OAKDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Celebrating another special week at our great school!

Thursday 22nd January

Growing Through Excellence

Key Dates

27/01/26
Year 6 Academic Review Day

27/01/26
EYFS Parents workshop

03/02/26
MTC Check Parent Workshop

05/02/26
Young Voices Concert

09/02/26
E-Safety Week

11/02/26
Year 4 Trip Chester Zoo

Principal's Blog – January Edition

Welcome back to all of our children and families after what we hope was a truly enjoyable and restful festive break. We hope 2026 has started well for you and that the break gave everyone a chance to rest and recharge. It's always exciting to begin a new term, and we're looking forward to the learning, creativity, and opportunities this year will bring.

To help pupils settle back into school life, we've placed a strong focus on community and being the best person, you can be. This term, we are exploring two inspiring 'No Outsiders' texts: Flower Block and Sulwe. These stories celebrate inclusion, respect, and diversity, encouraging our children to think about how we can all work together to create a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued.

Alongside this, our Art focus has been a wonderful way to reconnect and express ourselves. Through creative projects, pupils have been reflecting on what it means to belong and how we can contribute positively to our school community. These activities have sparked thoughtful conversations and helped reinforce our shared values of honesty, determination and respect.

Thank you for your continued support in making Oakdene Primary Academy such a vibrant and caring place. Let's make this year one to remember!

Sulwe

Self-acceptance and overcoming colorism: Sulwe, a young girl with skin "as dark as midnight," faces hurtful comments and internal pain due to her complexion. Through a magical journey guided by a shooting star, she learns that true beauty lies in who she is on the inside — not the colour of her skin.

Valuing all parts of ourselves: The metaphorical tale of Night and Day reveals that both light and darkness are important and beautiful. Sulwe realises her uniqueness is not something to hide but to celebrate.

Flower Block

Community-building through nature: When Jeremiah plants sunflower seeds in memory of his dad, the plants grow magically through the tower block, drawing neighbours together into a rooftop garden. This shared experience turns individual seeds into a communal celebration.

Inclusivity and connection: The story emphasizes how nature and collaboration can bridge social divides. It celebrates diversity, showing residents from different cultural backgrounds joining forces around this green, joyful space.

RESPONSIBILITY, RESPECT, FRIENDSHIP, HONESTY, DETERMINATION & PRIDE

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It is really important that each child reaches our school attendance target of 97%. Please make sure your child is in school and on time everyday!

Our whole school attendance figure for last week **96%**

97% **Attendance percentage we aim for every week**

Attendance Awards

Reception	Year 4	Year 3
99.7%	97.7%	97.4%

The winning class(es) will receive an additional playtime this week as a reward. Well done to Reception who had 99.7% attendance!

12/02/26
Friendship Disco

13/02/26
Values Assembly Friendship

13/02/26
Half term begins

23/02/26
INSET DAY

09/02/26
Children return to school

By weaving these texts into the term's focus, pupils are invited to reflect on **self-worth, celebrating differences,** and the power of working together to build welcoming, caring communities—and, ultimately, learn to be the best version of themselves.

Acorn Class

The start of the new term has been an exciting one for the children as they dived into the fantastical world of Supertato. With Evil Pea causing mischief in the classroom, the children have been busy investigating and learning through a variety of fun and educational activities.

Part of the classroom has been transformed into a police station where the children took on the roles of detectives. They enjoyed filing police reports on the antics of Evil Pea, honing their observation and writing skills in the process. This activity not only engaged their imagination but also developed their ability to communicate effectively.

Grandad puppet added to the excitement by dressing up as a superhero, inspiring the children to think creatively. Together, they explored words to describe him as a superhero. The children then wrote their own sentences, imagining the talents and powers they would possess if they were superheroes. This activity encouraged them to use their creativity and language skills to express their unique ideas.

The children unleashed their artistic abilities by creating their own Supertatoes. Using a variety of materials, they crafted unique characters, fostering both their creativity and fine motor skills. Additionally, they concocted potions in the water tray, hoping to catch Evil Pea, which added an element of science and experimentation to their play.

To further challenge Evil Pea, the children designed and built traps using resources and equipment available in the classroom. This hands-on activity allowed them to experiment with problem-solving and engineering concepts, all while having fun.

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KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AT OAKDENE PRIMARY IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY!

In mathematics, the focus was on developing subitising skills. The children progressed from recognizing quantities in simple arrangements to more complex ones, including standard dice patterns. For larger numbers, they practiced conceptual subitising, which involved seeing and explaining sub-groups within larger quantities. A key part of this was visualisation, as the children were encouraged to study dot arrangements, close their eyes, and describe what they remembered.

In Acorn Class, we are superheroes!

Maple Class

A Wonderful Whirlwind in Year 1

Year 1 is always a magical time, but the past fortnight has been especially full of creativity, curiosity, and hands-on learning. The children have thrown themselves into every challenge with enthusiasm, and their classrooms have been buzzing with energy. If you're wondering what they've been up to, here's a peek into their busy and brilliant world.

One of the highlights this term has been making windmills in Design and Technology. The children explored how windmills work, experimented with different materials, and carefully constructed their own. Watching them test their creations—celebrating the ones that spun and problem-solving when they didn't — was a perfect example of Year 1 resilience in action.

Art lessons have been wonderfully messy and full of discovery. The children have been mixing colours, learning how primary colours blend to create new shades. Their excitement as they created unexpected hues was infectious, and their artwork now brightens the classroom with vibrant splashes of creativity.

In English, the children have been inspired by the much-loved story Lost and Found by author, Oliver Jeffers. After exploring the characters and themes, they set to work writing their own versions of the story. Their imaginations took flight — some penguins travelled to space, others explored jungles or sailed stormy seas. It's been a joy to see their confidence grow as young authors.

Maths has been all about building strong foundations. The children have been learning numbers 1–20, practising counting, ordering, comparing, and representing numbers in different ways. These early number skills are essential, and it's been wonderful to see how quickly they've grown in confidence.

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History lessons have taken the children on a journey through time as they've been learning about kings and queens. They've explored what life was like in the past, looked at famous monarchs, and discussed how leadership has changed over time. Their curiosity has sparked thoughtful questions and lively discussions.

A Term Full of Growth

From building windmills to crafting stories, from mixing colours to exploring the past, Year 1 have embraced every opportunity to learn. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and growing independence make this stage of their school journey truly special.

Chestnut Class

What a fantastic start we have had to 2026! Chestnut class have been writers, artists, Geographers and Design Technology experts and we have only had two weeks in school!

The start of the year saw Chestnut class embark on reading two wonderful texts that made us think about our community, inclusion, understanding difference is our superpower and how we should be the best version of ourselves. Flower Block and Sulwe were wonderful texts to explore, and Chestnut class had some really interesting and caring insights into the themes of both texts. During the first week back, they used writing skills they had learnt in the Autumn Term to produce three fantastic pieces of instant publishing. Their flower designs were creative and their letters to Sulwe were so thoughtful. Take a look at our wonderful work!

We continued our Geography work this week too exploring human and physical features. To prepare us for our comparative work with a non-European country, Chestnut class went to explore their own locality - Rainhill. Despite the rain, there were no complaints, and then children used the map to identify the human and physical features of Rainhill as best they could. In the British weather, Chestnut class were true Geographers on a wet British Geography Field trip!

The children also continued their Design and Technology work on Mechanisms. The children designed their own monsters and evaluated materials for their finished product. They concluded that cardboard would be the most suitable for their work as other materials in school were to flimsy. Watch out for a finished designs!

Cherry Class

Cherry Class: Growing Confidence, Community, and Care for Our World

Cherry Class have been very busy learning about kindness, confidence, and what it means to belong to a strong community. Over the past two weeks, our learning has been inspired by several beautiful and thought-provoking stories.

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While reading The Flower Block, the children explored how small actions can make a big difference. We talked about what makes a community strong and how neighbours can help and care for one another. Cherry Class then put their ideas into action by writing thoughtful letters to our neighbours. In their letters, the children shared ways to build a happy community, such as being kind, looking out for one another, sharing smiles, and working together. They were very proud to know their words could help spread positivity beyond the classroom.

We also read Sulwe, the powerful story of a girl the colour of midnight who learns to see her own beauty and worth. This book led to meaningful discussions about confidence, self-belief, and celebrating who we are. Cherry Class showed great empathy as they wrote letters of advice to Sulwe, encouraging her to believe in herself, remember her strengths, and know that being different is something to be proud of. To celebrate our own uniqueness, each child created a star filled with things that make them special and to remind us that everyone has their own talents, interests, and qualities to share.

This week, Cherry Class have begun reading The Tin Forest and There's a Rang-Tan in My Bedroom. These stories have helped the children understand how important it is to look after our Earth and the animals that live on it. We have been learning about recycling, reusing materials, and how our everyday choices can help protect habitats and reduce waste.

All of Cherry Class are learning that by caring for ourselves, each other, our community, and our planet, we can all help make the world a kinder and greener place. We are environmentalists and advocates for our community.

Rowan Class

In Rowan Class, we had an exciting two weeks filled with learning, creativity, and fun activities. Practicing times tables had never been more entertaining! We used catchy songs to help us remember those tricky multiplications. Everyone sang along and watched how quickly they became times table superstars. Plus, we didn't forget to sharpen our skills with Emile and TT Rockstars. This not only boosted our confidence but also prepared us for next week's Emile competition. We are ready to show off what we've learned!

In our writing sessions, we explored the gripping story of the Vesuvius eruption through our class text, Escape from Pompeii. We discovered how this ancient disaster shaped history and left a lasting impact on the world. It was a thrilling tale that combined history with adventure, perfect for our budding historians. Our first English lesson of our new Writing Root transported us back

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in time as we dug for Roman artefacts. We imagined uncovering a piece of history right in our classroom! This hands-on activity inspired our writing and helped us learn more about Roman culture.

We were ready to light up our creativity in science as we learned how to create switches in electrical circuits. This engaging activity taught us the basics of electricity and circuitry. We watched as our bulbs came to life with a flick of a switch!

In Rowan Class, we are ingenious!

Sycamore Class

A Brilliant Start to 2026 for Sycamore Class!

Sycamore Class have burst into the spring term with energy, curiosity and a real love of learning. It may only be the beginning of the new term, but the children have already hit the ground running and achieved so much!

No Outsiders Work: Exploring Identity and Belonging

Last week, Sycamore Class produced some thoughtful and beautifully presented work linked to our No Outsiders texts Flower Block and Sulwe. The second of these books – Sulwe – left a particularly strong impression on the children. Its themes of identity, self-worth and celebrating differences.

What has been especially wonderful is seeing how the children are already making connections between Sulwe and our new reading text, Bright Stars of Black British History.

Their ability to link themes of representation and celebration of heritage shows real depth in their thinking and empathy.

Young Detectives in the Making: The Lizzie and Belle Mysteries

Our new writing unit has started with a bang – quite literally – as we dive into the world of The Lizzie and Belle Mysteries.

In this story, we step into the shoes of Lizzie, a young girl whose father was about to become the first Black British actor to play Othello on stage… until the performance was mysteriously interrupted and a chandelier came crashing down!

The children have embraced the drama, suspense, and mystery with enthusiasm. So far, they have created:

Action plans

Diaries written from Lizzie's perspective

Notes detailing their suspicions

And we can confirm, Sycamore Class includes more than a few budding detectives! Several children spotted clues that even Miss Scott had missed.

Making a Splash: Swimming Lessons Begin

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Outside the classroom, Sycamore Class have made an equally impressive start. This term's swimming lessons are now underway, and every child has shown determination, courage and resilience. Whether building confidence or developing technique, each child has taken on the challenge with a positive attitude. We are extremely proud of them all!

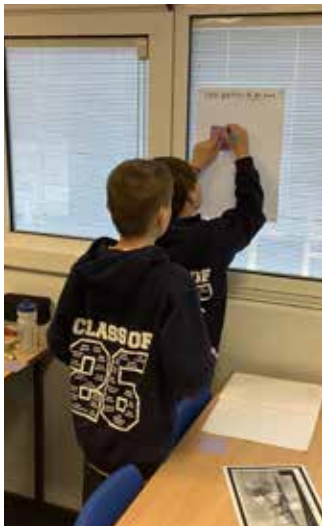
In Sycamore Class we are detectives who are making a splash!

Elder Class

What a great start to the term Year 6 have had! We began our new English unit with a look at some secondary sources of information whilst listening to 'London is the Place for Me' - an old song by Lord Kitchener. The children looked at the evidence provided and started to piece together some idea of what we were looking at - the journey of the ship Empire Windrush to England, bringing men from the Caribbean to fill jobs after the end of World War II.

We then started to read our book Windrush Child, which I believe has one of the best openings of any children's book, leading to more questions from the class and wanting to read to find out more! Our reading in Year 6 is generally very hard-hitting right now, with Windrush Child joined by the novel 'Once' as a class read. Both books look at the topics of discrimination and prejudice, linking neatly with our 'No Outsiders' work and definitely showing what an empathetic group our Year 6 cohort is based on their reactions to the content.

In Maths, we have tackled the tricky topic of long division this week and the children have taken to it really well. In Computing, we had looked at what decomposition meant linked to coding prior to making our own Crossy Road style game in the coming weeks, and we used the idea of decomposition ourselves in Maths - breaking down the process of long division into smaller, more manageable steps before putting it together to build that deeper understanding and confidence.



Apart from beginning our coding unit in Computing, we have enjoyed creating some wet-on-wet watercolour poppies in Art linked to our 'No Outsiders' whole school text Flower Block; we began our DT unit designing playground structures; we also did some fantastic work in Music playing 2 harmony lines on keyboards, reading music notation to play along with the Carole King song 'You've Got A Friend' - a brilliant song to link to this half-term's value of Friendship.

In Year 6, we are empathetic and creative!

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