

Prep Headlines

Spring 2 2026

It has been an honour and a great privilege to guest edit the Prep Headlines this half term. Every article in this edition has been written by a pupil here at the Prep, with the hope that this provides additional insight into what is important for them. Mr Layburn always says that, of the Prep School's values, kindness is the most important - and it seems that kindness is abundant here! Over the last couple of weeks, I have asked the pupil body to let me know "What or who has made your half term better?" The results told me a lot. They included moments of comedy but also those of significant achievement and personal pride. However, a common theme emerged: it's how we treat each other that makes the difference. Friendships are core, with a good friend being someone who is kind, caring, and supportive. However, we are also incredibly fortunate to be surrounded by the Bancroft's staff team who help us every single day. In the words of one Alpha, "My half term has been made up of happiness, friendliness and encouraging people." I have in turn been the recipient of great kindness from the Prep Headlines team of Mrs Dalton and Mr Layburn. They have been incredibly generous with their time, and I have learned so much from their guidance. I hope you all enjoy the holiday break and look forward to seeing you in the summer term!

Elizabeth

Red Nose Day

We marked Red Nose Day on Friday 20th March. Comic Relief helps people to eat, sleep and stay safe, and has helped millions of people by providing food, safe housing, support and healthcare. At Bancroft's, we celebrated by bringing in £2 or £3 and painting our noses red. On the day, I stood outside the gates with Bella, another Charity Ambassador, shaking a bucket and collecting donations from parents. I saw so many red noses — it looked like everyone had a cold! Thank you to everyone who donated - we raised a fantastic £447.50.

Freya Sampson ITB



World Book Day



On World Book Day at Bancroft's, students celebrated literature by dressing up as their favourite characters from books. I chose to come as Little Red Riding Hood, a familiar figure from a classic fairy tale. The day brought books to life across the school, creating a lively atmosphere filled with imagination and creativity. World Book Day is not only about costumes, but about appreciating the power of literature. Books introduce us to new worlds, ideas and emotions, allowing readers to connect with characters and themes in meaningful ways. Even traditional tales, like the one behind my costume, continue to be retold and reinterpreted, showing how literature can evolve while still remaining relevant. This year also included a subtle link to International Women's Day, adding another layer of meaning to the celebration. It served as a reminder that many stories highlight qualities such as courage, independence and resilience. Through reading, we are able to recognise these themes and understand their importance beyond the page. I think this year was an amazing World Book Day and everyone enjoyed it!

Lana-Mia Pandhi 2JH



Spotlight on Lambourne End

When I approached Mr Layburn to discuss Lambourne End, I wasn't expecting the conversation to turn to livestock and, specifically, goats! Some years ago, Mr Layburn's youngest son, who has additional needs, thoroughly enjoyed a residential school trip to Lambourne End. Inspired by his son's enthusiasm, Mr Layburn investigated and concluded that Lambourne End could also enrich Bancroft's pupils' learning and broaden their horizons. Bancroft's students have been attending Lambourne End on rotation for the last few years – and Mr Layburn enjoys accompanying these trips whenever possible. The activities include caring for livestock and the natural environment, and adventurous pursuits such as ziplines. Mr Hall is central to the Lambourne End programme, and even did a 24-hour walk to raise funds for the farm! Mr Layburn's favourite activity is helping on the farm, especially with the goats. A little-known fact about Mr Layburn is that he loves goats almost as much as he loves West Ham, having kept his own goat – Crystal – as a pet when he was a boy. Lambourne End has lots of incredible animals, including the goose called Ryan Gosling and the duck called Chuck. Chuck was given his name because – as he grew up with chickens – he now thinks he is a chicken and acts accordingly. Lambourne End is a core part of our learning here at Bancroft's, and we all really appreciate what it gives us.

Elizabeth Jaques 2JH



Beta Litter Heroes!

On 9 March – a wet chilly day – BSS went litter picking near school. We had three teachers with us: Mrs Strong, Miss Ware and Mrs Beckwith. We left school at 9am, grabbed our litter pickers, rubbish bags and rubber gloves and set off. We separated into three groups of seven and started our mission for the day. We all spread out and started collecting rubbish. It soon became competitive! We climbed into bushes and small gaps in rows of trees. We were happily chatting and finding places that no other team could find. Students even formed assembly lines to make the job quicker. By the end of an hour, the area was spotlessly clean with no rubbish to be seen. We were tired and

our shoes were drenched from the wet grass, but we were happy about the progress we had made. We walked back to school, took a photo with our litter pickers raised in the air, and then made our way back to our classroom.

Amaya Mashkaria BSS



Bringing Smiles Through Song

The Alpha and Beta Choir was invited to perform at Harts House. We sang a selection of seasonal songs including A Perfect Day in Spring and Spring Chicken. A number of choir members also performed on their instruments. I could tell that the residents really enjoyed the music by the smiles on their faces! We were all very grateful for the lovely refreshments and hope to visit our friends at Harts House again soon.

Henry Jaques AAK



Spotlight on Mrs Clark

The office is often seen as the nerve centre of the school, so I approached Mrs Clark to find out more about what goes on behind that glass screen.

How long have you been working at Bancroft's?

I've been here since 2009.

What's your favourite part of your role?

Working with children!

When you were in primary school, what job did you want to have?

I always liked the idea of being a vet.

What's the most unusual task you've been involved with?

The zip on a child's coat got stuck. Unfortunately, the child was zipped into the coat at the time! We were keen to save the zip, but the child couldn't stay in the coat forever. With some persistence we succeeded!

What is the most common request?

'Mrs Clark, I've lost [insert item of personal property]...'

Elizabeth Jaques 2JH

A Moment of Calm

On 11 March, the Beta students participated in a 45-minute meditation session led by an instructor named Nicola from Zen Fit Fun. This was inspired because we are currently studying Buddhism in our RS lessons. Meditation makes you feel calm and relaxed, and I think meditating really means reflecting on your past and being mindful. Nicola encouraged us to think about a positive affirmation. A positive affirmation is when you say something good about yourself in your head. For example, "I am brave". Nicola told us to find a comfortable position on the mat and then think about positive ideas. There was also some relaxing music in the background to help us. I would rate the experience as a fabulous 10 out of 10. I felt content, calm and peaceful after the session. I would definitely meditate again.

Aminah Riaz BSS

Making a Difference

Arjun and I recently presented our family's foundation at the Prep Charity assembly. It is called the Anuj Chopra Foundation, named after our Uncle Anuj, who sadly passed away in 2018. We shared how the foundation strives to help local communities and various charitable organisations through fundraising initiatives. Uncle Anuj loved music, which is why we host annual concerts at the Queen's Theatre for young Indian musicians trying to make a breakthrough in their careers. The theatre is so large, it can be hard to sell all the tickets so we also host Dinner and Dance events at various restaurants, which often sell out! Events can last seven hours for us as Arjun and I help backstage with lighting and sound as well as greeting guests at the front of the house. Using the money raised, we provide donations to organisations such as Whipps Cross Hospital, Ilford County High School, Ilford Cricket Club, and Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY). If you want to learn more, please visit www.anujchoprafoundation.com. Our next event is a Dinner and Dance at The Palms Hotel, Hornchurch, on 24 May.

Arjun and Shivam Chopra 2TC and 2BR

Prep 2 News



On 5 March, the Prep 2s visited Centre of The Cell at Queen Mary University of London. First, we took part in an interactive workshop about genes and natural selection. The staff members asked volunteers to play games that demonstrated this principle. For example, two students played a game where they had to pick paper butterflies out of coloured tissue and whoever got the most won. We observed that butterflies which blended with the colour of the tissue paper were chosen less frequently than those of contrasting colours. After lunch, we had a lot of fun playing games about cells and genes – we could have stayed for ages! Overall, it was a really great trip. The Prep 2s are also busy with rehearsals for our much-anticipated production of Aladdin – and we are all excited as the set and costumes are starting to arrive. In addition to the performances for our families, Cast A will perform the Prep School and Cast B will perform for the Thirds (Year 7).
Elise Doucy 2JH

Every Youth

On 13th March, the Prep School supported the charity Every Youth UK by wearing the most colourful and crazy socks we owned. The socks ranged from rainbow stripes to animal prints, and there were even sparkles. It was a really fun way to raise money for an important cause and we all enjoyed the opportunity to bring a touch of individuality to the school uniform.



School Council Links

At a recent School Council meeting, our representatives met with Daiglen's School Council to share ideas and experiences. We discussed what works well in our own schools, including clubs, opportunities, and ways students can have their voices heard. It was interesting to compare different approaches and see how similar challenges are tackled in different ways. I found it really interesting that in the Daiglen School Council team everyone was in charge of something different. Overall, the meeting was a valuable and inspiring experience that left everyone feeling motivated to make positive changes in their schools.

Aiyat Asad 2JH

Spring Fayre

On 21 March, it was the Bancroft's Prep Spring Fayre. It was a lovely sunny day with lots of fun activities including stalls run by the Bancroft's Cubs and the Prep 2 students. The raffle to be Head for the Day was the event that everyone was extra excited about – and Harry from Prep 1 was lucky enough to win the prize! There was lots of delicious food available, and attendees enjoyed performances from the Prep Singers, a selection of soloists, and Mrs Biston's tap dancers. The Easter Egg Hunt was also a big hit with the younger children! The event closed with Mr Layburn announcing the winners of the raffle prizes – but everyone had fun even if they weren't lucky enough to win a prize! Thank you so much to the PA for everything you do for our school.

Isabelle Talati BSS & Konrad Wright 2BR



Lunchtime Concert

Lunchtime concerts are an informal way for musicians to share what they have been working on to a small friendly audience of parents, teachers and friends. Some students even choose to perform a duet with a friend! Students from all years – and at every stage of their musical journey – enjoy performing, and it's a great opportunity to share your enjoyment of music with others.

Izzy Sampson 2JH

Betas in London

On Monday 23rd March, the Betas went on a trip to the Tate Modern and Shakespeare's Globe. When we arrived at the Tate Modern, we went into the gallery and looked at the artwork. It was very enjoyable to see all the different pieces and talk about what we thought they meant. After that, we went to Shakespeare's Globe, where we took part in a workshop on The Tempest. We then had a tour of the theatre and even got to sit at the very top of the seating area! Shakespeare's Globe is a reconstruction of the theatre where Shakespeare's plays were performed. It is unusual because it is round, and although the stage and seating areas are covered, the central area where people stand is open to the sky. Overall, we had a wonderful time and learned a lot on our day out.

Grace Dowsett BLW



Celebrating Holi

The Blue School became the Rainbow School for one dazzling afternoon. To mark the Hindu festival of Holi, we came together as a school to celebrate. The teachers pelted us with coloured powder as we ran around the field! This has become a much-loved annual event at the Prep School and reminds us that spring is here.

Elizabeth Jaques 2BR



Netball Festival



The Prep 1 pupils took part in an exciting Netball Festival at West Grove, where we played matches against local schools as well as other Bancroft's teams. The event was an amazing experience for everyone, giving the boys a chance to play netball, supported brilliantly by the girls who helped with lots of enthusiasm. Throughout the day, we learned valuable lessons about the game - from the layout of the court's three thirds to which positions each player can move in. Each team played six matches, with rest breaks in between depending on the schedule. When we weren't playing, we got to practise shooting goals, which was such fun! Every pupil had one rest game, meaning everyone took part in five matches overall. It was a fantastic opportunity for all involved, and the energy both on and off the court showed just how much everyone enjoyed the event. It's safe to say there wasn't a single person who didn't love the day!

Rudi Wilson IBR



Football News

On 13 March, the Bancroft's Prep 2 football teams took part in a large tournament at Fairlop Oak Playing Fields. We kicked off promptly at 1pm and did not stop until 4:30pm. We played lots of matches against local schools. The Bancroft's teams performed really well against some worthy opponents, and both girls' squads progressed into the Mini League. It was a fun but exhausting afternoon. The pitches were surrounded by walls that the ball could bounce from - rather than being out of play - so the action was non-stop!

Elliza Petkova 2TC

IAPS Hockey

On 6 March, Kenzo, James, Ezra, Josh, Sarim, Vishnu, Isaac, Robert, Dylan and I participated in the U11 Hockey IAPS tournament. The bus journey to Oundle School was two hours. We were ready for victory as excitement buzzed through the air! It was a rollercoaster of a day! Heartbreakingly, Chigwell knocked us out of the cup. We continued in the tournament, competing for the plate. Unfortunately, our run ended in the semi-final. However, the standard of play was very high and we were happy with our performance.

Milan Chowta BSS

Swimming News

Over the past two weeks, Bancroft's swimmers went to two exciting swimming galas and did really well. On Wednesday 4th March, some of the team went to Dulwich for the IAPS Gala. All the races were 50m, which meant they had to swim two lengths of the pool. This was especially hard for the Butterfly swimmers - Oscar, Lillian, Isaac and Katrina - because Butterfly is a very tiring stroke, so they did very well. They had been practising their relay changeovers and turns, and it paid off because nobody was disqualified. James won his 50m Breaststroke race, which was amazing. Another great moment was the Freestyle relay where Amelia, Lillian, Zelal and Saara swam a fantastic time of 1 minute, 14 seconds. Charlie D used very clever race tactics in his Freestyle race by taking only a few breaths on the first length and then breathing every three strokes on the second length.

On Tuesday 10th March, we went to Highgate School for another gala against Highgate and Forest. We did really well and won 13 out of 22 races! Lillian, Saara, Charlotte, Lakshmi, James, Amelia, Zelal and Vishnu all won their individual races, which is fantastic. Well done to everyone who took part.

Harry Ringer ITB



Running Success



Thanks to Miss Bird and the PE staff, we've had lots of exciting cross-country opportunities this year and more and more pupils have been getting involved in running. At the Fairlop Waters event in October, we had 24 runners competing, with U11 girls', U11 boys', U9 girls' and U9 boys' teams each having six members. It was a big event with lots of schools, which made it feel very exciting and a bit nerve-racking before the races started! All the pupils ran to an amazing standard and represented the school brilliantly. In February, we attended the Woodford Green Prep School cross-country event at Bancroft's Rugby Club. This was my favourite event because the course was really fun and we won lots of medals! It was great to cheer everyone on and see so many Bancroft's runners doing so well. In March, we competed in our first ever relay cross-country event at Coopersale Hall School, where six other schools attended. This was different from our usual races because we had to work as a team and pass over to the next runner. The day was very exciting and everybody came home with medals, which was amazing. We have the Mini Marathon coming up in April and our team is going to be made up of 40 runners. The Alphas and Betas run 1.6km (1 mile), and Prep 1 and Prep 2 run 2.6km, so we have been doing lots of training in preparation. My favourite thing about running is that it is a community that brings people together. With the help of Miss Bird, we have been turning Bancroft's Prep into a Parkrun School. To get this recognition, we need to complete three events at a Junior Parkrun, which is a weekly 2k run. We have one more in the calendar in the summer term and we would love to see as many of you and your families there as possible because it is really fun and everyone can take part. A special thanks to Miss Bird for organising all these events and making sure everyone has a chance to run and represent the school.

Summer Easton 2BR



IAPS Netball

On February 9th, a team of Prep 2 netballers went to a large IAPS tournament with schools from all around Essex. We set off at 7:45am and travelled for about an hour and a half to get there, listening to music on the way. It was a really fun journey. When we arrived, we went straight into our matches. We won our first game, which was a great start. Everyone on the team played really well. After our matches, we ate lunch and then waited to find out which division we were in. We were very pleased to be placed in the Cup competition, which was a great achievement. We played our hearts out again in the afternoon. Unfortunately, we didn't win, but it was a fantastic experience and we were very proud of how we played.

Anami Hare-Kunner, 2TC

House Spirit on Show

It has been a busy and competitive time for our Houses this term, with pupils taking part in House hockey, House netball and, as part of British Science Week, a House Science Quiz. The hockey and netball matches were played in great spirit, with pupils showing excellent teamwork, determination and House pride. There was plenty of excitement on the sidelines as Houses cheered each other on, and it was wonderful to see so many pupils getting involved and representing their House. During British Science Week, pupils also took part in a House Science Quiz, competing in year group teams. The quiz was hotly contested, with some very tricky science questions and some extremely impressive knowledge on display. It was a fantastic way to celebrate British Science Week and a great opportunity for pupils to work together and earn points for their House. Well done to everyone who took part and represented their House so brilliantly. We look forward to the next round of House competitions!

HEREFORD	314
KNIGHTON	304
MANOR	312
MONKHAMS	252