

TELL US ABOUT BRAESIDE AND NORMANHURST SCHOOL

Q & A with Claire Osborn

Braeside School in Buckhurst Hill and Normanhurst School in North Chingford make up half of The Oak-Tree Group of Schools alongside Coopersale Hall in Epping and Oaklands in Loughton.

Already Headmistress at Normanhurst, Claire Osborn was appointed as Headmistress of both Normanhurst and Braeside in September last year. We talk to Claire about her role and the two schools are now working together.

“ **Q: Tell us what is special about Braeside and Normanhurst.**

A: Braeside and Normanhurst are two schools that share a similar ethos. They both have community at their heart and aim to nurture and develop individuals academically and in their personal development. We are committed to providing an exciting, personalised and inspiring educational experience for pupils of all ages from 2½ to 16.

It is very special to have two schools able to collaborate together for the benefit of the pupils. The curriculum and planning is shared across the schools. Staff are able to work together to develop the learning and to enhance the pupils’ opportunities.

Pupils are benefitting from a broader range of educational opportunities from overseas trips to workshops, shared GCSEs and curriculum enhancement days. This is a real positive for pupils at both schools.

Q: What are the advantages of the schools sharing a Headmistress?

A: I have been the Headmistress at Normanhurst for nearly seven years. In that time the school has grown and its achievements and reputation are well recognised in the area. It is a happy, purposeful and aspirational community in which pupils achieve very well. The ethos we have built there is one that has benefitted pupils considerably and I am delighted to have the opportunity to share that with Braeside.

In sharing a headmistress the two schools are effectively sharing the same aims and vision. Our sense of purpose is united. I see great value in working in partnership because I see this enhancing the outcomes for our pupils. Some teaching staff are now shared and we have already begun to offer joint GCSE courses. We have been able to offer joint residential trips including a ski trip to the Alps and a trip to Seville in the autumn. We are running joint revision days and curriculum enrichment events like a recent Stone Age day and a writer in residence in March. This is all creating more opportunities for pupils and enhancing their personal development.



Normanhurst Early Years pupils



Performing Arts and Braeside School

Q: With two schools across 3 sites, you must be very busy! How do you fit it all in?

A: I am frequently asked that question! With the two school only five minutes apart it is very easy to move between the sites and I spend time every day at both schools. Each school individually is small: 165 at Braeside, 290 at Normanhurst. I take assemblies on all three sites every week, meet all prospective parents, spend time with pupils both individually and in groups and meet regularly with current parents.

I fit it all in by being organised, prioritising and being able to delegate to the excellent leadership teams in the schools. My diary is certainly full and it is a busy job, but it is a job I very much enjoy and am deeply committed to. I think we have the opportunity to create something very exciting as Normanhurst and Braeside build a future together within the Oak-Tree Group. ■

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THE DETAILS

The Oak-Tree Group of Schools
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www.oaktreeschools.co.uk