

1. ERA Samba Bateria

We ended the last half term with a bang! As part of our whole school project on Brazil, children made their own carnival masks and headwear and infants each made their own ganza. Juniors wrote and performed poetry about the carnival and set their rhyming words to the syncopated rhythms of Brazil that they have been learning about in their music lessons.

At ERA, we have been lucky enough to borrow a whole set of samba drums and we have been learning the traditional polyrhythmic beats of South America. We have also learned the samba dance step and, along with our parents, we ended the term with our own carnival procession around the school. I'm so proud of the samba band because they kept the rhythm and breaks going for the whole procession, even when marching - I have seen adults struggling with this!



2. Outdoor Learning

Our reception class have been rambling up the lane once a week to learn in the little wooded area next to the village rec'. They always come back full of excitement and tales of adventure. The aims of the project are to foster self-confidence, autonomy and problem solving as well as giving children opportunities to risk assess their own play in a supervised environment. It has been a huge success, not least because of the wonderful little environment they were allowed to set up next to the village hall. When I asked one 5 year old child why he like it so much, he told me *"it's our place, just for us and we know every tree and where all the cool stuff is"*. What a wonderful response!



**Excellence &
Adventure**

3. Staffing

After a turbulent term, we are nearly fully staffed! One of our teachers has moved to Canada following her husband's promotion to colonel in the army and we have appointed a strong replacement.

After a few unsuccessful campaigns to appoint a new cleaner for the school, we have employed a cleaning company to run all of the cleaning on site and they will start in September.

We are still looking for a midday support assistant to work with Polly Yates, helping the children with their lunch and supervising their play from 12:00pm to 1:30pm each day. We can be flexible on the number of days and time needed for holidays so, if you know anyone locally who might be interested in joining our happy team, please put in a good word for us!



4. Story Shed Project

The 'Story Shed' project has now been finalized and we are hoping for installation of the new 4m x 5m unit in late summer or early autumn.

Thanks to £13,000 funding from the Tesco 'bags for help' scheme, we will be able to create a new cosy space for reading and story writing, looking out on our own nature garden.

If you, or someone you know, would like to get involved with this project and come and share a love of reading or writing with the children, please do get in touch as you would be very welcome.



5. Music

Our parent group, Friends of Easton Royal Academy have kindly agreed to fund a new, long-term music project from September 2016.

Every child who joins ERA will be given their own recorder and will be given a free recorder lesson every week for their whole time at the school. Our aim is that every child will be able to read and perform music by the time they leave us. We are proud to offer six years of proper instrumental tuition taught by a qualified music teacher to every child and we can't wait to start hearing the results!



6. Big School's Birdwatch

We took part in the National Big (and little!) School's Birdwatch. We made our own hide in our nature garden and children were given the opportunity to look for birds and tick them off on our identification charts.

We were very lucky to be able to include a number of Red Kites, Buzzards and pheasants on our charts and tables.

7. Parking in the Village

Things we have done so far:

- Posted several parking plea letters to all parents asking them to be considerate when they park and detailing areas of concern such as steps, post-boxes, farm turnings, low walls.
- Added a similar reminder to all newsletters next to our essential nut allergy reminder (we are a nut free school as one of our pupils has a life-threatening allergy).
- Spoken to our coach company to ask that they be as exact as possible in their collection time to avoid waiting in the lane (sometimes there are unavoidable delays in school, especially with younger children).
- Invited one of the near neighbours into the school to talk to children about the importance of being a good neighbour (we highlighted the parking concerns as children can sometimes help to remind adults).
- Written to all staff and parents to inform them that the 20mph limit is now a legal one and reminded them that it is our expectation that all visitors to the school drive at or below this speed.
- Added all event dates to our website with notes about how this might have an impact on traffic.
- Copied HH in on our weekly email update.
- Talked to the health & safety rep's from the academies trust to discuss possible farm parking (the result of this was that there would be no way to insure this situation without cost/risk to the farm. We would also need to make sure there was no farm machinery or vehicles in operation during the start and end of the school day and this would not be practical).
- Added the parking reminders to our weekly email bulletin to parents.
- Added separate news items over specific issues as they are reported (e.g the small brick wall half way down the lane).
- Principal has been out on duty for several mornings, checking the situation with parking and speaking directly to parents who have forgotten.
- We have piloted a change to the start to the school day so that pupils' entry is staggered and they do not arrive in the village at exactly the same time (there was considerable opposition from parents to this plan but it has had a really positive impact on the traffic and so we are keeping it).
- Made 'good neighbour' posters with all children detailing things they and their parents can do to help the village community.
- Our school administrator has phoned individual parents to talk about parking at times when their registration details have been handed in by a villager. This does cause bad feeling between the school and parents as we have no way to legally enforce parking – it is a strategy that we would like to avoid where possible.

Our checks have shown that the morning routine change has made a big impact and discussions with local neighbours have shown that the email bulletin is also helping residents to plan around busy times. This is encouraging news and we will continue to prioritise these issues to keep momentum.

