NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2 - 18 SEPTEMBER 2026

Term Value: **Friendship**

BRINKWORTH EARL DANBY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Believe to Achieve

COMPASSION • RESPECT • PERSEVERANCE • FRIENDSHIP • TRUST • COURAGE

'Roots grow down into God's love and keep us strong'
Eph 3:17

Message from Mrs Butt

Dear Families,
What a fantastic start to the new school year we have had! It has been wonderful to welcome our children back and see how quickly they have settled into their routines, relationships and learning.
I have thoroughly enjoyed spending time in classrooms across both sites over the past few weeks. The atmosphere has been incredibly positive, and there is a real buzz about learning throughout the school. Our classrooms look warm, welcoming and inspiring, and it is clear that both children and staff have worked hard to create environments where everyone can thrive.
One of the greatest joys of this role is celebrating children's achievements, and I have been delighted by the number of pupils who have proudly brought their writing to share with me. I have listened to some wonderful storytelling, been impressed by children's growing grammar knowledge and enjoyed hearing so many pupils confidently recall their number facts. These moments remind me just how much enthusiasm our children have for learning, and I am incredibly proud of the effort they are showing already this term.
We are also looking forward to our upcoming School Council elections. This is an important opportunity for children to help shape and develop our school community. If your child is interested in applying for this role, we would encourage them to start thinking about the ideas, qualities and contributions they could bring. During the week beginning 28 September, children will have the opportunity to speak to their classmates about why they would like to represent them on the School Council. We are excited to hear their ideas and aspirations for making our school even better.
Finally, thank you to everyone who attended our recent Parent Forum. We greatly value the opportunity to work in partnership with our families and appreciate the thoughtful questions, feedback and discussions that took place. A summary of the key points and frequently asked questions from the meeting can be found below for those who were unable to attend.
Thank you for your continued support. Together, we are looking forward to another successful and exciting year ahead.
Mrs Kelly Butt
Headteacher

Parent Forum Summary and FAQs

Reading and Phonics

We discussed our continued use of the Little Wandle phonics programme and the support we are receiving from the English Hub at Ramsbury. This support helps ensure consistency in teaching, maintains high-quality phonics provision and ensures all pupils, including disadvantaged learners, can successfully access the programme.
Key points included:
Reading books in Key Stage 1 continue to be closely matched to the sounds children are learning in class.
Phonics assessments take place every six weeks.
Additional phonics support is available across both key stages.
Our focus remains on providing "keep-up" support rather than "catch-up" interventions.
Once children graduate from the phonics programme, they become free readers but we have aligned these books to reading age. Children are not limited in their book choices as we wish to engage a love of reading.
Reading records remain an important home-school communication tool.
We are moving away from extrinsic rewards for daily reading and instead aiming to develop children who are intrinsically motivated to read.
Children who demonstrate a love of reading through home reading, lessons, discussions and sharing reading experiences will be recognised through our Reading Café. We expect that all children read at least 3 times a week.

FAQs

How can I encourage my child to read if they are motivated by rewards?

Children who engage positively with reading and demonstrate enthusiasm for books will be recognised through our Reading Café celebrations.

Are there any phonics apps or websites that support learning at home?

There are phonics websites and apps available, although many do not align exactly with the Little Wandle progression because sounds may be taught in a different order.
instead play "Shuffle Up" phonics card games
We will also share information from the Little Wandle parent resources to help support phonics practice at home. https://www.littlewandle.org.uk/resources/for-parents/

School Lunches

Meals not being hot enough.
Changes to the lunch service arrangement at the Upper Site.
Meals being served in containers rather than on plates.

The issue with meal temperature was linked to a fault with catering equipment, which has now been addressed.
The revised lunch arrangements ensure that children receiving school meals are served while meals are hot and safe to eat.
The use of containers supports compliance with food allergy procedures. Where allergy-specific meals are served, additional checks by staff are required to ensure children's safety. Containers also help ensure portion consistency and reduce food handling requirements.
At the Upper Site, the hall accommodates approximately 60 pupils at a time. Monitoring shows that children continue to have opportunities to eat comfortably and spend time with their friends across the hour long lunchtime.

Physical Education and Sports Provision

Some parents shared that children were disappointed following Steve's departure and that attitudes towards PE have been affected.
Explanation
Parents were reminded that changes were necessary due to reductions in PE and Sports Premium funding. National guidance is clear that this funding should primarily be used to improve the quality of teaching and develop staff expertise rather than fund long-term coaching roles.
Qualified teachers are responsible for delivering PE lessons as part of the curriculum not sports coaches.

Can parents help run sports clubs?
Yes. We would welcome parental involvement, provided safeguarding arrangements are in place and a member of the safeguarding team is present on site.

Homework

Parents expressed concerns about homework arrangements and preparing children for Year 7 in particular.

Discussion focused on research regarding the impact of homework showing little impact and the importance of balancing activities such as:
Spelling practice
NumBots
Times Table Rock Stars
Feedback on the previous "pick and mix" homework approach was negative at prior forums.
We are exploring options including:
Discounted CGP workbooks
Possible use of maths.co.uk, which has been used successfully and monitored previously with Y6

Swimming Costs

Questions were raised regarding the increase in swimming costs from £35 to £65.
The increase reflects rising costs and reduced Sports Premium funding which previously subsidised.
We would like to reassure parents that contributions are not being used to subsidise other families, as this would not be permitted. We also discussed that many schools offer swimming during only one year of Key Stage 2, whereas our current provision allows children to access swimming annually.
If affordability becomes a significant concern for families, the wider swimming offer may need to be reviewed in future.

Class Dojo and the School Website

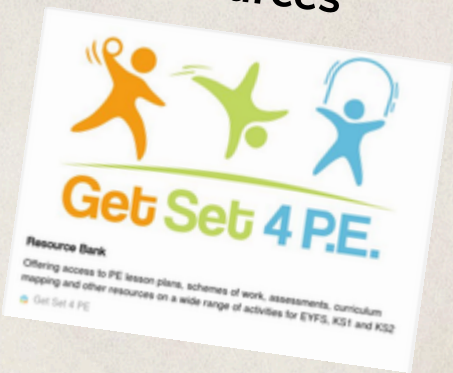
Some expressed concerns about increased screen time, while others asked whether information could be streamlined so that families receive content most relevant to their child's class.
Questions were also raised at Meet the Teacher sessions about the future role of the school website.
We reassured parents that the website is currently being updated and reorganised to make it more user-friendly for both current and prospective families.
Several parents also shared that they particularly value seeing key dates, class information and events within the newsletter. This feedback has been shared with the administration team as part of our ongoing review of communications and Class Dojo usage.

ATTENDANCE

Beech & Elm Class - 100%
Birch Class - 99.13%

Beech Class - 99.58%
Birch Class - 99.13%

Click for our new active families resources



STARS OF THE WEEK

Phoebe, Charlie M,
Rue, Lochie, Milly,
Sebastian, Sidney,
Cybele, Pippa, Harry,
Seth, Sage, Donovan,
Amari, Ben, Iliana,
Teddy N, Ada H,
Rowan and Darcie.

Upcoming dates:

25 FRI	All day	*POSTPONED* BEDSA Sip and Paint	School event
28 MON	All day	Aware+ pupil lifesaving skills (Day 1/2)	School event
29 TUE	All day	Aware+ pupil lifesaving skills (Day 2/2)	School event
	20:00–21:00	BEDSA AGM	School event

October

2 FRI	08:30–15:00	Whole School Day at Upper Site	School event
9 FRI	All day	BEDSA Disco @ LS	School event

December

10 THU	All day	Flu Vaccinations	School event

More dates coming soon. Please bear with us as we catch up with admin tasks across both sites