



Every day here at Bancroft's is action-packed and full of excitement and fun. You'll find our latest edition of *Prep Headlines* bursting at the seams with news! In fact, there are so many articles which show the richness and diversity of the children's many activities that I have been told I have only a few lines to write 'my bit'. This is very hard of course for someone who does love to write and to talk! But for once I shall be brief and say, do enjoy reading about all we have been up to in the Prep School and may I wish you a restful and enjoyable half term break!

Joe Layton

OLIVER!

Never underestimate the power of a Prep 2 production at Bancroft's. Each year, our oldest Prep pupils present a musical that's polished, professional and packed with personality. Direction is meticulous, choreography is tight, and every detail is purposefully shaped. But it's the moment each child steps into the spotlight that really stays with you. Whether they have one line or one hundred, every part matters. And often, it's the quietest moments that land the hardest. For families, staff and the wider Bancroft's community, it's an emotional watch. You cheer, you feel every beat, and above all, you're proud. A live band, full lighting and sound, a real set, this is the full experience. There are frissons throughout. These are formative, unforgettable moments in their Bancroft's journey. Oliver 2025, Cast A and B... you smashed it and I am so proud of you all!
Alex Adams

CHESS CHAMPIONS!

Zoe, Mary and Ishta competed in a gruelling two-day contest over the weekend of April 5th and 6th, playing against some of the most prestigious schools in the country, many of whom have longstanding traditions of competitive chess. The Prep School arrived on the girls' chess scene with a bang in 2023 when we won the ECF's National Girls' Chess Championship Finals at the first time of entering. Last year we were narrowly runners up but it is a joyous feeling to regain the trophy and bring it home to Woodford Green! Zoe, Mary and Ishta won all their matches in all nine rounds dropping just a single game in the process. All of this is down to the hard work and skill of the girls who maintained a steely determination over the whole weekend beating some really stiff competition from schools such as City of London, Eltham College and Habs. I am overwhelmed by the grit and competitive spirit our girls showed. To hold their nerve in so many tight games when everything was on the line was just awesome. When they realised they were national champions they couldn't stop smiling! We're all so proud of them.
Lisa Life



TOWER OF LONDON

On the 23rd of April 2025 we had our trip to the Tower of London! I arrived at school and was feeling really excited about the trip. As soon as I entered the school grounds through the gate, my friends and I had to rush to class so we could get organised for the trip. The blood was rushing to my head because I couldn't wait. The groups were led by Mr Bleasdale, Mrs Biston, Mrs Free, Mrs Shah, Mr Ringer, Mrs Dickinson, Mrs Darbar and Mrs Yelverton. After we had collected our packed lunches, we set off. We had to walk all the way to Woodford Station. It was an exhausting walk. I felt like my legs were going to fall off and this was just the first leg of the journey. We arrived at the station and boarded the train all the way to Mile End station. We then caught the District line train to Tower Hill station. On exiting the station we had to walk for 2 minutes to get to the Tower of London. We then had to pass through security. Once clear, we entered the building and went straight to see the Crown Jewels. Thankfully we didn't have to queue, so we just went straight in. We saw some special artefacts such as crowns, the orbs and sceptres and even an oil spoon. They were so beautiful. Huge colourful gems from diamonds to rubies and emeralds all set in shiny gold metal. Following this we went to Sir Walter Raleigh's cabin, where he wrote his books. In the room there was an automated video of him writing one of his books. From here we went to the bloody tower. Here another video told us about the Princes in the Tower and Richard the III. There was so much mystery surrounding the princes and their deaths. We don't know if they were murdered by Richard III, who was their uncle. I wonder if we will ever find out. Finally, we visited the White Tower. Here we saw the armour of Henry VIII and some cannons. We were able to play a virtual swords game using a foam sword as a controller to move a sword on a screen and try to chop cabbages. It was really interesting learning about the history and events that took place at the Tower of London.

Krish BNB

LUNCHTIME CONCERT

At the very end of last term, we enjoyed another lovely lunchtime concert in the Prep Hall, where pupils wowed us with their musical talent and confidence. Several students took to the stage to perform on their instruments, showcasing their hard work and musicality. For some, it was their first formal concert experience — including Grace (ALD), who said, "Despite being nervous, it was really fun." Other performers included Daniel (ATC), who shared that he "felt overjoyed when performing in the concert — it was really fun," and Zach (ATC), who said, "After the performance, I felt happy and extremely proud. The most nerve-racking bit was saying my name!" Jiaxin and Kaitlyn from Prep 2, who have played in several concerts during their time at the Prep School, reflected on their experiences together: "It's been really fun performing. It makes us feel happy and proud doing something that we love. The crowd going wild also boosts us too!" Performers included: Hugo, Arnav, Kaitlyn, Khadija, Jiaxin, Hermann, Max, Alicia, Leonidas, Zach, Daniel, and Grace. Congratulations to all who performed — we were so proud of you!

Natalia Spaliara

SIR JOHN SOANE



On Wednesday 30th April, the Prep Is visited the Sir John Soane Museum in Holborn, central London. Sir John Soane collected many antique objects, and when he died, his house was turned into a museum showcasing all these items. Most of the objects came from Ancient Roman, Greek, and Egyptian civilisations. There were three different parts to our visit: we explored the crypt (which was like a basement), toured the upper levels of the house, and took part in a workshop where we designed our own Greek temples. On our tour, we heard some Ancient Greek myths. One of my favourites was about Dionysus, the god of wine. He was on a boat ride — like a cruise — when he overheard that the captains were actually pirates planning to kill him. In his anger, he managed to summon vines to grow around the boat, capsizing it and drowning the pirates, while he escaped! We also heard some stories about the house. I especially liked hearing about the legendary monk who was said to live in the basement...We all enjoyed learning about Ancient Greece and then having lunch outside in the park. The museum was fascinating and full of secrets! I had a great time, and I hope other year groups enjoy this trip in the future.

Elise IBR

LIBRARY NEWS

It's simply wonderful to have so many children visiting the library! Since installing our new self-issue software loans have skyrocketed and we love welcoming the children in at breaktimes and lunchtimes to enjoy a quiet place to read. The start of the summer term has been a busy time for the library with a raft of new titles on our shelves along with our preparations for the recent VE Day commemorations. Mrs Houghton has been delving into the School archive for photos and first-hand accounts of life at Bancroft's during the Second World War, as well as telling the stories of the 79 Old Bancroftians who lost their lives during the conflict. Meanwhile, we've been creating displays and reading lists to help the children make the all-important decision of "what to read next!" Don't forget that you can access our book lists, audio books and e-books via the VLE, and watch this space for our upcoming book fair on 3-9th June!

Katie Pett

LITTER PICKING

Fostering a clean and safe environment is crucial for the well-being and development of children. One effective way to instill a sense of responsibility and environmental consciousness is through litter picking activities. Every spring, the Betas give back to our local community by making The Green, clean! They learn that their small efforts of litter picking can make a big difference in keeping their surroundings clean and preserving nature. By understanding the consequences of littering, children develop empathy towards the environment and the impact it has on others. Armed with rubber gloves, and trigger grips, the Betas collaborated to fill 15 black bin bags; this helped to foster teamwork and promote social skills and communication. They developed a sense of pride in their accomplishments and were praised by passing members of the public who were appreciative of their efforts. It's our way of helping the next generation to be responsible citizens who actively contribute to a cleaner and healthier world.

Sarah Strong



FOODBANK VISIT

Social responsibility is about children recognising their role in the world and learning to be proactive and accountable. It goes beyond simply 'doing good' — it helps build essential social and emotional skills. Our Charity Ambassadors spent an afternoon behind the scenes at Epping Forest Foodbank. They learned about the foodbank's history, aims, and operations, before helping to pack food parcels for the Waltham Abbey hub. They also explored what meals could be made from the items and calculated the average cost of a food parcel. The visit helped them understand how much the foodbank relies on donations and volunteers, and why reducing food waste and appreciating fresh, luxury produce matters. We were proud to hear compliments about the children's excellent manners — and it certainly gave them food for thought for future charity projects.

Sarah Strong



CLOTHING SALE

This half-term we proved we can be both charitable and sustainable in our efforts to do good with a pre-loved children's clothes sale. You donated over 400 items of pre-loved clothes which we displayed and sold over two days in aid of The British Heart Foundation. We raised over £350 for this cause; The British Heart Foundation are the biggest independent funder of heart and circulatory research in the UK, who help find cures and treatments for heart problems. The surplus stock was then sent to their Wanstead store to generate more sales and funding going forward. Another rewarding experience for our Charity Ambassadors who are always proud to represent our school. Thank you again to all who contributed.

Sarah Strong



GOSH FUNDRAISER

OH MY GOSH — we made it! Vaishnavi and I held a charity sale to raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital, a cause very close to my heart as they care for my baby cousin Reeva, who has hearing difficulties and a heart murmur. Over two months, we hand-made 246 friendship bracelets, and to include everyone, we also ran a fun ping pong cup game with treats for all who played. We were amazed by the support and so proud to have raised **£376!** Thank you to everyone who helped — I feel so lucky to be part of such a kind and generous school community!

Eshani BSS



ORCHESTRA VISIT

Our Junior Orchestra, who have been working incredibly hard this term, had the delight of going on a special trip to Blackheath Halls to watch the Trinity Laban Symphony Orchestra perform The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra. The performance introduced pupils to a wide range of instruments from different musical families, with each section of the orchestra showcased both individually and as a whole. It was a truly inspiring experience that brought music to life and sparked excitement among the children. They returned full of enthusiasm and can't wait to perform in the upcoming Lower Phase Concert. Natalia Spaliara

WELCOME!



My name is Mrs Dimple Sthalekar and I have been working across many different schools over the past ten years. I have worn many different hats including Forest School Lead, Learning and Support Assistant, Teaching Assistant and running Breakfast Club and after school Homework Clubs in my previous roles. I also love Art and Design and worked on a huge canvas piece with the students at my previous school. This art work went on a travelling exhibition around the UK! I was super proud of all those that participated and worked with all their hearts! I was lucky enough to live abroad between 2007-2012 with my family – my sons were 5 months and 2 years old when we left. We first lived in Mumbai for 3 years – a hot, bustling and sprawling metropolis which was a constant beehive of activity. We then moved to Singapore – a very different place to Mumbai, very modern, humid, organised but also full of energy. These experiences taught me so much about understanding other people and cultures. I loved every minute of my time there! I love working in schools and especially with the pupils who I learn so much from. My hobbies include badminton, making greeting cards and travelling. In the short time I have been at Bancroft's, everyone has been so warm and welcoming, I absolutely love it here! Dimple Sthalekar

REMEMBERING VE DAY

To mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, the whole school took time to reflect on the significance of this important moment in history. We discussed the enormous impact of the Second World War and considered the sacrifices made by both soldiers and civilians during this period. As part of our commemorations, the children learned wartime songs and sang them during a whole-school reflection assembly. We also created a special display featuring stories from our school community. Mrs Houghton explored our school archives to compile an honour roll of Old Bancroftians who served in the war, and she shared fascinating evidence of what school life was like during that time. Children

from across the school contributed wartime memories from their own families. It was wonderful to see such a wide range of photographs, obituaries, letters, and even audio interviews. Thank you to all the parents who talked with their children about their family histories and generously shared them with our wider community. The spirit of togetherness at Bancroft's is always heartwarming, and these acts of remembrance mean a great deal to us all. We hope our pupils grow up with a deep appreciation for the peace and security we enjoy today — and feel inspired to play their part in building a brighter future.

Bino Rathod



A CREDIT TO US!

Congratulations to our Green Credit winners for this half term! As a reward for their fantastic effort, behaviour, and positive attitudes, these pupils enjoyed a special trip to the nearby Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge. Rupert, Elsi, Charlotte, Ryan, Eliza and Fujian from the Alphas; Lillian, Alesha, Haala, Charlie, Michael and Emilia from the Betas; Ezra, Ophelia, Anami, Veera, Noor and Harshith in Prep 1; and Malena, Zarrar, Hugo, Theo, Skye and Imogen in Prep 2 all stepped back in time to explore Tudor history and discover how royalty once hunted in the surrounding forest. It was a fun and fascinating visit, full of hands-on learning and curious questions — a well-deserved treat for a brilliant group of pupils. Well done to all of our winners — you've truly earned it! With one half-term to go there is still time to earn a place at the final Green Credit winners' trip this year!

COMMUNITY LINKS

We made great community links this month with Avon House, who brought their School Council to meet with ours and share good practice. Over lunch, we discussed the many ways our councils have made an impact in their respective schools this year, and the positive changes they've helped to bring about. We exchanged updates on a wide range of topics — from lunches to school trips, curriculum ideas to the way our school councils are run. Both groups left with fresh ideas to take back to their peers — and certainly some food for thought! It is always beneficial to connect with our neighbours and collaborate in ways that keep our thinking fresh and purposeful. We hope to meet again next year to see just how far we've both come.

Sarah Strong

SPORTS NEWS

This term in Games, we've been making the most of the sunshine and diving into our cricket and tennis fixtures with real enthusiasm. Cricket is well underway across the school, with children honing their skills in bowling, batting, and fielding. We've seen fantastic progress across every year group, and it's been a joy to watch confidence grow and techniques sharpen. Our Beta pupils kicked off the season with a softball pairs match against Heathmount. Each pair had a chance to step up and showcase their attacking shots, scoring plenty of runs and learning as they played. Although a few wickets were lost along the way, the team showed great adaptability and progress — particularly in their bowling, where many are now confidently using a straight-arm technique, often one of the trickiest skills to master. Prep 1 followed with an impressive set of fixtures, securing victory in all five of their matches — a truly remarkable achievement and a testament to their teamwork and growing skill. We've also played matches against Forest and are now looking ahead to upcoming fixtures against Brentwood and St. Aubyn's. Meanwhile, we're excited to announce the return of tennis fixtures for Prep 1 and 2. So far this term, we've enjoyed matches against Chigwell and Bancroft's Thirds, and we're eagerly anticipating our fixture against Brentwood after the half-term break. With such a strong start to the term, we're excited to see what the rest of the season brings for our talented young sportspeople!

MINI MARATHON



On Saturday, 28th April, 45 Bancroft's Runners took part in the prestigious TCS Mini London Marathon, an event that covers the final section of the iconic London Marathon route. The atmosphere was electric as thousands of young runners gathered in the heart of the capital. With the London skyline in the background and the iconic landmarks lining the course, it was a truly memorable experience for all involved. The event kicked off with a dynamic warm-up led by none other than fitness legend Joe Wicks, which had everyone excited and ready to go. The runners passed some of London's most famous sights, including Buckingham Palace, The Mall, and St. James's Park, as they powered through their respective races, cheered on by their parents, some of whom were sitting in the grandstand! The 15 Prep 1 and Prep 2 runners took on the 2.6km challenge,

while the Alpha and Beta runners competed in the 1-mile race. While the event was all about mass participation and enjoyment, we also had some standout performances. Barnaby, Harry, and Ezra all finished in the top 15 in their respective waves, out of a field of over 300 runners—an incredible achievement that highlights their hard work and dedication. It was a day of achievement, and each runner left beaming with their well-deserved medal, proud of their accomplishment. Many of the children were inspired by the event and the atmosphere, and perhaps one day, we'll see them tackling the full 26.2-mile marathon themselves!
Tara Bird



GIRLS FOOTBALL

On Monday 28th April, we took a team to Bishop's Stortford College for a girls' football tournament. The girls faced five different schools throughout the day, and in true tournament fashion, they grew stronger, faster, and more strategic with each match. Our goalkeepers made some fantastic saves, proving to be a vital part of the team's success. With resilience and determination, the girls secured victory in two games and achieved two very close draws — a commendable finish to a brilliant tournament.



COMING 30TH JUNE...

Get ready for *the* biggest event in the Prep School calendar...

Bancroft's Sports Day 2025!

One day.

Four houses.

Hundreds of pupils.

A whole field of cheering, racing, leaping, and team spirit.

In the morning, the competition begins with epic Inter-House matches – where teamwork, determination, and House pride collide.

Then... from 1pm, it's showtime for parents! Join us by the Prep School gate, grab a portable chair, and prepare to witness the action unfold. From high-energy skill challenges to the adrenaline-fuelled 80m sprints, every moment is a chance to see your child shine.

New sports.

New challenges.

Same Bancroft's heart.

Plus... delicious treats at the PA stalls and a well-earned ice lolly for every pupil.

This isn't just a Sports Day.

It's Bancroft's in motion!

DISABILITY AWARENESS

In the last week of term, pupils stepped away from their usual PE lessons to take part in a series of inclusive activities, designed to raise awareness of disability sport. We were fortunate to welcome Bradley and Harrison from Essex County Cricket, who delivered tabletop cricket sessions to several of our classes. Bradley, a wheelchair user with cerebral palsy, shared his inspiring story with our pupils and demonstrated how he enjoys cricket through the adapted tabletop format. In addition to tabletop cricket, pupils also took part in boccia and were challenged to run the Daily Mile blindfolded — an activity that helped raise awareness of visual impairment. Overall, it was an insightful and thought-provoking week, encouraging pupils to empathise with those who have disabilities and to appreciate the power of sport in promoting inclusivity.



ESSEX CRICKET TRIP

Team PE had the fantastic opportunity to take our Prep 2 students to an exhilarating County Championship match between Essex and Yorkshire. As the children took a break from their usual activities, they quickly became the most enthusiastic supporters at the ground! We witnessed some outstanding shots from the formidable Yorkshire side, along with impressive bowling — great role models for our young cricketers. During lunch, we even had the chance to step onto the pitch ourselves, enjoying the sunshine and playing some fun cricket games at the home of Essex Cricket. We were thrilled to see Prep 2 pupils hitting the ball into the stands — much to the delight of fellow spectators, who were clearly impressed by the standard of cricket on show!



SKI TRIP

Our recent school trip to Passo Tonale in the stunning Italian Alps was a truly memorable experience. Pupils spent five hours skiing each day, building confidence and skills on the slopes. By the end of the week, every child had tackled a challenging red run — a remarkable achievement that made staff and pupils incredibly proud. Beyond skiing, the children enjoyed sledging, shopping in the local town, and sampling delicious Italian pizza and gelato. Evenings were just as lively, with discos giving everyone a chance to unwind and socialise. The trip was more than just fun — it fostered resilience, teamwork, and lasting friendships. Passo Tonale gave our pupils a chance to challenge themselves, support one another, and create lasting memories. It was undoubtedly a highlight of the school year and a shining example of the spirit of adventure and community at the heart of our school.

