



Balcombe

Church of England
Primary School

"In all that we do we are guided by God"



JANUARY NEWSLETTER

parents@balcombeschool.co.uk

We do have learners with allergies, so please remember – no nuts in school.

Dear Parents,

A belated Happy New Year to you all. It's been lovely to see all of our children back with their new Christmas present hats, gloves and scarves. Please keep sending them in as the playground can be quite a cold, windswept place to be.

As promised, I would like to share with you, the results of the parent survey carried out last term. We had a great response, 43 replies in all, the vast majority of which were very positive.

"..... Every child is treated as an individual person and their individual needs/personality is celebrated."
A parent

That said, there are clearly some areas where we can improve.

Only one response indicated that a pupil was not happy and feeling safe at school, with well over half choosing to strongly agree with the first two statements. I am of course very pleased about this, but can't help wishing that the survey was not anonymous so that I could work with the family of the one child who isn't happy to turn that around. As with any of the statements, I would welcome the chance to speak with any parents who have disagreed so that I might endeavour to improve our provision for all of our pupils. Please don't hesitate to arrange to meet with me to discuss any issues that you might have. As a school, we know we are far from perfect, but I promise you, we do all want the best for the children in our care and constantly strive to provide the best educational experience possible.

"The children are all well behaved, and the collegiate nature and strong support that e.g. older children

show younger children, and the values instilled by teachers and wider staff is great." A parent

Five parents disagreed that the school makes them aware of what the children are learning and four did not feel they knew how their child was doing. When reflecting on this, I realised that although we do publish lots of information about our curriculum on our website, we could perhaps be better at reminding parents about this and directing them to the relevant documents. With that in mind, please do take a look at the website – Our School – Curriculum – Maths/English/History/Art etc. Within each area amongst other things, you will find our rationale for teaching the subject and a detailed content map for each class. We work on a two year cycle and are currently on year B. This is the best way to find out what your child will be learning about this term. Teachers are also happy to have quick conversations about this at the gate each morning, for example to suggest somewhere that might make a good family outing to support the curriculum, or make appointments after school to discuss any more detailed queries or concerns you have about your child's progress. Please don't feel that you have to wait until parents evening to find out if your child is learning well.

"It would be nice to get more regular and specific updates regarding my child's academic progress and what she has been up to in school each week." A parent

Four parents did not feel that their concerns had been dealt with properly and to those parents I would like to extend an open invitation to meet with me again if they feel that would be helpful.

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“The school has such a warm ethos and my daughter is genuinely so happy to go in the doors each morning. They have just cultivated such a lovely environment for the children to learn and makes friends in.” A parent

Most of the parents of pupils with SEND, feel that their children are well supported, however three (out of eleven) do not feel this. This result was a surprise to us all, as we pride ourselves on the strength of our inclusion and the amount of progress that our pupils make from their starting points. Again, I would urge those parents to come and speak to Mrs Cleverton, the class teacher or myself, so that we may address any issues.

“I feel my children receive good pastoral care and support as they need extra help with their SEND needs.” A parent

Whilst most parents appreciate the range of planned activities to promote good personal development, some felt that we could do more in this area. With funding always a limiting factor, we really rely on FOBs and other income streams to enable those extra opportunities. Our Expressive Arts week was a huge success and we are planning a “Technologies” week before Easter, but in order to facilitate this and other charity events/theme days/trips/visitors etc, we need parental engagement to be consistently high. To be able to develop this further, we will need continuing help and support from FOBS and our parent body.

“I think there are areas for improvement but these would be challenging without additional finances e.g more teaching space, more opportunities to take part in sports, drama etc.” A parent

Finally, I think that as time goes on, parents will see more benefit from us being part of HET. Staff have already seen benefits associated with resourcing, training, collegiate working and advisory support. Some children have attended enrichment opportunities organised by HET and these should continue to grow in the future.

Please see the attached document for a further breakdown of answers given by our parents compared to answers from all HET schools.

With best wishes,
Wendy Millbanks

Parents Evening

Parents Evening will take place on Monday 24 March from 4pm – 7pm and Thursday 3 April from 3.30pm – 5.30pm. Booking will open the week after half term but in the meantime, please make a note of the dates in your diary.

Rocksteady Music

Thanks to those who emailed us before Christmas about this. The rocksteady music sessions will be going ahead, starting later this term. Following the trial workshop on 30th January (see December newsletter), parents who expressed an interest will be asked to confirm if they still wish their child/ren to be included and submit payment to secure a place. Final details about timings and payment required will be sent after the workshop.

World Book Day



We will be celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 6 March. The children are invited to either dress up as a character from a book or they can bring in clues about a character from their favourite book. More details to follow ...

On Friday 14 March we will have a visit from the Book Nook. They will run a book fair all day in the hall with the children having the opportunity to look at the books on display. The book fair will stay open until 4pm to enable parents to buy books with the children.

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South Downs Planetarium



Spring Class's visit to the Planetarium was a success with great opportunity for learning about all things space related.

"We were spellbound by the sky dome because it was pitch black and then lit up by all the constellations!"

Elizabeth

"I liked the quiz we did and I loved all the factual posters they had up on the walls"

Matilda

MSA Cross Country

Congratulations to our cross country team who ran their hearts at the MSA Trials earlier this week. Many of our team ran well enough to go through to the next round against pupils from a wider area. We wish them the very best for the next stage ... who knows, there may be a future Bunn Run winner amongst them!

Guitar Lessons – spaces available

Last week in assembly, we were treated to a guitar performance by some of our pupils who have weekly lessons in school. Our guitar teacher currently has spaces available and would love to take on more pupils. Please email West Sussex Music for more information on: music@westsussexmusic.co.uk

Wish List - Library

We now have a Wish List for the library. Please click the link to view it - <https://amzn.eu/6JA7JMV>

Dates for your Diary

Fri 24th Jan – Spring Class Cakes (FoBS)

Thurs 30th Jan – Rocksteady Trial Workshop

Fri 14th Feb – Mill Class Cakes (FoBS)

Mon 17th – Fri 21st Feb - ** HALF TERM **

Thurs 6th Mar – World Book Day

Fri 7 Mar @ 7.30pm – FoBS Curry and Quiz

Fri 14th Mar – Book Fair

Sun 23rd Mar – Bull Run

Mon 24th Mar 4pm – 7pm – Parents Evening

Thurs 3rd April 3.30pm – 5.30pm – Parents Evening

Thurs 3rd April – Term Finishes @ 3.15pm

Fri 4th April -** INSET DAY **

Fundraising for School

Amazon wish lists will remain open should you wish to purchase anything for your child's class.

Please ensure you include your child's name and the class on a gift receipt so we can get your gift to the correct class and thank you for your generosity!

Donate with
JustGiving

Remember to join easyfundraising - you can collect free donations for us every time you buy something online. It won't cost you a penny extra, so please help us to raise funds.

INSET DAYS: 4 April, 2 June 2025

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REMINDER

Pupil Premium

If you are on a low income making a FSM application can greatly benefit your child.

It is often thought that parents of children in KS1 who currently receive Universal Free School Meals do not need to make a Free School Meals Application for the school to receive Pupil Premium. **THIS IS NOT THE CASE.**

Please contact the office if you think you may be eligible for Pupil Premium funding. Any accepted applications for Free School Meals (whether or not your child takes the meal up) attract over £1300 per child per year which the school can use to greatly enhance the resources available for your child both within the classroom and for extra-curricular activities. We may be able to help with school uniform costs, trips and other extra-curricular activities like swimming and music tuition.

Making an application is easy and confidential.

Saturday, February 1st, 2025:
3:00 pm 4:00 pm at All Saints Church,
Lindfield

Get your tickets, buckle up, and embark on a thrilling musical journey with **Ensemble Reza!** In just 60 minutes, travel the globe with music from England to Australia, stopping in China, Haiti, Africa, Greece, Argentina, and Ukraine. Get ready to start the New Year with a foot-stomping adventure the whole family will enjoy!

Ensemble Reza are a group of professional musicians with a shared passion to enrich lives through live music. Our distinguished players have performed with prestigious ensembles and orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic, London Mozart Players and the London Symphony Orchestra.

Over the past decade, we've created a busy programme of concerts, a community orchestra for all and education programme in schools. Our ethos throughout has been to

bring people of different ages and backgrounds together, changing lives through music.

Tickets cost: £12 Adults and £3 children with family discounts available.

This is a perfect concert for all ages, and especially those from pre and primary schools.

Tickets available here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking/select/gayqerawpeer>

Do watch our clip for a flavour of the sort of music to expect on 1st February. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pETTOgAkL_E

BALCOMBE TENNIS CLUB **TENNIS TUESDAYS**

£8.50 per session **Cardio Tennis** 10.00 - 11.00

Spring term
wb 24.2.25 -
wb 31.3.25


Junior coaching
Reception - Yr 2: 15.30 - 16.30
Yr 3 - 6: 16.30 - 17.30

Adult coaching
From April 2025
19.00 - 20.00
NEW: 20.00 - 21.00

For more information and to sign up, please email:
davebarlowtmusports@gmail.com

INSET DAYS: 4 April, 2 June 2025

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BALCOMBE TENNIS CLUB

HALF TERM CAMP | 9AM - 12PM
17TH FEBRUARY - 20TH FEBRUARY

**£120 FOR
THE WEEK**

For more information or to sign up, please
email:
davebarlowtmusports@gmail.com



FEB 17th - 21st NEXT THING EDUCATION PRESENTS **9am - 4pm**
FEBRUARY HALF TERM

TECH CAMP

FEB HALF TERM 2025
17TH - 21ST FEBRUARY 2025

Code & Robots | Circuitry & Inventions | Creative Technology | Expert Engineers | Model Makers

Movie Making | Video Game Design | Robot Coding | STEM Experiments | Engineering

17TH - 21ST FEBRUARY - LIMITED SPACES
AGES 5 - 11 MULTI DAY BOOKING DISCOUNTS!

What Parents Say

"Absolutely Fantastic!
First time attending &
my son loved it!"

★★★★★

HOW TO BOOK

STEP 1 SCAN THE QR CODE

STEP 2 FIND YOUR NEAREST CAMP

STEP 3 BOOK ONLINE (SPACES LIMITED)

W: WWW.NEXTTHING.EDUCATION
E: INFO@NEXTTHING.EDUCATION T: 01442 873150

£35.99 PER DAY OR £175 FOR 5 DAYS
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 5-11

FIND YOUR NEAREST CAMP ON OUR WEBSITE
www.nextthing.education

SCHOOL LOCATIONS 139

INSET DAYS: 4 April, 2 June 2025