

From the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Spring Term is the shortest term in the academic year yet, despite this, our schools continue to produce a tremendous amount of work in this short time frame and this newsletter will give you a small sample of some of this outstanding work.

This term has also seen a couple of developments in relation to our schools. The process for the amalgamation of Barnes Farm Infant School and Barnes Farm Junior School continues in advance of the school becoming Barnes Farm Primary School in September 2024. We are delighted that Mrs Farmer will lead the new school as Headteacher and Mr McTaggart has been appointed as the trust's Director of Education (Primary), working across all the primary schools in the trust. We are also delighted to be welcoming William de Ferrers School into our family of schools from the 1st April 2024 and we look forward to supporting the school and the community in South Woodham Ferrers in the coming years. The new building for the expanded primary phase of The Beaulieu Park School is making excellent progress and this building will be open, ready to take the additional 2 forms of entry into Reception in September this year.

For some of our secondary pupils, the process of revising and preparing for their GCSE and A Levels has already started and we wish all these pupils, including Beaulieu Park School's first ever Year 11 cohort, every success in their examinations that take place from May onwards. Staying with secondary schools, it is pleasing to note that all our secondary schools will be admitting to their Published Admission Number (PAN) for Year 7 pupils in September. This means all our schools will be, once again, full and this is an indication of how popular are schools are with our local communities.

I would like to wish you an enjoyable and restful Easter break. Thank you for your continued support of our schools.

Paul Banks
Chief Executive Officer

Dear Parents and Carers,

As Easter approaches, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey we've shared thus far. It's been a time of growth, discovery, and resilience and I am immensely proud of what our school community has achieved together.

Your unwavering support and commitment are always the cornerstone of our success. Whether it's cheering on the sidelines at sports events, lending a helping hand during school fundraisers or encouraging your children to be the best they can be your involvement with our schools makes a tangible difference in the lives of our students.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff members, whose passion for education knows no bounds. Their tireless efforts both in and out of the classroom have enriched the lives of our students and inspired them to reach for the stars.

As we approach the Easter break, I encourage you to take this opportunity to recharge and reconnect with loved ones. Whether you're planning a grand adventure or simply enjoying some well-deserved downtime at home, I hope this break brings you joy, laughter, and precious moments of togetherness.

Easter is a time of renewal and hope, a chance to reflect on the blessings in our lives and embrace the promise of new beginnings. May it be a time of rejuvenation for your spirits and a source of inspiration as we look ahead to the possibilities that await us in the next term.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire school community, I wish you a wonderful Easter break filled with love, laughter, and cherished memories. Thank you for your continued partnership and support in our shared mission of nurturing the minds and hearts of our students.

Best wishes
Roger Blundell
Chair of Trustees



Sponsored Walk Money – Reading Corners

In the autumn term, our children took part in a fancy dress sponsored walk to raise money to make our reading environments even more inviting. Our new reading corners are wonderful - full of comfortable seating, lovely book displays and great books to share. Thank you to all that took part in the event.



World Book Day

As always, it was amazing to see all the fabulous costumes that the children wore as we celebrated our love of reading. This year's theme was 'You are a Reader'. At BFIS, we experienced reading and storytelling in many different ways. All the children enjoyed a dance session based on a Julia Donaldson book. They used their bodies to tell the story. In Year 2, the children were authors – writing their own stories, using all the skills that they have learnt over their time in school. All the classes wrote a whole schoolbook, with each class adding the next bit of the story.

One of the highlights of the day was our Reading Buddy class swap. Each class paired up with another from a different year group and they enjoyed reading together. The older children loved helping and felt very grown-up writing in their partners reading diaries! Our Reading Champions also went and read with the children in Reception, sitting with them and sharing their love of books.

Our New Forest School Area is being Built!

Barnes Farm Infant School is very lucky to have Forest School as part of our curriculum. This year, we have been working extra hard to improve our forest school areas by building our new forest school zone. We are excited that the first step in developing the area is adding a fence and new outdoor learning huts. This space will be perfect for forest school and group activities to take place with lots of lovely resources.



Spring Term Sporting Events

We have been very lucky to attend a variety of sporting events this term. These have included taking a group of children to the 'All In' event at Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre, attending the KS1 Cross Country event and the KS1 Tag Rugby Festival. We have seen great successes in the events with medals and certificates being achieved. Well done to all the super sports stars that have represented our school.



Children's Mental Health Week 2024

The theme for Children's Mental Health Week this year was 'My Voice Matters' and the aim was to empower children by providing them with the tools they need to express themselves.



We arranged a wonderful week of wellbeing activities for the children using Wellbeing Characters to help the children think about Mental Health. There were lots of visitors too who helped the children to think about how they can express themselves and keep their minds happy and healthy. This included Harold the Giraffe in his pop up tent, animal experiences, Mini First Aid workshops, and yoga session.



MIGHTY MONDAY



THOUGHTFUL TUESDAY



WISHES WEDNESDAY



THANKFUL THURSDAY



FRIENDLY FRIDAY



MINI FIRST AID 





Play Curriculum Transforms Lunchtimes at BFJS

We launched our OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) programme in February 2024 and it has already transformed lunchtimes at BFJS. It is based on the idea that, as well as learning through good teaching, children also learn when they play. As 20% of their time in school is playtime, we want to make sure that this amount of time (equivalent to 1.4 years of primary school) is as good as possible.

There are many proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme. They usually include more enjoyment of school, less teaching time lost to disputes between children, fewer accidents and greatly improved behaviour. Play is not messing about! It is the process evolution has come up with to enable children to learn all of the things that cannot be taught, while also having so much fun.

The experiences our school is fostering are essential for children's physical and mental wellbeing and are in line with all current good practice advice on health and safety, wellbeing and development.



We have setup 5 zones – all labelled with the help of Pedro the Owl – with more on the way:

- 1. Small World Play Zone including the Vehicle Testing Zone.** Think dolls houses, stuffed toys, pretend vets, castles, on and off roading toy cars and lorries etc.!
- 2. Cardboard City Zone.** Enough cardboard to put Amazon packing to shame! However, used in just about every possible way a child can use their imagination.
- 3. Sand Pit Zone.** Like the beach, just without the sea (and sun at the moment!)
- 4. Digging Zone.** Children love to dig; it is therapeutic and productive and satisfying – but a little bit muddy!
- 5. Tyre Zone.** Tyres of all shapes and sizes are available to balance on, move around and sit in.



The programme has been enabled by a working party from members of the school community and each zone develops its rules with all the children in 'play' assemblies. Parents and carers have generously supported OPAL by donating items or purchasing from our Amazon wish list. Finally, the programme has been helped by outside organisations such as Maldon Young Farmers who helped provide us with so many tyres and finally Thurrock Yacht Club for our amazing boat! Children have loved pretending to sail the seven seas in this.

The success of the programme is getting us noticed too, as we were proud to be featured in a news report on ITV Anglia. We cannot wait for the Summer to arrive and for even more zones to be created to continue our fantastic OPAL journey!

The Barnes Farm Junior School Values

BEING POSITIVE

BEING RESPECTFUL

BEING RESPONSIBLE

The secondary phase is in full swing with our enrichment programme at this point in the academic year. We have seen students visiting Bletchley Park, once the top-secret home of the World War Two Codebreakers; a series of Bikeability courses for our cyclists so they can be safe in our local community. Students are participating in The Scholars Programme, part of The Brilliant Club and are nearing their graduation ceremony; the school discos have taken place for our Year 7s - with some incredible dance moves, not only from the students but our staff too; students in elder year groups have been learning about a variety of Life Skills on topics such as buying a house, how to budget, employability skills and mock interviews, mixed in with some essential staying safe elements for social aspects of teenage lives. Our production of 'Oliver' is in its final throes of tech and dress rehearsals, with students and staff alike very excited about the live performances as we approach the Easter break. There have been a number of GCSE showcases where students have been displaying their work to family members to give them an opportunity to perform ahead of their final exams.

Year 5 Bikeability

In Year 5, some of the children have recently taken part in a 2-day Bikeability course. This involves learning how to cycle safely on the local roads. The children have really enjoyed the opportunity and some have even started to use their new skills to cycle to school.



Students had the opportunity to visit Trento in Italy on a skiing trip during half term, the snow was good, the injury numbers were low, cultural experiences were explored and the memories that have been made will last a lifetime.



Students studying History and Geography have visited Berlin, Germany to develop their language skills and immerse themselves in the wide range of culture and history on offer in this remarkable capital. Across the whole school, students in the primary and secondary phase have been honing their poetry and performance skills to win a place to perform as a soloist at the Chelmsford Theatre Studio.

Bedtime Stories

As part of our recent World Book Day celebrations, we held a special 'Bedtime Stories' event. This involved the children coming back to school in their pyjamas and being read some bedtime stories by their teachers, LSA's and some older students from the secondary phase. Over 100 children attended! We would like to thank our staff and older students for giving up their time to run this very special session.





Presentation Evening

Wednesday 11th January saw one of our biggest events of the year, our annual Presentation Evening. As is traditional, this event took place in Chelmsford Cathedral and recognised the outstanding effort and attainment of a significant number of our students. It was a fantastic evening – Well done to all those that received awards and also to those who performed.



Sixth Form Mock Bar National Finals

Students needed to prepare two cases. We placed 3rd overall in the competition out of 227 schools. With four barristers ready for their prosecution and defence cases. After our first round the Judge commended the team on such a high score and said Jessica's closing speech was outstanding. He liked the way the students were listening to the witnesses and reacted to what was said. Both the opening and closing speeches are some of the highest level that have been seen in the competition. In our final round the Judge praised the drama our witnesses brought. The judge was so impressed with Jack L as our Usher that she offered him a job! They put in one of the best team performances and the National Finalist Runner Up position was greatly deserved!



Jack Petchey Glee Club Challenge

On Sunday 14th January 2024, our Glee Club competed at the Regional Finals at Chelmsford Theatre. Rehearsals started in September following an intense auditioning process where each student prepared a solo song and learnt some high level choreography. The students performed two contrasting pieces that were an excellent standard. The first was a medley of Britney Spears songs, performed with high energy and enthusiasm. Their second piece was inspired by a previous school trip to see Standing at the Sky's Edge, where the students performed a gritty rendition of the title number. Not only did the students perform outstandingly, but they represented themselves professionally and maturely and were commended on these qualities. Their hard work and dedication were evident in their final performances, gaining a place in the Grand Final, which will be held at the Indigo 02 in April.



Year 7 Pantomime

This Years' Production was based on 'The Wizard of Oz'. Over 50 Year 7 students performed, showing an array of acting, dancing and singing skills. It was hugely impressive and was another example of what talented young people we have in the School. The production was a sell-out, so thank you to all the parents who came to support. The Mayor of Chelmsford also attended the evening and had some very kind and motivational words to say to the students at the end.



World Book Day

For World Book Day this year, we enjoyed bedtime stories around the school. Children came to school dressed in comfy pyjamas ready for a day of reading and book-based activities, including building reading dens! We voted on our entries for the most unusual places to read, and the winners were given vouchers to spend at Red Lion Books, courtesy of Lakelands PTA.



Colchester Zoo

The first of our 'big trips' took place last week – our Year 1 children, who are learning about groups of vertebrates in Science enjoyed a visit to Colchester Zoo. They also took part in a learning workshop about the fastest, biggest and strongest animals. Children found out that the strongest animal, relative to its size, is the dung beetle!



Football Festival

Children in Year 3 took part in the Colchester Blackwater School Sport Partnership Football Festival earlier in the term. They represented the school amazingly and showed fantastic sportsmanship throughout the day. Everyone said they had a great time, and the adults certainly did too!



Chess Club

One of the aspects of the growing school we are most excited about is growing our extra-curricular club offer. This term, we introduced Chess Club to Years 2 and 3 and were thrilled for the turnout. Everyone had lots of fun learning and playing chess with their friends and we were very impressed with everybody's knowledge of the game.





Perryfields Infant School - 'Be safe, be kind. Listen and think a lot. Be your best!'

Night Owl Visit

Perryfields Infant School had a visit from the 'Night Owls,' which are a Bird of Prey demonstration team. The morning started off with a fantastic talk and flying display session for the children to take part in. There were a wide variety of



Birds of Prey flying across the hall - WOW! This was a wonderful opportunity to get so close to these rare and beautiful birds and maybe a once in a lifetime opportunity for the children and staff. After the assembly the children had their photograph taken whilst holding a beautiful Barn Owl called Dotty.



World Book Day Fun!

It was fantastic to see everyone taking part in a wide range of activities for World Book Day in school. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the love of books and reading and to encourage everyone to pick up a book all year round. Our day started with individual workshops with the local author Hollie Hughes. Each year group had a different focus book and dressed up in specific colours. EYFS read the book 'You Can Do It Clover!' and wore bright colours, Year 1 read 'The Girl And The Dinosaur' and wore green/brown colours and Year 2 read 'The Boy Who Brought The Snow' and wore blue/white colours. Books were signed and Hollie stayed after school to give a story time to our Year 1 children and their parents.



Beat The Street 28th Feb - 10th April

'Beat the Street', which has been organised by Essex County Council to encourage everyone to get active and to work as part of the local community has started extremely well. I am personally enjoying walking around the local area and



meeting lots of families from Perryfields as well as other local schools whilst also getting fitter at the same time. Over the weekend, I managed to walk 6 miles! This is a great way to keep fit, save on petrol and have fun as a family or as part of a team and you or the school could win loads of great prizes!

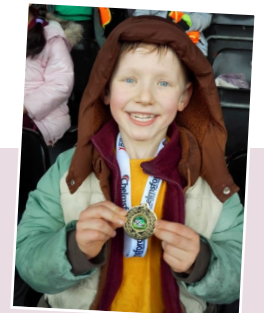
Cross Country Stars!

Eighteen children travelled to the Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre in Melbourne with Mrs Bowen, Mrs Pope and Ms Cansell. They braved the wet weather conditions for Cross Country. They sat in the big stands ready



to be called to race along the track, around the back of the stands and back into the stadium. Mrs Bowen reported that it was wet, cold and muddy but everyone showed such passion, enthusiasm and perseverance to race and cheer each other on. There were 17 schools in total who took part in most of the races. The school had some fantastic results! A few special mentions include, Harry in Year 2, 1st Place (Gold), Eliza in Year 2, 3rd Place (Bronze), Robyn in Year 1, 2nd Place (Silver) and a 1st Place in Reception (Gold). All the children got a score based on their position in the individual races. These are added together for the overall results, which were:

- Year 2 Boys Team:** 1st Place
- Year 2 Girls Team:** 2nd Place
- Year 1 Boys Team:** 2nd Place
- Year 1 Girls Team:** 3rd Place
- EYFS Boys Team:** 4th Place
- EYFS Girls Team:** 4th Place



EYFS - Healthy Teeth

As part of the EYFS Curriculum, the EYFS children have been learning about teeth hygiene. All of the EYFS children brought in their own toothbrushes from home and showed their friends and teachers how they cleaned their teeth properly - smile!



The School Result was **1st Place!** What an amazing accomplishment for everyone. You should all be extremely proud of this achievement.



Andorra Ski Trip 2024

Yet another amazing ski-trip! February half-term was full of skiing, bowling, ice-skating and lots of great food! The kids had a great time skiing out in Andorra and cannot stop talking about another ski-trip! Well done to everyone who signed themselves up for it and gave it a good go because everyone by the end of the week made massive improvements! Keep an eye out for the next one...!



Jack Petchey's "Speak Out" Challenge!



A group of Year 10 students participated in the Jack Petchey Speak out workshop-where they gained confidence in public speaking. Students performed exceptionally and did themselves proud. Out of 26 students, 8 were selected as the winning speeches on topics such as divorce, nostalgia, misogyny and identity. These 8 students will then perform their speech in assembly and one will go through to the regional finals.



Students are: **Jack C, Melissa T, Mia W, Marilyn R, Zoe H, Polina M, Isabelle D, Micah A** and **Oliver D** won the award for Highly Commendable.

On Friday 1st March 2024 it was time for Roding Valley to vote for the two students who are hoping to stand for the Epping Forest Youth Council. We had a record - breaking 17 candidates who spoke to so many voters about their plans and ideas, they were brilliant and filled with energy and passion for the whole morning! We wish them the very best of luck for the results on 26th March 2024.



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Disneyland 2024



The annual Disneyland Paris run by the Maths department took place over the half term. With 63 students and 6 other staff members supporting the trip, it was expected to be an uneventful but a great trip for students. It was my sixth trip after all! Wasn't long before I was thinking perhaps it will be my last one... The ferry ride was very choppy, you may recall the weather not being great over the half term but at least you were on solid ground! Multiple students did not have as sturdy a stomach as me and the worst did happen... I will be forever thankful to Miss Woods and Miss Bleakley for cleaning up after!



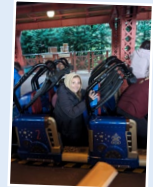
The Paris trip was very fun. There was a lot to do like roller coasters, having fun with your mates, taking lots of good photos and much more. Disneyland was so much fun. If I could, I would go back on this trip again with my friends and it would be just as fun the first time I went!:

Max, Year 8

Just wanted to say a huge, huge thank you to the teachers for giving up your half term to take us to Disney. I had a truly magical time and I think all my friends who went share the same thought. I made some amazing memories. I will never forget and also made so many new friends as well.

Thank you!:

Anya, Year 8



I really liked the trip, it was lovely. The best memory was watching the fireworks. My favourite rides were all of them, but the best were the rollercoasters: Indiana Jones and the Temple of Peril and Avengers Assemble. A big thank you to all the teachers who went with us!:

Yelyzaveta, Year 8

My personal favourite memory of the trip was just walking around the main park, eating in different places and trying to go on all the rides. My favourite ride was the Tower of Terror because it was unlike any ride I'd been on. The only downside was the queues, but it was worth it. I also enjoyed the fireworks display and the projections on the castle:



Georgia, Year 8

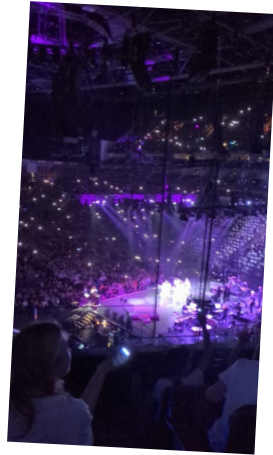
With such glowing feedback from the students, how can I not plan the next trip for February 2025! Please keep an eye for the letters for the next trip! A massive thank you to the adults - Mr Edeko, Miss Bleakley, Mr Vermaak, Miss Woods, Ms Thompson and Mr Perera. A trip like this is only successful with staff giving up their hard-earned holiday and all the effort they put in!

<https://rodingvalley.net/news/parent-bulletin/>



Young Voices Concert

On Monday 29th January, children from our Year 4, 5 & 6 Choir sang at the Young Voices concert as part of an 8500 child choir at the O2 Arena. The children worked incredibly hard leading up to the final performance, learning words and harmonies that they would then sing with children from across the country. At the event itself, the children's commitment and behaviour were outstanding and they had a brilliant time! A huge thank you to all the staff who supported the children to practice for the event and also to those who accompanied the children on the day of the performance. This was a fantastic opportunity for the children and something they will remember for a lifetime!



History off the Page

Within the last few weeks, our Year 1 and 2 children have been transported back to two different periods of history to bring their learning alive. Year 1 were transported back in time to a day at a Victorian seaside resort. The children enjoyed making souvenirs, investigating old cameras and playing seaside games. They made a train ticket and had a ride on a steam train, wrote postcards, made careful coin rubbings from large old pennies, shillings and sixpences, dressed up in Victorian seaside clothes and enjoyed many other seaside activities all from inside the School Hall.



Our Year 2 children took a trip back to London in 1666 to experience life before, during and after the Great Fire of London. Dressed in authentic costumes, the children used tools and materials of the time to make candles, scented pomanders, leather name tags and much more! The children tried out various jobs of the time such as apothecaries, bakers, plague doctors and even rat catchers. A fantastic experience was had by all.



A huge thank you to Friends of Tyrrells who funded the experiences with the 'Hooks and Highlights' enrichment fund, enabling the children to have an experience to remember forever.



Children's Mental Health Week

This year the 'Place to Be' Children's Mental Health week took place between 5th - 9th February. The theme this year was 'Your Voice Matters' and children took part in lessons, activities and assemblies that helped them to understand how to make sure that their voice is heard. The children have also been learning about how to stay mentally healthy as well as physically healthy. The older children also spent time looking at the links between online activity and their mental health.



For more details and links to some resources for parents to use to support children keep mentally healthy, click [here](#).

WOW' Travel Tracker

As a school we are now taking part in the 'WOW' Travel Tracker initiative to encourage more children and their families to walk, scoot or cycle to school. 'WOW' is delivered by Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking, to help as many children as possible experience the benefits of walking to school. The pupil-led challenge enables children to self-report (in class) how they get to school every day. If they travel actively (walk/wheel, cycle or scoot) at least twice a week for a month, they get rewarded with a badge. If children live too far away or don't have time to walk the whole way to school, they can park and stride to earn their WOW badge. A huge well done to everyone who is taking part regularly and wearing their 'WOW' badges with pride.



<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/products-and-services/projects/wow>