



Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust

Winter Newsletter – December 2024

Message from Lesley West, CEO.

Another end of term is almost upon us and, as ever, school life continues to be busy as we celebrate Christmas in our schools. Christmas is such a magical time in primary schools and in Owlcotes schools, staff have worked hard to ensure that performances, singing, treats and parties, celebrations have been planned so that our children have had a great time.

There is much to celebrate in Owlcotes schools: In August we were delighted with a very successful Ofsted inspection at Manor Wood Children's Centre; In September, we were delighted to welcome Morley Victoria Primary School to Owlcotes Trust; In October we enjoyed a wonderful Arts focus week in our schools; and we also managed to complete a number of building projects to improve our school environments including playground improvements, library upgrades and roof replacement work. In November, we took delivery of two new minibuses for Armley Park Primary School which will enable children to get out in the local community and beyond to widen their experiences outside of school. In December, Pudsey Primrose Hill Primary School achieved the Arts Mark Gold award from the Arts Council of England. This prestigious award is testament to the outstanding Art curriculum offered by the school.

There are some changes for 2025: Alan Steele, Executive Headteacher of Calverley Parkside Primary School and Owlcotes Head of Leadership Development, will be leaving Calverley Parkside at the end of this term to dedicate more time to his role as Head of Leadership Development for Owlcotes MAT.

Alan was appointed as Headteacher in January 2020, and has led the school for the last five years. Under his leadership the school has gone from strength to strength and Parkside is the school it is today because of the outstanding contribution he made to the school. On behalf of Owlcotes Trust, and also the staff, children and families at Calverley Parkside, I would like to say a huge thank you to Alan for the incredible work he has done as Headteacher over the years.

Whilst Alan will be missed in his role as headteacher at Calverley Parkside, the schools within Owlcotes Trust will benefit greatly from his expertise and experience and he is very much welcomed into the central team.

We are delighted also that Chris Jolley, Head of School at Calverley Parkside has been appointed as Headteacher. Chris has been at Parkside since January 2019; he has worked in partnership with Alan for the last 5 years and knows the school and community well. This will no doubt be an exciting time for Chris, and we are looking forward to welcoming him to his new role.

Looking ahead to 2025 we are looking forward to a number of things. We will be welcoming Fountain Primary School to Owlcotes in the first half of 2025; we are excited about the annual Owlcotes Literature Festival in February; and we are planning the annual Owlcotes Debating Competition at the end of the summer term - we are looking forward to welcoming children from Spring Bank Primary School and Morley Victoria Primary School to our competition.

I hope you enjoy reading the rest of this newsletter which will give you information about some of the events that have happened in our schools this term. If you want to keep up to date with what is happening, or find out more about Owlcotes Trust, you can do so by visiting our [website](#) or by following us on X [@owlcotesMAT](#).



Thank you to all of the staff; pupils and families at Owlcotes schools.
I wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Round Up of News from Owlcotes Schools

News from Pudsey Primrose Hill Primary School

Year 4 Art enrichment group visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park



Children in Key Stage 2 (years 3-6) take part in Enrichment sessions one afternoon every week. These sessions are delivered in smaller groups and include aspects of the curriculum such as the arts, music and computing.

The Year 4 art enrichment group visited the Yorkshire Sculpture Park for the first lesson of their unit about sculpture. The children were inspired by the many wonderful works of art they saw and enjoyed exploring the park and

discovering all the different exhibitions. Children will then use this inspiration back in school during their art enrichment.



Nursery and Reception Children Exploring in our Orchard

As part of the Owlcotes Element 'A healthy Mind and Body', Nursery and Reception children have been learning all about a healthy mind and body. Reception children have been learning about the life cycle of an apple and how they grow. Children in nursery and reception went on adventures to the orchard. They looked closely at the fruit growing on the trees and enjoyed being on our wonderful field. Together the children and staff picked fruit, went back to class to sort it, create artwork with the fruit and taste it

Year 2 visit to Leeds

This week Year 2 visited Leeds as part of our Geography learning. We planned a route in class and followed our maps to spot different places that we have been learning about such as the Civic Hall, Trinity and the Corn Exchange. We also enjoyed a picnic in Kirkstall Abbey. We were surprised at how big some of the buildings were and we all enjoyed looking up at the beautiful roof in the Corn Exchange.

Whole School Poetry Slam

We were amazed by the performances of the children in the Poetry Slam finals! It was wonderful to see and hear children practising poems around school all week, which culminated in the finals. All the finalists performed brilliantly with a mix of actions, performance theatre techniques as well as loud, clear delivery of their poems. Some poems made us laugh, some made us think and we enjoyed them all. Children in nursery and reception have enjoyed reciting poems about the current season. They performed their poems together, helping one another to recall the words. Well done to everyone who has performed either to their class or in the finals - this is an incredible achievement.

Primrose Hill awarded Artsmark Gold!

We are delighted to announce that Primrose Hill has been awarded Artsmark Gold! This is wonderful recognition of all the amazing teaching, learning and 'The Arts' opportunities at Primrose Hill. Well done everyone!



**Artsmark
Gold Award**
Awarded by Arts
Council England

Eco-Committee help out Pudsey Community Project

Our Eco-Committee have spent time at the Pudsey Community Project helping to sort the clothes for their Christmas



Pop Up event in November. It was a great opportunity for our children to help out and they did a fantastic job!

This Is Me homework

Well done to everyone who took their time to complete the learning log homework This is me! Children have spent time in their classes sharing their homework and getting to know each other well. It was wonderful to see so many creative ways that children and families

have come up with to celebrate everything that makes our children special.

News from Pudsey Waterloo Primary School

Wildlife Area

We are very pleased with our new wildlife area, which is located near the top entrance to the playground. It includes



log-pile houses for insects, bird feeders, wildflowers, bug hotels and a small pond. The children are really looking forward to exploring during science lessons and learning all about the birds and minibeasts that live there

Pudsey Community Project

A big thank-you to everyone who donated items for the food bank during our harvest celebrations this year. The school council, with the help of Mrs Swift's car, took all the donations to the Pudsey Community Project, where they were gratefully received. The

school council then stayed to help sort some Christmas donations and learnt all about the good work the project is doing in our local community.



Waterloo at the Leeds Playhouse

Years 3, 4, 5, and 6 had a great time at the Leeds Playhouse, when they went to see The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe. The production was amazing and so, as always, was



the behaviour of our children. I was very proud to receive emails from staff at the Playhouse and from members of the public who attended the show, who wanted to let us know how well-behaved they were. We were so proud of them. Thanks to all the volunteers who gave up their time to accompany us.

Northern Arts Factory

We had Northern Arts Factory in school delivering workshops to the children from Reception to year 4. The children experienced different activities which included drama games, dancing and singing. Northern Arts Factory are starting a musical theatre class here at Pudsey Waterloo on Monday evenings 4:15pm -

6:15pm from January. For more information, please see the flyer below.

Chess Club

Some of our chess club were lucky enough to be invited to play chess against Rachel Reeves, the Chancellor of the Exchequer! The children showed off some great skills and strategy and there were some very tight games, including one game where one of our Y6 children nearly had her in checkmate! We were really proud of how the children represented our school. You can read more about it in the article below.

<https://westleedsdispatch.com/rachel-reeves-mp-takes-on-budding-chess-masters-from-three-schools>



Year 5 trip to Bolton Abbey

Year 5 had a busy (if slightly damp) day at beautiful Bolton Abbey, learning all about the role of rivers in the water cycle, as well as enjoying the Welly Walk trail and having a well-earned run-around in the fields and fresh air. Everyone had a great time and the team at Bolton Abbey were highly complementary about the children's behaviour.

Year 6 Residential at Robinwood

In October, year 6 set off on their residential trip to Robinwood. We stayed at the centre for 3 days and 2 nights and had the best time! The children were able to take part in adventurous activities and also complete lots of team building and problem solving challenges. Despite a chilly dip in the lake for most of the children, spirits were high all weekend and it was a great opportunity for the year group to bond. Thank you to all the staff who gave up their time to come with us on the trip and to year 6 for being great company all weekend!

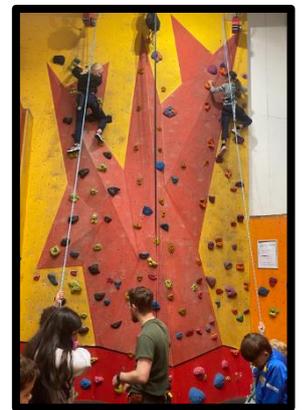
News from Calverley Parkside Primary School

It has been a busy term at Calverley Parkside, our Y6 began the term with their residential stay to Robinwood – and had a great time engaging in a wide range of adventurous activities (including the infamous Piranha Pool, luckily no children were harmed by the piranhas – everyone escaped in good time!) This was a great opportunity for the children to bond as a team and develop key character skills.



We held our termly theme week with a focus on DT and cooking – all classes in school prepared a wide range of dishes. This ranged from sandwich making in Reception, to pizza making and baking sausage/cheese rolls in KS2! Each class also designed some artwork inspired by Giuseppe Arcimboldo.

We have had many visitors in school to offer workshops and experiences to our classes. Y3 most recently have engaged in a day dedicated to Ancient Egypt – exploring the mummification process and reviewing a range of artefacts linked to the period, learning about many of the different practices and ways of living in this era. Classes have all visited our local church to take part in workshops related to their RE topics.



Our Y5 children enjoyed 'Space Camp' where they spent an evening in school, with a range of space-related activities to enrich their science topic. This included an attempt at stargazing alongside some creative tasks (building rocket ships from a range of equipment) and sleeping in the school hall in tents. The children very much enjoyed waking up to breakfast in school the following day!

Our Year 2 class engaged in some great experiences as part of their writing units. They focused on instruction writing and enjoyed getting messy and oily when making their own bird feeders!

News from Armley Park Primary School

Year 5 had an exciting day at the **Leeds Art Gallery**. They explored the gallery and were told about some of the interesting pieces of art before making their own sketchbooks and creating their own artwork. The children were really inspired by the fantastic artwork housed in the gallery and created some beautiful art.



Jonny Brownlee, Olympic triathlon gold medallist and one of our House Ambassadors, came to school to officially open our new astroturf pitch! He told the children all about his career, answered lots of great questions, let everyone have a look at

his gold medal and even had races with each class!

As part of the **Geography** topic where Year 2 are comparing Leeds and Tokyo, the class had a walk around Leeds City Centre to look at all the human and physical features. We even got a free ride on the carousel at the Christmas Market!



Our **Dance Club** performed on stage to a packed audience at Yeadon Town Hall as part of the Northern Arts Factory Dance Fest 2024 where we wowed the viewers with our choreography to I'm A Believer!

We had a very exciting delivery in November of two brand new Armley Park minibuses! These will make a massive difference to the school as we can go out on lots of trips and enrich the curriculum by providing the children with a range of different experiences.



News from Manor Wood Primary School



Our staff recently performed a, shall we call it, 'unique version' of the traditional Nativity, written and directed by Mrs. Hayes. The children watched in amazement and joined in with enthusiasm, singing along, and everyone had a wonderful time kicking off the festive season together!

Year 6 have been studying Judaism this term. To celebrate Sukkot, the Jewish 'Festival of Shelters', Year 6 collected sticks and leaves from the local woods and made their own smaller versions of 'sukkah'. This festival is celebrated to remember the 40 years the Hebrews spent wandering the desert after they escaped from Egypt.



Year 1 walked to our local library to meet Madeline, the librarian. She read us a story and told us all the fun facts about Leeds Libraries. Then we had chance to read books with our friends - it was very exciting to see the range of fiction and non-fiction available!



The week after Bonfire Night we welcomed our families into our front garden and teepee area, to enjoy some fun around the fire! We had bowls of warm chilli to feed on, hot chocolate to drink and we gathered by the fire for some live music and singing. The children also enjoyed some sweet treats and some sparkling provocations. The evening was magical and our parent community

feedback was glowing.

Year Five have enjoyed spreading some festive cheer as they donned their santa hats and sang for the residents at the local care home. The children were fantastic and enjoyed performing for an audience having put in lots of practice.



News from Spring Bank Primary School



This autumn term, Spring Bank Primary has successfully introduced the Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) programme, enhancing the opportunities for outdoor activities during lunchtimes. Pupils now have access to a variety of engaging areas, including the sports pitch, supported by a weekly sports coach, a garden area where rolling cable reels has become a popular pastime, and a designated space for tree climbing. They have also been enjoying the digging pit, equipped with puddle suits kindly donated by local companies, allowing them to explore and get muddy in all weather. Adding to the lively atmosphere, pupils dance along to their own curated

Spotify playlist. Looking ahead to the new year, we are excited to further expand these opportunities with the introduction of a mud café, a sand kitchen, and a large sandpit. We are also exploring the possibility of installing a couple of tree swings to add even more variety to the children's outdoor experiences.

We are excited to announce that Dougie, a goldendoodle, has joined Spring Bank Primary as our new school dog during this term! Dougie is a hypoallergenic dog, meaning he doesn't shed, and allergies to him are very rare. Having started his school visits at just 13 weeks old, Dougie is well-accustomed to school life and brings with him nearly three years of experience. Research shows that pets can greatly benefit mental health, and we're hopeful that Dougie's calming presence will positively impact the wellbeing of both pupils and staff. For those who may not be comfortable around dogs, please know that Dougie will always be on a lead and children can choose whether or not they wish to engage with him. Dougie's health is well looked after—he is regularly flea and worm treated and attends White Cross Vets for routine check-ups.

News from Morley Victoria Primary School

The Whole Child

The "Whole Child" approach is embedded into our school offer at Morley Victoria and is something unique to our school that we are very proud of. In essence, it is the life of the school and designed to equip our young people with



the social and emotional skills and experiences to cope in life.

Our New PSHE Curriculum

This year we have purchased a new curriculum called 1 Decision – we are using this as our main resource and supplementing with other materials we already have in place. We are immensely proud of our PSHE offer and feel like 1 Decision further strengthens the subject. So far this year we

have had weekly PSHE sessions focused on Mental Health and Wellbeing, Feelings and Emotions and Relationships and Growing Up.

Primary Choices

Our Cluster funded a group of year 6 children to go to Elland Road with other primary schools in Morley to take part in the Primary Choices Programme which is run by the Leeds United Foundation. They took part in workshops about anti-social behaviour, knife crime, online safety and peer pressure.

Move and Learn

We have been lucky enough to continue working with the Well Schools Partnership and can further develop our project around moving and learning in the classroom. This has had a great impact on the teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum. The children love to learn in this way!



MV Podcast

Mr Allen has introduced a new club in school – the MV Podcast, it has replaced the MV Post newspaper. The group have worked on a trailer and are working on their first episode. We can't wait to hear it!

Sporting Opportunities

We have had a number of sporting opportunities this term including cross country, athletics football, dodgeball, ice skating, American football, bowling, cheerleading, multi-skills and kayaking.

Metacognition

This is one of our school development priorities and is something we are going to be developing over the few years. This year we have had some whole school training about the Zones of Regulation and this will be introduced to the children in the new year. Zones of Regulation will complement all our work around metacognition.

Geography Advent

This year we have completed an advent calendar with a difference – a geography advent calendar. Each day the children have had a flag to identify, a country to find and some facts (some Christmas related and some not) to learn about each one – they have loved learning new things about countries from across the world



History and Art Homework Challenges

At half term Miss Shaw and Mr Precious (History Leaders) set a fantastic History Holiday Homework Challenge for all those children who wanted to get involved. The challenge was to visit the free museums in Leeds and/or research famous people in Morley. The winners of the homework challenge are going to be interviewed by the MV podcast group.

Mrs Grayston and Miss Wood launched a Christmas art homework challenge in Spring 2 for all those children who would like an extra creative homework. They were very impressed with the Christmas bauble designs and they were used to decorate the school Christmas tree in the main hall.



Growing Talent

Our Year 6 children were lucky enough to take part in a growing talent event in school. This was linked to careers and was led by local businesses. Year 6 had a fantastic morning learning about different occupations and those qualities needed within the world of work.

