

# Oak-Tree NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023



Issue 20

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## Group Principal's Message

It's always amazing how quickly terms fly by, and this is especially so when they are packed full of curricular and extra-curricular activities that add so much to the experiences on offer. The Spring Term was certainly no exception and I am delighted that so many of our pupils benefitted from such a range of additional learning opportunities.

I hope you have been able to have a break over Easter with your families, and that your children are rested in preparation for what promises to be another busy Summer Term with the multitude of events, performances, trips, sports days and prize givings that are already scheduled.

One of the forthcoming highlights promises to be the reintroduction of what used to be a biennial evening Oak-Tree Music Festival in May for all pupils in Years 3 to 6 and selected seniors at a large local concert venue. Details will be following.

Good luck to those older pupils who are within their final weeks of formal schooling before they sit their GCSEs in May - our teachers will be working with them until their exams start as they continue their revision.

I look forward to chatting with you during the coming Summer Term's events.

*Matthew Hagger*

Matthew Hagger

## Braeside Junior Peri Music Concert

A long list of talented musical pupils performed in front of their peers and an audience of appreciative friends and family at the Junior Peri Music Concert.

There was an entertaining mix of pieces that included individual performances on the piano, violin, guitar and recorder, as well as some singing solos.

The pupils overcame their nerves and showcased their amazing skills, making their Peri teachers very proud.



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## World Book Day

World Book Day exists to support all children to experience the joy of reading.

This World Book Day we discovered that 500,000 children in the UK don't own a book and the number of children enjoying the benefits of reading is in sharp decline.

Pupils and staff from all four schools

joined in by dressing up as their favourite characters and taking part in plenty of book-related activities throughout the day.

Normanhurst pupils decided to do something a little different this year and celebrated with a Mad Hatter's Hat Party day, with the children coming to school in handmade hats inspired by their favourite book characters.



## Coopersale Hall First Aid Course

The children in Year 6 at Coopersale Hall took part in a first aid training course, learning about DRABC (Danger, Response, Airway, Breathing, Circulation), how to assess whether someone needs help and how urgent the situation is. Using the resuscitation manikins, the children also learned how to perform CPR if required and how to help someone with various types of burns, cuts and choking.

Our pupils can now confidently put a casualty into the recovery position and they know how to help them if they are unresponsive.



## Oaklands House Cross Country

On a beautiful sunny Monday afternoon, the school field was marked out, freshly mown and ready for the annual Oaklands House Cross Country Races for Years 1-6. It was a fantastic atmosphere with music playing, children cheering and teachers dancing! The children took it in turns in their year groups to run as many laps as they could for the 200m course in order to move their House up the leaderboard. The boys and girls worked so hard and walked, jogged and ran very impressively all afternoon. Well done everybody!

### Results:

**1st** – Willow: 213 laps

**2nd** – Holly: 193 laps

**3rd** – Sycamore: 192 laps

**4th** – Beech: 183 laps



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## Coopersale Hall Bikeability

Coopersale Hall's Year 6 pupils enjoyed a challenging Bikeability course this term. The Bikeability team worked to give the pupils the skills and confidence to ride their bikes safely on roads.

The course started off at school where they practised turning, hand signals and basic cycling on the astroturf within the grounds.

Once the children had mastered the essential skills, it was time to take their bikes out onto the open road to practise traffic diversion, traffic lights, turning into junctions and more U-turns.

They now feel much more confident cycling on the roads.



## Careers Day at Braeside

Braeside pupils recently experienced a highly engaging and informative Careers Day. They welcomed several special guests into the school for the day, who kindly gave their time to speak to the children about their chosen careers.

Talks included what made them choose their career paths, how they got the roles and what the job entailed. They were then happy to answer any questions the pupils had.

Children as young as Lower Kindergarten took part in the discussions, and had some very interesting questions to ask.

Special guests included:

**Mr Barrett** – Director of European Product Development & Licensing; VTech Electronics Europe

**Mrs O'Shea** – Dog Trainer and Dog Day Care (JJ's VIP Pets)

**Mrs Honeyben** – Midwife and Nurse

**Miss Celentano** – Passenger Service Agent

**Mrs Willemse** – Previously a journalist before becoming a teacher.

Thank you to all the speakers and sharing your journey with the children. A big thank goes to Mr Barrett for the generous donation of VTech toys.



## 100 Days of School at Normanhurst

Pupils in the Juniors celebrated their 100th Day at school earlier this term and completed many different activities to mark the day.

Reception class learnt that there are 10 '10s' in 100 so decided to build a Lego tower of 100. They each built a

tower of 10 then worked together to build a tower of 100.

Year 5 enjoyed making 100 day art, which was very impressive. Year 4 then predicted what they would look like at 100 years old with some surprising results and Year 3 played 100 themed English and Maths games.

This was a novel day to celebrate!





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## Oak-Tree Ski Trip

After several Covid postponements, it was finally time for the Oak-Tree ski trip at the end of the Spring Term.

80 pupils and a large number of staff from across the Group travelled to the town of Madonna in the Italian Alps, and for many it was their first trip abroad without their parents.

Every day the pupils from all four schools in the Oak-Tree Group hit the slopes in their respective ski schools.



There were pupils at all skill levels, from those who had never been skiing before to those more advanced skiers.

Pupils were very lucky to have had some excellent skiing conditions and the ski school instructors were pleased with our children's endurance. Everyone made quick progress.

After long days out on the mountains, the evenings were filled with relaxed dinners together back at the hotel, or at the local pizza restaurant, followed by films and games.

Pupils agreed it was one of the best school trip they had been on, filled with laughter, new experiences and new friendships.



## Oak-Tree Spelling Bee

Pupils from Oaklands, Braeside and Coopersale Hall competed in this year's highly anticipated Spelling Bee.

The children worked in their teams to complete boggle and anagram games in order to win points. Then in their year groups they tackled the more traditional spelling challenges, with Mrs Copeman reading out some very tricky words for the pupils to spell.

It was close, but the winning school was Coopersale Hall and the children took home the coveted trophy and golden bee certificates.

It was lovely to see the schools coming together and taking part in some friendly competition.

Well done to everyone who took part, you should all be very proud of your efforts!



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## Braeside Dance Workshop

Pupils were lucky enough to have two members of the National Youth Dance Company join them for the morning as part of their school workshops programme.



The dancers worked with Year 7 and 8 pupils over two sessions. The morning started with a warm-up and a repertoire from Alessandra Seutin's 'Speak Volumes', before the dancers gave the pupils some more creative freedom to develop the material.

The children also had the chance to learn more about NYDC via a short video, and ask any questions they had about the company. The workshop was led by NYDC Alumni; young artists who have been through the company themselves and can share their experience and knowledge of being professional dancers.



It was an inspiring morning that was enjoyed by everyone who took part.

Thank you to the workshop leaders for coming in and teaching our pupils some new dance moves.

## Normanhurst Chicks

The children in Early Years enjoyed watching chicks hatch from eggs they had been incubating in their classroom. It only took a few days, but we were delighted that they all hatched successfully!

It was incredible to see how fast the chicks grew each day and this was a lovely chance for the children to see part of the life cycle of the animals.

Pupils from across the school had the chance to meet the chicks, and asked lots of thoughtful questions.

Not only have the chicks been a



wonderful hands-on life lesson, but there have been many additional learning opportunities to teach concepts across the curriculum.



## Oaklands Astroturf Court Makeover

The Oaklands School grounds saw a flurry of activity over the Christmas holidays as the playground had a makeover. The old Astroturf surface was taken up to make way for a brand new replacement to take its place.

After laying out the huge rolls, the team covered the area in sand and installed the court markings, ready for our pupils to use in their PE lessons.

It has been wonderful to see the new Astroturf being enjoyed for a range of sports and break/lunch time activities by the children.





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## Coopersale Hall Easter Bonnet Parade

The grey weather didn't dampen the spirits of Coopersale Hall's pupils as they wore their homemade bonnets for the annual Easter Bonnet Parade!

First up were the youngest children parading their spectacular hats, which were adorned with all sorts of Easter decorations. There were giant eggs, daffodils, chicks, Easter gardens,



edible hats and even an Easter themed spider man hat.

The children were joined by their families and friends who cheered them on all afternoon.

Each year group took it in turns to parade along the terrace, through the gate and onto the grass, finishing at the main steps for a photo.

This was a wonderful way to finish off the Spring Term! It is safe to say that

there are some very impressive bonnet makers out there. We can't wait to see what next year brings!



## Braeside Boxing

The Dennis & Dyer Boxing Academy have been granted funding to deliver boxing sessions to girls aged 11-16 for the first quarter of 2023.

Braeside Year 8 pupils have been able to take up this fantastic opportunity and took part in sessions that consisted of technical learning and fitness. Year 8 really enjoyed their sessions and it was great to see them participating in a sport that was new for so many.



## Oaklands Children's Mental Health Week

PSHE helps children to understand their own emotions, develop strategies, stay healthy, safe and prepared for life. Pupils at Oaklands learned about some of these strategies during Children's Mental Health Week.

Year 5 particularly enjoyed sharing drama sketches that related to mental health during their school assembly. This year, the focus was making meaningful connections and showing kindness to others, as well as ourselves.



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## African Drum Workshop



On Tuesday 21 February, some very lucky pupils from Oaklands and Braeside took part in a fantastic African drumming workshop with workshop leader, Kwame.

The pupils were able to have a go at

producing a beat and a song on a traditional African drum, learning how to hold the drum correctly and how to play different sounds.

The children then formed a band with the workshop leader, playing individual percussion instruments!

The session ended with an African dance workshop, where the children were able to express themselves and were encouraged to really feel the music.

This was a fantastic way for the children to learn about different cultures and they really enjoyed making new music.



## Normanhurst Art Exhibition

The return of the Normanhurst Whole School Art Exhibition really brightened up a cold January weekend. Since the pandemic, this was the first opportunity to bring together and celebrate all of the amazing artwork produced across the school.



Children from Lower Kindergarten up to the oldest pupils in Year 11 were represented through a wide variety of

projects and artworks. It was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the creativity, knowledge and skills of the pupils.



There was so much amazing art on display and it was lovely to see something from every year group from 3D light houses and Great Fire of London-inspired collages to self portraits and space scenes.

This really was a lovely opportunity for

the pupils' achievements to be recognised publicly.





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## Normanhurst STEM Learning

Normanhurst Pupils enjoyed taking part in lots of fun experiments during their STEM fortnight. Organised by the British Science Association, the week was a celebration of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

The fortnight started with a bang, as some of the Senior pupils shared a range of exciting experiments with the Junior pupils during assembly. Year 9 pupils explained the importance of STEM in our everyday lives and introduced this year's British Science Week theme: Connections.

## Early Years

The Early Years children enjoyed working in small groups to build a



bridge that could hold a train. They were only allowed to use pasta, spaghetti and playdough. They had great fun and all of the bridges successfully held the train.

## Juniors

The children in Years 3 to 6 took part in a super exciting, interactive virtual reality workshop. They had an amazing time exploring new places, including Mount Everest and Space.



Junior STEM



Years 1 to 6 had the opportunity to observe and take part in a variety of experiments including elephant's toothpaste, lemon volcanoes and fireworks in a jar. The children had enjoyed getting a little messy whilst learning about the reasons behind the different reactions that they explored.

## Seniors

A huge selection of experiments happened across the senior department, such as salt making, eyeball dissecting, testing electromagnets, recreating the digestive system and investigating

reflections.

As part of their Stem Fortnight activities, the Year 7 and 8 pupils also visited the Field Studies Council in High Beech to learn about Terrestrial and Aquatic invertebrates.



Senior STEM





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## Oak-Tree Indoor Athletics Tournament

All four Oak-Tree Schools got together to take part in a Junior Oak-Tree Athletics Tournament. As usual, the event took place in the spacious Peter May Centre, which meant there was plenty of room for activities.

On one side of the hall were the 'track'



events, which the girls tackled first. Pupils were involved in competitive races such as shuttle relays and obstacles. On the other side of the hall, the boys worked on several 'field' events.



The circuit of activities included standing long jump, vertical jump, speed bounce, chest push and javelin throwing.



Once everyone had had a turn at each activity, the girls and boys swapped places.

Everyone had a great time, cheering each other on and working together to score as many points as they could for their school.

Everyone who took part should be proud of their efforts.

## Coopersale Hall Firepit

Upper Kindergarten were very excited to get outside and use their new firepit during their Forest School Learning. The children had prepared their own skewers in the classroom, carefully threading marshmallows onto their sticks.

Before getting close to the fire they learned about fire safety and what they should and shouldn't do around the firepit. They stood safely behind their markers until invited forward.

The children took it in turns to toast their marshmallows, garlic bread and sweetcorn, before settling down to enjoy their treats and watch their friends take their turn.



The activity was a huge success as can be seen by the sticky smiling faces.

The Upper Kindergarten children can't wait for their next outdoor adventure!



[braesidesch](https://www.instagram.com/braesidesch)

[coopersalesch](https://www.instagram.com/coopersalesch)

[normanhurstschool](https://www.instagram.com/normanhurstschool)

[oaklandssch](https://www.instagram.com/oaklandssch)



[@BraesideSch](https://twitter.com/BraesideSch)

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[Braeside School](https://www.facebook.com/BraesideSchool)

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## School Trips

Both Braeside and Normanhurst pupils visited Bletchley Park this term, discovering the secret work that took place there during WWII.

During their visit, Braeside pupils attended a special event to celebrate the contributions of Women in Technology and Science. As part of the day, they took part in VR Surgical Training, coding on a BBC Micro Computer from the 1980's, as well as observing the original Colossus Computer.

Year 3 pupils at Oaklands recently visited St. Albans Verulamium Museum to look at the exhibits in the gallery, attend a market workshop and learn about the beautiful mosaic in the grounds.

The children tried on authentic costumes and handled everyday objects similar to those that would have been used by Romans all those years ago.



Verulamium Museum

Coopersale Hall Year 6 children spent a very enjoyable afternoon at High Beech Riding School, where they spent a few hours riding through the forest and grooming the horses. The children

asked thoughtful questions and learned lots of new information.

Year 3 took a trip back in time to WWII to see what life would have been like for the children who were evacuated to the countryside.

The old-fashioned double-decker bus came to collect the children from school and after a fun ride to the Epping Ongar Railway, the children got to view the original signal boxes used for guiding the steam trains and marvel at the amazing restored trains.



Epping Ongar Railway

Braeside children from Years 2, 4 and 5 enjoyed visiting Kidzania, an immersive, interactive learning centre, which gave them an up-close look at different career paths and connected their learning to the real world.

The children were able to independently choose from a number of real-life activities and test their skills in a variety of professions. A fabulous way to build upon their knowledge following their Careers Day!

The Early Years children at Normanhurst had a fantastic time visiting the fire station this term, learning the number '999' and having a tour around the station. The children



Bletchley Park

had great fun firing the hose and sitting in the fire engine.

Some of Normanhurst's older pupils travelled to Oxford in the Spring Term for an interesting day of workshops to challenge their thinking and inspire them to be outstanding. The pupils were able to benefit from hearing esteemed Oxford professors and motivational speakers explain how to broaden their critical thinking skills, as well as share with them the psychology behind what makes an outstanding achiever.

Trips are an important part of school life as they help to broaden the curriculum and enhance the pupil's learning. There are many more planned for the Summer Term so watch this space!



Oxford Trip



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## Coopersale Hall A Capella

On Friday 10 March the Key Stage 2 choir travelled to Leighton Park School for the annual ISA A Capella competition. After a long journey and a quick warm up, there was no time for nerves as they were on stage and performing.

The choir sang "Love Shine Alight" and did a fantastic job, with great percussion, air guitars, solos and harmonies.

The children performed with a huge amount of joy and enthusiasm and received a rousing round of applause.

Having sung, the pupils took part in a lively musical workshop that was run by the judge, Christopher Hann, who is a conductor, vocal animateur, singer and teacher.

He quickly taught everyone a song and had everyone singing in parts with movements and harmonies. It was a fantastic way to end the day.

It was a very inspiring experience for the Coopersale Hall Choir and the children are already planning what they will be doing for next year's performance.



## Oaklands Class Assemblies

Years 1, 2 and 3 have all performed wonderful class assemblies for their parents this term.

Year 1 wore some impressive animal costumes and told the story of Anansi the Spider, the great drummer and music maker. The assembly showed the very important message, that there is always a way to include others in our activities, and that it is cool to be kind to others.



Year 2 performed an amazing assembly taking everyone on a journey around the United Kingdom,

travelling to England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, where they shared the history and culture of each location.



Year 3 wowed the large audience with their fun, colourful and informative assembly about the rainforest. They told the story of a businessman who paid lumberjacks to cut down sections of the forest for him.

The animals of the rainforest fought back to protect their homes, and showed the humans that the forest itself is full of precious jewels worth a lot more than gold that should not be destroyed.

This powerful assembly helped everyone to consider the damaging effects of deforestation on our planet, and encouraged the children and audience alike to consider where products have come from and how to be more sustainable.

The songs in all the assemblies were catchy, the costumes were fabulous and the pupils did very well, learning many lines and performing with confidence.



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## Braeside Performance

We were treated to a spectacular performance this term from the talented junior pupils at Braeside. Boos, hisses, cheers and laughter filled Lopping Hall in Loughton as the children took to the stage and showcased their rendition of 'Cinderella Rockerfella'.



All pupils in the Juniors were involved in the production, even including our youngest pupils who danced, sang and thoroughly enjoyed themselves providing the backing vocals for the songs.

Thanks to the teams of senior pupils who helped out with sound, lighting, makeup and back stage.



The pupils put a huge amount of hard work and effort into their rehearsals, and the several weeks of practice really paid off with some excellent singing, perfectly timed comedy and great acting.

Songs included toe-tapping 'Tonight's the Night', 'If I had One Wish', and 'Happy Ever Afters' to name just a few.



## Oak-Tree Maths Challenge

Selected pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 from all four schools in the Oak-Tree Group came together at Braeside this term for a competitive Maths Challenge.

After settling in and enjoying a few refreshments, it was time for the tournament to begin. The Year 3 pupils started the proceedings with three pupils from each of Braeside, Coopersale Hall, Normanhurst and Oaklands representing their school.

They only had a few minutes to complete a mental maths challenge

before making way for the Year 4 pupils, and so on.

Once all of the year groups had had their turn, the judges set about marking the papers.



It was then time for the second stage of the challenge. In this round, the children's teamwork was put to the

test, as they had to work together to complete a series of tricky problems.

After the scores from both stages were added up, it was announced that Coopersale Hall pupils were the overall champions.

We're looking forward to holding another Maths Challenge next year.





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## Normanhurst visit the Residents of The Spinney

The Early Years children had a wonderful time doing some Easter crafts with the residents this term, who quickly became their new friends.

It was really lovely to see the wonderful interactions between the children and the residents and they all enjoyed singing together at the end of the afternoon.

“To watch the children and our Ladies and Gentlemen interact with each other is magical. A huge warm thank you to you all for the joy that you bring to The Spinney.”



A number of the senior pupils also visited the Care Home to spend the afternoon with the residents. During the visit as well as chatting, our pupils read poetry to them and helped them to draw and colour in some sunny Spring pictures.



This was a really relaxed and happy afternoon and the teachers enjoyed watching the generations converse and enthusiastically enjoy each other's company.

## Easter at Oak-Tree

As an Easter treat organised by FoCHS, Coopersale Hall was visited by a whole host of animals that included 6 day old lambs, a tarantula, a snake, meerkats, a toad, a tortoise, a bearded dragon and a very, very big rabbit to name a few. The children were taught about each animal and even had the chance to hold some.



Oaklands children from Reception to Year 6 took part in a competition to design a fun and exciting Easter egg. The children were allowed to decorate them with any materials they liked.

This was a brilliant competition as it enabled the children to showcase their artistic talents.

The amazing parents from the OPA organised a very special visit for all of the children at Oaklands, the Easter bunny!



The pupils at Braeside had a very special visit from the Easter bunny too, who brought the children lots of lovely treats!



The children in Early Years at Normanhurst enjoyed a selection of Easter-themed crafts.

They painted plates to look like cute chicks and bunnies, carefully painted eggs, made stained glass windows, used playdough to decorate hot-cross buns and made Easter baskets. Of course, the most exciting activity was an Easter egg hunt in the garden!

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## Charity Fundraising

On Friday 3 February, the Oaklands children took part in Number Day for the NSPCC. The children 'Dressed up for Digits' and donated their pennies to a very worthy cause, raising over £250.



Oaklands



This year's Red Nose Day was held on 17 March, raising money for people who are facing the toughest times of their lives both in the UK and across the world, with the aim of helping them to break free from poverty. Braeside pupils dressed in red and donated to this worthy cause.



Red Nose Day

The children at Coopersale Hall donated Easter eggs and Easter sweets to help Epping Forest Food Bank to provide Easter treats for families struggling in the lead-up to the holidays. Over 60 eggs were donated as well as lots of other delicious food.



Food Bank Donations

In response to the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria, Normanhurst held a cake sale to raise funds for this worthy cause. The sale was hugely successful, with a lot of money raised and most of the cakes sold.



Normanhurst Cake Sale

## Oak-Tree Schools Parents' Associations

Thank you to our wonderful parents' associations for your continued support.



**NSPA**  
Normanhurst Parents' Association



The children have enjoyed lots of fun Easter treats this term such as animal visits, Easter eggs, the Easter Bunny, Easter basket raffles and school Discos.

If you are interested in joining your Parents' Association and helping to organise fun activities for the children and families, please don't hesitate to get in touch via the school website or talk to your school's PA rep.