



DIARY DATES

April 2024

Mon 29th

Event at Westbrook
Hay – Y2 (selected
children only)

Reception Screening
School Nursing Team

Parent talk – YN

Tues 30th

09:00 Voles Class
Assembly

May 2024

Wed 1st

Balancebike course – YN

Postponed SATs
Parent Workshop – Y2

Thurs 2nd

Polling Day - Squirrels
Gate entrance closed

09:00 Hedgehogs
Class Assembly

Balancebike course - YR

Fri 3rd

Shared Reading – YN

09:00 Rabbits Class
Assembly

Mon 6th

Bank Holiday

Tues 7th

Shared Reading – YN & YR

Wed 8th

Balancebike course – YN

Thurs 9th

Balancebike course – YR

Fri 10th

09:00 Parent Forum

Visit to Berko Art
Exhibition – Voles

The [school calendar on our website](#) has all our important dates

26th April 2024

It's hard to believe we are two weeks into the summer term already. The children are embracing the final term of this year and we will be outlining our transition programme to support their move to a new class or school in the coming weeks.

Deadline to accept Nursery 2024/25 places

If your child is due to start Nursery this September, the deadline to accept their place is today. If you do not accept the place by the end of the day, we will release it to the next child on our allocations list.

Polling Day arrangements

On Thursday 2nd May, our school will be a polling station for the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections. To limit disruption, and most importantly to allow all of the children to attend school that day, the elections will take place in Squirrels Class only.

Squirrels drop off and pick up will be at the main hall door, where the children will be met by a member of the Squirrels teaching team. All other classes will need to drop off and pick up at the usual classroom door. Entry to the main playground will be via the London Road gate only.

The Squirrels gate entrance will be reserved for the polling station and voters only. If you are late that morning, please do not attempt to access school via the Squirrels gate.

Attendance

As you may be aware from the media, the Government's focus is on attendance and making sure that schools return to pre-Covid levels of attendance. Alongside letters to parents whose children's attendance has fallen below 95%, we presented children with certificates if their attendance has now improved to over 95%.

I met with our Attendance Improvement Officer this week and she discussed the increasing number of children with neurodiversity that are finding school attendance more challenging. She provided me with information for parents on how to support children with neurodiversity in school. Here is the link to [The Neurodiversity Support Hub](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/neurodiversity-support-hub) ([hertfordshire.gov.uk](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk))

Reminders

Breakfast Club

A reminder that Breakfast Club **must** be booked by 14:00 on the previous working day before the session takes place. Our no entry system for unexpected arrivals began last week and we have had to turn away children who were not booked. This is uncomfortable for both the children and staff. If you are having issues with Arbor please speak to the office.

Uniform

As we are now in summer term, all children need to have a name labelled Swing Gate sunhat in school. You can purchase these from our supplier, [PL Schoolwear](#).



Pause for thought

"I'm going to make everything around me beautiful - that will be my life."

Elsie de Wolfe, American actress

Legoland School Trip

The trip will be going ahead on Wednesday 26th June at a cost of £30 per child. Further details will be sent shortly.

Staff Update

After 46 years and 1 month of service, our head cleaner, Jean Harding is retiring next week. We will be having an assembly to thank her for this extraordinary length of service and hard work.

Can you help?

We welcome volunteers at school. If you have a spare hour or two each week, we would be grateful for your help. After a very generous two years volunteering as our library helper, Lauren Wilson can no longer assist us. We would love someone to take this on this role, let us know if you can help. Thank you Lauren.

Class Photos

A school photo registration card of your child's class photo will be sent home in book bags this week. You can use the QR code or website link to view the photo and find details of how to order. If you do not receive the card by next week, please let the office know.

Wellbeing Parent Workshop

It was great to welcome so many of you to today's parent workshop. We hope you gained valuable tips and ideas for how to harness and support positive mental health in your child. There are some handouts available for anyone who was unable to join us, let the office know if you would like a copy.

Along with Suzanne, we would appreciate any feedback about the workshop and what you found useful. Please send this by [email to the office](#). Thanks again to FoSG for funding this workshop.

Following on from our Mental Health parent questionnaire, it is apparent that some parents are not aware of the many things that we do in school to support children's positive mental health and wellbeing.

Just a few tips that came out of today's workshop that complement what we are doing in school.

- We have areas in each classroom that children can access if they need time to self-regulate.
- We teach children to label their emotions, developing their emotional literacy.
- We provide hints and tips for Wellbeing in our Newsletters.
- We have scripts for children that are having 'big emotions' so that we can support them.
- We use the technique of offering limited choices to children, please see our Behaviour Policy.
- We teach children how to support their own wellbeing through the Five Ways to Wellbeing.



Menu changes next week

An email was sent earlier today, to inform you that owing to supplier issues, the kitchen team has had to make menu changes next Monday and Tuesday.

Piano Concert

Mr Lyon, our piano music teacher, has organised a concert to be performed by the Year 2 children currently learning piano at school. Their families will be invited to the concert that is taking place on Tuesday 21st May at 14:30.



School Learning

Voles had a visit from James' brother, Matthew in Foxes who gave an excellent and informative talk about dinosaurs.



Munro's mum visited Voles to answer questions, talk about her job and to create a podcast!

Emily's dad also visited to talk about his job in the construction industry.



Look out for a photo of Emily's brother, Nathan, reading to the class, this will be in the next issue.

Reception and Nursery have had two Balanceability sessions, which they have thoroughly enjoyed. They



have learnt how to control the bike using dinosaur steps and frog legs and have been practising gliding. It has been incredible to watch the children

confidence increase in just two weeks!

Nyla-Rae and Evie from Owls pretended to be Shelley in our EYFS top area. They tell us, "We are making the children's favourite dinner!"



Year 2 were busy designing, making and evaluating citrus cakes in D&T this week. Lots of children hadn't ever used the term 'citrus'

before and they enjoyed looking at and smelling lemons, limes, oranges and grapefruits. They then used lots of cooking skills including measuring, grating, juicing and mixing to make citrus cupcakes. Some children loved their cakes and others weren't so sure about the taste, but they all enjoyed working as a team and trying new things.



Thank you!

A message from the Big Spring Clean organisers:

'Thank you so much for taking part in our local Great British Spring Clean 2024 campaign. More than 750 volunteers from around Dacorum joined in with a litter picking event. Together, you helped collect 251 bags of rubbish and 160 bags of recycling – what a fantastic result!'

Swing Gate Infant School played a big part in this year's Spring Clean success.

It doesn't need to be a special occasion to litter pick, we are always happy to support litter picks all year round. To plan another litter picking event email us. If you'd like to litter pick more regularly, we'd love to welcome you to the [Dacorum Street Champions team](#) where you can receive your own litter picking kit to use whenever you like!'

Book review by Mrs Marshall

'The Huge Bag of Worries' by Virginia Ironside is a lovely book for opening up a discussion about worries. In the story, Jenny, who worries about lots of things, finds a bag of worries at the bottom of her bed. The worries





follow her everywhere and she tries lots of ways to get rid of them but they always come back. In the end, she shares her worries with someone and they start to leave. This book focusses on the important message that it is important to share our worries and not hold them in.

Wellbeing in Action

Healthy Eating

Orange sorbet

Ingredients

- 300ml orange juice
- 2 star anise
- 100g caster sugar



Method

Put the orange juice, star anise and sugar into a pan. Bring to the boil, stirring, until the sugar has dissolved, then remove the star anise. Cool, then pour into an ice-cream machine and churn until smooth and frozen. (If you don't have an ice-cream machine, cool the mixture, then tip into a freezerproof container and freeze until firm, whisking every hour with a fork to break up the ice crystals.)

Mindfulness

Have a look at the bubbles of gratitude, a sheet is attached with the newsletter. As your child colours each bubble, think of something that they are grateful for. It could be something big or something very small, something that they have experienced often or something that has

just happened once. Thinking of these things helps make us feel calm and happy.

And finally...

I attended the Partnership of Dacorum Head's Conference this week with Mrs Ayres (our SENDCo). One of the important messages to come out of the day is that we shouldn't define children with a Special Educational Need, as their diagnosis, we are all individuals and a complex mix of likes, talents and interests.

One of the tasks that we were given was to write a short song, called the 'I Am Song' to share with the people next to us. The activity was designed to think about how we view ourselves, not just our jobs. I will share mine with you...

- I am Francesca (said in an Italian accent)
- I am mother
- I am kind
- I am wife
- I am fun
- I am friend
- I am adventurous
- I am an injured runner.

This is an activity that you can do with your children, they can say anything they feel defines them (even I am purple), and it might be a different list on a different day!

*Francesca Gallagher (Mrs)
Headteacher*