

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS BELL

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 Author **Toby Porter**



Headteacher Sarah Parbhu and Ife Davies of Proud Places are joined by schoolchildren in front of the bell

Contrary to popular belief, a computer's "break" button does not automatically end a boring school lesson.

You have to wait for the bell for that. Thankfully, pupils at Gallywell School, in Gallywell Road, Bermondsey, now have a new one – and what a musical sound it is for the youngsters. Unfortunately, no matter how much they learn in any day, it will not be enough – they still have to come back tomorrow.

The bell, funded by Heritage of London Trust through sponsors Delancey, was brought to London from its Loughborough foundry, placed in its setting and rung on Friday, March 18, for the first time since before the Second World War.

The inscription along its rim has a quote from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes: "Beacons of the future! Capsules with hundreds of bright little seeds in each, out of which will spring the wiser, better England of the future."

The back said: "With thanks to Heritage of London Trust and Delancey".

To mark the return of the bell, the Heritage of London Trust has been teaching the children the history of the area and traditions of bells as part of its Proud Places programme.

The bell will be rung at the start of each school day as well as for commemoration events.

The school was built in 1876, along with the nearby railway lines, and is almost the only tangible evidence of the area's Victorian past.

When first opened, the school was surrounded by food factories, noxious heavy industry, busy railway yards and high density back-to-back terraced housing. The area was heavily bombarded during the Blitz – although the school was relatively undamaged.

It was refurbished in 2016 as a new school – Galleywall Primary School City of London Academy– and is now oversubscribed.

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Headteacher Sarah Parbhu said: "We are so pleased to finally have a bell back in its rightful place, at the very top of our school. It has been a brilliant opportunity to look back at the history of Galleywall with our children and look to its future as we start new traditions."

A Year 4 pupil, Miles Nzei, said: "When I was under five I didn't know what a bell was and I have never heard a bell or seen one before and it's amazing.

"I really enjoyed the celebration and the ringing of our bell. We used to make little bells, but never had a bell before."

Heritage of London Trust director Dr Nicola Stacey said: "This has been a great project to celebrate Bermondsey's Victorian heritage. We hope that new generations of schoolchildren will enjoy the bell over the next 100 years."

Delancey founder and chairman Jamie Ritblat said: "We are thrilled that our continued partnership with Heritage of London Trust has delivered the restoration and return of this historic bell to Galleywall School in Bermondsey. This project has seen young people immersed in the history of the bell through the Proud Places programme and we look forward to hearing it ring out again."

Now, there are can be no excuse if pupils see the sign which says "School ahead. Go Slow".