



Welcome to the first totally paperless edition of Prep Headlines! Even though we are all apart currently, it's apparent to me every day that Bancroft's Prep School remains a strong, vibrant and cohesive community. We want to share with you some of the experiences the children and their teachers have had during this extraordinary period. We also want to showcase activities at home and online which highlight how creative, resilient and enthusiastic the Prep School children and their families continue to be! We don't underestimate for a second the crucial role of parents in supporting the children with their home learning and all the other online activities they take part in. Thank you for ensuring they continue to enjoy their school lives even as you are facing your own challenges and demands. Not all heroes wear capes, though having seen one of our mums dressed as Wonder Woman and joining in with her daughter's entry for the online House dance competition, it's clear that some Bancroft's parents literally do!

Joe Layton

WHERE AM I?

Welcome to one of our fantastic new clubs! Can you work out where I am in the UK from the clues given? Every week there will be a new set of clues, including a picture clue. Use your geographical knowledge of the UK and once you think you have worked it out, drop me an email. I'll give you an extra clue if needed, or if you've got it right, I'll set you the accompanying activity. Here are the clues from the first week, if you didn't take part:

- I am 250 miles from Bancroft's by road
 - They speak one of the oldest languages in Europe here
 - I've just met Alice and the White Rabbit
 - The goats keep watch from above
 - The bay is beautiful but I don't fancy a dip in the Irish Sea at this time of year!
 - I know where I am, but I'm struggling to pronounce it!
- Here is a picture clue:



Where am I?

Well done to everyone who has taken part so far; it would be great to have you involved!

Nick Thomas

BANCROFT'S HEROES



The shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline NHS staff during the current coronavirus crisis has been well reported. Marc Rogers, Head of our Design and Technology Department has been following this story on the news and Twitter. One tweet called for anyone with manufacturing capability to help in the production of PPE for the NHS. Further posts suggested that it might be possible for D&T departments within schools to use machines that were necessarily idle during school closures to help. Marc decided to put his skills, and those of David Fernandez (D&T Technician) together with Bancroft's equipment to good use. Mr Rogers writes: I found prototypes of the various components online and decided to build the Prusa MK 3 developed by the 3D printing company Prusa. Each 3D printed frame takes 1.5 hours to complete, so to make best use of time we set the 3D printing in stacks of four overnight. The visors can then be constructed the next morning. Once the frames have been printed, the rest of the job is pretty swift: cutting the visor shield takes seconds and assembling them a couple of minutes. It is necessary to wear masks and gloves to keep manufacturing as clean and germ-free as possible. Following construction, the visors are placed in sealed bags for three days (to avoid any virus being passed on). The visors are picked up and delivered directly to local NHS points of need by @3dcrowduk or @medsupplydrive. The school has received several requests directly from parents working within the NHS for these PPE items. At some point over Easter, Mr Rogers and Mr Fernandez hit the 1,000 mark and we couldn't be prouder of them.



AMAZING ALPHAS

As I write this, from home, I'm conscious that life is strange for us all right now. We're all settling into a new rhythm. What changes? What stays the same? Well, school has certainly changed and the challenge of adapting our curriculum to suit remote learning is something that has seen Mrs Bhangal, Mrs Kanolik and I wishing there were more hours in a day. But, crucially, what stays the same is the children; their ineffable energy and their enthusiasm. Trust me, even online, their personalities really do shine through. I was nervous ahead of our first online registration, but now I look forward to it. Of course I wish I was sitting in the classroom looking at twenty-two little faces, but the power of a cheery 'Good morning Mrs Dalton, I'm ready for a new day!' greeting on Teams is rather remarkable. It is amazing to think, that just six weeks ago, our Alphas did not have so much as a school email address - and now? Well, now they are more tech-savvy than I could ever aspire to be. Naturally I am biased, but I'd like to think that our Alphas have been on the steepest learning curve and I'm proud to say that they have emerged triumphant. We are very proud of you all so please, take a moment to feel proud of yourselves.

Laura Dalton

PREP 1

The last half-term has been a testing time but, for Bancroft's staff and pupils, every challenge can be overcome with perseverance and determination. It is wonderful that our Prep 1s are so practised in our school values, as these have had to come into play in so many ways. From the outset, the children were very resilient about the fact that they may not physically be seeing their friends on a regular basis. Nevertheless, through form chats, friendly discussion forums and online gaming in their spare time, they are catching up on their news and having fun. With regards to work, they have had to take risks and show initiative when using Teams and the VLE and the kindness they have shown to each other when guiding each other through tasks has been excellent. Such collaboration is also shown on Thursdays when we tend to have a face-to-face discussion lesson in English so ideas can be shared and group work still take place. The Prep 1s have been introduced to Philosophy as a topic in Personal Development this term, which has enabled them to show curiosity and critical thinking skills. Persistence when challenges occur and reflectiveness at the end of tasks means that it is 'business as usual' in the Prep 1s with no stone left unturned. In form discussions, I have been so pleased to hear that the children are taking part in lots of the extracurricular activities on offer, keeping active and spending quality time playing with family members. It is this balance during the day that will lead to a positive mindset in what can be a difficult time for some. Stay safe, stay in and stay cool Prep 1s - I am extremely proud of you all!

Sarah Strong

BRILLIANT BETAS

It has been really hard for us to not see our brilliant Betas every day - we have missed their constant questions, chatter and laughter more than we could have imagined! But we always knew that despite the distance, we'd be able to carry on learning in a meaningful way. There have been many challenges and we are so impressed with how our Betas have stepped up and adapted, becoming independent learners who have grown in maturity. They have demonstrated real excellence and creativity already in their work and all the while have continued to maintain wonderful relationships with us, and each other. We are so very proud of them!

Bino Rathod

PREP 2

Distance teaching and learning in Prep 2 got off to a great start and keeps getting better! Our wonderful children have stepped up to the challenges of locating, completing and uploading their tasks and so many have been positive when feeding back to us about their experiences! It took a little bit of time in the beginning to find our feet and get used to this different way of working, but as I write this, halfway through week 3, it feels as though we have been doing it for a lot longer than we have! We laugh when the camera doesn't turn on, only for someone to reappear from cyberspace and we share our thoughts and feelings about how tough it has been when not able to see our friends and families every day. We miss our school and seeing the children but we know it won't last forever. I know from seeing my own class on our Teams calls that the time we do have to chat and share our experiences (good and bad!) as well as laugh and joke is invaluable. A special mention must go to the girls in 2AA, lead by Nandika Mali, for putting together their wonderful music video they shared with all the teachers. Keep it going Prep 2; we are so proud of you!

Alex Adams

CHESS

One of the many things I am very happy to see continuing is our online chess coaching. Mr D'Costa, Mr Lee and Mr Bukojemski are running their clubs as usual with a mixture of top class coaching and fierce competition! They have teamed up with ChessKid in a campaign to get **one million** children playing chess in the UK during the lockdown. It was reported in the national press that their campaign may be bearing fruit as there has been a 400% surge in chess games played online during the last few weeks. This renewed interest may make qualifying for next year's National Primary Schools Chess Competition harder but having seen the quality and determination of our teams I am sure we are up for the fight! It is sad that we cannot compete in Camber Sands or Prestatyn this year, but with Mr D'Costa's online initiative, I'm certain we'll be back!

Lisa Life

OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD

On Monday 20th January, the Prep 2s found out what our play was going to be. The whole year group was excited as everyone had been talking about it for weeks. When we learned that it was 'The Wizard of Oz', we were over the moon! We watched the film that day and got our scripts that afternoon. We had three days to prepare for the auditions. Everyone was nervous on the day, but we all performed to our best, making it a difficult decision for the teachers to make. Everyone looked forward to rehearsals each week, and soon the play was looking professional! When school closures were announced, it seemed like all our hard work might go to waste, but our teachers decided that the show must go on! Sadly, those of us who were isolating or unwell, were disappointed. Costumes and props were hard to get hold of at such short notice but luckily we were able to find something for everyone, from hats to tutu skirts to a crystal ball and a broomstick.



With some children away due to the circumstances, their counter-parts had to double up on parts. Originally, we had four girls playing the role of Dorothy, but two were ill, so Esha and Dhiya learnt 138 lines overnight and performed the whole play with no script! They were brilliant! So on Friday 20th March the Prep 2s performed a 'small' version of 'The Wizard of Oz'! Cast A performed in the morning; Cast B performed in the afternoon. Before we started, everyone was buzzing with excitement! Act 1 saw Dorothy being whisked away to Oz by the cyclone and meeting Glinda and the Munchkins! On her way to the Emerald City, she encountered the Scarecrow, Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion but also some Jitterbugs who were ordered by the Wicked Witch to make Dorothy "Dance, dance, dance until those ruby slippers fall from her feet!" In Act 2 Dorothy, Toto and the Trio entered the haunted forest. The play then ended with Dorothy hugging Aunt Em. Thank you to the DT department at the Senior School, Mr Baum, Miss Ingram and of course our AMAZING Prep 2 teachers for making this happen.

Avantica, Nandika, Ayesha and Rajni 2AA

SPOTLIGHT ON TIM RAWE

With technology enhancing teaching and learning more than ever in these testing times, I decided to interview Tim Rawe, Head of E-Learning at Bancroft's, about his role in making everything run smoothly for our school.



How has your job changed in the past couple of months?

Things have become very hectic over the past couple of months. We had to ramp up both systems and equipment provision before lockdown and provide a lot of training to help everyone gain confidence to work online.

How would you say everyone has adapted to online learning?

In one sense the pressure of lockdown has made things easier, as everyone just has to get down and learn. On the other hand, it has been so encouraging to see teachers and pupils respond so well to all that online learning can offer, and in such a short space of time. I think most people are not aware of the paradigm shift our teachers have had to go through to prepare learning and deliver it in a way that can work online. It has been great to see how this has extended into fitness sessions, theatre and dance performances, music and so on through some inventive work by staff and pupils.

What facilities do the IT dept provide for staff?

We have a whole variety of online systems, from [Office365](#) to [Planet eStream](#) for digital videos and of course the VLE. We have loaned out almost the entire collection of laptops used in school when users have had limited equipment at home.

What have been the positive aspects of online learning?

It has shown me that all of us can learn and develop beyond what we maybe thought was possible.

What is life like in the IT dept in an average week?

At present it can be very hectic for periods of time and then go quiet. We can now see clearer patterns of how our users are working (and resting) by when Helpdesk tickets or calls come in!

Do you enjoy your job?

Yes, I do, partly because as an IT team we are a very tightly knit group and also because the staff and pupils at Bancroft's are so good to work with.

Do you have any advice for pupils and staff who are stuck at home with an IT problem?

In the first instance drop us an email at ithelpdesk@bancrofts.org. The more information you can supply us the better. Don't be surprised if we might first ask some questions instead of giving an immediate answer. We will tend to respond via email but if needed can arrange to make a Teams call to any user and that user can then share their desktop with us to let us 'see' what problem they are hitting. Unfortunately, all our houses have problems with Wi-Fi coverage, but there are tools such as plugin Powerline network adaptors ([Amazon options](#)) and Wi-Fi extenders ([Amazon options](#)) that can help make the most of your internet connection. A simple (and free) test is to visit <https://speedtest.net> and run a check on what your internet connection is actually supplying you with. It can be very revealing!

Sarah Strong

HOUSE EVENTS

Despite everything, we have still managed to run three House events and I do encourage you to check out the efforts from the pupils on the House page of the VLE. There you will find some superb designs made by the pupils, as well as their dance entries which showcase an array of talents, from individual floor dances; on a trampoline; playing guitar with a cricket bat and some truly amazing family efforts! Thank you for your support in this. Last week we also hosted a live quiz in year groups as girls and boys joined a TEAMS video call to test their wits against each other. It was great to create a social experience even though we are apart.

David Archer



SPORTS CHALLENGES

On National Skipping Day we set a skipping challenge to see how many skips pupils could manage in two minutes. Nell managed 185 skips! Well done to all who attempted the challenge - especially Nandika in 2AA who skipped a close 183!



Another great challenge from the PE department was to see how many stairs you could climb. A flight is 15 stairs and each iconic building had a target. Well done to all who took part but a special mention must go to Jayden in ALD who climbed the equivalent of Big Ben, Blackpool Tower, Scafell Pike, Snowdon and Ben Nevis—phew!

Hayley Pegg

MUSIC

As I write, we should have been celebrating a Music and Munch String Special but, alas, life events have taken over and any music being enjoyed, can only be enjoyed in the comfort of our homes. I have been so impressed with the amount of music taking place. From the start of the lockdown, some pupils have been enjoying 'Young Voices At Home', with the team at YV doing thirty-minute weekly workshops, which have been great. A Young Voices and Young Voices USA online collaboration is to come on 2nd June and I will send more details nearer the time. Some pupils took part in an 'Ode to Joyathon' with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and I was sent some lovely videos and pictures of the children playing. It was so good to be part of something that was a national initiative. Music lessons with our amazing peripatetic team carry on at a pace via Zoom, Teams or FaceTime. Hundreds of lessons are taught throughout the week and they have been largely successful. The initiative demonstrated has been very impressive, and thank you for embracing the experience so fully. Lessons and activities 'in school' have carried on too. Junior and Senior Choir take place every week; I just wish more of the children joined in! Do encourage your children to take part. The curriculum for the children carries on, too, for all year groups and it has been a lovely challenge to find material for the school and to put myself in front of the camera to present these classes. The children have sent in some fabulous work: some practical, some pictures, videos, PowerPoints, projects and more. I have been very impressed. William and Jayden from ALD are pictured below with their creations. It will never be the same as going live, and one day after lockdown and with some distancing, we will make music together again. That truly will be an 'Ode To Joy.'

Adam Baum

