



## DIARY DATES

### March 2023

**Mon 13<sup>th</sup> – Fri 17<sup>th</sup>**  
Science Week

**Wed 15<sup>th</sup>**

Balanceability – Voles

**Thurs 16<sup>th</sup>**

09:30 Final Nursery  
Admission 2023/34  
Open Morning

Gymnastics workshop

**Fri 17<sup>th</sup>**

Red Nose Day –  
uniforms as normal

**Wed 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Balanceability – Voles

**Thurs 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Class Photo Day

**Fri 24<sup>th</sup>**

Deadline to apply for  
Nursery 2023/24 places

15:00 School Council  
Bake Sale

**Sat 25<sup>th</sup>**

14:00-16:00 Litter  
Pick

**Tues 28<sup>th</sup>**

11:40-15:30 Parent  
Consultation – Voles

15:30-17:30 Parent  
Consultation – YR, Y1  
& Y2

**Wed 29<sup>th</sup>**

14:30 iRock Parent  
Assembly

**Thurs 30<sup>th</sup>**

14:30 Guitar Parent  
Assembly

17:30-19:30 Parent  
Consultation – YR, Y1  
& Y2

All dates are on [school  
calendar on the website](#).

## 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023

It's been another busy couple of weeks at school from the Berko 13 mile & 'Fun Run' to Book Week.



We wanted to remind everyone that the aim of our newsletters are to be a one-stop shop of everything happening at school – if you only read one communication from school, make it this! We take on board feedback that there can be a lot of information sent to our parents but we try to consolidate via the newsletter. However, there are times when we have a statutory duty to disseminate information or have events/news that needs to be shared individually.

### Parent consultations

The online booking system on Arbor is now open. You can book an appointment to meet your child's class teacher via your Arbor account, any issues please [contact the school office](#).

### Red Nose Day

Next Friday is Red Nose Day, we will be celebrating with the children. We ask that they wear normal school uniform and bring in a joke to share with their friends. We will also be collecting

a suggested £1 donation for the charity.

### School & Eco Council Bake Sale

The School & Eco Council have decided to run a bake sale on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March. This will take place in the playground after school. More details to follow.

### Litter Pick

Our next litter pick will take place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March from 14:00-16:00. Continuing our bid to 'Keep Berko Clean', if you would like to join in please [email the office](#) to let us know. All volunteers will need to be dressed for the weather and must bring gloves. Litter picks and refuse sacks will be provided on the day.

### Final Open Morning for Nursery 2023/24 Admissions

Our final Open Morning for Nursery 2023/24 admissions is taking place on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March. If you, or someone you know, has a child due to start Nursery next September, [contact the office](#) to book a place.

The deadline to apply is Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March. You can apply for a place by [visiting our website](#).

### Class Photo Day

VanCols our photographers will be in school on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March for class photo day. Please send your children in with their full school uniform and smart as can be ready to say cheese. An order form will come home with the children for you to order directly.



## Pause for thought

*"One child, one teacher, one book,  
one pen can change the world."*

Malala Yousafzai, Education Activist

## Reminders

**Drop off** – children must be accompanied by an adult to their classrooms. Parents and carers must wait for the staff member on the door to acknowledge the child's arrival before walking away. Children should also remain with their adult until they are at the classroom door. Our gates are open at drop off for exiting and, if unaccompanied, there is a risk of a child running out of the gates without anyone being aware. Also, if the bottom gate is closed (London Road side) then please enter the school through the front office and not by the top gate (Early Years playground). The classroom doors should be closed at 08:35.

**Road Safety** – we have had complaints about families crossing unsafely at the bottom of Swing Gate Lane by the mini-roundabout. **Please** take the extra 30 seconds to walk up to Carole Lollipop to cross. If we do not use her we may lose her! This is your children's safety we are asking you to prioritise.

**Lost property and labelling** – there are lost property boxes in every class as well as a cupboard in the entrance foyer. There are many items being found particularly gloves, hats, and Swing Gate jumpers/cardigans with no name label inside. We cannot reunite the item if we do not know who it belongs to

## Attend and Achieve

The proud winners of the February attendance cup were **Foxes Class** with an attendance of **94.6%**. Attendance levels for all are below:

- Badgers with 94.3%
- Owls with 93.8%
- Rabbits with 93.2%
- Voles with 93.05%
- Squirrels with 93.01%
- Hedgehogs with 90.5%.

The overall attendance for the whole school is 93.2% and the DfE target is over 95%. We are working to bridge the gaps in the children's learning and good attendance is key for us to be able to achieve this.

## Book Week and 'Reading Sea' Challenge

Book Week has been great and we are enjoying seeing the decorated 'fish' reviews that have made up our beautiful new display. We are looking forward to receiving more early next week to complete the display. The template is attached and all the children who enter will receive a certificate.

Mrs Marshall held a 'masked reader' assembly where the teachers read a poem and the children had to guess who they were.



As part of the week, all the year groups enjoyed visits to Berkhamsted library. Here are some of the children with their chosen books to take home and enjoy with their family.



For World Book Day the children created sandwich boards of a favourite book. Here are Voles with their boards.

The whole school also channelled their inner author for the day compiling a story called 'Do Not Open





This Box'. You can find a copy of this with the newsletter to read at home together. It's a daring and exciting adventure with many unexpected twists and turns!

## School Learning

The children in Voles have been continuing with their Balanceability course. Here they are whizzing around the hall with their new found skills.



The children really enjoyed the visit of Megan's baby brother Toby. They asked questions about babies and toddlers.

They also used the Chromebooks to draw pictures of frogs, then they tried to type a label, finding letters on the keyboard to write 'frog'.



In addition to their trip to the library, Voles also went to the park at Butts Meadow.

Year 1 had a successful trip to the library during book week. They learnt how easy it is to join the library and how many books you can borrow for free. They also learnt how librarians organise story books and information books. The children were then allowed to have a look at all the exciting children's books available to borrow and some, with library cards, were able to borrow one to take home. They were encouraged to take their parents and carers back for another visit soon. We are very proud of how well all the children behaved on the walk and at the library, well done Year 1!

Year 2 children have had the opportunity to take part in some wonderful activities this week, around the enjoyment of reading as part of our whole school Book Week.



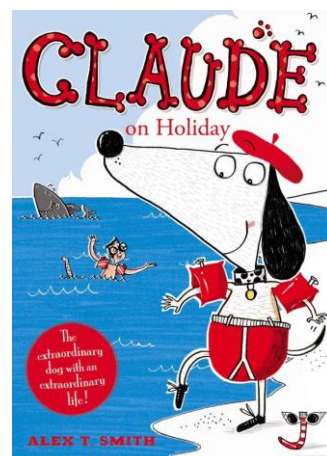
They started the week with a trip to Berkhamsted library where they enjoyed learning about how they can choose books for free, with the help of an adult, as well as listening to great stories. They followed this love of listening to and reading stories, by selecting a book of their choice from home or their class selection and reading to a child in another year group. The children really enjoyed this opportunity to share their favourite books.

Reception finished Book Week, with their walk to the library. Many already had library cards and were able to take their chosen books home with them.

Thank you to all the volunteers that made it possible for the children to go on their trips this week.

## Book recommendation from Mrs Hier and Foxes Class

'Claude on Holiday' by Alex T Smith. The book was selected by the Year 2 children to be read during story time. The story is about Claude who is no ordinary dog! Claude enjoys a holiday to the



seaside where he meets pirates, sails the high seas, and discovers treasure! The children enjoyed the book due to the funny illustrations and interesting characters.





## Are there any wannabe Brownies in our midst?

Would your daughter like to join Brownies? Brownies introduces girls aged 7-10 to a world of new opportunities, challenges and fun, whilst offering excellent value for money. They can make new friends at regular meetings where they learn new hobbies, get creative, develop life skills and have outdoor adventures. To find out about units in and around Berkhamsted, or to join the waiting list if your daughter is not yet 7, visit <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/>

## Event Hub Dacorum

Are you looking for things to do with your children during Easter? Then check out the [Event Hub Dacorum](#), a website created to help local people discover what's happening in Berkhamsted and the surrounding villages. They list events for free and aim to simply celebrate the local area and display all that's on in one helpful website. Check out their website to see sections for Children and Easter, its one to share with friends and family!

## Nippers and Netiquette

### Devices everywhere

Devices are getting smaller and more capable and can be used almost anywhere. This has obvious benefits but also some drawbacks. You won't always see what your child is doing on a device. Carefully consider this and the safeguards that you will put in place. Children's devices are likely to divert their attention away from other things that they are doing; they may sit down to do some homework, get a message on their device and an hour later, they still haven't started their work.

## Wellbeing in Action

### Healthy Eating

When trying a new food... encourage your child to remain present and in the moment by drawing upon their five senses to take small, focused bites.

- **See:** What do you notice? What colour is it? What shape is it? What stands out?
- **Feel:** When you hold it in your hand, what does it feel like? Is it soft or hard? Squishy or rough?
- **Hear:** Does it make any sounds? What about if you squeeze it between your fingers? (You can also revisit sound during taste.)
- **Smell.** How would you describe the smell?
- *Invite your child to close their eyes as they explore taste.*
- **Taste:** Put the food in your mouth. Before you chew, what is the first thing you taste? Is it sweet or salty? Sour or savoury? As you start to chew, chew slowly and before you swallow, think about the change in flavour, texture and sounds. Does it change the longer you chew?

## Three Ingredient Savoury Cheese Scones

- 1) Make the dough – mix 300g self-raising flour with 150g grated mature Cheddar in a large bowl. Stir in 250g low-fat natural yogurt until it comes together.
- 2) Roll and shape - Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead gently a few times until smooth. Pat into a round then roll out with a lightly floured rolling pin to a thickness of 2cm. Stamp out 10 scones using a 6cm round cutter, re-rolling the trimmings as needed. Transfer to a baking tray lined with baking paper.
- 3) Top and bake – Sprinkle the tops of the scones with another 50g grated mature Cheddar, then bake at gas 6, 200°C, fan 180°C for 18minutes or until light golden and springy to touch.
- 4) Serve – Transfer to a wire rack to cool slightly, serve still warm as they are, or





split and spread with butter or fill as you like.

- 5) Tip – some finely chopped spring onions or chives could be stirred through the dough to cheese and onion favoured scones or add a pinch of crushed chillies for a spicy kick.

## Mindfulness

Why not try a '[move your body](#)' movement break this week. Your child may enjoy this on a rainy day when they are stuck indoors. It is an opportunity to 'get moving'.

## Social media

Swing Gate School is on Facebook and Twitter, if you have an account why not follow us to keep up to date with our news. You can find us [on Facebook @swinggateschool](#) and [on Twitter @SwingGateSchool](#)

## And finally...

I joined a bunch of eager parents from Swing Gate to run the 5 mile race, three of them ran the half marathon,



well done to all. We were spurred on by Swing Gate supporters along the route including the Johnson family who sent in this lovely picture! It was also my PB for 8K, so I am delighted...

Today the proud children joined me to share their parents' medals with the rest of the school.



Thank you to those that supported us with your kind donations, we have raised an amazing £1,219 so far. If you haven't made a donation and would like to there is still time as the page does not close until 31<sup>st</sup> March. Here is the link - [JustGiving](#).

I'm off to run 10K this weekend but I will be missing my supporters!

Have a great weekend.

*Francesca Gallagher (Mrs)  
Headteacher*