



## Oaklands Primary School

Great North Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire AL6 OPX

Tel: 01438 715278

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Web: [www.oaklands.herts.sch.uk](http://www.oaklands.herts.sch.uk)

Twitter: @oaklandsschool

Headteacher: Mr T Hassan

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs S Morgan

### **Newsletter 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

#### **Head Teacher's Message**

Since the last newsletter, I have had the pleasure of seeing our wonderful school choir perform locally on two occasions. The first was a week ago at St. Mary's Church in Welwyn Village, where the children performed to a full house before the switching on of the village Christmas lights.

On Wednesday, they performed again at The Monks Walk Community Christmas Concert in St. John the Evangelist Church in Welwyn Garden City. If they performed well at St. Mary's, they were simply magnificent this time around, particularly when performing "Shallow." It would be fair to say that they raised the roof and deservedly received huge applause.

We are equally proud of the choir's visits to local care homes. The residents thoroughly enjoy the concerts the children put on for them, and it is very rewarding for the school to contribute positively to the local community beyond the school.

In addition to recognising the achievements of the children who show dedication to the choir by attending regular rehearsals in their own time at lunch and after school, we must acknowledge others without whom these events would not happen. Thank you to all the parents who provided lifts to children to get them to events and for attending; your support means a lot to the school and the children.

Finally, a huge thank you to Mrs. Murley, Mrs. Bell, and Mrs. Bissmire, who give freely of their time to lead the choir. Without their generosity and passion for the choir, none of what we have seen, heard, and enjoyed would have been possible.

We hope to see as many of you as possible this Sunday at the Christmas Fair, where you will have a chance to hear the choir perform.

#### **PTA News**

We're delighted to inform you that for those who have ordered them, the personalised Christmas cards designed by your children will be delivered next week.

Don't forget the Oaklands Christmas Fair is this Sunday!

Join us from 10.30am - 12.30pm for a festive family morning packed with fun activities:

- Warm up with mulled wine and hot chocolate
- Meet Santa and enjoy his storytelling
- Play exciting festive games
- Browse our craft stalls for unique gifts
- Create magical reindeer food with the children
- Pre-order our exclusive new Oaklands Christmas Gin!



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We look forward to seeing everyone there for a fun filled celebration!

Best wishes,

The Oaklands PTA Team

### **A message from Mrs Thompon (SENCo)**

As we approach the festive season, it's important to consider the unique challenges that children with special educational needs may face during this time. Christmas can be hard for your child if they struggle with crowds, noises, and changes in routine. The festive period can be overwhelming for autistic children and those with ADHD, sensory issues, or anxiety.

Action for Children and the Together Trust have some great advice to help neurodiverse children at this time. You can find helpful resources here:

[Action for Children](#)

[Together Trust](#)

Additionally, SPACE has some great activities and workshops running through December. For further details, see the link below:

[SPACE December Activities](#)

We also invite you to join our next SEND coffee and chat on Thursday, 30th January at 9 AM. It's a wonderful opportunity to connect with other parents and share experiences.

### **Sporting news at Oaklands from Miss Mason, PE Lead**

#### **An update from Mrs Bissmire – OPAL and Eco Lead**

##### **Cut Your Carbon Month**

November was Cut Your Carbon month, an initiative linked to Eco Schools. This week, each class conducted a hands-up vote to indicate whether they participated in one or more activities aimed at reducing individual carbon emissions. Activities included having a meat-free day, walking to school, or simply saying 'no' to a new item. A total of 142 children reported taking part in these activities.

##### **Battery Collection**

The first battery count of this academic year has been completed, with a grand total of 486 batteries handed in since September. Collection jars are located in the foyer of the school office. Please remember that we cannot accept flat batteries, such as those found in watches.



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### Travel Together Tuesday

Travel Together Tuesday's walking bus is still going strong, even though the weather has turned a bit grey and cold. On the last snowy Tuesday, 19 pupils participated. You can join us any Tuesday from The North Star, where a member of staff will be waiting from 8:25 AM, with the walk to school beginning at 8:35 AM. Thank you to all the parents who walk along with us!

### Travel Tracker Badges

November's Travel Tracker badges have also been distributed this week, with a total of 139 awarded throughout the school. It is lovely to see that pupils are making an effort to complete at least one sustainable journey each week. A reminder that for 'park and stride' to count, at least one road needs to be crossed.

### OPAL Update

As the weather has turned and the rain continues, the field and paddock areas have become extremely muddy and slippery. For the safety of children and staff, and to allow these areas time to recover and dry out, we have decided to close them to all pupils this week. Instead, children have been accessing the top or bottom playgrounds with mixed year groups throughout the week, with some OPAL loose parts available for play.

Thank you for your ongoing support in promoting sustainability and safe play for our children.

### Hazel

In phonics, we have been learning lots of new digraphs and their corresponding catchphrases. We have continued to read sentences as a class, thinking about full stops, exclamation marks, and question marks. Our new tricky words are 'into', 'she', 'he', 'of', 'we', 'me', and 'be'.

In maths, we continued our unit '1,2,3,4,5'. We have been exploring number composition and using our 5 frames to represent 1 more and 1 less. We have also been singing lots of songs to support our learning, such as "5 Currant Buns in a Baker's Shop," "5 Speckled Frogs," and "5 Cheeky Monkeys." We have used our 5 frames and counters to represent the amounts as we sing.

In topic, we enjoyed learning about birthday traditions from around the world. We reflected on our own birthday traditions and how we celebrate each other in class. We also discussed celebration music and how it makes us feel.

Over the next few weeks, we will be revising all the phonemes and graphemes we have learned so far in phonics. We will also review all our tricky words and play games such as tricky word bingo to support our learning.

In maths, we will be looking at shapes with four sides, focusing on squares and rectangles and how to tell them apart. We will also revisit triangles and circles and discuss the differences we notice.



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In topic, we will be exploring the book "The Snowman" by Raymond Briggs. We will have lots of Christmas activities available in continuous provision, and we will be busy rehearsing for our Nativity play.

### **Willow**

In Mathematics, pupils have been working on missing number problems, using a number line to support their understanding. This activity aligns well with the Year 1 curriculum, which encourages solving one-step problems and utilising number lines for addition and subtraction. Additionally, the children have recapped their learning on fact families, which is essential for understanding the relationships between numbers, and they have been introduced to symbols for 'greater than', 'less than', and 'equal to', crucial for developing their mathematical reasoning and comparison skills.

As the Literacy unit based on the text "I Want My Hat Back!" comes to a close, pupils have been planning their sequel stories titled "I Want My Friend Back!" This creative approach engages them with narrative structure and encourages their imagination. Throughout this process, the focus has been on ensuring that their sentence structure, punctuation, and use of adjectives are consistently applied, supporting the development of their writing skills in line with Year 1 expectations.

In Art, the pupils have explored portraiture and compared different pieces of art to identify similarities and differences. This analytical approach fosters critical thinking and appreciation for various artistic styles. After choosing their favourite style, they recreated it in their art books, reinforcing their learning and creativity.

The Geography unit has begun with an exploration of maps and key features, including a compass and a key. This foundational knowledge is important for understanding geographical concepts. Pupils have also used directional language to give instructions from a starting point to an endpoint, enhancing their spatial awareness. They have learned about the world's seven continents and five oceans on a map, which is a fundamental aspect of the geography curriculum that fosters global awareness.

As the festive season approaches, pupils are thoroughly enjoying learning Christmas songs, which enhances their cultural awareness and musical skills. Additionally, they have developed their fine motor skills by making intricate paper snowflakes, requiring careful cutting and hand-eye coordination.

Looking ahead: -

- Literacy: we will shift to exploring regular plural noun suffixes (-s or -es) through the text "The Snowman."
- Geography: pupils will continue to name and locate the seven continents and five oceans on a map, reinforcing their previous learning.
- Science: exploring the five senses, including learning about sensory loss and assistive tools, which is crucial for developing empathy and understanding human biology.

### **Pine**

We have once again had a very busy couple of weeks as we lead up to Christmas, filled with engaging learning activities!



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In Literacy, we have come to the end of our book "We Are Water Protectors." The children used their imagination to take on the role of a water protector fantastically. For our final writing pieces, we wrote our own campaign to save Lemsford Springs, a local nature reserve. This project allowed the children to link their learning to something more personal to them. They used a range of literacy skills, including coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, noun phrases, commas, and apostrophes in contracted words. They also had the chance to edit and improve their work before publishing their final pieces. Each child wrote a fantastic and persuasive campaign!

In Maths, we are nearing the end of our topic on 2D and 3D shapes. The children have been making repeating patterns using a range of shapes, as well as patterns that involve a line of symmetry. We have also tackled some problem-solving questions as a class to consolidate and challenge their learning, which they all answered brilliantly. They focused on sorting 2D shapes by choosing categories themselves, such as shapes with four sides versus shapes without four sides. We used physical versions of 3D shapes to practice sorting on the carpet before answering questions in their books.

In Computing, we have started a new topic all about spreadsheets. We have been using the Purple Mash website to complete our tasks. The children have learned how to input text, numbers, and images into a spreadsheet. They have also practised using the spreadsheet to calculate answers to various addition and subtraction equations. They are enjoying this topic and have accessed the learning really well.

In Art, the children completed a colour study based on familiar still-life paintings from previous weeks. They used white and black to create lighter and darker shades of each colour. Using their observation skills, they spotted different shades in the pictures and added these into a table, finding as many colours as they could. They then had the chance to use these colours to paint their own versions of the paintings.

In addition to all of this, we have been busy practising our Christmas songs for the end-of-term assembly, which has been getting us into the festive spirit! The children have also worked hard to put together their class assembly, which we hope you all enjoyed!

In the following weeks, we will focus on:

- Literacy: "The Polar Express"
- Maths: Consolidation of topics covered so far
- Science: Habitats and animal adaptations
- Art: Creating their own still-life scenes to sketch and paint
- RE: Making Christmas cards

### **Birch**

Year 4 have had a lovely couple of weeks getting involved in a range of learning.

In Literacy, the children have worked hard to finish writing their own sequels to the text FAR<sup>T</sup>H<sup>E</sup>R. There have been some fantastic stories written and illustrated by the children, which will be taken home to share with their families. We will be starting The Polar Express on Monday, which the children are very excited about.



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In Maths, the children have completed their multiplication unit and have been consolidating their knowledge of everything they have learned this term. They have also been working on recalling their times tables.

In Science, the children have worked hard to understand how we hear sounds and what materials can be used to muffle sounds to protect our ears. They found that dense materials were effective for this, while thinner materials did not have the desired effect.

In History, we have focused on understanding the Viking invasion of Lindisfarne and how this impacted everyone in Britain. The children have explored the challenges the Vikings faced when fighting the Anglo-Saxons. They argued whether the Vikings should have fought or surrendered and provided reasons for their opinions.

Over the final fortnight of the autumn term:

- In Literacy: Our learning will focus on *The Polar Express*.
- In PE: We will finish off our units in dance and football.
- In DT: We will explore healthy foods and what packaging should include.
- In Art: We will complete our wall hangings using a loom.

### Sycamore

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### **Hawthorne**

In literacy, we are continuing to read "The Strange Case of Origami Yoda" by Tom Angleberger. We are in the process of writing our final piece, which is a persuasive text answering the question, "Can we predict the future?" We read different case studies and made a plan of various viewpoints to include in our balanced argument.

In maths, we practised adding and subtracting fractions and revisited all our maths learning for the term before completing an assessment.

In science, we conducted an experiment using force metres to measure the mass of different classroom objects in grammes and kilogrammes and their weight in Newtons. We recorded our data on a line graph and explored the relationship between mass and weight before answering questions. Additionally, we investigated air resistance by making parachutes and observing whether the length of the string affected the fall.

In art, we sketched both a real and a fantasy landscape, paying attention to perspective, features, the horizon, and the weather.

In French, we have been learning the months of the year and the days of the week.

In dodgeball, we have been developing our catching skills and applying them in games.

In the next fortnight, we will be:

- Literacy: Using parenthesis
- Science: Investigating water resistance
- Geography: Learning about biomes and vegetation belts
- Art: Creating a landscape painting
- PE: Developing blocking skills

### **Oak**

In Literacy, we have finished reading "The Promise." Throughout this unit, we explored the use of semi-colons and abstract nouns. To conclude our study, we wrote narrative poems, which we then published in a class book.

In Maths, our focus has been on measures. We have been converting between metric measures and some imperial measures, such as miles.

In French, we have discussed various items that we wear to school, enhancing our vocabulary and understanding of everyday clothing.



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During our Reading sessions, we have been working with past papers, specifically concentrating on 3-mark questions and understanding what is required to answer them effectively.

In PE, we have engaged in team-building activities and have also had fun practising some exciting dance moves!

In Computing, we explored the world of blogs. We created our own blogs and collaborated with our classmates to share our writing.

In Geography, we utilised atlases to examine both large and small-scale maps. We also practised using the contents and index pages to navigate these resources effectively.

In Music, we have been busy putting together different components into a class song, incorporating singing, percussion, and various musical elements.

Looking ahead:

- We will start reading "The Polar Express" in Literacy
- Finish our measurement unit in Maths
- Delve into Ordnance Survey maps in Geography.

### Diary Dates

Date	Event
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> December	Xmas Fair – 10:30am – 12:30pm
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> December	Whole school Panto trip - Gordon Craig Theatre Full school uniform to be worn. Please order your school packed lunch by Monday.
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> December	Oaklands Christmas Jumper Day, and Christmas Lunch day
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 6 class assembly
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> December	Reception nativity: 9:00 - 10:00
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> December	Whole school carol concert sing-along@ 13:30 End of term 14:00 There is no After School Club today