

Belmont School Newsletter

Belmont
A special school
Spring Term



A message from the Headteacher

Dear Belmont families,

It never ceases to amaze me just how much Belmont can squeeze into each and every term, and the weeks since Christmas have been no exception. As always, our students' successes have been our high points, and at Belmont we celebrate these each and every day. Our lower points – such as unusual levels of illness and national challenges – we work through with an optimistic determination and emerge stronger than ever.

So can I please start by thanking all our parents and carers for their support during the tough times of strikes and sickness. We now have the majority of staff back in school, and are hoping for high levels of health for each and every one of us in term four and beyond.

As with the previous national strike day it's very difficult to predict how many (if any) classes will need to close should there be further action. At this stage I am confident that, as leaders, we will do all we can to ensure that classes that have recently been closed remain open. We will always look to protect the primary classes where we have children with more complex needs. Should classes need to close, I will do all I can to inform you at the very earliest opportunity.

Now to our high points! Can I pass on my congratulations and thanks to the staff team for their efforts this term. Firstly, it was my absolute pleasure to attend the No Child Left Behind awards evening at Cheltenham Town Hall where Belmont was awarded a prize for our 'Growing Hope' project. The project is led by Kirstin Eccles (Mental Health Co-ordinator) and offers support for children who have lost a loved one. The project has linked support for grief and loss, with peer mentoring and gardening. It's been a massive success for all involved and a deserved winner, well done to one and all involved.

The students have also been out exploring this term, on many trips and visits. Llamas headed out to Cheddar Gorge and Caves to support their work on the Stone Age, Otters had a cultural visit to Cheltenham Art Gallery, searching for inspiration for their own art work, and Night Owls spent a day at Gloucestershire College thinking about their next steps. Again, my thanks to all the staff who go to such huge efforts to make these trips happen for our young people
(continued...)

Thanks are also extended to our amazing F@B team who this term presented a total of £2,000 to be spent across all the Key Stages – the classes and school council have been asked for ideas on the best use of these funds and we are likely to see some wonderful new facilities next term!

Finally, some news from our Local Advisory Board, or 'LAB'. I am delighted to let you know that Paul Tibbetts has been appointed as Chair of Belmont LAB by the SAND Academy Trust. Paul joined the LAB as a parent representative in 2020, and held the Vice-Chair position for six months from September 2022. In addition, we are very pleased to welcome Jane Ozanne as a new Community LAB member. Jane has a wealth of SEND teaching experience, and will be the LAB's safeguarding link with school. We also welcome Ruth Hansell as our new Parent LAB member, and the LAB link for interventions. Ruth works in speech and language at the National Star College, and many of you will already know her for her sterling work as co-chair of F@B. Belmont is very grateful for the time, talents and commitment that all our LAB members bring to our school, all on a voluntary basis.



Please remember that Friday 17th is an INSET day, with school closed to all pupils. We look forward to welcoming you all back on Monday 27th February. My very best wishes for a happy and relaxing week.

Kevin Day, Headteacher

As an Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) school, we want to give our children the best opportunities to explore, be active and have fun at playtimes.

If you find that you're getting rid of any of the items on the list attached, please don't chuck them in the bin or take them to the tip because we would love them for our playground! Your trash is our treasure.

Trash to Treasure

If you find that you're getting rid of any of the items on the list below, please don't chuck them in the bin or take them to the tip because we would love them for our Outdoor Play & Learning (OPAL), so that our children can have creative play experiences! Items can be dropped at school 13-16th February (before half term) and 6th – 10th March (after half term).



Kitchen

- Plastic or wooden utensils – spatulas, spoons, whisks, funnels, colanders, bowls
- Metal pots and pans (no glass lids please)

DIY

- Tarpaulin/ canopy
- Large paint brushes, rollers (cleaned please)
- Buckets
- Foam pipe lagging
- Strong wooden planks (no nails please)

Mud kitchen

We would also love to add a Mud Kitchen to our secondary playground. We are looking for a metal sink, kitchen unit and wooden pallets for this construction. If you are able to help us put this together or know someone who can please contact Miss Lumsden (lisa.lumsden@belmont.sandmat.uk)

Old toys

- Plastic farm animals, dinosaurs
- Cars, tractors, diggers, trucks (large and small)
- Lego
- Dolls (no barbies please)
- Wooden blocks
- Pool noodles
- Hula hoops

Garden items

- Watering cans
- Chunky logs
- Wooden pallets
- Sticks
- Tree trunk sections

Miscellaneous

- Plastic crates
- Musical instruments
- Yoga mats
- Picnic blankets
- Clip boards
- Ribbons
- Fabric cut offs
- Free standing clothing rail

Clothes

- Fancy dress
- 'Real' clothing items – suit jackets, shirts
- Hats
- Bags

All items will be checked before play.

Many thanks for your donations.

Items can be dropped at school, either to your child's class or the school office on:

13th - 16th February (before half term)

6th - 10th March (after half term)

BELMONT CHOIR

LET US ENTERTAIN YOU!

Belmont's choir has had a busy time this term with two performances. We entertained some guests in school and were very privileged to be invited to sing at the *No Child Left Behind* awards evening at Cheltenham Town Hall. We performed a medley of our favourite songs - not just singing, but dancing and signing too.

There are currently 22 members of the choir ranging from years 7-11 and we meet every Friday - new members are always welcome. We are currently working towards a variety of performances including the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts and the SEN choir concert at the Bacon Theatre.

The children will begin fundraising next term to raise money for choir polo shirts – look out for opportunities for you to come and watch us perform soon.



Neil's marathon F@B fundraiser for Belmont

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PILGRIMS

On May 2nd this year I'll be travelling to Biarritz in France and then on to Saint Jean Pied de Port in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains. The next day, May 3rd I'll cross the Pyrenees into Spain, starting a 28-day, 776km challenge by walking across the top of Spain along the "Camino de Santiago", raising funds for Friends at Belmont that will go to support our fantastic kids as they grow into the best adults they can be.

We often hear the term "give something back" and are reminded of the benefits of feeling grateful enough to want to do something to say "thank you" to people who've helped us in some way. But what could be more special than wanting to say "thank you" for the incredible support you've seen your child receive and the positive changes you've seen because of that support.

When my lad started at Belmont in September 2021 he was largely non-verbal and often didn't seem to understand what was going on in the world outside of the bubble he was lost in. With the odds stacked against autistic adults and only 16% of them being in full time employment, thoughts of his future seemed very bleak and we doubted he would ever be independent or lead a happy and fulfilled life like his brothers and sisters. But since starting at Belmont School 18 months ago the changes have been nothing short of miraculous. He very quickly became a reader and often picks out words on shop signs as we wander around town, he has a great group of friends who he obviously enjoys seeing and he can now get his point of view... and his requirements... across without hesitation. Now he has the chance to become a valued, happy, fulfilled member of society, a chance we once thought was impossible and I felt the need to "give something back".



Initially I joined the Friends at Belmont PTA and have enjoyed helping to plan and run the school's summer fair, Christmas Fayre and other "drop in" events with my fantastic F@B friends to raise funds for the school (you really should come to a meeting and get stuck in, I can't recommend it enough) but I wanted to do something a little more personal.

That's where I came up with the idea of walking along "the way of St James", a journey taken by Pilgrims since 950 AD, and join thousands of others in using the 776 kilometre pilgrimage along the "Camino de Santiago" as my way of saying thank you. With a ticket out on the 2nd May and the re-

turn journey booked from Santiago de Compostela on the 31st May I've got 28 days to cover the distance.

Staying alongside other pilgrims at night in hostels and albergues, I'll be covering up to 35 kilometres a day, passing through the cities of Pamplona, Burgos and Leon as well as countless small towns and villages, collecting "pilgrims stamps" in bars, restaurants, churches and hostels along the way until I complete my journey in Santiago de Compostela. Many who've completed the Camino de Santiago refer to it as a life changing experience, and I'm hoping to use my journey to raise money and help Friends at Belmont PTA and Belmont Special School change many lives. If you are able to donate you can find a link to my Just Giving page on our Facebook group and step by step we can help to make the future incredible for our amazing kids.

Link to Neil's JustGiving page via the link below:

[Neil Rushen is fundraising for Belmont Special School \(justgiving.com\)](https://www.justgiving.com/Neil-Rushen)

Or search for Neil Rushen on the JustGiving platform. Thank you!

NEWS FROM F@B

We start by sharing some very exciting news that we won the ASDA green token scheme and have received a cheque for £500. Thank you to everyone who voted every week!

We ended 2022 by helping Father Christmas to deliver a present to every pupil at Belmont – it was lovely to chat to so many children and again we must thank Lanes Health for the donation for the presents.

More recently we enjoyed providing free tea and cakes at the Saturday afternoon drop in sessions. It was lovely to meet some new people and we plan to be at the next one on Saturday 4th March.

We have also recently been lucky enough to have been donated a push along lawnmower which we have handed over to Mrs Eccles and the Growing Hope project at school.

Our first evening F@B get together is on 16th February and we hope to see some new faces! Come along at 7.30pm at the King Edward Pub in Longlevens (also known as the Teddy).



Lastly – we are very excited to have started exploring the possibility of some information exchange sessions with members of the intervention team at school. Watch this space for more information soon!

As ever, if you would like to find out more about Friends at Belmont please do not hesitate to contact us at thefabpta@gmail.com or find us on Facebook -

Friends at Belmont – Warden Hill.


We love meeting new parent/carers/family members!



 Find a store

in Groceries

Search for...




Last Voting Period Results...

Congratulations!

Friends At Belmont PTA

Cheltenham Open Door
2nd Churchdown Guides Unit

Past period results are subject to auditing and results may change.

 ASDA

ALLIGATORS CLASS

LOTS OF LEARNING WITH THE LAZY LADYBIRD

This term in Alligators we have had fun exploring our topic The Very Lazy Ladybird. We have all enjoyed learning the story, especially when we engaged in a sensory story of the book. Many of our activities have been linked to our topic. In outdoor learning we went on a bug hunt, and in active skills we participated in a yoga session that took us on the same journey of the very lazy ladybird!

In maths we have focused on learning all about patterns and matching. We have engaged with this topic through activities such as playing snap to understand when something is the same and finding the odd one out. We have since started creating our own patterns!

We have been discovering healthy foods in PSHE and discussed the meaning of healthy and unhealthy. This has allowed us to engage in role-play and sorting activities as well as creating our own healthy meals. We also enjoyed an amazing wellbeing party! IT has allowed us to begin to be exposed to the use of laptops which we have loved!

In Thrive we have enjoyed lots of lovely interactions, highlights have included making potions and our ladybird-themed tuft tray. Our World has allowed us to develop our understanding of different animals, mini beasts and sea creatures and learn the Makaton signs for each. Religious Education has followed the story of The Tiny Ant.

All in all we have had an amazing term during which we have all developed our understanding and capabilities, well done Alligators!



BUSY BEES CLASS

FLYING BEES AIM FOR THE MOON

This term in Busy Bees we have been learning through our topic of 'Whatever Next!'. In Thrive, the children have enjoyed making their own windows to look out at the moon, and they have made space helmets and a rocket to fly to the moon with Baby Bear.

Within our topic we have also been learning about vehicles and motions. The children have been naming vehicles and learning about different motions such as 'push' and 'pull'. They especially loved pushing and pulling each other on the scooters and skateboards.

We have also had lots of fun covering our maths topic of 'patterns and shapes'. The children have been on shape hunts around the school, made shapes with their bodies and have liked matching shape aliens.

Finally, we have all been learning about farm to fork and where our food comes from. We will be taking part in a farm to fork day, when the children will be digging up their own potatoes, taking them to the shop to buy, and then using them to make a class meal.



CHEETAHS CLASS

BRINGING STORIES TO LIFE

What a busy term 3 Cheetahs Class has had!

We have been focusing on performance poetry in our English lessons. As a class we have explored the story “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt” and acted out each scene on our very own Belmont Bear Hunt outside.

The class has also sequenced the story of The Gruffalo and used descriptive words to label its features. We have even made our own Gruffalo Crumble in the sensory trays!

We have been busy in food technology following steps to make toast, fruit salad and hot chocolate! For Topic we have enjoyed learning about toys old and new. We are looking forward to even more fun and learning in Term 4!



DOLPHINS CLASS

SHARING, SHOPPING, MOVING AND PLAYING

This term in Dolphins we have had great fun learning about fractions, money and old toys. When we looked at fractions, we made our own play dough food and then cut them in half or into quarters. We also had REAL cake brought in for us to cut into fractions and share with our friends.

In our money topic we used our coins to visit a sweet shop and bought lots of penny sweets, and then enjoyed eating them whilst watching a film.

We really enjoyed looking at old toys and seeing how they are different to our toys today.

Mrs Grace arranged for a Victorian toy box to come in so we could see old toys next to new toys and talk about how they look and feel different. We also made our own jack-in-the-box.

One of our favourite new activities is Tatty Bumpkin Yoga! We love going on a different adventure each week and doing all the different yoga moves. We had great fun in Outdoor Learning where we coloured in our own wooden fairy door and then we made our own fairy houses using junk modelling. We can't wait to see what we learn about and what activities we will take part in next term.



ELEPHANTS CLASS

ALIEN ADJECTIVES

This term Elephants have been busy learning all about space. The children have learnt all about the different planets and have enjoyed creating their own.

In English we have been practising our writing skills and have written some rhymes to help us remember the order of the planets. We have also been learning about adjectives and have been using them to describe aliens and planets to our friends.

In the arts we have enjoyed experimenting with different types of materials such as paint, baking soda, tissue paper and colouring pens. This term our PE topic was dance, the children have had lots of fun learning new dances and performing to an audience.

In maths this term we have been looking at 2D and 3D shapes, we went on a walk around the school to see if we could find any shapes in the environment.

Elephants Class has even been lucky enough to have visits from the lovely dog Dasher.



FOXES CLASS

HOUSTON, WE ARE IN THE SPACE ZONE

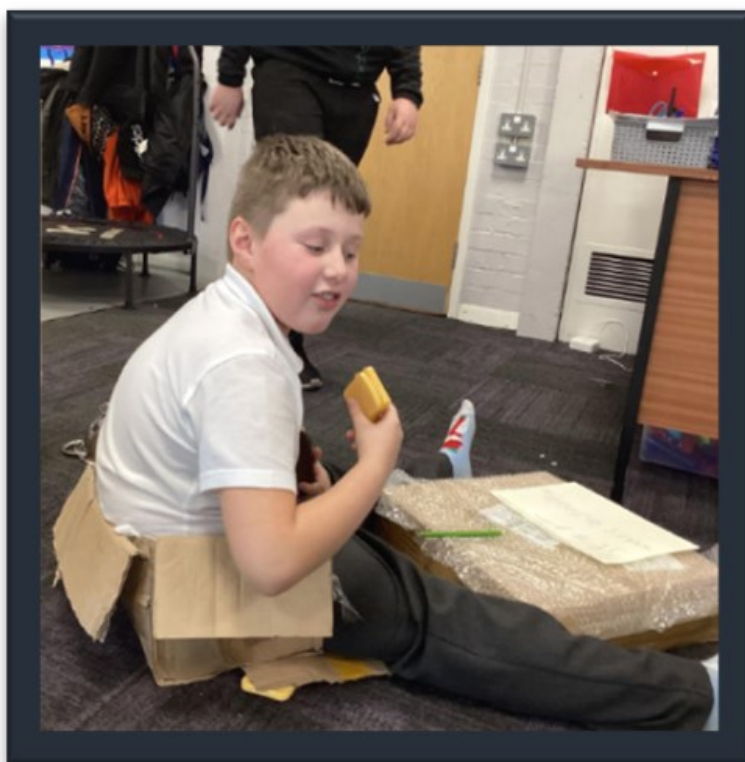
The start of the new term was an interesting one for Foxes Class. Mrs Maddock's return to the class was delayed but Foxes still had great fun starting their investigations and finding out about space.

We have learnt about the first landing on the moon and who was on Apollo 11. Who walked on the moon and what it would be like to be an astronaut. We become reporters for the day using the information we had gathered to write a newspaper article for the moon landing.

Following on from this we have learnt about the planets in the solar system, which order they are in, and some key facts about each one.

In Maths we have been learning about 2D and 3D shapes, symmetry, and positional language.

In the arts and DT the children have made various models including an Earth which, when you cut into it, you can see the different layers and our own space shuttle. We even made space shuttles and pretended to have a picnic on the moon!



EARTHQUAKE APPEAL

Cheltenham schools always work closely together to support each other and our community of families and young people.

On this occasion we have linked many schools in an attempt to raise some desperately needed funds for the Earthquake appeal.

Our schools have set a target of £5000 and are making very good progress towards this. If your family is in a position to help with a donation, it would be greatly appreciated and put to very good use.

Thank you

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/cheltenham-schools-earthquake-appeal>



Cheltenham schools coming together to support their wider community



FOREST SCHOOL

Over the winter, when all the trees and bushes lost their leaves, it gave us a good insight into our Forest School area and what this large but relatively bare area needs. We are so lucky to have such a great patch of the school playing field which over time will show its true natural beauty but equally somewhere that has great potential to be developed into a Forest School that the whole school can access and enjoy.

Last term KS3 enjoyed whittling with potato peelers and penknives, it was great to see natural materials being used and core safety skills embedded. Next term we will be receiving a delivery of wood kindly donated by Cheltenham Tree Services which will allow the children to develop their tool skills and progress to the use of Bowsaws.

Watch this space for Forest School updates!



GIRAFFES CLASS

ART TAKES SHAPE IN GIRAFFES

Giraffes Class has had another busy term. We have been learning about the human body! The children worked in teams to problem-solve where they thought the organs were in the human body before learning more about the organs and their functions. We did an investigation to help us learn more about the digestive system and acted out the circulatory system.

Linking with our learning about shape, we explored different artists and shape inspired art work. The children created art inspired by the different artists using paint, oil pastels and 2Paint on the computer.

It was Children's Mental Health week and this year the theme was 'Let's Connect'. We especially enjoyed connecting through a celebration where we had a little class party. We have also been having fun with symmetry and counting coins in maths, relaxing our minds and flexing our bodies in yoga, and making levers in DT.



HIPPOS CLASS

PHENOMENAL PUPPET PERFORMANCE

Hippos have had a good term, learning all about how our body works! We can name the different bones in our skeletons, we have been recognising how our respiratory, circulatory and digestive systems function, and making fake poo!

Our cooking skills have improved. We have learnt to bake scones and how to use sharp knives and other tools safely. The vegetable soup we made was interesting and we all tried

it but some of us weren't very keen. The potato soup was not a great success either, but our chopping and frying was great!

The puppets we made in drama were absolutely amazing. We learnt how to work as a team to control them and bring them to life so they could tell a story without saying anything. We also worked together to create a short sequence of movements showing different emotions. When we put them all in a sequence, we created our first real performance!



IBEXES CLASS

A VEGGIE TASTING ADVENTURE

In Ibexes this term we have been learning about keeping healthy. We have read the story 'Oliver's Vegetables' and have tried all of the foods in the story! In food technology, we prepared vegetables and tried out different dips.

We have also looked at where food comes from and we are able to talk about foods from plants and animals.

In maths, we have learning about patterns and shapes and have enjoyed exploring and making our own patterns in different ways!

We have had lots of fun this term and cannot wait for more in term 4!

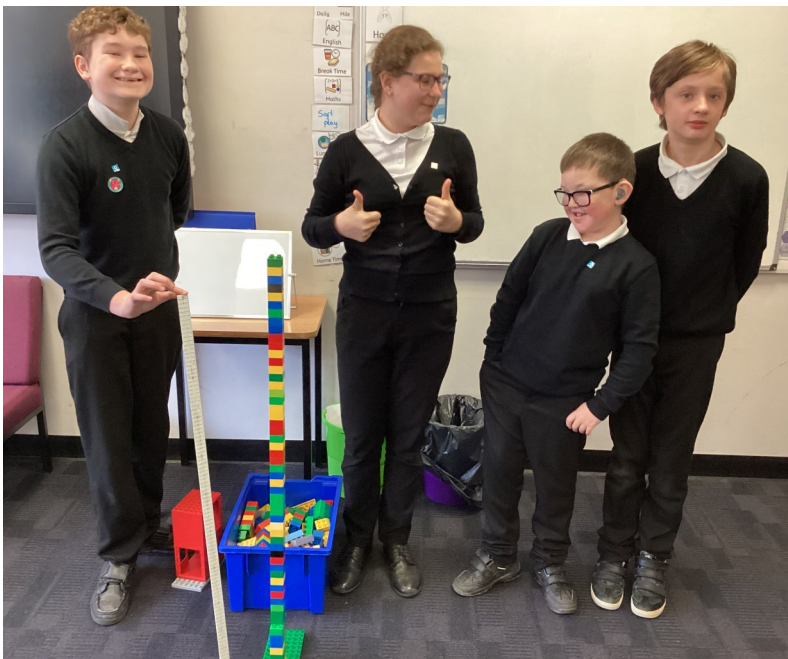


JAGUARS CLASS

STUDENT FOCUS ON KEEPING WELL

The school year seems to be flying by, and we are now nearing the end of term 3. Everyone in Jaguars Class continues to work very hard and throw themselves into any learning opportunities they are given. Our topic this term in Our World was based around our 'fabulous bodies'. We talked about a range of body parts and thought about the importance of each one and how we would struggle if one part of our body was missing. This linked into our PSHE topic of Keeping Well – we thought about the importance of personal hygiene and acted out different scenarios where someone was poorly and needed some help. Who would be the best person to help them? Do they need to go to the doctors or to hospital?

The children have been very busy creating their own people in art using junk modelling. They have planned what junk modelling they wanted to use, and then worked hard to bring their creations to life. They are all looking forward to bringing home their creations at the end of the term.



KOALAS CLASS

CHALLENGE CHAMPIONS

Koalas have been super busy this term learning all about how our bodies work, what we can do with them and how we can look after them. In Our World lessons, they have learnt about human organs, the skeleton and how our heart pumps blood around the body. They then put their bodies to work, competing in a Panathlon Challenge at All Saints Academy. All of the children were incredible, with the girls winning first place and the boys were runners up.

More recently, the children turned their attention to how to look after their mental health, taking part in activities as part of Children's Mental Health Week. The theme this year has been 'connecting' so the children have been getting together, carrying out team tasks and enjoying social activities.

It has been another wonderful and busy term for Koalas.



LLAMAS CLASS

EXPLORING THE STONE AGE

Term 3 has seen Llamas focus on the topic of the Stone Age during their Our World lessons. On Thursday 9th February, the class travelled to Cheddar Gorge and Caves to take part in an immersive pre-history experience as well as have the opportunity to explore Gough's Cave.

The class had a fantastic time, and our guide 'Caveman Tom' really brought the session to life with his enthusiastic demonstrations of what it was like living in Stone Age Britain. A great day which is highly recommended.



MONKEYS CLASS

A POSITIVELY MAGICAL TERM

Monkey magic struck again as the Spring term sprang into action.

We have been cooking over fires, burning home-made paper logs, cooking a range of classic winter warmers as well as healthy dishes in the cookery room and learning EVERYTHING about fractions. We have increased our understanding about developing a positive body image and given compliments to everyone in the class. If we thought the first two terms were good, this term has been epic enough to

overcome those winter blues and to give us all extra hope for what lies ahead. The chickens have even started laying again! For more reasons than the weather we are already looking forward to next term. We're already working hard to make it the best yet!



NIGHTOWLS CLASS

IT'S OFF TO COLLEGE WE GO!

Night Owls have been working hard this term and thinking about what they would like to do in the future. The first step came with a two-day visit to GlosCol to find out what it would be like to be a college student!

There were lots of important questions like, "Is the cafe food good?" and "Will they have WiFi?". Everyone was a little nervous, but, very brave and joined other students on what is an exciting start in their learning journey.

We managed to capture three of them, but the others were too excited to stand still for their photos to be taken.



OTTERS CLASS

DISCOVERING INSPIRATION THROUGH ART

It's been an action-packed term for Otters. We have been involved in sensory circuits each Wednesday morning with Mrs Barry and have chosen to complete some follow up work on them for ASDAN.

We have also visited an art gallery in Cheltenham to look at different art works for Inspiration on which to base further work and complete an arts award challenge. We also stopped by the 'Knife Angel' statue in Gloucester and practised using money when we ordered our own lunch at McDonalds!



PANDAS

BUDDING FOODIES COOK ON A BUDGET

Pandas have been looking at 'cooking on a budget' this term during cookery lessons and learning some important life skills along the way. Some delicious meals were created including Macaroni Cheese, Pasta in a Tomato Sauce, Sausage and Mash as well as Cornish Pasties. The students have certainly enjoyed learning new skills in the kitchen and have definitely enjoyed sampling the food at the end of each lesson!

These types of lessons are a welcome break from coursework and modular exams in other subjects and is a great opportunity for the students to demonstrate teamwork, independence and perseverance. Well done Pandas for your hard work during these sessions – there are some budding chefs amongst you!

Enjoy your half term!



QUAILS

ENGLISH AND ENTERPRISE

In English this term, Quails have been learning about leisure.

They have read the book 'The Wind in the Willows', they have also focused on comprehension activities and have even written their own newspaper articles about 'Toad's escape from Prison.'

They have also this term been rehearsing a play about 'Dracula' and are now ready to perform this after half term.

For their enterprise project they have been learning how to make lemonade too.

Quails have worked really hard and deserve their well-earned half-term break.

