



DIARY DATES

February 2023

Tues 28th

Inter-school Athletics
Event – Y2

March 2023

Wed 1st

Balanceability – YN

14:00 'Maths' parent
workshop

Thurs 2nd

World Book Day

Gymnastics workshop
– all school

14:45 – 15:05 FoSG
Preloved Uniform Sale

Fri 3rd

08:15 – 08:30 FoSG
Preloved Uniform Sale

09:00 Parent Forum

Mon 6th – Fri 10th

Book Week & Fair

YN Open Morning

10:30 Visit to
Berkhamsted Library Y2

Tues 7th

10:30 Visit to
Berkhamsted Library &
local park walk - YN

Wed 8th

Balanceability – YN

10:30 Visit to
Berkhamsted Library Y1

Thursday 9th

Gymnastics workshop
– all school

Friday 10th

13:30 Visit to
Berkhamsted Library YR

Also view our [school
calendar on the website](#)

24th February 2023

Welcome back to second half of the spring term and over halfway through the academic year already! This term we have lots happening, don't forget to look at [the school calendar](#) and your [child's class page](#) on our website to keep up to date with all the exciting adventures we have in store!

Open Mornings

Our Nursery Admission Portal went live on Monday 20th February. If you have a child due to start Nursery this September, please apply [here](#).

We still have two Open Mornings taking place on the following days at 09:30:

- Monday 6th March
- Thursday 16th March.

If you, or someone you know, has a child due to start Nursery next September, [contact the office](#) to book a place.

Parent consultations

Our parent consultations will take place on Tuesday 28th and Thursday 26th March. You will be able to book an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher through your Arbor account. An email with further information will be sent to all our families. For Nursery, appointments will be on Tuesday 24th during the afternoon.

PE Sport events

Before half term Year 1 attended the Dacorum multi-sports event at Everyone Active Berkhamsted.

The morning was a chance for the children to try a variety of sports activities from balance bikes to ball skills. The children's comments included 'best day ever' and 'I loved it' when they returned.

Next Tuesday 28th February, our Year 2 children get the chance for their turn to attend an inter-school athletics event.

World Book Day

We will be celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 2nd March. We will be designing and creating a sandwich board of a favourite book on the day.



We have asked families to send in a pre-cut cereal box so that they can create a sandwich board in school. Please make sure this is in school by Monday 27th February.

Date for your diary!

Our next litter pick will take place on Saturday 25th March from 14:00-16:00. If you are joining us please make sure you [email the office](#) to let us know so that we can make sure we have enough litter pickers for our helpers!

We also had a lovely write up in the recent 'Berkhamsted News' with a picture of our fabulous team from the last pick.





Pause for thought

"Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today."

Malcolm X, Human Rights Activist

Packed lunches

A reminder for families who provide home packed lunches – you must not include any of the following items;

- nuts
- seeds including sesame
- egg egg sandwiches or authentic mayonnaise
- popcorn (choking hazard)
- lentils
- houmous

We also ask that packed lunches are a healthy nutritionally balanced lunch and do not contain fizzy drinks, chocolate or sweets. Please also chop small fruit such as grapes and blueberries (choking hazard) into quarters.

Donations

We would be very grateful for donations of spare tights (ages 3-7) and black/grey socks (any style!) Please leave them at the school office for Ms Di Giuseppe's attention.

Our school spares are running low as borrowed items are not being returned when borrowed. If your child comes home with a borrowed item, please return them clean and ready to be reused.

School Learning



The children in Voles began their six weeks of Balanceability. They are learning to use

balance bikes and balance equipment. The first session was enjoyed by everyone!



They then celebrated Pancake Day by making egg free pancakes using chickpea flour,



fizzy water, herbs and oil. The children all tried them and (most) loved them too!

Squirrels class have started a new text to support their Literacy learning, 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'.

They have shared the story and created story maps to use to retell in their own words. To end the week they had a fruit tasting session, tasting the five fruits from the story. Plums were a particular hit, with many children saying they'd never tasted them before and they really enjoyed them. During this session they thought of different adjectives to describe the fruits, some of the ones that they used were crunchy, juicy, smooth, bumpy, sharp, slippery, squishy and sour. They also talked about where these fruits grew, and have decided to attempt to grow some later this year.

Year 1 have been very active this week with drama activities to support them internalising their English text and learning new jumping



techniques both on and off the equipment in their gymnastics lessons. In PSHE we have been talking about success and what this means and feels like. All of which have supported the children with their confidence when tackling activities out of their comfort zone. A great start to this half term!



Year 2 have come back to school this half term, ready to learn about their new theme, 'How Does Your Garden grow?' This week, as part of a science lesson, the children have been exploring a variety of items. They have been using their observational skills and making suggestions as to whether the items are dead, alive or have never lived. The piece of tree trunk which is now dead and the fungi growing on it, which is alive, gave the children much to consider when sorting the items.



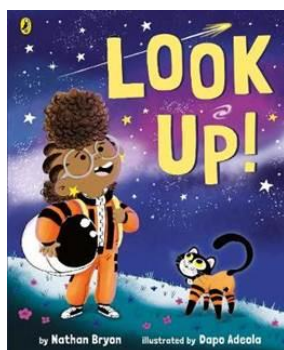
Connecting Generations

We had lots of thanks from family and friends who joined our Connecting Generations event before half term. The Year 2 choir received much praise for their really 'amazing performance'. The afternoon tea was also gratefully received, one Nanna commented 'the afternoon tea was literally the icing on the cake!' Here are Voles preparing their cheese straws.



Book recommendation from Mrs Hardwick

'Look Up' by Nathan Bryan. This is a story about a girl called Rocket who is really enthusiastic and full of energy. She wants to be the greatest astronaut, star-catcher and space-traveller who has ever lived. It has facts about meteors and space and also highlights the importance of putting



away technology and seeing what is around you! I hope that you enjoy it too!

Friends of Swing Gate

The 2023 Challenge

Yesterday's date was 23/2/23 and Friends of Swing Gate launched this year's 2023 Sponsorship Challenge.

The team is asking you to help your child raise £23 (or more!) in sponsorship by doing whatever takes their fancy. Last year we had walkers, bakers, skippers, tidy-uppers. Mrs Gallagher will give regular updates in assembly to thank the children involved.

The deadline isn't until after Easter so there's plenty of time to get planning. Sponsorship forms are attached.

Berko Runners

On Sunday 5th March our team of intrepid 'fun runners' will be taking part in the Berko 5 mile run. The team, including Mrs Gallagher, will meet at school at 10:00 for a photo opportunity before setting off for the start line. They will be easy to spot as they'll be wearing a Swing Gate PE t-shirt! If you still want to join them you can sign up [here](#) and if you can sponsor their fantastic efforts raising money for the school, by visiting this [Justgiving link](#).

'Anxiety Unravelled' – a free parenting course

Fully funded by Dacorum – 'Anxiety Unravelled', a three-session online course for parents is starting on 7th March. Join three one-hour sessions to explore anxiety. You will come away with an understanding of what it is, where it comes from and why it's actually essential for human beings to experience it. This course will give you practical tips and strategies that can be used to help your children understand and deal better with anxiety. You can find further information and booking details [here](#).





Open Door Community Hub

The local community hub and café, Open Door, run a variety of events and courses for local people to enjoy. You can find out more [here](#). For any budding authors in our community there is a '[Creative Writing for Everyone](#)' course run by local author, Clare Swatman starting on Monday 6th March.

Nippers and Netiquette

Age appropriate content & PEGI ratings

There are so many entertaining, yet addictive, games and apps out there that aren't always suitable for younger children. There can be huge intrigue and temptation for younger children to access games and apps that older members of the family are using. Pan European Game Information (PEGI) ratings exist to help consumers make an informed decision about game purchases and they shouldn't be ignored. They are based on the following content-related criteria: violence, grown-up themes, discrimination, fear, use of language, gambling and illegal activities. Many popular games offer online player communication capabilities and encourage the purchase of add-ons to advance within the game. Demonstrate your own scepticism when it comes to in-app purchases.

Is it really a good idea to spend money on 100 virtual diamonds when you have limited funds? If your child receives pocket money, you could suggest that they make their own decisions about how to spend it, including on the purchase of apps and add-ons.

Wellbeing in Action

Healthy Eating

Squash Quesadillas

Ingredients

- 350g chopped butternut squash
- 100g feta, crumbled
- 160g bag watercress, spinach & rocket
- 8 small flour tortillas.



Method

STEP 1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Boil the squash for 10 mins or until tender, drain and cool.

STEP 2 Divide the squash, feta and half the salad leaves over the tortillas and season well. Fold each tortilla into quarters, place on a baking tray and drizzle with a little olive oil. Put another baking tray on top and push down. Bake with the tray on top for 5 minutes, take the tray off and bake for a further 5 minutes until golden. Serve with remaining salad leaves.

Mindfulness

Bubble Balloon Game

Blow up some balloons and play the don't-touch-the-floor game, but focusing on gentle movements. Pretend that the balloons are bubbles that might pop, so you can only tap them delicately.

Movement Break

Your child might enjoy this action song which is a recent favourite in school: [YouTube Movement Break video](#)

And finally...

I was delighted to be invited to a recent iRock session in school and the children let me join their band. I had a comprehensive lesson from the children about how to play the guitar!



Next week is another busy week in school and I look forward to talking with the children and sharing their learning with them.

I hope that you have a good weekend spending time with your families.

*Francesca Gallagher (Mrs)
Headteacher*