



Oakleaves

Dear Parents and Friends of Oakfields,

I was recently asked to comment during a meeting with potential 11+ candidates and their parents, upon the mounting concern of late about the deteriorating mental health of an increasing number of children and whether or not I had noticed any trends linking this deterioration to the pressures of 11+ tuition, and, if so, was I able to suggest any reasons for this increase.

Firstly, I believe our education system, with or without 11+ tuition, is very intense and the introduction of robust 11+ tuition into the Year 4 curriculums, along with three extra, early morning classes, will only add to the strain. However, in my view there is one much larger culprit, existing for both parents and children and that is the Social Media frenzy that has taken a firm grip on our society, parent body and our habits.

This medium of communication has brought about a much heightened sensitivity towards body image, personal achievements, scurrilous and vitriolic gossip, become an addictive hobby and can be very damaging to self-esteem; all contrary to its original purpose which was to inform and assist communication. Add to this the ease of access Apps, such as Snapchat and WhatsApp, leading to cyberbullying, 'relational aggression', yet more scurrilous gossip and we have a very worrying scene.

Children (and parents!) these days never get a break! Schools have the golden opportunity to offer a social media free zone and allow our children to have a calm, healthy environment in which to relax, be themselves, chat face to face with friends, and take part in activities (which are great distractors) and focus on their aspirations for the future. I do not envy the position of our parents who are also trying to enforce such a zone at home – but I urge you all to make a concerted effort to do so.

Perhaps a starting point would be to start acting as suitable role-models for our children with our mobile use. In the spring term alone, more than ten parents approached me directly complaining about their class WhatsApp group – explaining that they had been forced to either delete the App or turn off their mobile phones as the message notifications and conversations were still arriving beyond midnight! How can this be an acceptable use of a mobile device? In conclusion therefore, I ask you all to be sensible and consider the wider implications of typing into the early hours of the morning – especially when we are trying to encourage our children to also limit the amount of time spent communicating virtually. Food for thought, I am sure... for all of us to consider.

Additionally, here at Oakfields we also feel strongly that children should understand the importance of a life-long investment in their health and well-being. Sensible nutrition, regular exercise, a good work life balance and mental wellness are becoming increasingly more important than exam results. Physical activity is a winner all round giving great health benefits

Over/...



Key Dates 2017

Please refer to Class newsletters for dates and times of activities relating specifically to your child's class.

Start of Summer Term:

Tues 25 Apr—Fri 26 May inc.

(Note: Mon 1 May is a Bank Holiday)

Mon 5 Jun— Fri 14 Jul inc.

April

Tues 25 Start of Summer Term (summer uniform please)

May

Thurs 4 P.T.A. Music Room

Thurs 11 Class Photographs—Kittle Photography

Fri 12 P.T.A. Spring Ball

June

Thurs 12 P.T.A. Music Room

Fri 23 Junior Sports Day

Sat 24 12 noon—4 p.m. P.T.A. Summer Fayre

Weds 28 Showtime

July

Fri 7 Reports home

Sat 8 (a.m.—time t.b.c.) Prize Giving at Oakfields. All children from Reception to Year 6 to attend in school uniform.

(Please save the day in your diary!)

Tues 11 Parents' Evening

Weds 12 Parents' Evening

Fri 14 Last day of term

(Year 6 Leavers' Assembly and Year 5 and Year 6 Leavers' Party)

Term Cards for the academic year **2017/18** have been sent home with the children, but can also be obtained from the **Reception Desk** and **Kindergarten**.

J & S BESPOKE SCHOOLWEAR

J & S offer a 'click and collect' service via their website: www.bespokeschoolwear.co.uk. Orders can then be collected from the school. They can also be found in the school library each Friday (term-time only) 3—4.30 p.m.



alongside social inclusion, friendship building, a sense of belonging and a lot of fun. That is why Oakfields places so much emphasis on a wide ranging extra-curricular provision to encourage participation

and to educate children on these many benefits. Sowing the seeds at an early age and ensuring that every experience is truly enjoyable - at all levels - is an absolutely key factor.

An awe and wonder of nature is also a chief consideration of education at Oakfields. We work and study within eight glorious acres of woodland. We want both children and parents to see the beauty around them and to be constantly charmed by the view. With all this in mind we have recently embarked upon enrolment as an official Forrest School. Great plans are now afoot for September – to ensure that we are a Forrest School not just in name but in practice too.

Reflecting on the last few weeks, we offer many congratulations to our very own Miss Lucy in Kindergarten who gave birth to a beautiful girl, Nancy Claisse, at 8pm last Friday— some ten weeks early – weighing 3lbs and 5 oz. As a result of such an early delivery Nancy will remain in the intensive care unit for a further 6 weeks. However, mother and daughter are doing extremely well and I feel sure you would like to join me in wishing Lucy and Connor many congratulations on their beautiful new addition to the family.



A huge thank you to Mrs Tragen and the P.T.A. for organising the most eggciting of events in the Oakfields calendar on Wednesday - the Easter Egg Hunt - set this year along the Nature Trail. Thank you also for ensuring not only that all of our children - from Kindergarten through to Year 6 - received an Easter Egg, but the staff too whilst our P.T.A. volunteers entered into the spirit— and made do with CARROTS! (left)

More thanks are due to our P.T.A., Our library has undergone a magical transformation this week with a truly wonderful treasure trove of books purchased for the children.

Many thanks to the school librarians (Rubin, Jessica, Lawrencecia and Toby), who have devoted much of their time to making our school library a reader's paradise – under the superb direction of Mrs Pickard. Donations of much-loved books will continue to be gratefully received and should be left at Reception or given to one of our librarians. Also, may we urge that children take great care of any library books that they have borrowed so that they can be enjoyed by others for many years to come?



The SLT here at Oakfields are committed to improving communications with our parents so that it is easier, faster and more effective. To support this, we've introduced a new text and email service – 'School Gateway' to help communicate with you more quickly and cost effectively via email, text and smartphone app.

In addition, and provided you have a smartphone, both you and the school will save money when you download the "School Gateway" app for your smartphone (Android and iPhone). Using the app means we can send you app messages that you will be able to reply to at no cost to the school or yourself.

It's quick and simple to do. All you need is your email address and mobile number that the school holds on record for you. If you have trouble logging in, or if your details have changed, please call us on 01708 256721. We're aiming to get as many parents as possible using the School Gateway app as soon as possible, and your help is requested with this. If you don't have a smartphone, please be assured that you will still receive text messages from the school in the same way as you do now.



Earlier this month, the older Kindergarten children were treated to a fairy-tale welcome by Oakfields' very own Rapunzel but - unlike the traditional tale - none of our Kindergarten children wanted to escape! On the contrary, they were captivated by Rapunzel's eloquent storytelling and entertainment whilst parents were given the opportunity to journey through the main school accompanied by our wonderful Year 5 and 6 ambassadors who imparted and reflected upon life at Oakfields.

For potential parents, attending the Open Morning, our staff, children and parents all shared our common vision for Oakfields' schooling: shared values and ideals to create a truly unique sense of identity, belonging and place. I would like to extend a special thank you to all our Oakfields' children who represented their school so superbly; especially Skye and Rubin, who in their capacity as Head Girl and Head Boy, led the proceedings so eloquently.

The feedback and comments from all of our visitors was truly extraordinary; each visitor recognising that every Oakfields' child has a unique talent and gift, and that it is the job of educators to identify



And nurture it, and to demolish each and every barrier that stands in the way. Thank you one and all.

Finally, whilst the Year 3 – 6 compete in today's Swimming Gala (see page 5), I would like to extend to you an enjoyable Easter break and look forward to welcoming the children back on **Tuesday 25 April**.

Laura Ciftci, Headteacher

Kindergarten and Reception

On Wednesday, the children wore the Easter Bonnets they had lovingly made (with their parents we suspect!) and especially for their Easter Parade through the Nature Trail. The Reception class watched as the beautiful spectacle wafted past and whilst they patiently awaited their turn for the Egg Hunt. Kindergarten Parents – we cannot believe the amount of time and effort that you put into making the children's bonnets, they were absolutely stunning. Thank you! There really is nothing quite as special as our annual Easter Bonnet Parade and the P.T.A. Egg Hunt!



"On Tuesday morning we saw seven wight eggs in the egg inqator. In the aftanoon one craked out of its shell the duckling was wet. Two more craked and we leftem in the inqator for lfeer awas to get tair feathers driy. On Fiday I saw the duckling swims. Tau was cute." Beautifully written Seikemi (aged 5).



Thank you Reception for playing host to our five ducklings and for playing host to our older children who took it in turns to admire them. Here's a photo taken this week by their new family—Oliver (Kindergarten) Harry (Year 3) and Amelia (Year 6).



The Reception children all gathered in the garden earlier this month to surprise our wonderful mummy's. They had worked so hard painting portraits of our mums. We wanted them to be extra special and so we created a frame using a repeated pattern. We really hope our mummy's enjoyed their surprise gifts for Mother's Day.

Year 3

Year 3's trip to London Zoo last Thursday was the perfect conclusion to their exciting topic on the Rainforest this term. Coupled with an extensive knowledge and an enthusiasm to see and feel the tropical, humid conditions of Brazil, Year 3 were treated to many wonderful insights into this extraordinary environment; including the arrival of Charlie – a Madagascan hissing cockroach – clearly not for the faint-hearted!!! The visit also afforded Year 3 all the usual sightings of tigers, lions, giraffes and the all-important pygmy hippos. Sincerest thanks to Mrs Ward for ably assisting once again with our school outings.



Words for teenagers

Northland College principal John Tapene has offered the following words from a judge who regularly deals with youth. "Always we hear the cry from teenagers, 'what can we do, where can we go?'"

"My answer is this: Go home, mow the lawn, wash the windows, learn to cook, build a raft, get a job, visit the sick, study your lessons and after you've finished, read a book. Your town does not owe you recreational facilities and your parents do not owe you fun.

"The world does not owe you a living, you owe the world something. You owe it your time, energy and talent so that no one will be at war, in sickness and lonely again. In other words grow up, stop being a cry baby, get out of your dream world and develop a backbone not a wishbone. Start behaving like a responsible person. You are important and you are needed. It's too late to sit around and wait for somebody to do something someday. Someday is now and that somebody is you!"

Year 4. Reflections from Adiel, aged 9:

"Yesterday, I visited Duxford IPM with my class. In the Battle of Britain hanger, I felt so guilty, lucky and yet extremely troubled. I thought about all of the people we killed that were German. I was very upset when I could see such little space in the Anderson shelter. England killed 500,000 Japanese and 750,000 Germans. I think we are so lucky to have health and to be safe these days. All of these emotions were great to feel. The happy, the sad and the fear. It was good to learn more about WW2 and its planes. I have never felt some of these emotions before and overall I had an amazing day. Dave Rust agreed with me saying 'People should see what is happening, they should see how graphic it is, they should see how horrible it is, and maybe they would do something about it.'" Beautiful reflective writing Adiel.



Year 5. On Tuesday, Oakfields entertained a number of well known Ancient Greek characters including Poseidon, Herakles, Athena, Aphrodite, Medusa and of course the King of the Gods himself, Zeus, as Year 5 enjoyed their Greek Dress Up day. Everyone 'introduced themselves' explaining a little about their character and the adventures experienced in their lives. Then everyone had the opportunity to design their own Greek coin based on their character and using the symbols that they were known for.



In honour of the Ancient Greek philosophers like Aristotle, who explained so much about how the solar system works, we took advantage of the sun to investigate how shadows change throughout the day as the Earth spins on its axis. During the afternoon, Year 5 enthusiastically sampled some Greek food including taramasalata, Tzatziki, olives, stuffed vine leaves, dates and figs. However, the favourite was definitely the Greek yoghurt mixed with honey! Well done Year 5 - an amazing effort with the costumes and speeches!

Last week, it felt as though Zeus was actually watching over Oakfields and arranged a glorious sunny afternoon in which Year 5 and 6 were able to enjoy the 4th Oakfields Ancient Greek Olympics. With Year 5—and Mr Matthews—organising and running the event, and Year 6—who were the competitors. They were split into four Ancient City States - Athens, Sparta, Delphi and Knossos. Each team took part in four events, which included stone throwing (actually it was a medicine ball that was thrown), long jump, running and an equestrian event (piggy back races). All teams took part honourably and enthusiastically and the winning City State was the mighty Athens. Each Athenian received a laurel wreath in recognition of their great endeavours - well done! A fun afternoon was had by all!



Year 5 also had a trip to the Gurdwara in Forest Gate. On arrival, they removed their shoes, washed their hands and covered their heads in order to show respect. They then went to the prayer hall, where they were able to see the Guru Granth Sahib, sample Prashad and enjoy a presentation about the Sikh religion by their wonderful guide, Mr Panessar, who answered the children's (very relevant) questions. They were then taken to the Langar Hall, where they were lucky enough to sample some delicious vegetarian curry, chapattis and sweet desserts. They then had a fabulous morning bringing to life our classroom learning about this amazing religion. Thank you so much to the Ramgharia Sikh Gurdwara and to Mrs Singh and Mr Gill who came along to support us.



ICT



As part of ICT, Miss Kitt gave the Year 5 and 6 children the opportunity to design a poster to be entered for a competition run by Havering Virtual School. The objective was for the children to think about online safety and particularly about what it means to be 'safe online'. The poster designed needed to target young people so therefore needs to be eye-catching so that it draws attention. Just taking part

On Tuesday of this week, we heard from Havering Education Services that Year 6 Harry's poster (left) had won First Prize in the competition. Harry's prize is a £50 voucher but how proud we are to also learn that Harry's poster will be printed and displayed in secondary schools all around Havering!

Music

Year 6's Harry took his Grade 2 ABRSM piano exam and Year 5's Zoran his Grade 1 ABRSM violin exam last week. Those who attended our Spring Concert at Brentwood School earlier this month will remember each of them performing one of their exam pieces. What great preparation for their exam and we wish them the very best of luck.





Above: Reception and Year 5 thoroughly enjoyed a visit from the In-house Planetarium at the beginning of last month.



Above: Best of Luck to Year 3 Harry WHO has been selected to play for the West Ham Football Academy in Belgium during the holiday period whilst classmate Nihall and Year 2 Oscar and his Year 4 brother Oliver show off their recent achievements.

STOP PRESS! A fitting conclusion to a term full of joy at Oakfields. Earlier today, the juniors set off to Coopers Company and Coborn School for our annual swimming gala. The afternoon saw great technique, coupled with real enthusiasm and camaraderie as children valiantly cheered and supported their fellow house mates to heat victory. The eventual winning house was Beech! The event saw a return to Oakfields of some very special guests: Gracie-Mae Martin (Sports Captain 2013-14) and Harry Millsom (Head Boy 2012-2013), who gave a splendid medley display to conclude the afternoon events to raise the aspirations and expectations of our children further.

Sincerest thanks to Miss Sabrina Mercury and Mr Jake Matthews for organising the afternoon's events.



SPORT

Yet another victory for Oakfields' amazing Year 3 & 4 rugby team on Wednesday. More than thirty-two teams participated in fiercely fought battles at Upminster Rugby Club, competing for the ultimate title – to be crowned Year 3 & 4 2017 rugby champions.

Ably captained by Year 4's Isabella, Oakfields kept a clean sheet with every victory; also managing to secure bonus points to add to their final tally. Such a wonderful conclusion to yet another successful term for Oakfields. A big thank you to Mrs Pickard for sending us these super photos so quickly! Ad victoriam ... audere est facere (in victory – to dare is to do).



What a proud moment for Team Oakfields (Sophie (Captain), Amelia, Declan, Jacob, David and Toby) when they reached the semi-finals of this year's Quicksticks Hockey Competition at Coopers Coborn School earlier this month. Designed to introduce young people to the game of hockey, Quicksticks is 4-a-side, can be played on any surface and uses a larger, lighter and safer ball.

Team Oakfields performed particularly well on a bright, sunny day. After playing some fantastic defensive and attacking in the Pool stages, Oakfields found themselves with 3 wins out of 4 and the opportunity to progress towards the Quarter Finals after defeating Broadford 2 -1. With Semi-finals against our toughest opposition St Joseph's and a very nervy start, Oakfields allowed St Joseph's to cruise into the lead again. Oakfields showed fantastic work rate and discipline to try to get back into the game but unfortunately the sun had decided to set on Oakfields this time. Well done Toby for Player of

the Day, and also to Team Oakfields who received a special award for fantastic teamwork.

On Friday 17th, children from Year 4 (Abigail, Isobel, Aaron and Alexander) & 5 (Eliza, Atifah, Harshaan and David) children competed in the Havering Sports Collective Key Skill Gymnastics Competition at Emerson Park Secondary School. They learnt and then performed three routines: body management, floor exercises and vault in front of the competing schools and judges. Our children once again proved how amazing they truly are by demonstrating all of our School Values: Discipline, Passion, Curiosity, Humility and Work Rate.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

BEDAZZLED. LAMDA Results. Bedazzling results just received. Year 5 Davina (Merit - Grade 1), Year 4 Emily and Abigail (Distinction - Stage 2) and Year 3 Anita and Year 2 Maria (Distinction - Stage 1) following their verse and prose examinations in February. Thank you so much to their teachers – Rose and Tamara, fantastic achievement. Children - look forward to being presented with your Awards in assembly in the new term!



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