



BCA Newsletter

N° 17 / February 25th 2022





PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

Read to Succeed

In this Newsletter we focus on our work, across the whole College, on English language acquisition, and on the development of reading. Later on in this edition, you will find articles providing an insight into our Phonics programme and our English as an Additional Language (EAL) programme. Here, though, I would like to reflect on the role of parents in supporting reading.

Reading is of fundamental importance to a child's future academic achievement, wellbeing and success in life. The English National Curriculum is clear in stating that, *"it is essential that, by the end of their primary education, all pupils are able to read fluently, and with confidence, in any subject in their forthcoming secondary education"*. This is a goal to which BCA fully subscribes. Furthermore, by the end of their secondary education in Year 13, our aim is that all students, whose first language is not English, should achieve a bilingual level of competency in English, across not just reading but also writing, speaking and listening.

The role of parents is clear: daily reading to your child, throughout the Early Years, Primary Years, and even on into Secondary (why not?), will make a huge difference to your child's cognitive development.

Researchers in the United States who in 2019 looked at the impact of parents reading with their children, quoted the following figures in a [news release about their findings](#):

"Here's how many words kids would have heard by the time they were 5 years old:

Never read to, 4,662 words;

1–2 times per week, 63,570 words;

3–5 times per week, 169,520 words;

daily, 296,660 words;

and five books a day, 1,483,300 words."

It is interesting here that the difference between doing the minimum and the maximum could lead to a 'million-word gap' within five years.




As parents we all know the importance of a daily bedtime story read to or with our children, but why not consider adding more occasions to the mix, especially at weekends and vacations to maintain the momentum of language acquisition? Here you can find some tips [on reading to your child](#) from the well-established UK organisation 'Booktrust', including ideas for carrying on your support into the Secondary years.

Last week, as you will read about below, our Secondary students led an assembly to celebrate [International Mother Tongue Day](#). The diversity of languages of our students and staff at BCA is an enormous strength and valuable resource for learning. We provide an immersion in the English language, with all instruction conducted in English, except in specialist language lessons. Nonetheless, and aligned with widespread research on language acquisition, we recognise the value of a student's home or 'first' language (abbreviated to LI) in providing the foundation and anchor point for acquisition of a second language, such as English, and in allowing for more general cognitive development in areas beyond language acquisition. Thus, the learning environment we seek to create here at BCA is "English-first", but not "English-only".

[World Book Day](#) aligns perfectly with all of the above and the learning stories below. At BCA we will be organising a week of celebrating and promoting reading from 7-11 March. As part of the celebration, on Friday 11 March we will have a non-uniform day where the theme is [favourite books, characters from books](#), or an [outfit based on a word](#) and its meaning. The donation to take part in the non-uniform day is to bring in a book to contribute to the growing school library.

I wish all BCA families an enjoyable half term break, and an opportunity to catch up on some reading!

Finally, with this Newsletter, you will also find the menu for March. In response to student suggestions, we have re-introduced a themed lunch once a month, this time from South Asia.


Mr Harry Lock
Principal



Phonics at BCA

Ms Menés, Ms Clarke and Mr Monahan (Class Teachers)

Phonics is a way to support children's early reading and writing. By learning the different sounds that letters make, children can hear, identify and use the sounds when reading and writing. The written language can be compared to a code, so knowing the sound of individual letters and how those letters sound when they are combined helps children decode words as they read. Phonics teaching begins in the Early Years and continues through to Key Stage 1.

Traditionally, children were taught ABC... the letter names. However, letter names do not always represent the pronunciation. It was discovered that by teaching children the sounds of letters they were more able to read and spell words.

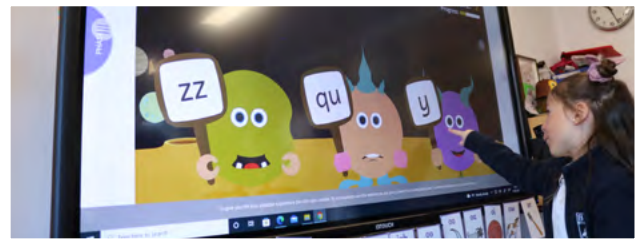
The sounds are taught in a systematic way to support their growing understanding of the written language. For example, SATPIN sounds are taught first, allowing children to decode many simple CVC (three letters) words t-a-p/s-i-t/p-a-n, to name a few. Moving onto digraphs, sounds that have 2 letters, and then finally sound families, for example, the /ai/ sound as in rain, can also be spelt /ay/ as in play, /a-e/ as in make, /eigh/ as in eight, /ey/ as in grey and /ei/ as in veil. Here at BCA, we use the 'Letters and Sounds' programme which is a highly recommended and widely used program in the UK and internationally.

Phonics lessons should be regular, short and fun! Sounds are introduced in sets and then reinforced at the end of each set. Lessons follow a simple pattern of review, introduce, practise and apply. Most phonic learning is recorded on individual whiteboards, allowing the children the freedom to make changes and correct mistakes. Games are used to practise the sounds, from bingo, tornado, snap, game boards, just to name a few. We now have a subscription to a fantastic phonics website, phonicsplay.co.uk, that has many fun games that the children love to play to practise their sounds. When 'applying' their phonic sounds, often children are asked to put the sound words into a sentence or they may read sentences containing words with that sound.

Children are encouraged to 'sound out' words to help them decode when reading and to slowly say words to hear the sounds when segmenting to spell them. By



sounding out children become confident writers as it gives a way to spell words before they have actually learnt them, thus meaning they can use their growing vocabulary in their written work, even if it isn't spelt correctly.



As we all know, English is not 100% phonetic and so many words do not follow the phonetic rules and have to be learnt by sight. By combining phonics and sight word learning, a child's ability to decode words quickly increases, and they become fluent readers. Once children have mastered these skills, the world of reading and writing opens up. They no longer need to rely on adults to access books. They become independent readers who love practising and growing their skills and vocabulary, not just in reading lessons, but in all learning inside and outside of school.



Our EAL support programme

Ms Spillane, EAL teacher

In order to facilitate students' English language acquisition, a mixture of targeted pull-out and push-in support is currently provided to select students from Year 3 upwards.

The pull-out support offered, aims to complement students' studies in class, whilst providing them with activities tailored to help them overcome specific misconceptions. With Year 4s for example, we have been looking at improving word order and use of adjectives in order to help them improve their written work on Chocolate. Meanwhile in year 6, we have been working on identifying word classes in order to support them in their analysis of the Highwayman poem.

As well as pull-out support, push-in support is currently taking place with our Year 5s and Year 7s to help students in their mainstream classroom. The main focus of this is to provide assistance with vocabulary introduced in class and to guide students through their written work. In Year 5, we have been working on producing explanation and information texts on Ancient Egypt. In Year 7, students have been writing about mediaeval jobs and have given a brilliant assembly on mother tongues.

In addition to this support, across the years, students are being encouraged to keep bilingual dictionaries/glossaries as a way of accelerating their vocabulary acquisition and promoting independent learning. It is expected that the use of these bilingual dictionaries/glossaries will also support the students with their LI and help them make useful links between English and the other languages they speak.



Robins-Speaking and listening about the Olympics

Mr Monahan, Class Teacher

As part of the Year 2 Winter Olympics topic, children have been preparing projects at home about the different countries that are taking part in this year's competition. The children have been presenting their very creative projects to the rest of the class, helping to improve both their speaking and listening skills. Robins Class have had the opportunity to learn about the different landmarks, languages, foods and famous people that can be found in each country. The projects have been fun, interactive, colourful and very interesting!



Peacocks - Writing

Ms McHale, Class Teacher

In Peacocks, students have been developing their English skills through the current topic, by creating information texts on the importance of the River Nile in Ancient Egypt.





Condors - Mother Tongues Assembly

Mr Quinton (English Teacher and IBDP Coordinator)

Last week, Year 7 prepared and presented a Secondary assembly which celebrated the various mother tongues that we have represented at BCA. First, I asked all Secondary students to fill in a survey to share their mother tongue, as well as a saying or phrase in that language and its English translation. Year 7 students then chose one of the languages to present to the school, either individually or in groups; they did not need to speak the language in order to present it, though some did. Before they could present they researched the language and some interesting facts about it. Finally, last Friday, it all came together and they shared what they had researched, each with their own unique presentation. We also involved students from other years who spoke the mother tongues by asking them to read the expression in the original language. The assembly was a great success and I think the students genuinely appreciated seeing their mother tongues acknowledged and valued by the school.



Falcons- Role play in English Language

Mr Quinton (English teacher and IBDP Coordinator)

As part of their literary study of a dramatic adaptation of Dracula, Year 8 did a role-play activity. The learning objective was to explore attitudes towards madness in Victorian England. After reading a scene from the play in which we meet a character, Renfield, who is locked up in an asylum and who displays deranged and erratic behaviour, the students were asked to explore the character in more detail, considering his backstory and how he came to be locked up in the asylum. After exploring these questions, we went outside in groups with the task of imagining Renfield's capture. First, students formed a set of tableaux (frozen images) and then a dramatic scene. The conclusions of the activity were that instinctively, the students treated Renfield as no better than a criminal, which is very much in line with how Victorians saw madness. Thankfully, in 2022, our attitudes towards mental health have changed significantly!



Harriers - Business and Economics simulation

Mr Vila (Business and Economics Teacher)

As you can see in the pictures, on Thursday February 10th, Y10 students of Business and Economics did a Productivity Workshop. The aim of this activity was to look at some issues related to different ways of producing goods. The class was divided into three teams. Each group operated as a factory, producing paper dice. The aim was for each group to produce as many dice as possible in 25 minutes. Each die had to meet rigorous quality standards, which are set by the customer's buyers. The students enjoyed a different kind of lesson and learned the topics explained in class like production systems, productivity, efficiency, cost and benefits. They also learned values like team work, coordination, respect and healthy competition.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Couscous with vegetables Parsley omelette with lettuce and carrot Natural yogurt</p> <p>Cuscús amb verdures Trita de julivert amb enciam i pastanaga logurt natural 7</p> <p>BANK HOLIDAY</p> <p>FESTA DE LA CONSTITUCIÓ</p> <p>14</p>	<p>Caprese salad (tomato, mozzarella and oregano) Chickpeas stewed with cod Season fruit</p> <p>Amanida caprese (tomàquet, mozzarella i orenga) Cigrons guisats amb trossos de bacallà Fruita del temps 8</p> <p>Stewed beans with pumpkin Cheese omelette With salad tomato Season fruit</p> <p>Mongetes seques estofades amb carbassa Trita de formatge amb tomàquet amanit 15 Fruita del temps</p> <p>Homemade soup with wholemeal pasta Fish with vegetables Season fruit</p> <p>Sopa de brou casolà amb pasta integral Suquet de peix a la jardineria Fruita del temps 22</p> <p>Pasta with vegetables Sailor fish Season fruit</p> <p>Pasta saltada amb verdures Peix a la marinera Fruita del temps 29</p>	<p>Tricolor vegetables with olive oil Baked loin with mushrooms Season fruit</p> <p>Verdura tricolor amb oli d'oliva Llom rostit al forn amb xampinyons Fruita del temps 9</p> <p>Assorted salad with orange, corn, seeds amb olives Meatballs with sauce and Brown rice Natural yogurt</p> <p>Amanida variada amb taronja, blat de moro, pipes i olives Mandonguilles, salsa i arròs integral logurt natural 16</p> <p>Potatoes and chard (olive oil and garlic) Beef round with tomato in Provençal Season fruit</p> <p>Trinxat de patata i bledes amb all i oli d'oliva Rodó de vedella amb tomàquet a la provençal 23 Fruita del temps</p> <p>Beans with potato Turkey With plums and mushrooms Season fruit</p> <p>Mongeta tendra amb patata Blanqueta de gall dindi amb prunes i bolets Fruita del temps 30</p>	<p>Leek cream Fish paella Season fruit</p> <p>Crema de porros Paella de peix Fruita del temps 10</p> <p>Potato and broccoli gratin Chicken thigh with herbs, lemon i Carrot dice Season fruit</p> <p>Gratinat de patata i bròquil Cuixa de pollastre amb herbes aromàtiques, llimona i pastanaga a daus 17 Fruita del temps</p> <p>Cream of pumpkin and apple Noodles with Rabbit and chicken Natural yogurt</p> <p>Crema de carbassa i poma Fideus a la cassola amb conill i pollastre logurt natural 24</p> <p>Chickpeas with spinach and sweet potatoes Baked eggs with tomato Season fruit</p> <p>Cigrons amb espinacs i moniato Ous al forn amb tomàquet Fruita del temps 31</p>	<p>Spaghetti with pesto sauce (cheese, oil and basil) Grilled turkey with wok vegetables Season fruit</p> <p>Espagueti al pesto (formatge, oli i alfàbrega) Tires de gall dindi a la planxa amb wok de verdures 11 Fruita del temps</p> <p>Neapolitan noodles (natural tomato, onion and oregano) Baked fish with Zucchini, pepper and onion Season fruit</p> <p>Tallarins napolitana (tomàquet natural, ceba i orenga) Peix al forn amb carbassó, pebrot i ceba Fruita del temps 18</p> <p>Rice with ratatouille sauce Omelette with Grated carrots Season fruit</p> <p>Arròs amb samfaina Trita a la francesa Pastanaga ratllada Fruita del temps 25</p> <p>We visit India Hindu salad (tomato, cucumber, olives) Curry chicken with basmati rice Natural yogurt</p> <p>Amanida Hindú (tomàquet, cogombre, olives) Pollastre al curry amb arròs basmati logurt natural</p>

Els menús han estat planificats per la dietista i nutricionista Berta Jiménez Bover Núm.Col·legi de Dietistes – Nutricionistes d'Andorra: 0703. espaldietetica@gmail.com
The menu has been created by nutritionist and dietitian Berta Jiménez Bover with Registration number: 0703. espaldietetica@gmail.com

SNACKS PER MIG MATÍ
Cada dia a escollir: fruita fresca de temporada i entrepanets amb oli d'oliva.
Als mes petits, anem alternant fruita fresca de temporada, entrepanets amb oli d'oliva i llet amb cereals Bio sense sucre.

SNACKS IN THE MORNING
Every day choice: fresh fruit and sandwich with olive oil.
For the little ones, alternatively a seasonal fresh fruit, sandwich with olive oil or milk with bio sugar free cereals.

2. COPS A LA SETMANA ES SERVEIX PA INTEGRAL
*Early years : Els logurts són naturals i sense sucre.
*Els dilluns : Menú sense carn ni peix (opcional).
Km 0: Producte de proximitat.
**Les pipes només s'ofereixen a secundària.

WHOLEMEAL BREAD TWICE PER WEEK
*Early Years: Plain No Sugar's Yogurt.
*Mondays: Vegetarian Menu (optional).
Km 0: Local products.
**Food with seeds only for Secondary students.

