



Bernards Heath Junior School

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Interim Head Teacher: Mrs Hayley Gilbert BA(Hons) QTS NPQH

3 September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well, and enjoying the final days of summer. We are very much looking forward to welcoming you all back on Friday 5th September. A particularly warm welcome to our new Year 3 families—we are delighted that you are joining the Junior School community. I hope your children enjoy a happy and successful time here over the coming years.

As we prepare to begin a new academic year, I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself in my new role as Interim Headteacher. Having worked at our school for the past 24 years—20 of those in various leadership roles—I feel incredibly honoured to step into this position. This school has always been more than just a workplace to me; it's a community I care deeply about. I know many of you personally, and I have had the privilege of watching your children grow, learn, and be successful. My commitment to their wellbeing and success remains at the heart of everything I do.

I would like to invite you to an informal 'Meet the SLT' session on Thursday 18th September at 2.30pm, where you can pop in, say hello to me, Miss Honeybell (Assistant Headteacher and SENCO) and Mrs Nicholas (Assistant Headteacher), and take a look at a brief overview of our School Development Plan for the year ahead. This will not be a formal presentation, but rather a relaxed opportunity to meet, ask questions, and share in the vision for our school.

School initiatives

This year, we are excited to be launching several new initiatives that we believe will enrich the school experience for our children and strengthen our community ties. I will keep you updated via the newsletter, but I wanted to let you know about two initiatives that we believe will make a meaningful difference to the children and the wider school community.

OPAL (Outdoor Play and Adventurous Learning)

We are excited to be introducing OPAL, which will transform our playground into a more interactive, imaginative, and child-led space during lunchtimes. This approach encourages creativity, collaboration, and joyful exploration—giving children the freedom to play in ways that support their development and wellbeing. This will be a long-term project, introduced gradually over the course of the academic year. Keep an eye on the newsletter for more information in the coming months. Thank you to the PTA for generously agreeing to fund this important development.

The Hive – A Community Multi Bank

We are also launching The Hive: a welcoming space where families can access preloved items such as clothing, school supplies, and more. It is designed to be a supportive resource for everyone—whether you're looking to donate, browse, or simply stop by and feel part of the community. We understand that life brings different challenges, and The Hive is here to offer help in a way that's discreet, respectful, and free of judgement. Everyone is welcome.

Please look out for regular updates from the key staff involved, who will be asking for specific donations (food, toiletries, bedding, etc.) to support this initiative, if you are able to contribute. I would like to extend my thanks to Mrs Burr, Mrs Player, Kerry Seye, and Mr Paxton for their hard work in bringing this vision to life.

Communication and Partnership

As you will know, at Bernards Heath we place great importance on communicating with families in a timely, open, and respectful manner. I firmly believe that when schools and families work closely together, children thrive—both academically and personally.

Your child's class teacher is always your first point of contact and will do their utmost to respond to any questions, concerns, or queries you may have. We are here to support you, and we value the trust you place in us.

If there is something you would prefer to discuss privately, or if you feel a matter would be best raised with me directly, I warmly welcome that conversation. Please feel free to speak to me (I am often at the school gate) or arrange a meeting via the school office.

I will always listen, and I will always do my best to support you and your child.

Key dates-Autumn term

Date	Event
Friday 5 th September	Term starts
Wednesday 10 th September	New to Y5 meeting 3.30pm New to Y3 meeting 7pm
Thursday 11 th September	New to Y4 3.30pm New to Y6 7pm
Wednesday 17 th September	Y5 swimming begins
Friday 26 th September	Mini marathon
Wednesday 1 st October	Individual Photos
Tuesday 14 th October	Harvest Assembly 2.30pm
Wednesday 15 th October	Flu Immunisation Parents Evening 4-7.30pm
Thursday 23 rd October	Parents Evening 4-7.30pm
Monday 27 th October to Friday 31 st October	HALF TERM
Monday 3 rd November	INSET DAY
Tuesday 9 th December	Carol Concert Y3 & 4 1.45pm 7pm
Monday 15 th December	Y5 Play 7pm
Wednesday 17 th December	Xmas Lunch
Friday 19 th December	Term End 1.30pm

I am excited about the year ahead and all that we can achieve together. Thank you for your continued support and trust. I look forward to working closely with you and to seeing your children continue to flourish in the months to come.

Warmest regards,



Hayley Gilbert
Interim Headteacher