

News Hub



FEBRUARY
2026

Update from the Headteacher and The Senior Leadership Team

Just like that, we are halfway through the year! It's amazing how quickly time flies when the school is this full of life, and we've certainly had a busy and productive start to the Spring Term.

We are incredibly proud of how successfully Holly Class has opened for our Year 1 and 2 pupils. Our new students have transitioned fantastically, settling into Oak Tree life with brilliant confidence and plenty of smiles.

We also want to give a warm welcome to our new staff members, who have hit the ground running. They've shown such great effort and genuine care in their new roles, and it's wonderful to have them on board.

As we look forward to another successful half term leading up to the Easter break, we'd like to thank you for your continued support.

The Senior Leadership Team



Primary and Secondary Update

What a busy and exciting start to the year it has been for our Primary department!

A huge well done to Holly Class, who have been absolutely great since joining us. It has also been lovely to see our new chickens settling in; they have been super friendly and are clearly enjoying all the attention and time spent with our students.

We've had some fantastic visitors and celebrations recently. We enjoyed marking Chinese New Year with lots of colour and creativity, and it was a real treat to have the local librarians visit to share some wonderful stories. We also had an exciting visit from the Police! The students had so much fun exploring the police cars, checking out the equipment, and asking some very clever questions.

Finally, it's been brilliant to see so many classes getting out into the community. Seeing our students grow in confidence while transferring their classroom skills to offsite settings is exactly what Oak Tree is all about.

It has been a truly standout term for our Secondary students, filled with hard work, new skills, and some very well-deserved celebrations.

Year 9 have been absolute stars. They recently completed an accredited First Aid course and blew us away with their commitment and resilience during two weeks of assessments. These results are vital for informing their Key Stage 4 pathways, and the students handled the pressure with incredible focus. To celebrate this massive achievement, they were rewarded with a bumper hot chocolate session and a movie afternoon!

Our first Cultural Day of 2026 was a huge hit as we enjoyed finding out all about Chinese New Year. It was wonderful to see the school come alive with such vibrant learning.

Out in the community, 8S took their very first trip on the school minibus to GREGGS! They did a fantastic job of choosing their own menu items and eating in, showing great respect for other members of the public. Back on site, our Land-Based Studies students have been busy in the garden, planting spring bulbs and growing plants from seed, we're all crossing our fingers for a bit more sunshine and less rain to help them grow!

On the sporting front, a group of Year 9 students competed in a Table Cricket competition just before half term. They came 3rd out of 8 teams, making us all incredibly proud of their teamwork and spirit.

Whether working towards academic goals or personal targets, our students continue to give their best in every lesson and community visit. We can't wait to see what next term brings!



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 complex learning needs.</p> <p>This curriculum is designed to enable students to learn functional skills and experience a range of activities through meeting students' sensory needs.</p> <p>The focus is on developing key skills of communication, cognition, independence and personal care in an engaging and stimulating environment.</p> <p>Immersive/ Meadow learners are unlikely to go on to further education or a workplace.</p> <p><u>Therapeutic Input may be significant in order for them to meet their goals.</u></p> <p>Teaching and learning is sensory based 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 complexity of needs and emergent communication, social and interaction skills.</p> <p>The focus on this pathway is a narrower selection of options which may be linked to employability.</p> <p>Flexible/ Emerald learners have an Inconsistent profile and learn best through a combination of experiential learning and a topic-based approach.</p> <p>Life skills 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 developing communication, social and interaction skills.</p> <p>They have a more consistent learning profile and are able to access a range of subjects for their key stage, at age related expectations.</p> <p>It aims to develop higher order thinking skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving as well as functional skills, employability and independence skills.</p> <p>Concrete/ Forest learners are able to access lessons delivered in a more traditional format.</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

The PTA has been busy behind the scenes over the past few months, meeting with potential grant charities and working through the process of becoming a registered charity so we can better support the school and our children. We were delighted with the fantastic turnout at last week's coffee morning — thank you to everyone who came along and helped make it such a welcoming and successful event. Your support and involvement make a real difference, and we're excited to share more updates and opportunities to get involved as the year continues.



Shannon: Our newly appointed chairman of the PTA and also serves as a parent representative on the school board. With a professional background in resource management in the private pensions sector, she contributes skills in strategic planning and operational support. As the parent of a child with profound autism, she is particularly passionate about inclusion, communication and ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed. She looks forward to working with the school community to support ongoing improvements and strengthen collaboration between families and staff.



Grace: Hi, I'm a mum of two girls, including one in Year 2 at Oak Tree. I've been part of a PTA before and loved seeing the joy it brought to the children and the difference it made to the school. I work as an EA and do lots of event planning! So, I'm really excited to get involved, support the team and help make great things happen for our school community.

PTA at OTS



Sarah: Hi, I have a son in year 9. I also serve as a parent representative on the school advisory board along with Shannon. After spending most of my working life as a pensions consultant, I am using my lived life experience of parenting a neurodiverse child and have recently started a new role and am now working for an organisation who support families like ours. I am excited to be involved with the PTA to support fundraising that will benefit all of the amazing young people at Oak Tree.



Michelle: Hi, I'm a mum of three, with one of my children currently attending Oak Tree School. He has autism and global developmental delay and he experiences significant sensory and selective needs around food, smells and textures. Through our journey, I've learned the importance of patience, understanding and strong home-school communication. I'm joining the PTA because I'm passionate about helping create an inclusive, supportive environment where all children and their families feel understood, welcomed and valued.



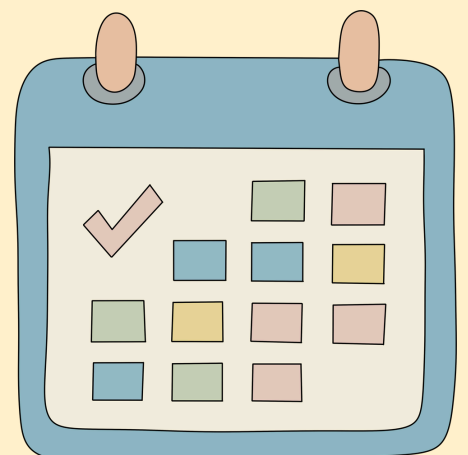
Cath: A mum to 3 autistic children with my middle daughter in Year 7 at Oak Tree. I am a Primary School Teacher in Woodley so have the experience of working within a school team. I am excited to join the PTA to help support our children by raising vital funds for resources to be used in school. I am looking forward to meeting more parents from the Oak Tree community and working together to achieve the very best for the children.



Sophie: A teacher with over 25 years experience, who now works in Higher Education, specialising in teacher training. As a parent to a Year 3 girl, she is passionate about neuro advocacy, education and Autism awareness, particularly in relation to female Autism. She has joined the PTA as she wants to contribute towards creating opportunities for all the students at Oak Tree. We look forward to working together to make great things happen for our children.

Dates and Topics:

- 27th February: INSET Day 
- 2nd March: Parents Evening 
- 3rd March: TacPac Training 
- 4th March: Holi Cultural Day 
- 5th March: World Book Day 
- 5th March: Parents Evening 
- 6th March: Behaviour Training 
- 9th March: Toileting Training 
- 16th March: Sleep Training 
- 27th March: Last Day of Term 



The Term In Pictures

