrong. We are extremely pleased with these excellent outcomes. A parent questionnaire will be sent out later today, and we would be very grateful for your feedback.

This morning, we were delighted to host our Berky Experience Open Morning for prospective Pre-Prep and Early Years families. Parents and children were invited to enjoy a typical morning at Berky, and we hope the event offered valuable insight into our super school.

I wish everyone a very happy and successful Spring Term.

Michelle Bareham
Head of School



BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL



NEWS AROUND THE SCHOOL

STAY CONNECTED WITH BERKHAMPSTEAD

We love hearing the wonderful moments and achievements of our school community, and we'd love you to join the conversation! Follow us on social media for updates, news and a glimpse into life at Berkhamstead.



berkhamstead_school
berkhamstead_sch_head



@BerkyCheltenham

BERKY GETS GREENER COBALT CHRISTMAS CARDS

If anyone is interested in recycling their Christmas cards, Cobalt Health is accepting used Christmas cards until 13th January. Please drop them off and help give your cards a second life while supporting a worthy charity. Drop off location: Thirlestaine Breast Centre, Thirlestaine Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7AS

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please note that, under revised safeguarding guidance, our attendance policy has been updated and is now available to view on the website:

[ATTENDANCE POLICY 2026](#)

UNIFORM SHOP
The shop times for the Spring and Summer Terms will be:

Mondays: 08:15-08:45
Thursdays 15:30-16:00

ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY BOOKS

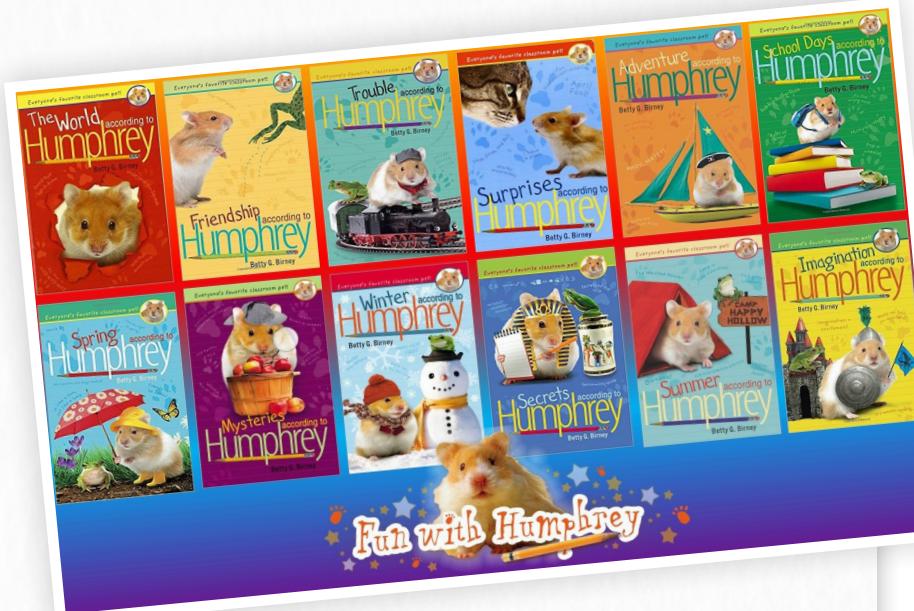
We have been made aware that several titles in the 'According to Humphrey' series contain a weblink at the back of the book that no longer directs people to information about the books. Instead, the link has been compromised and now leads to inappropriate and unsafe material that should not be accessed by children at any age.

Below are images of some of the front covers in the series to help you identify the books should you have any at home. The link can be found on the back cover or may be also included on a page inside.

For clarity and reassurance, we are not aware of any children who have accessed this link at our school and have removed copies of the book with the weblink from school circulation.

Actions and Next Steps:

- If you have any of these books at home, we advise you to remove them immediately or remove the page with the weblink.
- Be extra-vigilant with all children's books that contain links and ensure that they are checked by an adult.





BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

NEWS FROM KINDERGARTEN

It has been so exciting returning to Kindergarten this week, at the start of a brand-new year. The children have all been so eager and ready to greet their friends and settle back into familiar routines. We are welcoming several new starters over this first fortnight of term; it is wonderful to have you join us in Kindergarten. Playing simple circle games together has helped us to learn our new friends' names.

Our Berky Experience Open Morning was a chance for us to share our provision with prospective parents whilst our Kindergarten children took part in a wide array of activities with their teddy bears from home! We loved showcasing what we have to offer.

This cold snap of weather has arrived just in time for our topic of 'We are Polar Explorers'. The children have had a fantastic time exploring with ice in the tuff trays; touching it, feeling it, and finding out what happens when you hit it with a hammer! It has been amazing to see ice forming naturally in our outside water tray, and to watch it change as it melts throughout the day. We have started to learn about the different polar habitats of the North and South Poles, and the types of animals that inhabit them. Using cold colours, we have created wonderful winter landscapes with paint and glitter. We are all very much looking forward to the term ahead with eager anticipation! LS



BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL
EARLY YEARS
VALUES TREE

THIS WEEK'S AWARDS
Leaves: Finley G & Harrison M
Berky Bear is still on holiday and will be sent out next week.





BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

NEWS FROM RECEPTION

It has been wonderful to welcome the children back after the holidays. They have returned full of enthusiasm and eager to share stories from their magical Christmas break. We have loved seeing the photographs on Tapestry of their favourite books, which range from classic stories to cookery books and science fact books—such a fantastic variety!

This week, we have begun our new topic on toys. The children have enjoyed talking about their oldest and most-loved toys, new toys Santa may have brought, and comparing the toys they play with now to those they had as babies and toddlers. As the term continues, we will explore how toys have changed over time, looking at technological advances, the materials they are made from, and even where they are bought.

In art on Wednesday, the children practised their sketching skills by drawing our much-loved Berky Bear. They carefully observed the teddy beforehand and produced some impressively detailed and accurate drawings. These are now displayed in the Reception corridor and look absolutely wonderful.

In maths, we have been tackling the question: Is zero really a number? The children explored what zero means using number lines, real-life scenarios (often involving chocolate biscuits!), and even the freezing temperatures we have experienced this week.

Finally, the children were excellent ambassadors for our school this morning during carousel lessons for our Experience Open Morning. We are incredibly proud of them and are looking forward to a fun and happy term ahead.

ZM-S



THIS WEEK'S AWARDS
Leaves: Dario N, Rannoch G,
Eliza J, Odin T
Berky Bear: Ayann A,
Jack G

