



Headteacher: Mr T Hassan
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Oaklands Primary School

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Newsletter 22nd November 2024

Head Teacher's Message

We have had a busy few weeks since the last newsletter, incorporating parents' evening, Children in Need dress up day and 'Odd Socks' Day to mark Anti-bullying Week last week. Mrs Andreas has provided a roundup of the activity's children took part in below: -

Anti-Bullying Week at Oaklands

Last week was Anti-Bullying Week, and at Oaklands, we marked this significant occasion with a range of engaging activities. The theme this year was "Choose Respect," which aligns closely with our school values.

We kicked off the week with an assembly on Monday led by Stevenage Borough for KS1 and KS2. Hazel class (Reception) had the wonderful opportunity to participate in a workshop with Rebecca from Bigfoot Education, focusing on building confidence and self-esteem through imaginative, physical storytelling. Well done to Hazel class for their brilliant enthusiasm and enjoyment!

On Tuesday afternoon, pupils in Years 1-6 attended a performance by Adrian Benn from Bigfoot Education, which was a huge hit. The feedback from both children and staff was superb, highlighting the effectiveness of the performance in conveying important anti-bullying messages.

A special thank you to the PTA for funding these workshops and performances, and to everyone who participated in Odd Socks Day, helping us raise £60 for the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

As we continue to promote a culture of kindness and respect, we look forward to reinforcing these messages throughout the year.

Mrs. Andreas
PSHE Lead

Parking

I would politely remind everyone about the importance of parking safely around our school, especially on the zigzag lines as you pass by heading towards The North Star Pub.

These zigzag lines are there to ensure the safety of our pupils and all pedestrians. Parking in these areas can obstruct visibility for both drivers and walkers, making it more challenging for everyone to navigate safely. It is clear that everyone understands this as when traffic wardens visit the site at pick up time, no cars are parked in these spaces.

We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our school environment safe and welcoming for all. Thank you for your understanding and for helping us protect our children.



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PTA News

Christmas Jumper Donations

Have your children outgrown their Christmas jumpers? We're collecting clean, good-condition festive jumpers for our Christmas Fair sale. Please drop donations at the school office - look for the "Elf Bag" collection point. All sizes welcome.

Brown Bag Appeal

Your children also brought home brown bags earlier last week. If you'd like to participate (this is entirely optional, but greatly appreciated):

- Decorate the bag
- Fill it with eco-friendly items such as crafts, small toys and gifts (no food please)
- Return to school by Friday 29th November

Thank you for your continued support and generous donations.

Thanks.

Kind regards,

Jennifer Al-Tahan

A message from Mrs Thompon (SENCo)

It was lovely to see so many of you at the SEND coffee and chat morning this week. Both Andrea and Carli from the autism team enjoyed meeting you all and will attend future coffee mornings.

The most common conversation on Monday was about how to support and help emotional children at home, especially in the evening. I know personally the stress that this can cause and the 'not knowing what to do to help' feeling. I am currently looking to see if I can organise a speaker to come to our next morning to offer us all some helpful advice.

In the meantime, I have found some helpful advice online.

[Action for Children: Dealing with Emotions](#)

[Home-Start: Helping Children Manage Their Emotions](#)

If there is any other service, professional that you would like me to invite to future coffee mornings please let me know.

Family lives are offering courses on sibling rivalry and reducing family conflict. (More information to be found at the end of the newsletter).



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The Ollie foundation is offering a variety of free courses to help parents and carers work with and to understand behaviour of children. They also work closely to support men and their mental health.

[The Ollie Foundation](#)

The next coffee morning will be on Thursday 30th January at 9.

Kind Regards,

Kate Thompson

SENCo

Sporting news at Oaklands from Miss Mason, PE Lead

Our most recent PE event was a curling event held at Welwyn St Mary's. We took 4 girls and 4 boys in Year 4 to participate and practice their skills. They had previously practised when Monks Walk visited our school for a taster session. The girls came 5th and demonstrated fantastic teamwork skills, using lots of encouragement towards each other. The boys finished 1st and represented our school brilliantly.

Well done to those children who participated! You should be very proud of yourselves. We look forward to another event soon!

An update from Mrs Bissmire – OPAL and Eco Lead

Eco Meeting Update

We had our third Eco Meeting on Monday, where we reviewed the results from our Environmental Review from our last meeting. As a school, we scored a very good 75 out of a possible 100 points, reflecting our strong performance on the topics we worked on last year. This review also highlighted areas for improvement in enhancing the learning and outdoor environment at Oaklands.

This led us to create our action plan for this academic year, focusing on our topics of school grounds, litter, and transport. We shared ideas, agreed on them collectively, and developed a realistic plan to monitor our progress throughout the year.

We discussed the need for additional bins in the top field and paddock area to help reduce litter. We also plan to implement another litter-picking rota, which we hope will assist Oaklands in maintaining our Green Flag status. Additionally, we talked about restoring parts of the school grounds. Updates will be displayed on our Eco-Board regularly.

(Contributions from William from Oak class)

OPAL Update

Since returning to school, the outdoor classroom has been bustling with activity, featuring firework crafts and diva lamp painting for Diwali. Many colourful creations were made, and enjoyment was had by all.

This week, part of the bank has turned into a 'mudslide,' with children making full use of the puddle suits available to them at lunchtimes. A lot of fun was had, and quite a bit of washing was sent home!



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We have also changed our Play Rangers this week to assist with the end-of-lunch tidy-up and to take photos of play from the children's perspectives. It has been wonderful to see the children taking pride in their roles outside of the classroom and to hear their views on OPAL and what they would like to see next.

Looking ahead, we will be asking for donations of outdoor, weatherproof soft furnishings (e.g., cushions, picnic blankets, rugs) as we aim to create inviting social spaces for the children to enjoy during their playtime.

POD update

A huge thank you to all who have donated Christmas trees, decorations, etc. We are looking forward to making the Pod feel very festive in the next few weeks! We are still looking for a variety of cause-and-effect toys (think of all the singing, dancing push-button toys).

Pod life is in full vibrant swing, with the children working very hard on their individual activities as well as exploring the many Festivals of Light during this part of the year, starting with Bonfire Night and Diwali, followed by Hanukkah and Christmas!

We have been exploring these festivals with a range of sensory activities, such as spray painting, biscuit dough, and colourful rice. We have also enjoyed the brief wisp of snow we had this week and are really hoping for more!

Miss McGrath

Hazel

Hazel class has got off to a fantastic start this half term!

In phonics, we have been learning new phonemes and graphemes, practising sounding out and blending words as a class. We've also started decoding simple sentences together, focusing on capital letters, finger spaces, and full stops. This half term, we have introduced several new tricky words: 'and', 'his', 'has', 'her', 'go', 'no', and 'to'. Mastering these will greatly enhance our reading fluency!

In maths, we began by exploring circles and triangles, learning that circles are round while triangles have 3 corners and 3 sides. This week, we moved on to our unit '1, 2, 3, 4, 5', where we've been counting 4 and 5 and representing these numbers using counters and natural resources. You could try this at home with a variety of objects to reinforce their learning!

Our topic this half term is 'Sparkle and Shine'. We've been discussing different celebrations, including party food, decorations, and clothing. In Child-Initiated Learning (CIL), we've been busy designing cakes, writing party lists, and creating decorations. These activities are designed to support fine motor skill development and early writing opportunities.

In the coming weeks, we will continue learning new graphemes and phonemes, with a strong focus on digraphs. We will keep decoding sentences together and practice writing new CVC words and tricky words.



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In maths, we will explore numbers up to 5 further, focusing on 1 more and 1 less, and representing amounts on our 5 frames. There will be plenty of opportunities to count during our exploration time, and we will practice writing our numerals.

In our topic work, we will look at birthdays from around the world, discussing different traditions. We'll explore how music makes us feel and have a go at creating our own celebration music.

Next Friday afternoon, we will have our own Hazel class celebration to recognise all of our hard work so far! We look forward to celebrating together!

Willow

In Maths, we've delved into the world of 3D shapes, exploring their properties through lots of hands-on activities. The children also thoroughly enjoyed learning about repeating patterns, using natural objects collected from the paddock to demonstrate their understanding.

A special letter from Naughty Bus brought an extra spark of excitement! The letter hinted that the Naughty Bus had been on holiday, inspiring us to use our imaginations and write postcards in the first person about where he might have been.

Our new art topic, "Funny Faces and Fabulous Features," has truly captivated Willow Class. The children have been exploring a variety of portraits and showcasing their creativity by designing their own representations of the human face using drawing, painting, or collage, both from observation and from their imaginations.

During phonics lessons, we have been learning our phase 5 split digraphs, focusing on a-e, i-e, o-e, and u-e. We have been spotting these in sentences and practising writing words containing them.

In Music, we have been developing our listening skills by finding the pulse in different pieces of music and identifying the instruments used—a fantastic way to build rhythm and awareness with a close link to supporting early reading skills.

In the next few weeks, we will be:

- Literacy: Starting our new text, "I Want My Hat Back."
- Geography: Learning about physical and human features and exploring maps.
- Science: Naming and counting body parts and identifying similarities and differences.

Pine

Year 2 have been very busy since returning from the half term break!

In Literacy, we have been reading "We Are Water Protectors" and learning all about water pollution. The pupils have been really engaged with this book and have been working hard to learn about ways that we can help prevent water pollution. They have made signs to protest against oil companies and have used expanded noun phrases to describe the main character in the book. As a class, we used adjectives such as determined, courageous, brave, and strong.



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In Maths, we have started our new topic on Shape. The pupils have been exploring 2D shapes and counting how many sides and vertices they have. They have then used lines of symmetry to complete halves of shapes. In Science, we have started our new topic all about habitats. This topic links to our last two Literacy books about the environment and how we should look after animals' habitats. We have explored the paddock area in the school grounds and found a variety of different habitats, considering what types of living things may live there.

In Art, we have started a new topic based on Still Life. We converted the classroom into an art gallery with a variety of still life art placed around the room. The pupils enjoyed walking around the 'gallery' and observing the different pieces of art. They even spotted some pieces created by two artists we had previously learned about in our History topic: Paul Cézanne and Pablo Picasso. They then chose one of their favourite pieces and sketched it into their art books. We used watercolours to bring our paintings to life, and they looked fantastic!

In the following weeks:

- Literacy: Research different tribes and write a non-fiction text.
- Maths: Properties of 3D shapes.
- Science: Living and non-living things.
- Art: Exploring shades.
- RE: Christmas.

Birch

Over the last two weeks, Birch class has been looking at the beginning of the Iron Age. We explored the Farming Boom and discussed how farming became easier and more efficient as tools improved. The children also looked at the two types of farming: growing crops and keeping animals. The class enjoyed examining the Celtic Warriors. They had to draw one based on evidence from a text, and then we looked at images of the Celtic Warriors, focusing on their weaponry and lack of armour.

In Literacy, we have started a book called "The Tear Thief." The children have really engaged with this text and have produced some great pieces of writing, full of interesting verbs! They have written diary entries and letters of advice. This week, the jar of tears has gone missing from the classroom! The class spent time punctuating quotes from eyewitnesses. Next week, we will be writing newspaper reports to report this incident.

In Maths, we have recapped adding and subtracting 2 and 3-digit numbers using the column method. We have also looked at estimating answers by rounding to multiples of 10 or 100. The class has also used the inverse operation to create fact families.

In Geography, we have been locating capital cities across Europe. The children were able to use atlases to locate the cities and match them to the correct countries on their maps. They have also spent time looking at counties and cities across the UK, highlighting landmarks and physical and human features. In French, Birch class has been learning the names of 10 animals—see if they can tell you any!

Over the next two weeks, we will be learning:



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- Maths: To multiply and divide by 3 and 4.
- Literacy: Writing a newspaper report.
- Art: Mixing watercolours to create a piece of artwork.
- Geography: Carbon footprint and land use in the UK.

Sycamore

Year 4 have had a lovely few weeks back after half-term, getting straight into their learning. They have been exploring new texts, units, and topics.

In Literacy, the children have been reading a book titled 'FARTHER.' This story is about a small family whose father lives with a dream of flying; however, this dream is taken from him when he is called to fight in World War One. The children have been working hard to predict what could happen next, write postcards in role as a character, and not only investigate the text but also explore what it might have been like for someone living in WW1. The children will work towards writing a sequel to the story, answering some questions they have and exploring what could happen next.

In Maths, the children have been working hard to practice and remember their times tables. The focus has been on the 3, 6, and 9 times tables, as well as understanding the 7s and 11s. I am very impressed by how dedicated all of the children have been when working on these multiplications. They have taken it upon themselves to do extra work and find out more about how they can remember the tougher times tables.

In Science, the children have been exploring a new unit all about sound. They started off by exploring what sound is and how we hear it. They then had a brilliant time exploring different musical instruments to understand what we need to do to make sound. In this week's lesson, the children have been working hard to understand the anatomy of the ear to help them grasp how sound is produced.

In PE this half-term, the children are working hard, getting involved in football as well as dance. They are practising ball skills and control in football, whereas they are trying out different types of dance moves and themes, from 'spy' to 'carnival.'

Over the next fortnight, we will be learning how to:

- Literacy: Write a sequel to a familiar text.
- Maths: Consolidate our knowledge of multiplications.
- Science: Change the pitch and volume of sounds.
- Art: Weave on a loom.

Hawthorne

In Literacy, we finished reading the adapted version of 'The Tempest' by William Shakespeare. We enjoyed exploring the themes, ideas, and characters in the play and wrote our own playscripts based on 'The Tempest'. This week, we received a note from the Star Wars character Yoda, saying, "The future, how much can we predict?" As a class, we discussed things we could and could not predict and made origami Yodas.



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In Maths, we are continuing our learning on fractions. This week, we compared and ordered fractions greater than one and also looked at how to convert improper fractions into mixed numbers by using equivalent fractions.

In Science, we have started our new unit on 'Forces and Mechanisms'. We revisited our learning from lower KS2 about contact and non-contact forces and were introduced to the specific forces we will be studying in this unit.

In PE, we have been learning dodging skills and applying them to various situations. In Dance, we have been practising for our class assembly using the style of rock and roll.

In the next fortnight, we will be learning:

- Maths: subtracting from a mixed number
- Literacy: using evidence from a text to infer the writer's perspectives
- Science: about gravity; PE: dodgeball and dance

Oak

In Literacy, we have started to read 'The Promise.' We have looked at semi-colons and abstract nouns. We will finish the unit by writing a narrative poem.

In Maths, we are about to finish our fractions unit. We have multiplied and divided fractions by integers and have also found fractions of an amount.

In French, we have explored different things we wear to school.

In Reading, we have been looking at past papers and have focused specifically on 3-mark questions and what these require.

In PE, we have done team-building activities as well as practising some impressive dance moves!

In Computing, we have explored coding that includes user input. We used these skills to create programmes to sort different aliens based on their features. We have also made quizzes for our little buddies!

In Geography, we have used atlases to look at large and small-scale maps. We have also practised using the contents and index pages.

In Music, we have combined different elements to create a class song, which includes singing, percussion, and music.

Coming up...

- In Literacy: We will write narrative poems.
- In Maths: We will look at measurement.
- In Geography: We will explore Ordnance Survey maps.



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Diary Dates

Date	Event
Friday 29 th November	Year 6 class assembly
Friday 6 th December	Year 2 class assembly
Sunday 8 th December	PTA Christmas Fair 10.30-12.30
Thursday 12 th December	Whole school Panto trip - Gordon Craig Theatre (school uniform)
Monday 16 th December	Reception nativity: 9:00 - 10:00
Wednesday 18 th December	Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Lunch Day
Friday 20 th December	Whole school carol concert @ 13:30 End of term 14:00