

BERKELEY PRIMARY SCHOOL



If children are happy, they will achieve!

Monday 9th September 2019



Welcome back to a brand new term here at Berkeley Primary school. We trust you all had a wonderful time over the summer break, making memories to treasure. It was wonderful to welcome smiling faces into school last week, with children excited to enter their new classrooms. Reception children start this Wednesday, and their Y6 buddies are getting ready to welcome them in and show them the ropes. Seeing the children so happy and confident on their return filled me with such pride.



Curriculum News: “If children are happy, they will achieve”. This is at the heart of everything we do here at Berkeley, and we don't stand still. We are always moving forward, listening to what children want, and what helps them learn. We surveyed the children last term, asking them what they love about their school, and what they think will help them to learn more.

What they told us:



They love...the teachers; their friendships; the swimming pool; camps; the woods; PE; the active reward days; certificates; house points; Bertie the bus; the dining room; fun topics and art.

What they would like more of...cooking; time learning outdoors; drama; PE and pottery!



With this in mind, we, as a staff have looked at the curriculum and have put enrichment high on the agenda to ensure our children engage in their learning, and embed new knowledge and application of skills. Just this week, I have seen children cooking up a storm with a recipe from the past, and also cave painting and lighting campfires in the woods! I have seen children doing various PE lessons, and I have to say, they look superb in their new house colours. Mr O has said it has made such a difference with team games during sessions. I have witnessed some horrible histories style drama, which children were thoroughly enjoying to retell stories of rampaging Romans! Roman Shields adorn the walls in Y4 and are remarkable! This is just a snippet from the first 4 days of school.



We have recruited three new specialists to help enrich your children's curriculum further. Mr O will continue to work with classes across the school throughout the year for PE lessons, but we have a new sports specialist called Miss Robbins! And no, it's not me! The children will call her Rhian, as it will get super confusing for all concerned otherwise. Rhian will be doing inter-house tournaments every Friday afternoon, starting in KS2 this term, and KS1 next and so on. Mrs Lanceley will introduce this to the children; they can choose different sports tournaments to sign up for and could have the opportunity of taking part in at least 2 tournaments each term.



We also welcome Miss Lam who will begin by carrying out some Art therapy/relaxation sessions with small groups each afternoon from Mon-Thursday and Miss Buck, who will be delivering drama workshops every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon. Miss Lam will also progress onto engaging children who express a keen interest in art and design into some whole school projects and installations over the year. I have set Mrs Stewart the challenge of finding us a Kiln too, so we can bring their pottery dream to life! Miss Buck will work with each class over the year, and after Easter, will invite children to audition for an end of year summer musical. Exciting stuff I am sure you will agree.



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TOPICS: This term, class teachers have teamed up to create the first topic of the year, sharing in planning, events and school trips! Year 1 and Year 2 are becoming explorers this term with their topic of 'Are we there yet?'. Year 3 and Year 4 are going back in time with their topic 'Rampaging Romans' and Years 5 and 6 are also delving back in time to the Stone Age with 'Rock through the ages'. Watch this space for Reception's first topic, as I think Miss Rimmer is putting it in their hands! You should have all received your class welcome letters by email, but they can also be found on the class page on our website (different to the class blog) where copies of all future letters relating to each class shall be posted, just in case you miss one in your inbox, or need to refer back to information.



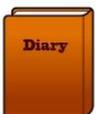
Reading: Class texts are high on our agenda this year, as being read to is a luxury that we want to foster throughout the school for all ages. Class teachers have hand-picked the first text, relating it to the class topic to engage interest, and will announce each new text as they are introduced. Please pay particular attention to the reading guidelines and systems for each class in your welcome letters. We expect all children to be reading at home and in school, and to find texts they love and don't want to put down. Please help us in our quest to foster their love of reading by continuing to read with them and to them, and sign their reading records which will be monitored weekly by class teachers.



Guided Reading: As you will know, we developed a new system for teaching reading in our Guided Reading sessions last year. This year, the children will come straight into their reading sessions which start promptly at 8:55am, and so it is imperative they are in school on time and ready to learn with everything they need for the day please, including their reading book. Doors will be open from 8:40am. To allow lessons to begin without disruption, please go to the main office after drop off if you have any messages you need to pass on to class teachers which cannot be done so in a note with your child. Teachers will not be available before school, but can be spoken to after school daily and/or appointments can be made via the main office. Thank you.



Governor News: We welcome Mr Runham this term in his new role as Parent governor, and look forward to working with him to drive school improvement as always. Our first meeting is on October 2nd, where we will be outlining the priorities for the school for the coming year. Over the holidays, we had new toilets installed by the school hall, which were in urgent need of repair. Our governors worked with staff to organise and oversee the work in school. They have also just secured quotes for new windows in the junior block which are long overdue. One of the school priorities this year is how to make our communication system more efficient, and slicker, bringing it into the modern world and making it easier for families to be informed and also engage with the school. Again, this is something we are working on together, and have some research parties in process currently. Watch this space for our new and improved communication systems...coming soon!



Dates for your diaries: I have attached this year's annual dates for your information. We have added Wow events in this term, but will update for Spring and Summer shortly.

Here's to a happy term, filled with learning and laughter.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miss Robbins'.

Miss Robbins and all the team here at Berkeley Primary School.