

Spring 2025



Oak-Tree Newsletter

Group Principal's Message



This is yet another bumper edition of the Group Newsletter, which is packed with key memories from the Spring Term 2025.

It is always lovely looking back and seeing the huge range of trips, activities, competitions and other extra-curricular opportunities that are organised at each school to enhance the classroom education for our pupils. The Spring Term has been as busy as ever.

I particularly enjoy the occasions when the schools come together either for shared learning experiences or friendly competitions. This is happening more and more, and the pupils are certainly benefitting. I joined the Young Voices trip this year where we had over 120 children from the Group singing at the O2. What an experience!

I'd like to wish our Year 11 pupils at Braeside and Normanhurst the best of luck for their GCSEs, which will be starting over the next few weeks. It is inevitable that they will be feeling nervous, but I am sure they are well-prepared and that they will be making the most of their remaining revision lessons.

I hope you managed to get something of a break over the Easter holiday, and that your children are ready for the start of what promises to be another very busy Summer Term. I'm looking forward to catching up with you at the various events over the coming term.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Hagger". The script is cursive and fluid.

Matthew Hagger

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Young Voices

Pupils from The Oak-Tree Group of Schools had an unforgettable experience performing at the Young Voices concert at the O2 Arena. Joining a choir of over 8,000 children, they sung a series of well-known songs together.

Months of rehearsals paid off as the pupils confidently showcased their hard work and passion for music. Our pupils were also very fortunate to have been allocated prime seating at the front, and families were able to see them throughout.

A huge thank you goes to the staff who worked tirelessly to prepare the pupils for the event.

Our schools could not be prouder of their pupils for their enthusiasm to perform and their good behaviour throughout our time at the arena.



Oak-Tree Spelling Bee

Oaklands School hosted the much-anticipated annual Oak-Tree Spelling Bee on the afternoon of 25 March. Selected pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 travelled from Coopersale Hall and Braeside schools to participate alongside Oaklands pupils.

Each year group faced a round at their designated school table. The atmosphere was full of focus and concentration as the pupils tried their hardest to spell the words correctly.

The overall winners of the Spelling Bee were Oaklands, who will be keeping the trophy in their cabinet for another year. However, the other two Oak-Tree schools did not leave empty-handed, as certificates were awarded to their deserving participants.

Sophie from Coopersale Hall extended their offer to host next year's Spelling Bee within their school grounds, which was accepted with thanks by Miss Dee from Oaklands.



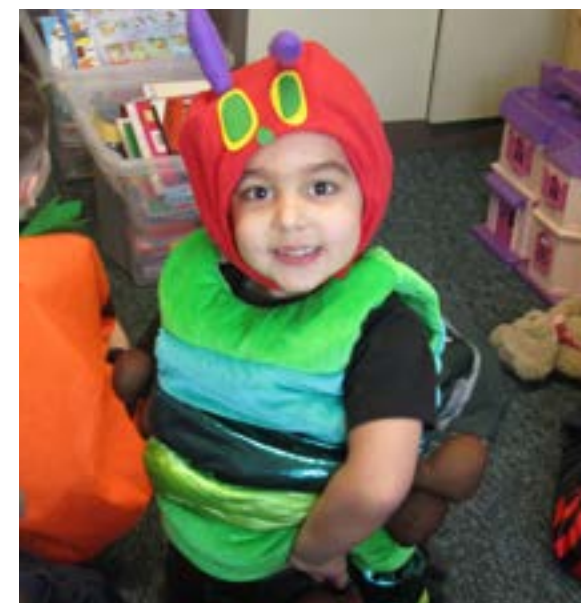
World Book Day

All four Oak-Tree Schools celebrated World Book Day with spectacular dress-up days.

From Harry Potter to The Wizard of Oz, Where's Wally to Willy Wonka, the schools were brimming with imaginative costumes. Pupils excitedly shared why they chose their literary characters, sparking wonderful conversations about their favourite books.

The celebrations extended beyond costumes, with book-inspired activities taking place throughout the day. Braeside based their day on the book 'The Word Collector' by Peter H. Reynolds, with everyone dressing up as a new word that was interesting to them and taking part in a 'vocabulary parade'.

Normanhurst Juniors took part in live lessons with authors and a book character riddle hunt, where pupils solved clues to discover hidden literary figures around the school.



Reception Celebrate Holi Festival

Reception children have been learning all about Holi, the vibrant Hindu festival that celebrates colours, love, and the arrival of spring.

Each year, people across the world come together to mark Holi by throwing powdered paint and coloured water, filling the streets with joyful bursts of colour. Inspired by this tradition, Reception pupils had their very own Holi festival!

The children threw colourful powder, danced, tackled an exciting obstacle course, and most importantly, had loads of fun!

This was a fantastic way to immerse themselves in the spirit of Holi while learning about different cultural traditions.

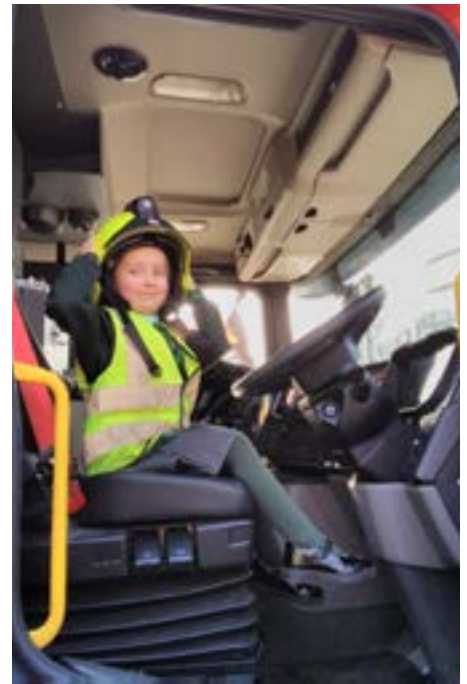


Upper Kindergarten meet Police and Fire Crews

Oaklands Upper Kindergarten children were thrilled to welcome a real Police Officer into their classroom. She shared details about her important job, the equipment she uses, and how she helps keep everyone safe. The children even got to sit inside a police car, turn the blue lights on and off, and hear the siren.

Later on in the Spring Term, Upper Kindergarten had an exciting trip to Loughton Fire Station. The firefighters showed them around the fire engine, let them try on helmets, and let the children spray the hose to put out a 'fire'.

Both of these hands-on experiences are a brilliant way to build on pupils classroom learning and teach about the wider world.



School Council Visits the Houses of Parliament



During the Spring Term, Oaklands School Council visited the Houses of Parliament.

Their visit included a guided tour of the building and to meet our local MP Dr Neil Hudson for a Q&A session.

Reflecting on his journey into Parliament, Dr Hudson shared stories about his path as a veterinary surgeon to becoming an MP and the responsibilities that come with representing Epping Forest.

He explained to the children how they can let him know about potholes and also took time to explain how he is working with TfL to ensure the Central Line has trains that run more frequently and quietly.

We would like to thank Dr Hudson MP for taking the time to speak to pupils and staff.

ISA Cross Country Finals

Isla and Margot and Alfie represented Oaklands School for London North Region at the ISA Cross Country National Finals on Sunday 9 March.

Greeted by wonderful sunshine, they made the long journey up to Leicester, supported and cheered on by family, to race the gruelling 1.6KM course against all the other regions across the country.

Alfie was in the year above his category race, and this certainly didn't affect him, where he came in 38th place out of over 80 runners.

Isla and Margot, in the Year 4 Girls race, both came in the top 40, and with a very talented field of runners.



House Swimming Gala

All pupils from Years 4-6 took part in the annual House Swim Gala at Loughton Pool, cheered on by amazing support from their friends, teachers, and parents up in the gallery.

The Results:

1st Sycamore - 144 points

2nd Beech - 137 points

3rd Willow - 121 points

4th Holly - 114 points

Well done to House Captains Anais and Isabella, all the swimmers in Sycamore and every pupil who took part in the competition.



The Easter Bunny Visits Oaklands

The children at Oaklands were surprised by a visit from the Easter Bunny!

The Easter Bunny went from class to class to see our Early Years and Infant children, gifting Easter Eggs to each of our pupils. Our Kindergarten classes even entertained the bunny with a song and a dance!

In the afternoon our Junior pupils were treated to a House Point Easter Hunt on the school field. Collecting much needed House Points for their houses before the end of term.

A big thank you to the OPA for organising the Easter Bunny's exciting trip, the children had a fantastic day getting into the spirit of Easter and Spring time.



Kindergarten's Wonderful Bird Adventures



Early in the Spring Term, Kindergarten children wrapped up warm and headed out for a beautiful winter walk. They were fascinated by the frosty patterns on the leaves and loved walking across the crunchy grass. One of the funniest moments was watching the ducks 'skating' on the frozen pond! The children also had fun using their gross motor skills to throw food as far as they could.

Continuing their nature exploration, the children took part in the Big Bird Watch. They got creative by making bird food, building nests, and crafting their own binoculars before heading outside to spot and identify different birds.

As part of their learning about birds in colder climates, the children also made their very own penguins using papier-mâché, paints, and card. Their creations looked amazing!



Church Trips

This term, Kindergarten, Year 1, and Year 2 embarked on an exciting local trip to All Saints Church. They got the Number 20 bus to Woodford and had a picnic lunch on All Saints Green before entering the historic church for a fascinating tour.

Inside, they explored church symbolism, the meaning of Lent, and the colours of the Christian calendar. A special highlight was when Jayden, Thea, and Sufyan had the chance to ring the church bells as everyone counted how far the sound travelled.

Year 6 also visited All Saint's Church to learn about the wider role of the Church both locally and globally. Ella, a Youth Pastor, guided the pupils through the Christian journey from Baptism to End of Life, using symbols and artwork around the church to deepen their understanding of Jesus' teachings.

Meanwhile, Year 7 took a different journey of discovery, traveling to Holy Trinity Church to meet Rev Abi Todd. After taking time for quiet reflection, they had the unique opportunity to ring the church bells for worship. Rev Abi led an engaging discussion on worship, Lent, fasting, and the Stations of the Cross ahead of Easter, as well as the concept of atonement between humans and God.

A huge well done to all pupils for their curiosity, respect, and insightful questions during these enriching experiences!



Braeside Peri Concert

Braeside pupils took part in a Peri Concert in the first part of this Spring Term.

The afternoon gave the pupils who are currently taking music lessons in school the chance to perform in front of their peers and an audience of eager friends and family. There was a wonderful array of pieces, including individual performances on the piano, violin and guitar as well as some singing solos.



Year 1 & 2 Create Viking Longboats

Year 1 and 2 have been learning all about Viking longboats.

They worked as a team to row their Viking longboat, each holding an oar. The class then designed and made their own Viking longboat out of card.

Afterwards, they made longboats out of Lego and explained how they worked.



The Easter Bunny Visits Braeside

The Easter Bunny hopped into Braeside to surprise pupils, bringing joy and a touch of Spring magic!

A big thank you to our very special guest for making the day egg-stra special!



Reception's Superworm Assembly

The children in Reception re-enacted the rhyming story of Superworm by Julia Donaldson for their class assembly, performing for their parents and siblings. This wonderful story explores themes of friendship, courage, and the importance of teamwork. We see how Superworm and his friends—the toads, beetles, bees, bugs, brother snails, sister slugs, Uncle Ant, and Earwig Aunt—work together to overcome challenges and outsmart the Wizard Lizard.

The children looked fantastic in the hats they had made, and they sang and recited their rhyming lines beautifully, much to the delight of everyone in the hall.

Well done Reception for this wonderful and heart-warming performance.



Year 6 Bikeability

Year 6 completed the Bikeability challenge and test. The two-day course started with a day's training on the schools Astroturf court, getting used to riding behind someone and using different road signals.

By the second day, Year 6 were out on the roads. When finally back in school, they all sat down in the courtyard and shared something they learned within the course to earn their Bikeability level two badges.

Easter Animals Visit Coopersale Hall

Farmer Keith and Farmer Gemma warmly welcomed the children to their farm on our lawn to see a variety of animals. Pupils learned that the lamb was only nine days old and that their sheepdog, named "Pig," was, surprisingly, afraid of sheep! The children were very respectful around the animals, speaking softly and asking thoughtful questions.

All the lambs born on the farm are named after foods. This year, they have Lolly, Lasagne, and Lettuce. The names follow alphabetical order to help track the year they were born. Next year, the lambs will have names starting with "M"!

A big thank you to FOCHS for organising this wonderful event, giving the children a fantastic opportunity to learn and explore.





House Cross Country Competition

The Coopersale House Cross Country competition took place on the school field, with pupils from Years 3 to Year 8 participating. The event saw competitors representing Beech, Chestnut, Oak, and Willow as they raced across the challenging terrain.

The weather conditions were changeable, with rain falling for most of the event, making the field wet and muddy. Despite the difficult conditions, all participants put in their best effort, determined to complete the course.

At the end of the competition, the scores were tallied and Oak emerged as the winner, with Willow securing second place.



Year 5 visit The National Portrait Gallery

Our Year 5 pupils recently went on a trip to the National Portrait Gallery as part of their history and art topics.

It was a marvellous experience, and pupils thoroughly enjoyed travelling to the Gallery, engaging with the artwork, and learning more about portraiture through time.



Coopersale Hall Easter Bonnet Parade

The sun was shining as pupils from Coopersale Hall School proudly adorned their meticulously crafted bonnets for the eagerly awaited annual Easter Bonnet Parade!

We had giant eggs, daffodils, chicks and Easter gardens, each bonnet was a testament to the creativity and imagination of Coopersale Hall's pupils.

Each year group proudly took it in turns to parade along the terrace and onto the grass, finishing at the steps for a perfect photo opportunity. Amidst the sea of colourful headwear, there were even a few surprises, including an Easter-themed Spider-Man creation, much to the delight of onlooking parents and family members.

The Easter Bonnet Parade served as a heart-warming way to usher in the Easter holidays, finishing the Spring Term on a high.

Into the Woods Jr.

This half term, Normanhurst School saw over 52 pupils take to the stage in their annual school production, 'Into the Woods Jr.' The musical weaves together stories from classic fairy tales like Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk and Rapunzel.

For three intensive days, the cast worked tirelessly at Redbridge Drama Centre, perfecting their performances and bringing the much-loved musical to life. Their hard work and enthusiasm paid off, as the final shows were a huge success.

The production is a special event in the school calendar, offering a unique opportunity for pupils from Year 4 to Year 10 to collaborate, learn, and create lasting memories

A huge well done to all the pupils involved, your commitment, creativity, and confidence made the show an unforgettable success!



Early Years Discover the Cello



This term, Early Years children had an exciting opportunity to explore the cello in their music lessons.

They learned about how the instrument is played, listened to its sounds, and even felt the vibrations as it resonated.

The children loved the sound and sensation of the cello, making it a memorable musical moment in their early education.

Who knows, this may have been the start of a future world-renowned cellist's journey!

Chinese New Year

The pupils at Normanhurst celebrated the Lunar New Year with a variety of engaging activities that brought the festival to life.

Early Years classes enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon, rotating through exciting activity stations. They created noodles in their play kitchen, made brightly coloured lanterns decorated with glitter and flowers, and explored the festival's traditions through interactive play zones. Dressed in traditional Chinese outfits, the children also discovered their Chinese zodiac animal, finding out whether they were born in the Year of the Mouse or Ox.

Year 1 pupils put on a fantastic class assembly, retelling the story of the Chinese New Year and how the order of animals in the zodiac was decided. They also created vibrant Chinese dragons and sang songs about lucky red envelopes, sharing the cultural significance of the festival with the Junior school.

Across the school, pupils took part in a range of artistic activities to mark the Year of the Snake. From intricate drawings to paper sculptures, they designed stunning snake-themed artwork, reflecting the traditions and symbolism of the Chinese zodiac.



ISA Table Tennis Champions

Normanhurst celebrated their pupils competing at the ISA National Table Tennis Championships Finals.

The Normanhurst team secured gold and silver medals in the singles tournament.

Following a successful morning, pupils went on to compete in the doubles tournament. In a thrilling Semi-Final, they battled hard to secure the Bronze Medal in the afternoon competition.

What an incredible achievement for Normanhurst's talented table tennis players! Congratulations to all on this fantastic success!



Crazy Hair Day

Early Years to Year 6 pupils let their imaginations run wild for Crazy Hair Day - and what a spectacular sight it was! From brightly coloured locks to gravity-defying styles, pupils embraced the chance to express themselves with fun and creative designs. There was an array of accessories, temporary dyes and inventive themes that made for an unforgettable day filled with laughter and excitement.

The enthusiasm was so high that many pupils are already asking for Crazy Hair Day to become an annual tradition! A huge thank you to our Junior School Council Members for reintroducing this fantastic event. We can't wait to see what wonderful hairstyles appear next time!



Coopersale Hall Year 4 - The Hive Residential

On Thursday, 6 March, Year 4 embarked on an exciting residential trip to The Hive in Epping Forest.

The adventure began with a coordinates trail, where pupils independently navigated the site using a compass. After moving into their woodland pods, they enjoyed a forest trek, crossing streams and tree trunks, followed by den-building and blindfolded teamwork exercises. The evening ended with a delicious dinner and the classic camp tradition of roasting marshmallows around the fire and sharing stories under the stars.

The second day saw more team challenges to test the children's problem-solving abilities. The trip concluded with an exciting animal handling session, where pupils had the chance to hold a Giant African Land Snail, Fire Salamander, Stick Insect, Madagascan Hissing Cockroach, and Dora the Corn Snake!



Braeside School Science Museum

Year 3 and 4 had an unforgettable visit to the Science Museum, where they took part in the Flash, Bang, and Wallop show!

The interactive performance was jam-packed with thrilling experiments and demonstrations designed to help children find out about fire and explosions.

While thinking about everyday applications of controlled explosions they demonstrated how energy is transferred through light, sound, heat and movement. The show had everyone on the edge of their seats as they watched sparks fly and reactions unfold right before their eyes!



Oaklands School London Eye

Year One went on a trip into London to ride on the London Eye, as part of their Humanities topic.

It was a bit of grey and chilly day, but everyone loved spotting all the famous landmarks of London they had been learning about in class, such as The Houses of Parliament, Downing Street, Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, The Shard, The Gherkin and St Paul's Cathedral, to name a few.

They ate their picnic lunch in Jubilee Gardens and tried their best not to let the pigeons steal their sandwiches! After lunch, the children had time to sit and sketch some of their favourite landmarks or buildings that could be seen along the Thames.

All the children were so well behaved and sensible, they made all the staff proud.



Normanhurst School Hyde Park Learning Centre

Year 11 pupils visited the Hyde Park Learning Centre to participate in a Practical Investigation Day - which is run by The Royal Parks charity for Key Stage 4.

The group demonstrated great enthusiasm, fully engaging in all activities. They conducted plant surveys using quadrats and measured light levels, soil moisture, and compaction in the meadow adjacent to the Learning Centre.

In the afternoon, pupils investigated the invertebrate population of the Learning Centre pond. There was much excitement as they discovered a variety of species, including dragonfly nymphs, water boatmen, numerous fly larvae, and even mating toads, with their string-like spawn beginning to emerge in the pond.



Normanhurst School Year 4 visit Food Bank

Year 4 made a visit to Highams Park Food Hub for an insightful look at how they help the community.

Sharon, the manager, explained that individuals and families in need are referred to the hub by organisations such as the council or doctors. She detailed how the hub operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays, welcoming people in groups of five to ensure a sense of privacy and dignity. Visitors are also offered a jacket potato and a hot drink during their visit.

Sharon then guided the group through the process of food distribution, explaining that recipients are allocated a set amount of food. Further explaining the daily temperature checks conducted to maintain hygiene standards.

The Food Hub relies heavily on donations, and Sharon expressed gratitude for the contributions received from Normanhurst, particularly at Christmas.



Oaklands School Number Day

The whole school celebrated Number Day in aid of the NSPCC, raising a brilliant £174.41!

The day was filled with exciting maths and number related activities, from number challenges to interactive games, all aimed at making learning fun while supporting a great cause. Children came to school dressed as either rock stars or in outfits featuring their favourite numbers, adding a lively, colourful atmosphere to the day.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part and donated to help the NSPCC continue their vital work. We're proud of our school community for coming together to support this important charity while having so much fun with numbers!



Coopersale Hall Edith Swims to her Level 6

Edith has achieved her Level 6 certificate in swimming! She started swimming at the age of four, and over the past three years, she has made incredible progress.

Well done Edith! Keep up the great work!



Normanhurst School Demaury Dances to Success

Demaury was nominated to participate in the British Association of Dancing junior freestyle scholarship and solo hip/hop competition. Demauri was a finalist and placed in the top nine (there was only one winner) of the solo competition.

He was also chosen to be the Head Boy of Stages Performance Academy - the youngest Head Boy in the school.



Oaklands School Arthur's Football Fun

Following on from interviewing the England football team, Arthur recently acted as mascot for Leyton Orient Football Club.

A really special achievement, Oaklands are proud of your footballing passion, well done Arthur!





The Oak-Tree Group of Schools

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