



Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust

Spring Newsletter – March 2024

Message from Lesley West, CEO.

This newsletter provides a brief 'round up' of some of the events that have happened in our schools during the Spring Term.

Throughout this term I have visited each Owlcotes school. In every school I have worked with the school leadership teams and met teaching staff, as well visiting classrooms and talking to children. I am, as always, impressed by all our schools, by the commitment and dedication of staff and, of course, by the wonderful children in all of our schools.

Our schools continue to strive to provide a full and engaging curriculum for all pupils, including trips, visits and visitors, indoor and outdoor experiences and participation in music and sporting events.

During February, four schools took part in the wonderful 'Shakespeare in Schools' festival, performing at the Carriageworks in Leeds. I was delighted to be in the audience for all performances. It was such a privilege to see our children on stage in a national theatre, and I was really impressed with the confidence our children had to perform. Well done to all the children and 'thank you' to all the teacher ("directors") who made the event so successful!

The Owlcotes Literature festival in February was also huge success, and we are looking forward to our outdoor focus week at the end of May.

Next term, we are looking forward to a number of things. We will be welcoming Spring Bank Primary School to the Owlcotes Trust at the start of May, and we are excited about the annual Owlcotes Debating Competition when we will be able to welcome children from Manor Wood Primary School to this event for the first time.

A huge 'thank you' to all our schools, their staff and pupils, and of course to the fantastic families in all our communities. I wish everyone a 'happy holidays' for the forthcoming Spring Break and Easter Holiday and I look forward to working with everyone again next term.

I hope you enjoy reading the rest of this newsletter, which includes information about some of the events that have happened in our individual schools.

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: www.owlcotesmat.org or by following us on X [@owlcotesMAT](https://twitter.com/owlcotesMAT).

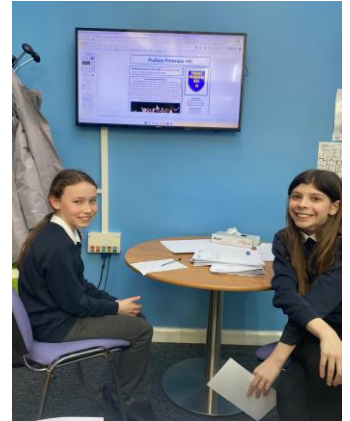


Round Up of News from Owlcotes Schools

News from Pudsey Primrose Hill Primary School

Year 6 Take Over Week

Our Year 6 children applied for jobs across school as part of our 'Take Over Week'. This year, a small number of children were offered the opportunity to carry out their work in one of the other MAT schools. Children were engaged in reading to Nursery and Reception classes at Pudsey Waterloo and Armley Park. The week was a huge success with children taking on a range of roles in school. These included; helping to write the school newsletter, supporting our Groundsperson, working alongside our IT technician and helping out in the school office. Many children also delivered lessons to other year groups. The week was a great experience for our children, which will deepen their understanding of roles and jobs for our upcoming Raising Aspirations Week in July.



Reception Train Trip

As part of the Owlcotes Elements 'Civic Pride', children in Reception have been on a train journey from New Pudsey to Leeds City Station. Before setting off, children helped to map out their journey. During the trip they enjoyed looking for different shapes in buildings, reading signs and talking to staff in the station about their jobs. On their return to school, children were inspired to create their own maps and write about their experiences!



Kirkstall Toy Museum

Year 1 visited the Abbey House Museum to learn all about the history of toys. The children enjoyed a fantastic workshop where they learned about the differences in toys from the past, as well as having a play with them! The children asked a lot of interesting questions about toys from the past and how they are different to the toys they have today. We explored the artefacts around the museum and compared lots of old toys to the toys we play with today.

Space Camp

Children from both Year 5 classes took part in the 'Space Camp'. They camped out in the school hall and took part in several activities to further their knowledge of space and to develop the skills needed to be an astronaut! The children did a great job of getting stuck into the activities and showed fantastic resilience and independence by staying over at school for the night. Well done everyone!



Shakespeare School Festival

Year 5 Shakespeare company had an unforgettable evening at the Carriageworks Theatre in Leeds as they finally got to perform their version of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' on stage to a full theatre! They had been working really

hard rehearsing for this since October 2023 and when the big moment came, they were all fantastic and played their parts flawlessly. The whole performance was wonderful and an unforgettable experience for the children involved. Well done to everyone who has dedicated their time to learning lines, stage direction, preparing props and costumes - it was a brilliant!



News from Pudsey Waterloo Primary School

Year 2 DT Project

The children in Year 2 have been shown great resilience in their DT unit of making puppets. The children were given a brief from the character Chrissy, she asked if they could create a Bog Baby for her. During the DT unit they had to design, make and evaluate their puppet. The children have learnt back stitch, running stitch and how to sew on a button. They are so pleased with the outcome of their puppets.



Lego Workshop

Year 2 had a great opportunity to do some learning with Lego when they



had a visit from Ian who works for Junior STEM. The children were taught how to make a Lego fairground with a motor which turns the carousel using a gear combination. They followed 25 steps to make their fairground. How impressive is that! After that, the children then wrote algorithms using the WeDo 2.0 app to control their fairground and had the opportunity to upgrade/improve the carousel with their own creative Lego designs. It was great to see the children working in their pairs as they showed great resilience to complete some difficult problem-solving tasks.

Year 4

Year 4 had a visit from musician and teacher Sam Praechter who taught everyone about the Science of Sound. The children were enthralled. We saw how so many everyday objects could become musical instruments; learnt how sound travelled by waves using a slinky and dominoes, and saw how sounds differed depending on the pitch and volume. Whoever knew you could use an empty wooden case to create an amplifier!

Space Camp

It has been a busy fortnight in Year 5 as a result of our Space Camps taking place for each class the past two Thursdays. The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves and developed their problem solving and team building skills

completing missions inspired by Tim Peake's time on the ISS. The children then settled down for the night, enjoying hot chocolate and a film before sleeping in tents in the school hall. The staff managed to get a couple of hours of sleep at least! Check out the school's Instagram and X feeds to see more photos from the two nights (as well as the year 5 class page on our website!)



Music

This term, Year 6 will be learning to play the glockenspiel. We started our



music unit entitled 'Happy' by learning about the song 'Happy' Pharrell Williams. We will also learn about other songs with the theme of being 'happy' and alongside this we will learn to sing the songs and to play the glockenspiel.

Magic Show

As part of our Owlcotes Elements theme 'We are

curious about our World' we were very lucky to have a magic show from the amazing Oliver Meech in school on Wednesday. Oliver performed his show 'Books are a bit Magic' to reception and KS1 and 'When Magic and Science Collide' to KS2. Oliver has performed at the Edinburgh festival at magic and science shows around the world so were honoured to have him perform at Waterloo!



Shakespeare Festival

We were incredibly proud of all the Year 5 children who took part in this year's Shakespeare Schools Festival. They performed a fantastic, thrilling and very gory production of Julius Caesar in front of an audience of 200 people at the Carriageworks Theatre in Leeds. Their hard work learning lines and attending rehearsals has really paid off and their confidence and enthusiasm was great to see. They were clearly delighted with their performance as they came off stage, which was a delight to witness. Huge thanks to all the parents and grown-ups for supporting your children with learning lines and providing costumes - and thanks also to all the staff who supported during rehearsals or on performance night. Well done all!



News from Calverley Parkside Primary School

The Owlcotes Literature Festival

This year at Calverley Parkside we chose to link the annual Literature Festival to work we have been doing on developing emotional literacy. Throughout the week, the children read a wide range of stories linked to this and each class in school explored a range of feelings and emotions. The main aim of the week (as well as reading lots of excellent books!) was to develop an emotional toolkit, with children creating strategies to support them to manage their emotions. Children also wrote their own versions of some of the stories they looked at, produced some art work linked to these and made badges which showed off something which was unique about them.

Commando Joe's at Calverley Parkside

We have the Commando Joe's resource in school which is aimed at developing skills such as teamwork and resilience. This half term, children throughout school have been using the resources in one of their weekly PE



lessons. In each lesson, the children complete a mission which is often linked to something they are learning about in class. The children work together in teams to complete the various stages of their mission, using the equipment from the Commando Joe's box, along with their imaginations and creativity. It is proving to be an excellent resource which the children are really enjoying using.

Trip to Abbey House Museum

Earlier in the term, our Year 1 children visited Abbey House Museum in Kirkstall. They have been learning all about toys in their History lessons and this was a wonderful opportunity for them to learn more about how toys have changed over time.

The children had a brilliant day! Thanks to the staff for the hard work that goes in to planning and supervising these trips.



Year 5 Shakespeare in Schools Festival:

On Thursday 29th February, our Year 5 children went to the Carriageworks Theatre in Leeds to perform their play 'The Three Richards' (Richard III with a Parkside twist!). They have been practicing this since October and were all incredibly excited that the big day had finally arrived. They left school at lunchtime to get to the theatre in time for a tech rehearsal in the afternoon, during which they made sure that all of the music and other special effects were working as intended. The show started at 7pm and Parkside performed their play first (there were three schools performing in total) to a full house. The children were amazing, delivering their lines with enthusiasm, confidence and a wonderful clarity. It was fantastic to see them on stage having such a good time. The other two schools were also fantastic, making for a very enjoyable evening. At the end of the performance, the Coram staff said a few words about each of the schools. In addition to commenting on the children's wonderful performance, it was also noted how well the children supported each other throughout, which was really noticeable. Well done to everyone who was involved. A huge thank you goes to all of the staff who have been working hard to prepare the children for this event, including making props and helping with costumes, and to those who attended (Mrs Larkin, Mrs Jones, Mrs

Reidy, Mrs Sherwin, Mr Jolley and Mrs Hargreaves). A special thank you goes to Mrs Larkin on her directorial debut for her imaginative and memorable adaptations and interpretations to the script and to Jack in Year 3's mum for providing some of her expertise in drama during the practicing phase.



News from Armley Park Primary School

Visits to Rievaulx House Care Home

In February, all children from Year 1 to Year 6 had the opportunity to visit the residents of Rievaulx House Care Home. They shared stories they had written, recited poems, presented copies of art work for display and Year 6 even performed their contemporary dance about World War 2.

Since the visit, some of the residents have returned the favour and have been to school to see the children. This was a lovely opportunity for our children to deepen their understanding of how to support some of the more elderly generations of Armley and I know both the children and the residents really enjoyed the experience.

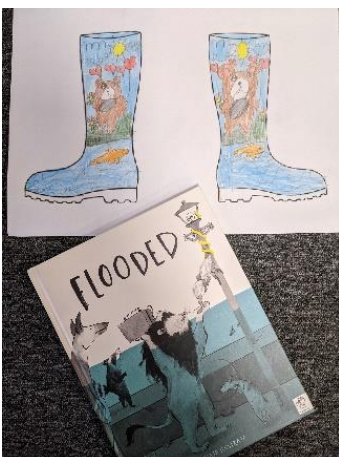
Owlcotes Literature Festival

During the Owlcotes Literature Festival, all classes focussed on books which featured elements of overcoming loneliness. Each class was paired with another year group from a different key stage and they worked together to write stories, create poems and songs to perform and produced art work on the theme of flowers.



Year 5 performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream

In February, Year 5 showcased their fantastic theatrical skills when they performed A Midsummer Night's Dream at The Carriageworks Theatre as part of the Coram Shakespeare Schools Festival.



World Book Day Celebrations

This year, all the children focused on a book called Flooded by Mariajo Illustrajo. The story focused on a group of animals who had to work together to clear their flooded town. The children produced some fantastic writing around the theme of the book and created some great art work depicting parts of the story.

Attendance Competition

As a reward for excellent attendance, a group of 30 children had a relaxing afternoon at the cinema. They were even more excited that they had the whole cinema screen to themselves!

England Netball

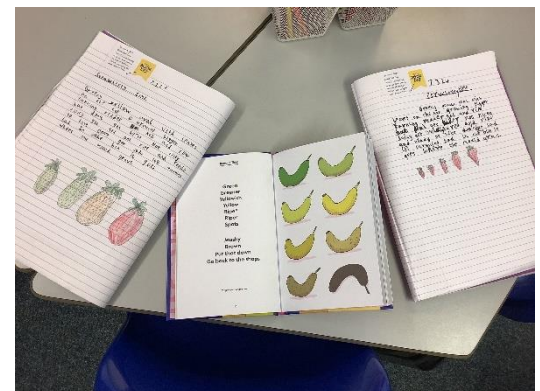
A group of 12 children went to watch the England netball team play matches against New Zealand, Australia and Uganda at Leeds Arena. They were really lucky to get seats really close to the front and were very excited when England won their match!



Manor Wood Primary School

World Book Day

We celebrated World Book Day with a poetry focus week, featuring a visit from local author, Matthew Hodson. In an assembly for KS1 and KS2, he shared some of his poetry with the children, culminating in a huge group performance with Y1-6 performing together! Later in the week, some year groups had author workshops where they explored writing their own poetry alongside Matthew, while other year groups focused on oracy and performance strategies for delivering some of the poetry from our focus book – Matthew Hodson's 'Forwards Always'. The resulting poems, creations and performances were captivating!



Year 4

What a fantastic week we have had in Year 4. Children brought to life their geography and History lessons about Yorkshire and the ancient Greeks by planning and creating a Yorkshire-Greek Café for our DT project. The children made a variety of traditional Yorkshire and Greek foods, used technology to create invites and used their creativity to make the most stunning menus. Children then decided on one of the many roles they would like to be, from waiters to front of house staff and executed their roles brilliantly as parents, carers and friends joined us at the café.



Year 5

Year 5 have enjoyed weaving all manner of cross curricula skills together as part of a STEAM project inspired by the British Science week theme of **time**. The children explored what time means to them. By using A.I. text to image generators, the children were able to share their emerging concepts with their peers before being invited to create their own contemporary pastel artwork. This art was then used to inspire movement before the children teamed up in small groups to collaboratively produce a modern time inspired soundscape on garageband. A focus on storytelling provided the narrative to finally choreograph their own interpretive dance. This exciting collaboration of art, movement, music was brought together with darkness and light as the children welcomed parents into school whispering quotes about time before delivering their incredible dances. The installation finished in dramatic fashion as the children stood in unison announcing "Time is up" before leaving the hall and the parents applauding. This has been a rich and rewarding project to be involved in, through which the children have represented themselves brilliantly. After the installation was over the children hosted a Q&A session with their parents, explaining their decision-making processes, the challenges they had overcome and what they had loved about working in this way.



Year 1

Year 1 visited Abbey House Museum at the end of January to kick start their History topic around Toys and Technology. Each class had a workshop where they explored old toys and were encouraged to make



comparisons with toys that children have today. They also had time to explore the museums toy galleries, operate the penny slot machines (some of which were not for the faint-hearted) using an old 1 pence piece and undertake a task of finding an item for every letter of the alphabet while exploring the Victorian streets. It was an extremely enjoyable experience for all and really enhanced the children's learning once back in the classroom!

EYFS

The Foundation Stage children have loved learning the technique of gelli-printing in the atelier over the last few weeks. A visiting artist, who also happens to be Francis's mummy, came in to

demonstrate how to produce the stunning images with the gel printing plates that she makes at home.

Year 5 and Year 6

Manor Wood Primary School pupils gave up their screens, in Years 5 and 6, as part of the 'Disconnect to Reconnect' project organised by Becky Hayes (UKS2 Phase Leader and Year 5 teacher) Becky has been



running this type of an intervention across Y5 and 6 for the last 8 years. She connected with No phones at home founder - Dr Charlotte Armitage and Helen Lord from Leeds City Council, to run an even bigger scale project. Look North were also keen to get involved and come in to school to film the event.

Children's Centre

Every day in the Children's Centre, our children have the wonderful opportunity to join in with... 'The Monster Project!' The inspiration for this project came from many games surrounding the idea of a mysterious 'monster that lived in the cupboard'. During meetings, the children have researched and imagined what the monster could; look like, sound like, and empathised with how it must feel to be a big lonely monster - scary but exciting! After a few weeks creating their own version of the monster through different media's, the children concluded that the monster is much scarier when it moves. As a result, we explored how light and shadow can play a key part in characterising



their figures with a projector and a couple of wriggly volunteers. The children are now eager to delve into their own storytelling, through video and puppeteering! We can't wait to see what they produce! "The monster is in our imagination, that's something in your head. If you think really hard you might see it." - E, aged 3.

