

# News Hub



OCTOBER  
2025

## Update from the Headteacher and The Senior Leadership Team

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of a busy and successful half term, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on what a wonderful start to the school year it has been. It has been fantastic to see all our students settling into their new classes. We know that for many children in an SEN setting, settling can take time and sometimes present through behaviours as they adjust to new routines, relationships, and expectations. We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support from our families—your willingness to share strategies that work at home and collaborate with staff has made a real difference.

Please continue to communicate with us as this partnership is vital for each child's success. As our school continues to grow, we have welcomed a number of new staff members who are now working closely alongside our experienced team to embed and strengthen our Oak Tree strategies. Our therapists have also been working diligently to screen all new pupils, ensuring they have the right support in place for regulation and communication. We are already seeing the positive impact of these efforts across the school.

This half term has been filled with achievements and celebrations. Our Macmillan Bake Sale was a great success, raising £157.50 thank you to everyone who baked, bought, and contributed! Our Harvest Assembly beautifully highlighted ways we can support local food banks across Reading, and our Diwali Cultural Day was a vibrant celebration of our diverse community. The students thoroughly enjoyed the day's activities—please visit our Facebook page to see some lovely photos from these events. Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable half-term break.

We look forward to seeing everyone back, ready for another fantastic term ahead.

Warm regards, Abi



# Update from the Headteacher and The Senior Leadership Team

We wanted to update you on an important matter. One of our local authorities has directed a number of new students to join Oak Tree School. Some of these students have already joined us, and others are due to start in November and January.

Unfortunately, this decision is outside of our control. I have written to the Secretary of State to express our concerns, as this increase may lead to larger class sizes and additional pressure on staffing. We may need to bring in temporary staff to ensure all pupils continue to receive the high-quality support they deserve.

For some classes this year, the numbers have already increased. Unfortunately, SEN schools across the country are under significant pressure to take on more students, and most successful schools are now operating above their Planned Admission Number (PAN). Please be assured that we will continue to strive to provide the best possible education and care for every child. However, we do ask for your understanding and awareness that class numbers may be slightly higher than usual in some areas.

This situation reflects a national challenge around the growing demand for SEN places, and we truly appreciate your ongoing understanding and support during this time.

As always, we are so proud of how our students, staff, and families continue to embody the Oak Tree spirit—working together, adapting, and supporting one another.

## School gate timings

In the mornings the parent gate will open at 9am and the Taxi's will be let in just before this. In the afternoons the parent gate will open at 3pm

## Parents evening

Just a reminder that parents evening will be held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November. Please speak to the class teacher regarding appointments for this.



# Curriculum at OTS

At Oak Tree School, we recognise that our students have a wide range of individual needs, which is common in a setting that supports young people with autism and associated complex needs. To best meet these needs, we offer a number of tailored curriculum pathways designed to support each student's unique strengths, abilities, and learning styles. As students progress into Key Stage 4, we will introduce additional pathways that focus on preparing them for adulthood and their next steps beyond school. These options will be refined and explained to parents of Year 9 students before being shared with all families.

This approach reflects what all Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools strive to do - ensuring that students are not set up to fail, but are instead supported through pathways that are carefully matched to their individual needs, interests, and future aspirations. Our overarching aim is to nurture independence and equip our students with the skills they need for later life. We are deeply committed to supporting the whole child - focusing not only on academic progress, but equally on personal, social, emotional, and life skills development to help each student thrive both in and beyond the classroom

Curriculum at OTS		
Immersive/ Meadow	Flexible/ Emerald	Concrete/ Forest
<p>Meadow learners have <b>complex learning needs</b>.</p> <p>This curriculum is designed to enable students to learn <b>functional skills</b> and experience a range of activities through meeting students' <b>sensory needs</b>.</p> <p>The focus is on developing key skills of <b>communication, cognition, independence and personal care</b> in an engaging and stimulating environment.</p> <p>Immersive/ Meadow learners are <b>unlikely to go on to further education or a workplace</b>.</p> <p><u>Therapeutic Input may be significant in order for them to meet their goals.</u></p> <p>Teaching and learning <b>is sensory based</b> with opportunities for practice and repetition.</p> <p>The progress is evidenced through engagement and participation in the process of learning.</p>	<p>Emerald <u>follow a flexible curriculum</u>.</p> <p>Students have significant learning difficulties, and some may have a <b>complexity of needs and emergent communication, social and interaction skills</b>.</p> <p>The focus on this pathway is a narrower selection of options which may be linked to <b>employability</b>.</p> <p>Flexible/ Emerald learners have an <b>Inconsistent profile</b> and learn best through a combination of experiential learning and a topic-based approach.</p> <p><b>Life skills</b> permeate the <u>curriculum</u> and it focuses on real life experiences and application in engaging and stimulating environments.</p> <p>Students <u>have the opportunity to pursue accreditation in Entry Levels, Functional Skills and Level 1 courses</u> at KS4. Some</p>	<p>Forest learners have <b>developing communication, social and interaction skills</b>.</p> <p>They have a more <b>consistent learning profile</b> and are able to access a range of subjects for their key stage, at age related expectations.</p> <p>It aims to develop <b>higher order thinking skills</b>, such as critical thinking, problem solving as well as functional skills, employability and independence skills.</p> <p><b>Concrete/ Forest learners are able to access lessons delivered in a more traditional format.</b></p> <p>Students <u>have the opportunity to pursue formal level 2 qualifications at KS4 such as GCSEs, IGCSEs and AlmVoc courses.</u></p>

# PTA at OTS

We're delighted to share that our school is starting a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) — a group that brings parents, carers, and school staff together to support our children and strengthen our school community.

The PTA will help us:

- Organise enjoyable school events and fundraisers
- Support classroom and playground improvements
- Build stronger connections between home and school
- Celebrate and include all families in our school community

We're now looking for parents and carers who would like to be involved in getting the PTA started. Whether you'd like to help organise events, share ideas, or simply lend a hand occasionally, your contribution would be very welcome.

If you're interested in being part of the PTA, please email [OTS@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:OTS@maidenerleghtrust.org) by the 3rd of November. The office will then pass your details over the parent governors.

We'll then be inviting everyone who expresses interest to our first informal meeting to discuss how we can shape the PTA together.

Thank you for helping us create something that will make a real difference for our children and our school.'



## Primary Update

The first half term has flown by at Oak Tree in Primary! We've opened three new classes and welcomed over twenty new students, all of whom have done amazingly well settling into their new routines.

Our dedicated staff have been working hard to build positive relationships and create safe, nurturing environments where every child can thrive.

We've already enjoyed some exciting whole-school moments, including our first cultural celebration of the year for Diwali. Happy Diwali to all who celebrate! We wore yellow for World Mental Health Day, where we reflected on kindness and wellbeing.

Our school chickens have also grown up quickly, laying plenty of eggs, while the rooster's morning call is now a firm favourite among the students on their way into school!

As we look ahead to the next half term, we're excited to continue building on these strong foundations. With more new students 4 more students joining us and plenty of exciting learning opportunities planned looking at celebrations around the world. An exciting time to be in Primary!

Have a lovely break and we will see you all soon.

## Secondary Update

It has been a great start to the year in secondary with lots of excitement around our Values Victor certificates in assembly- and the winners having a hot chocolate with SLT. Its been lovely to see the new year 7's settle into school so quickly, and how the year 8 and 9s have been welcoming and supportive of them.

We had a HUGE success with the first round of bikability, the students involved were fantastic and demonstrated excellent resilience. We had over 80% that are now able to ride a bike independently and some that are very close! We are currently looking into the next stages of this and we will inform you when this will take place as we know it could make such an impact on so many of our students.

All secondary students have successfully completed the unit of Multisport in PE and have engaged exceptionally well. They have worked on a range of key fundamental movement skills as well as, resilience, team work, co-ordination, speed, agility and many more.

Half Term Challenge for all - to complete three active things during the week. e.g. going for a walk, scooting, bike ride, trip to the park etc...

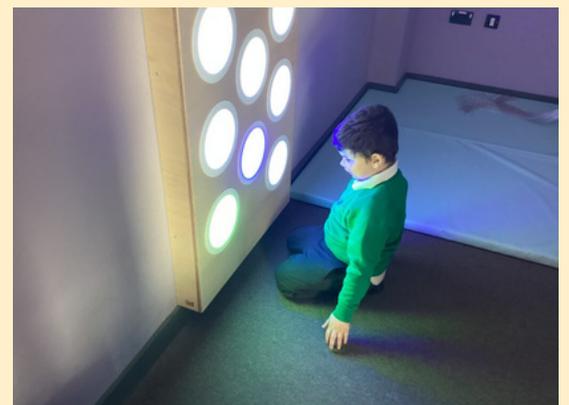
All students across the school have made an excellent start in the Personal Development (PD)

Curriculum, covering a range of key skills in PSHE, Life skills, community visit preparation, start of the careers programme in secondary and an RE curriculum day covering Diwali. We

also welcomed volunteers from Readifood foodbank to talk to us about Harvest festival- and sent them away with lots of food donated by parents. Thank you! We will continue to explore the PD curriculum and embed the key fundamental skills throughout the remainder of the year.



# The Term In Pictures



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