

Balfour Primary News

Respectful • Courageous • Friendly • Ambitious • Caring • Enthusiastic

28th April 2023



NOTES FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Welcome to our first newsletter of the Summer Term. How did we get here already? It does not seem possible that we are two-thirds of the way through the school year already. Hopefully, the weather will soon catch up with the idea of Spring, let alone Summer – it does feel as though Spring has been slow to get started this year, but a few recent sunny days (between the rain) gives us all hope.



Alan Gunn
Headteacher

This half-term is a strange one with so many weeks interrupted by bank holidays, strike action and an INSET day on the last day of half term. I would like to thank you in advance for supporting all of us during the next few weeks and reminding me which day it is! Unfortunately, the government offer to teachers has not been accepted and one of the biggest obstacles has been the unfunded nature of the proposal. All schools in the city are suffering a funding crisis; in real terms we are operating with levels lower than 2010, and there is no slack in the budget at all. Schools, like all our families, are finding things much tougher and the cost-of-living crisis is a harsh reality.

In our last newsletter I spoke about our upcoming parent survey and how important your views are in helping shape our priorities as a school. I would like to thank all of you who took part (we had 129 responses), and we are currently unpicking the results as we review our practices and develop our strategic plan. Some headlines I would like to share with everyone are;

- 75% of parents feel that their child has a good experience of school (96% OK or better).
- 89% would recommend Balfour to another parent
- 88% say that their child is happy at school
- 95% say their child feels safe at school

These figures are a good starting point and now we need to think how we get closer to 100%!

Below I have included some of the summarised responses to represent the diversity of views we received. We grouped them into areas ourselves and included how many had this view. I hope this proves interesting and thought-provoking, whether you completed the survey or not. As you will see there are people who have completely opposite views as well as some common themes.

A key area we are keen to develop further is how we engage with and work together with all our families and the wider community. We are all keen on having more families in school, sharing what the children have been learning, sharing the experiences children have and sharing the expertise you have. I hope you have received news of some events already planned for this term, including opportunities each half term for families to visit their child's class and celebrate their learning. We plan to develop this further as we move into the next academic year and welcome any thoughts or ideas (please email me directly).

The survey has also made us think again about what and how we communicate with our families. As we all know communication always comes up in every survey in any organisation (too much, not enough, where do we find things ...) but this does not mean we are not always thinking carefully about how we communicate and what we can do to improve things.

There were lots of strong positive comments on communication between staff and parents, and it was felt that the teachers were always contactable either directly or via email but there were also some views that expressed a difficulty in knowing what the children had been learning and information about events.

We have our Weduc newsfeed and messages, our twitter account,



<https://twitter.com/BalfourSchool>, and our website



balfourprimary.co.uk. These all give details of upcoming events and share the learning children are doing. We have now set up a new Facebook page, [Balfour Facebook](#) to enhance this further and I plan to meet with families early in the next half term to share with you all the successes we have had this year and where the school is going next.

Finally, I wanted to say thank you to everyone who has taken on board our earlier communications around driving to school and parking by;

- Walking to school whenever you can
- Parking at least 200m from the school allowing our blue badge holders closer access
- Avoiding parking across driveways
- Not stopping on double yellow lines especially at road junctions
- Using designated bays
- Not parking with wheels on the pavement
- Turning off your engine when waiting

I have really noticed a difference in the mornings over the last couple of weeks – especially at the road junctions, and it is a lot safer for the children.

Thank you as always for all your support.

BALFOUR PARENT SURVEY SUMMARY: MARCH 2023

Area	One thing the school does really well....	One thing the school should improve on...
Formal and informal Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra fun days- dressing up, Easter Egg hunt (x3) • Excellent trips/visitors (x8) • Lessons are fun/lots of different activities to make learning fun and inclusive (x10) • Brilliant, enthusiastic teachers (x10) • Teacher knows child well (x4) • Delivers a great range of knowledge in the curriculum (x1) • Environment education (x2) • Bedtime stories/Book Week events (x5) • Teachers make sure children are on target (x1) • Well-structured curriculum e.g. Maths and Reading (x5) • Varied curriculum (x2) • Football for girls (x2) • After school clubs (x3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis on subjects other than Math's and English- more exciting projects (x4) • Greater emphasis on nurture, rather than academic success at the open days (x2) • Academic expectations are not high enough (x3) • More emphasis on Art, Drama, Music and PE (x2) • Develop stretch and challenge provision (x7) • Clarity over learning focus (x1) • Further opportunities for shared learning between home/school (x2) • More options for dress up days for families can't afford costumes (x1) • Outdated choosy books (x1) • Make lessons more engaging for all (x2) • More opportunities for parents to come into school and learn with their child (x1) • All children to be given the opportunity to play a musical instrument (x1)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff (x2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent changing of phonics books (x1) • Displays (x1) • Improve the end of year report (x1) • Too much homework (x1) • More time outside to play (x1) • More variety in after school clubs (x3) • Improve Christmas shows (x4) • More sports clubs at lunch and after school (x1) • Too many different teachers covering my child's class (x5)
Pastoral incl safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow children to have/act on own ideas/encourage independence (x3) • Children feel safe/secure, confident, supported and ready to learn (x10) • Encourage kindness/caring for each other, inclusive and respectful behaviour (x3) • Caring, friendly, supportive, welcoming and nurturing culture/environment/learning environment (x16) • Phonics (x2) • Pastoral and safeguarding (x4) • Make children feel special, supported and appreciated (x2) • Let's kids play freely/not too risk averse (x1) • No bullying (x1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How bullying/unpleasant behavior is dealt with at KS1 (Key Stage 1) (x1) • Emotional and pastoral support (x1) • Listen to the children more and take what they say seriously (x1) • Taking parents' concerns more seriously (x1) • Stop parents parking dangerously at drop off and collection times (x1)
Community and campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active PTA/school community events (x4) • Amazing outdoor space for play and learning (x6) • Building a strong community-makes the school feel small (x4) 	
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication (x13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with parent- more information about what your child is learning and how to support and about pastoral concerns (x 13)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with SLT (roles and responsibilities) (x2) • Longer slots at parents 'evenings (x3)
SEND		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) provision for children who struggle with social skills (x1) • SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-Ordination) budget (x1) • Support for SEND children (x3) • SEND information needs to be passed on each year rather than parents having to share this with each new teacher (x1) • SEND TAs (Teaching Assistant) in each class. (x1) • Inform parents when their child moves in or out of a booster group- would (x1) • School being more trauma and attachment informed and more flexible thinking around support. More than one SENCO (x1) • Greater focus on dyslexia screening and wider range of adapted learning for homework and in class to support neuro-divergent children (x1). • Improve staff understanding of children with ASC (x2) • Identifying support earlier and not missing other activities e.g., assemblies (x3) • More personalised provision (x1) • Exercises for fine motor skills and construction sculpting e.g., Lego/robotics (x1)
Food		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time to eat lunch (x2) • Lunch menus for children with allergens (x1) • Healthier eating and more options (x3)
Wider		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader focus on cultures/diversity (x2) • Reduce teacher workload (x1) • Staff retention- teachers leaving mid-year (x3)

TERM DATES

Summer Term 1: 17/4/23 - 25/5/23

➤ Half Term: 29 May – 2 June

Summer Term 2: 5/6/23 – 21/7/23

➤ First back day for students: TBD

INSET days: 26th May



[Additional dates for your diary](#)



What have we been up to in school this month to diversify our curriculum?

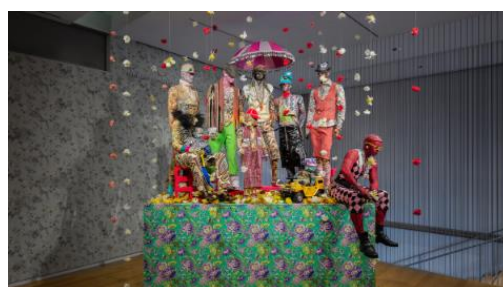
Reception - Our topic is Animal Magic. We will be looking at various non-fiction and fiction texts, including 'Odd Dog Out.' We will be discussing how unique Odd Dog is and celebrating how we are all unique. During our Understanding the World discussions, we will be learning about Ramadan and Eid. We will be making Eid baskets as well as looking at how Eid is celebrated.



Year 1 – We are comparing London to Brighton as part of our geography topic. We have been learning through the experiences of Paddington Bear. We are learning about how people have travelled and moved to live in different countries. We have been thinking about how populations have changed and become more diverse.



Year 2 – In our Art topic we are being inspired by the artist Ebony Patterson. She uses mixed media to explore Jamaican culture, identity, class, race, gender and more. Patterson is known for her large and colourful tapestries created out of various materials such as, glitter, sequins, fabric, toys,



beads, faux flowers, jewellery, and other embellishments. She wants people to stop and look behind the colour and texture to see the people who are ignored and forgotten. We will be using a mixed media approach to create our sculptures for the Art Exhibition.

Year 3 – In English, we have read a wide range of diverse biographies from Marcus Rashford to Neil Armstrong to Malala Yousafzai. The children have really enjoyed reading about all these diverse people and learning about them.

In Art and RE, the children are learning about Islam and in particular the Five Pillars. The children have then transferred this knowledge and will be designing and creating prayer mats during their Art lessons.



Year 4 – We are reading the book the Explorer. The main characters are from different parts of the world and they come together to survive in the jungle. In RE we have been looking at Christianity, focusing on Christianity around the world and how different key events are celebrated.



Year 5 – We are learning about Gypsy Roma Travellers. This includes their history, culture and way of life, as well as challenging the stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination that can exist about them. There will be three lessons that cover these aspects.

Year 6 – We are exploring electricity and light in our science topic, 'Bright Sparks'. We will look at influential scientists: Thomas Edison, known best for his work perfecting the first long-lasting, commercially available light bulb, and Nikola Tesla, who helped perfect alternating current (AC) electricity. We are keen to challenge stereotypes about a



'typical scientist', so we will also look at Mária Telkes, who earned her nickname "The Sun Queen" thanks to her pioneering work with solar thermal storage technology and Annie Easley who worked on early solar, wind and battery projects, and solved the energy problems that come along with putting vehicles in outer space.



INCLUSION



What do we need to do to keep our children safe online?

1. Understand how to set limits from your internet service provider (SKY, TALKTALK, Virgin, BT)
2. Put restrictions on devices. (iPad, mobiles, Xbox etc.)
3. Set safe search on google and YouTube (turn off auto play on YouTube)
4. Have a plan for when things go wrong
5. Most importantly - keep involved in your child's online life

Please also see links for further useful information:

[Parental Controls & Privacy Settings Guides | Internet Matters](#)

[Screen time: everything you need to know — Parent Zone – Parents' area](#)

[Keeping children safe online | NSPCC](#)

WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS/CARERS
SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH THEIR
MENTAL HEALTH



16TH MAY

FREE TO ANY
PARENT/CARER
LIVING IN
SUSSEX

5 WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE COVERING:

- Anxiety
- Sleep
- Managing self-harm and suicidal thoughts
- Autism and challenging behaviour
- Eating disorders

Workshops will be delivered on
16TH MAY AT 9:30AM, 12:30PM AND 7PM
Workshops last 90 minutes and have a 15 minute
Q&A session (pre-sent questions only)

WANT TO BOOK YOUR TICKETS?

Scan here:

Or visit:



<https://bit.ly/3LvABw5>

FREE DIGITAL GOODY
BAG OF RESOURCES
AND INFORMATION FOR
EACH ATTENDEE

NEED TO GET IN TOUCH?

If you have any questions, please email: Melissa.Baitmansour@spft.nhs.uk

Delivered by **Sussex Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

GOVERNORS



If you wish to contact the chair of governors, Kirstin Baker, the email address is: KirstinBaker@balfour.brighton-hove.sch.uk

If you wish to contact the school governors, the email address is: balfour.governor@balfour.brighton-hove.sch.uk

Governors can also be contacted via the school office who will be happy to forward any correspondence, or to the clerk of governors, Kristina McCulloch: kristinamcculloch@balfour.brighton-hove.sch.uk

VACANCY – Clerk to Governors. Paid position. For more information please contact lisacollington@balfour.brighton-hove.sch.uk

PUPIL PREMIUM UPDATE



Sandra Mulholland
Deputy Headteacher



Natasha Paling
Pupil Premium Deputy

Welcome back after the Easter break - we hope you managed to relax a little and eat an Easter egg or two!

We had our first Pupil Premium staff meeting of the summer term this week and it was so wonderful for the staff to have the opportunity to see all of the amazing things we have been

doing to support our families most in need. We continue to support several families financially, to allow their children to attend extra-curricular sports clubs, using our Sports Premium funding. Teachers are going above and beyond to ensure that the children are happy in school, feel supported, are provided with everything they need to access the learning and make accelerated progress.

The staff meeting also gave us an opportunity to discuss the difference we can all make by making purposeful small actions that increase our children's sense of belonging.

We visited a 'Pantry' at a local primary school, during the Easter break. We went to get some inspiration for our own provision at Balfour so watch this

space! We have asked staff to come up with a name and a location so we will let you know as soon as we have more information. If you are interested in supporting us with our food bank/pantry/sharing facility, please get in touch:

sandramulholland@balfour.brighton-hove.sch.uk

natashapaling@balfour.brighton-hove.sch.uk

Please use the link below if you think you may be eligible for free school meals. And, as ever, please get in touch if you have any questions about anything Pupil Premium.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

Sandra Mulholland and Natasha Paling

BALFOUR MUTUAL AID FOODBANK

You can help Balfour Mutual Aid Foodbank to make further progress of widening access to affordable food and reducing food waste. On Monday 8th May, we will be having our first open 'donate as you feel' session at Knoyle Hall in Knoyle Road, with thanks to St. John's Church. This will be for local families to browse through surplus vegetables, bread and other items. Do come along between 3 and 4 with a bag and, if possible, anything you feel able to donate.

SHAUN THE SHEEP IN AID OF MARTLETS

Thank you so much to all the children who submitted a design for the 'Shaun the Sheep' in aid of Martlets.

We have picked a number of features from different designs to go on the sheep. It is so lovely for as many children as possible to take part in these exciting design projects. Well done to Laily in Red Vipers, Leo in USA, Imogen in Fern, Rory in Lemon Tree, Herb in Laurels, and Elsie in Armadillos. They will be painting the sheep in school over the coming month.

Thank you also for your generous donations, you can donate still using the following link:

[Balfour Primary School is fundraising for Martlets Hospice \(justgiving.com\)](https://www.justgiving.com/Balfour-Primary-School)

ATTENDANCE

Welcome to the attendance section of our newsletter.

We were thrilled that the penultimate week of the Spring term, we met our target of 97% attendance across the school!

We are hoping to maintain this moving into the summer term.

On discussing why it is important to attend school in assembly, a Year 2 pupil explained:

“When you come to school every day, the learning makes more sense because you know what happened the day before.”

A Year 1 pupil added:

“I love coming to school because I get to see my friends and teachers every day.”

Attendance totals for last week (starting Monday 17th April).

Reception	97.8%
Year 1	96.1%
Year 2	96.3%
Year 3	96.3%
Year 4	96.9%
Year 5	95.0%
Year 6	94.4%



If you have any questions or would like any help or support regarding your child's attendance, please contact Mrs Francis-Hicks on michaelafrancishicks@balfour.brighton-hove.sch.uk.

FAB UPDATE

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Hanami is the Japanese festival celebrating the arrival of the sakura or cherry blossom and it marks confirmation that spring is well and truly underway and summer is just around the corner. It also marks the countdown to our two big events this summer - the circus and the summer fair.

Due to events outside of our control last year's circus had to be cancelled at the last minute. Something that scarred us all but as promised we are able to present Happy's Circus to you once again with a new show for 2023.

As for all our events, it relies on volunteers to help run it. If you can spare some time, your help is hugely appreciated.

We also have the summer fair to look forward to. A fantastic finale to the school year. Sunshine, Balfour's Got Talent, Pimms, games and of course some delicious food.

Finally, I really want to talk about how much FAB needs parents to join. We have a handful of regulars who help out at events and get involved with organising events and activities. These awesome people are the reason we continue to function, but we need more help. Many hands make light work they say. And it's true. We are in real pressing need for more of you to help us with your skills, experience, energy and creativity. We especially need a person or two with skills in marketing and websites as well as people with experience or enthusiasm in the kitchen.

If you think that could be you then drop us a message. There is no commitment. We'd love to meet you!



FAB NEEDS YOU!

Do you have any skills that you think would come in handy? We'd love to hear from you. We have lots of places for parents just like you.

If you have a background in anything, it doesn't matter; we are a diverse bunch at FAB and would gladly welcome you aboard.

We are currently looking to fill the roles for: Vice-Chair, Website, Marketing, Volunteer Coordinator, Food Team members and Activity Leaders.

Drop us a line anytime if you are curious or interested in ways you can help. There is no obligation to do more than that, we are a friendly bunch of parents just like you!



EVENTS AND FUNDRAISERS

GREAT BALFOUR EASTER EGG HUNT



Friday 24th March saw us dodge the rain and hold another successful Easter Egg Hunt for the children after school! Thanks to those who took part and those who volunteered to marshal – we can't run these events without you! Special mention to the Morrison's Community Champion scheme who supported this event, too.

YEAR 2 DISCO & YEAR 2 PLAYGROUND

Friday 31st March - two of our Year Two parents, Anna and Ruth, led and organised a disco for the Year Two cohort to raise funds to spruce up the upper playground in the KS1 part of our school. They have raised an amazing £2600 profit with the disco and a Go Fund Me page! The rainbow benches and balance beams have been ordered. A living wall with plants and a mural will make their appearances soon! Still want to make a contribution to this initiative? Go to:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/year-2-playground-improvements>

If you've got any time on **Wednesday 5th, Thursday 6th, Wednesday 12th or Thursday 13th May** and can help with some painting or the planting of the living wall. Any plant donations are also gratefully received – looking for evergreens and perennials. For either, please contact friendsatbalfour@hotmail.co.uk and we'll connect you with Anna and Ruth.

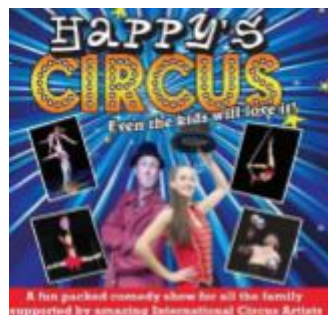
SPRING CHALLENGE



Our second year of running the Spring Challenge and we received an amazing 51 entries and sponsorship totalling £1041.30. See Martha from Anteaters class who really enjoyed participating in the challenge!



HAPPY'S CIRCUS AT BALFOUR



Wednesday, 14th June 2023, from 4pm

We're bringing the Big Top and a cast of amazing international performers to Balfour!

The action-packed show starts at 6pm and finishes at 8pm (pre-show 5.40pm). Bring a picnic and grab a drink at the FAB bar – the fun on Balfour playing field starts from 4pm.

Watch Happy's Circus video to find out more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lu59rGEFXVM> Tickets cost £10 per person and are available at www.ticketor.com/friendsatbalfour We will need volunteers to help with this event – please sign up here: <https://volunteersignup.org/JA4M3>

SAVE THE DATE! SUMMER FAIR!

Yes it is some way off but you know that thing where time suddenly flies by?

Summer Fair – Saturday 15th July

BALFOUR SWIM SCHOOL

At the end of the Spring term, the swimmers at the BSS challenged themselves to a sponsored distance swim. We've collected £900 and still counting! Well done to all the swimmers who took part – it was a real physical and mental challenge. The furthest distance awarded was 3000m with many who swam a mile (64 lengths)! The swimming school will be investing in some new flippers and other swimming equipment.



NAME LABELS WITH MYNAMETAGS.COM



Raising money for school couldn't be easier – next time you're buying name labels for the inevitable lost property why not use mynametags.com – they will donate 24% of the cost price to FAB for each order made using our **school ID 20190** (NOT school name) or via this link. Stickers stress-tested by a number of Balfour families and found to survive kids, dishwashers and washing machines!

<https://www.mynametags.com/affiliate?id=20190>

100 CLUB

The Balfour 100 Club is open to all Balfour parents, carers and staff and costs just £5 per number per month. You need to sign up for at least a year.



Half the monthly takings are given out in prize money; the other half is used for the benefit of the children at school.

Join anytime to help the school raise much-needed funds. To sign up, or for more information, please email fab100club@gmail.com.

GET INVOLVED

The next FAB committee meeting is on Tuesday 9th May at 8pm KS2 – all welcome!

If you'd like to be added to our committee email list, drop us a line at info@friendsatbalfour.org. You'll be kept informed of committee meetings, and contacted if we need a little help from time to time.

STAY IN TOUCH

Follow us for the latest information on our events and meetings:



Website: <http://friendsatbalfour.org/>



Facebook: [Friends at Balfour](#)



Twitter: [@FABatBalfour](#)

We also have private Facebook Group pages for each year group.





Free Trial Session and £40 discount at Perform

Popular children's drama and dance school Perform is offering a Free Trial Session and a **special introductory discount of £40 for members of Balfour Primary School**. Parents should quote BALI230923 when they book their free session by going to perform.org.uk/try or calling 020 7255 9120.

You can find out more about the classes at perform.org.uk/try. Alternatively, pdf flyers can be downloaded from [here](#).

The nearest classes to Balfour Primary School are as follows:

Perform Hove (Drama for 4-7s) (1.4 miles) Fridays at 4pm	Wrap 83 Queens Road, BN1 3XE
Perform Hove (Drama for 7-12s) (1.4 miles) Fridays at 5.05pm	Wrap 83 Queens Road, BN1 3XE
Perform Hove (Drama for 4-7s) (1.9 miles) Saturdays at 9.30am	Cornerstone Community Centre Church Road, BN3 2FL
Perform Hove (Drama for 7-12s) (1.9 miles) Saturdays at 11.15am	Cornerstone Community Centre Church Road, BN3 2FL
Perform Brislington (Drama for 4-7s) (2.3 miles) Fridays at 4pm (Opens September 2023)	St Christopher's School 33 New Church Road, BN3 4AD

Find a list of all venues here: [Venues | Perform](#)

BALFOUR

B.A. Academy Clubs

OPEN FOR REGISTRATION

START FROM APRIL 17, 2023

FRIDAY
3:20-4:20PM

OUR CLUBS:

- Friday - Musical Theatre - All Years

BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!

FULL TERM BOOKINGS AND PAYMENT PLANS AVAILABLE*

*contact us for details

07874826409 ENQUIRIES@BA-ACADEMY.CO.UK BA-ACADEMY.CO.UK

Book here: <https://www.ba-academy.co.uk/balfour>

Our Club...



Musical Theatre

In our musical theatre club, children spend time learning skills such as acting, singing, and dancing. This club is packed full of activities which will help enhance creativity, confidence and improve pupils language abilities.

Our teachers provide high energy, fun classes and are all DBS checked, Safeguarding trained and First aid trained

SCAN TO BOOK NOW

<https://www.ba-academy.co.uk/book-online>

If you have more questions please contact us at enquiries@ba-academy.co.uk



SCAN ME





Balfour After-School Summer-Term Cricket



Balfour After-School Cricket - YRS 3-6.
SUMMER Term 2023, Tuesdays from April
18th to end-of-term. End of school- 4.45pm

A cricket club centred around games-based learning with the emphasis on FUN! We take an ecological approach to coaching that encourages children to be creative, expressive and to problem-solve. ECB qualified Level2 coach and All-Stars Activator with vast experience of coaching at Primary level. Enhanced DBS. First-Aid Qualified.

Please text message Dom Ashton for info
07894 332 867