

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026

## Transition Day

Although there is still much to look forward to and celebrate in the weeks ahead, this is naturally the time of year when our thoughts begin to turn towards September and the opportunities a new academic year will bring. We hope that families will continue to make the most of the events and activities still to come, as these moments play an important role in strengthening the partnership between home and school.

Last week our Year 6 pupils spent some time visiting their new secondary schools, taking the next exciting step in their educational journey. We hope that they represented Berrywood with the respect, integrity and positivity that we value so highly, and that they enjoyed getting a taste of the opportunities that lie ahead.

For children across the rest of the school, this afternoon provided the chance to meet their new teachers and spend time in their September classrooms. For many children, this is an exciting experience, helping to build confidence and anticipation for the year ahead. We recognise, however, that change can feel daunting for some children. Our experienced staff are highly skilled in supporting pupils through these transitions, ensuring that every child feels secure, valued and ready for the next stage of their learning journey.

Where classes have been reorganised, considerable thought and care have gone into creating balanced groupings that support both learning and wellbeing. The processes and criteria we use have been refined over many years and continue to serve our children well.

Transition Day also provides a wonderful opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to the newest members of our Berrywood community. In September, we will be welcoming 90 children into Year R, and we are delighted that so many families will be joining us. We look forward to working in partnership with you and remain fully committed to providing a rich, values-driven education that enables every child to thrive.

## Staffing Structure – September 2026

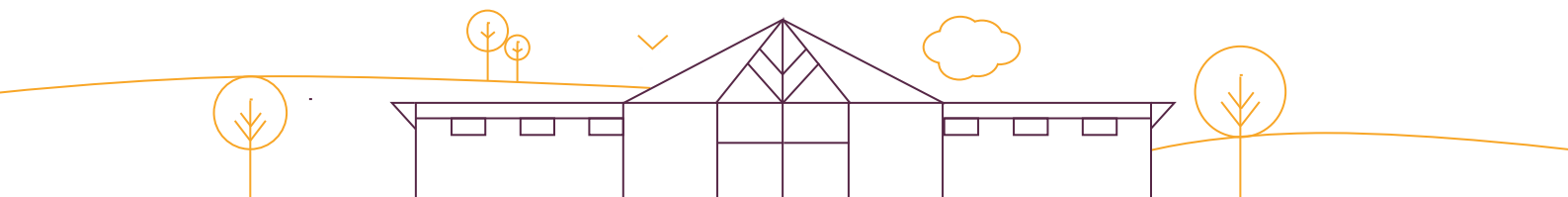
We hope that the information sent home today provides a helpful overview of your child's class arrangements for September. We would also encourage families to take a moment to look through the wider staffing structure for the new academic year.

In a school as large as Berrywood, it would be impossible for parents to know every member of staff. However, the sense of community that makes primary schools so special is strengthened by the small acts of kindness, appreciation and recognition that staff receive from parents each day. A friendly greeting, a smile or a word of thanks can make a real difference!

As is always the case in a school of our size, September will bring some changes to our staffing team, with colleagues moving on to new opportunities and others joining us for the first time. Recruitment and retention continue to present challenges across the education sector, but I am pleased to say that we have assembled another strong and talented team, ready to provide the highest quality education and care for our children.

Although there are always some staffing changes in a school of our size, the overwhelming majority of our teaching and support staff remain at Berrywood. This continuity, alongside the enthusiasm and expertise of our new colleagues, provides a strong foundation for another successful year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank those members of staff who will be leaving us at the end of this academic year. Their dedication, professionalism and commitment have made a significant contribution to Berrywood over many years, and we wish them every success and happiness in the future.



### **A Few Words for Our Lovely Leavers...**

As you know, **Mrs Amber Adams** is leaving us as Deputy Headteacher to become the Headteacher of Fernhurst Juniors. She is quite simply an exceptional professional from whom I have learnt so much. No stone is ever left unturned in her pursuit of the very best education for all children. I have every confidence that she will make a tremendous success of headship and have a huge impact on the school she leads. Good luck, Amber, best wishes and please do stay in touch.

**Mrs Ania Pitter** is retiring from teaching after many years of passionate and fun-loving service. In recent times, Mrs Pitter has specialised in drama teaching and has played a key role in our performing arts team. Her many friends will miss her greatly, and thank you hardly seems to do justice to the contribution you have made. We wish you well and very much hope you will remain a great friend of the school.

**Mrs Laura Hunter** joined Berrywood at a very early stage in her career. She has taught many Key Stage 1 children during her time with us and has grown into a highly accomplished classroom practitioner. Walking past the Year 1 classrooms will not seem the same next year. We know that Laura will go on to great things at St James, where she is taking on leadership responsibilities alongside her teaching. Thank you for your excellent service, Laura, and very best wishes for the next chapter.

**Miss Lauren Melliush** is moving on from Berrywood to become a School Travel Trainer for the local authority. Lauren has worked incredibly hard and brought positivity to everything she has done since joining Berrywood two years ago, and we wish her all the very best as her career takes an exciting new direction. Thank you for your service and professionalism during your time with us.

**Mrs Phillipa Miles** has been the most dedicated and professional colleague that any school team could wish for. Her reliability and calm, reassuring presence have ensured that the children in her classes always feel secure in their learning, especially when they have needed just that little bit of extra support or guidance. Phillipa is such a lovely person, and we know that she has many exciting plans for her retirement that she will embrace with energy and relish. Please remain a great friend of the school, and very best wishes.

**Mrs Alison Hayter** is retiring from our support staff team after many years of dedicated service to Berrywood children. Alison is deeply loved and will be sorely missed. Congratulations on reaching this well-deserved milestone! Fear not though, Berrywood community, Alison has kindly agreed to stay on as part of the Berries team, so she will be far from a stranger come September.

**Mrs Debbie Hannan** is joining the support staff team at a different Hampshire school. We wish her well and thank her for her excellent contribution to the Early Years setting since joining us. Debbie will be greatly missed.

**Mrs Jo Bhatnagar** is also retiring from education to focus on family life. Jo has been an incredibly reliable and professional colleague for a number of years at Berrywood. She has always given her all in supporting children and her colleagues, and we thank her sincerely for everything she has contributed.

**Mrs Hanna Purnell** is returning to higher education to complete her studies in psychology. We wish Hannah every success for the future and thank her for her dedicated service to Berrywood over a number of years.

**Mrs Kelly Butterworth** has been a fabulous member of the support staff team, working across different year groups and providing caring guidance to children. Kelly will be greatly missed, and we wish her well as she focuses on other pursuits.

**Mrs Laura Hastings** is joining the support staff team in another local school. We wish her well and thank her for her excellent contribution since joining us.

We would like to thank **Mrs Bahar Barkhordar** for her efforts since joining us this year and wish her well for whatever the future brings. We are sure that this future may well include her real passion for music tuition.

**Miss Regan Taylor** is taking some time out of education to explore other opportunities. We wish Regan every success for the future and thank her for her service to Berrywood children and families.

**Mrs Louise Buckley** is retiring from her role as Breakfast Berries Manager. She has been an absolutely fabulous servant to Berrywood families over many years and we wish her well in this exciting new chapter of her life.

**Mrs Katie Newman** will be a greatly missed member of the admin team. Katie is an absolute riot to work with and one of the most generous people I have ever met. We really hope she remains an active friend of the school as a parent and member of the BSA committee.

Our SENCo, **Miss Amy Spencer**, will be taking maternity leave in September, and we wish Amy and her family all the very best at this exciting time. As previously communicated, Miss Spencer will be temporarily replaced as SENCo by Mrs Kate Woods.

### **Our Jolly Joiners...**

**Miss Stacey Merrell** joins us as our new substantive Deputy Headteacher. I am genuinely excited about what Stacey will bring to Berrywood as we enter the next chapter of the school's journey. Stacey has a background of working in large urban schools and is very much used to rolling up her sleeves to tackle the complex work involved in senior school leadership.

**Miss Tanya Rowland** joins us from a smaller Eastleigh school. We are delighted to have her on board and look forward to supporting the next stage of her career in our larger setting.

**Miss Lauren Heads** is one of four Early Career Teachers joining Berrywood this year after graduating from the University of Winchester. We are looking forward to the enthusiasm and energy that we know she will bring to her Year 3 class.

**Miss Hollie Pemberton** is another Early Career Teacher who is eager to begin her teaching journey. We are thrilled to have her on board and know that she will become a valued member of our Year 2 team.

Our third Early Career Teacher, **Miss Charlotte Allen**, will be mainly based in Year 2 but will also teach in other year groups. Charlotte was once a pupil at Berrywood (yes, I was her Headteacher!), and she is now beginning her professional career here as a teacher. It is wonderful to welcome former pupils back as colleagues.

The fourth Early Career Teacher is **Miss Isabella Grogan**, who will be mainly based in Year 6 while also teaching in Year 5. We are excited to support Isabella as she begins her career and look forward to seeing her flourish at Berrywood.

**Miss Charlotte White**, **Mrs Vicky Wetton** and **Mrs Mia Budnj** are relatively new members of our support staff team, having joined us during the current school year, but all three have made a fantastic start. I wanted to take this opportunity to officially welcome them to Berrywood and thank them for being such fantastic team players.

**Miss Abby Stote** joins us as a Special Needs Assistant in September, bringing valuable experience from a nursery school background. She is enthusiastic, skilled and incredibly positive.

**Miss Ella Gregory** also joins us as a Special Needs Assistant in September. Ella is keen to begin her career in education, and we know she has a great deal to contribute.

**Mrs Elizabeth Ewers** is an experienced educationalist who also joins us as a Special Needs Assistant. We are delighted to welcome Elizabeth to Berrywood and look forward to benefiting from her considerable experience and expertise.

**Mrs Louise Howes** has recently joined the office team and **Mrs Sarah-Jane Cool** will be joining the office team in September. We are very pleased to have these two lovely people on board.