



# BCA Newsletter

Nº 33 / 16 March 2023



MATHS AND LANGUAGES

In this newsletter I would like to tell you something about the BCA approach to teaching mathematics and languages, two core subject areas studied by every child in the school. Why consider these subjects together? Well, mathematics is in many ways a language, indeed it was Galileo Galilei, speaking some 400 years ago, who claimed that “Mathematics is the language with which God has written the universe.”

Last school year, BCA adopted a Teaching for Mastery approach across the school. This pedagogy, widely used in the UK, was originally inspired by high-performing South-East Asian countries, to improve mathematics teaching and student outcomes. The approach is underpinned by the rejection of the idea that a large proportion of people ‘just can’t do maths’. Central to the approach is the belief that with the appropriate resources, support, teaching and time, all children can succeed mathematically. The approach aims to develop a uniform expectation of high standards of achievement in mathematics for all students. Thus, the aim is that the large majority of pupils progress through the curriculum at the same pace. Differentiation is achieved by emphasizing deep knowledge and through individual support and intervention. All students in the class are introduced to mathematical concepts at the same time, with time given for all learners to master these concepts before moving on. This is a significant shift away from the previous practice of differentiation through content, task, resources and ability groupings (Blausten et al, 2020).

At BCA, we have adopted the White Rose Maths programme of resources and curriculum planning across Primary and Secondary, which follows this mastery approach. Furthermore, we seek every opportunity to add authenticity to learning in mathematics, through real-life problem solving in the classroom or playground rather than just working through questions out of context. Last week it was a pleasure to see Kingfishers having an outdoors mathematics lesson: they were busy measuring the length and width of various outdoor spaces (playground, grass, Astro...), and then calculating the area and perimeter- the interest and excitement was clearly felt. Owls have similarly been engaged in ‘real’ mathematics, as you will see below in the pictures section. Read also in this newsletter of the success of our students in our first ever entry for a mathematical competition.

We have often looked at the teaching of English in this Newsletter, but less often at Catalan, Spanish and French. This year the most significant change has been the introduction of the study of literature alongside language, already in Primary and certainly in Secondary. Our students now routinely engage with modern and classic Catalan, Spanish and French literature, at an age-appropriate level, in addition to acquiring the language itself. This is of course essential since many of our students will be aiming for a ‘Bilingual Diploma’ through the International Baccalaureate, for which we are a candidate school. A well-attended parent workshop and survey last term

was very helpful in informing us of the interests, needs and aspirations of our students and parents in terms of language. It is clear that, in languages, BCA cannot be all things to all people: we must develop strategic focus. Therefore we have reviewed our current provision in Catalan, Spanish and French, as well as how we support children's other home languages. Our aim is to provide continuity and clear language progression pathways for all students, especially as we become an all-through school from age 2 to 18. We also want to ensure that students of different levels in the class continue to be well supported. I will be writing to all parents in the coming weeks to outline some of the changes that we will make in the teaching and assessment of languages other than English next year.

The snow is melting fast, the grass is turning green and Spring has come to the BCA- look at this beautiful daffodil that came out today, one of many planted by students of our new Gardening Club last term.

*Source: Blausten et al (2020), Supporting Mathematics Teaching for Mastery in England.*



## Announcements

### Early Years and Primary swimming

Swimming for children from Nursery through to Year 6 will be part of the curriculum next term.

The venue will be the Serradells Sports Centre with instructors provided by the Serradells Swimming Club. The children will swim once a week for 10 weeks, in the morning, with 45 minutes in the water.

The sessions will be on Wednesday (Reception, Year 2, 3 and 6) and Friday (Nursery, Year 1, 4 and 5).

The first session will be on Wednesday, April 26 and the last session will be on Friday, June 30.

There is no additional charge for this activity.

Further information including what to bring will be provided by class teachers via Seesaw.

**Mr Harry Lock**  
Principal





# ANDORRAN HYMN

This week the whole school gathered in the Sports Hall to sing the Andorran Hymn. This was an event in which every school in Andorra participated.

Mr. Lock first spoke to the students to tell them something about who the Emperor Charlemagne was, and the significance of this year's Constitution Day. Our talented musicians Ms Stacey Newlin (viola) and Mr. Eduardo Sanchez (flute) accompanied the singers, who had prepared well with their teachers and did a very good job.





Spanish through drama.

It's always a magic moment when older students share a learning experience with younger students. Ospreys visited the Penguins Class and made a short play to introduce the new topic for their Spanish lesson.

The children were so excited!



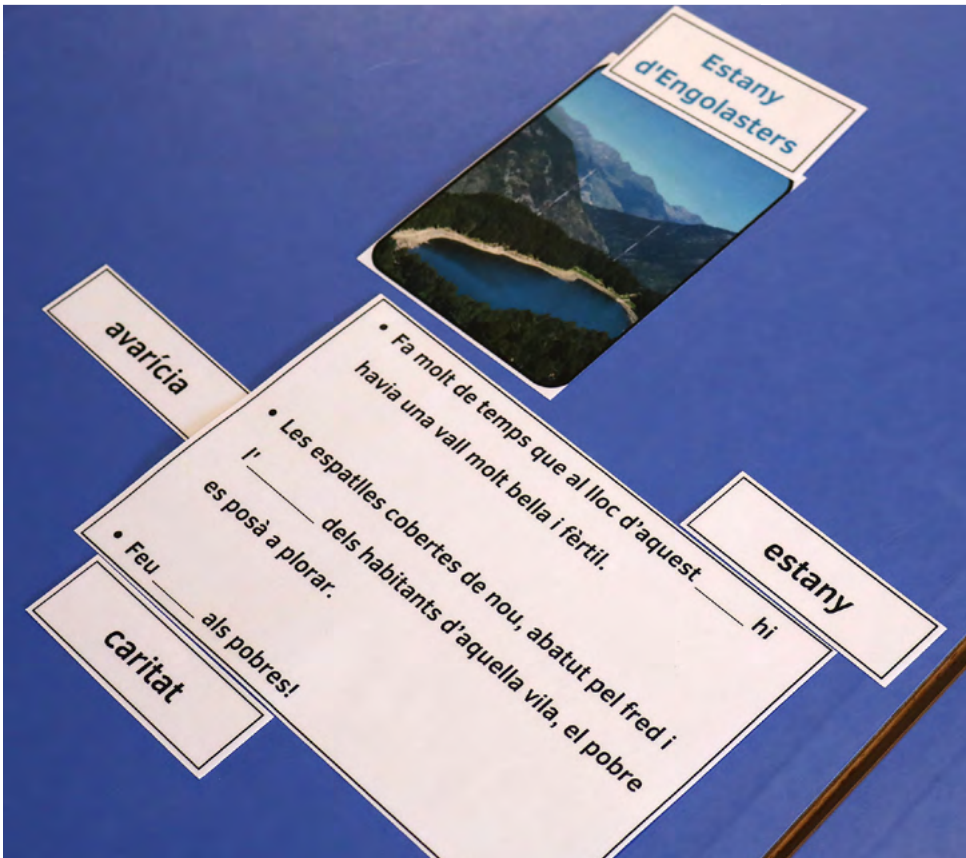


Students were working on measuring, and they practiced with real objects they could find in their classroom, comparing sizes and doing some research.





On Fridays, Robins have a Formació Andorrana lesson, to learn about Andorra's culture. This time they needed to complete different legends, working as a team. These games keep them motivated and active whilst they are learning.





## Real-life Maths with Kingfishers!

As part of their measurement topic in Maths, children in Year 3 have been measuring the perimeter around school. They worked in groups of three to carefully use a trundle wheel to measure in meters. Mr Kay was very pleased with how the children completed the task, especially with their enthusiasm and ability to record results accurately.





Eagles are working on action verbs in their French lessons.

Working in groups they wrote instructions (jump/ touch your toes...) for their partner and read it out aloud. The others listened then carried out the instructions. They had an amusing time together!





Year 8 in Catalan lessons.

Writing texts of different styles and for different audiences is a usual practice in Catalan lessons. Our Year 8 students, for example, have been writing opinion pieces on various topics, such as:

*“Should children have pocket money?”*

*“Do young people help enough at home?”*

*“Are we addicted to screens?”*

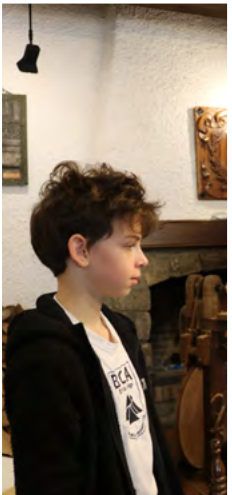




On Thursday our students from Year 7 and Year 10 went to a special workshop in Sant Julià de Lòria to learn about the art of carpentry and wood work, in all its shapes and forms. Utilitarian, decorative, for work or play, wood has and is still being used to create incredible pieces. They even had the chance to try out the tools of a professional and worked on a medieval lathe! An enriching and inspiring visit for all of us.









Children from Early Years were invited to visit the Thyssen Museum last Thursday.

As part of their learning around emotions and feelings, the KHRÔMA exhibition was based on emotions, trying to teach the students that colours can affect our emotions and the works can transmit very different feelings. Their purpose was to bring art and culture closer to all pupils. They also had a really creative workshop.





Mathematics: taking it to the limits.

To extend the classroom learning further, BCA recently entered Secondary students for the [UK Mathematical Challenge](#), a 60-minute, multiple-choice challenge. It encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency in using basic mathematical techniques to solve interesting problems. The problems on the Intermediate Mathematical Challenge are designed to make students think.

The results? Six Bronze awards, one Silver and three Golds. Well done students and their teacher Ms. Newlin and we eagerly look forward to the next challenge."

