

Trust Termly Newsletter

December 2023



The 'wonderful everyday'

On the following pages, each school has shared the significant events from the term to give you a taste of what is going on in each of our fantastic schools.

But, I am going to start by celebrating the 'wonderful everyday' that you create for your children in your schools. (Making no apologies for shamelessly stealing the tag line from a very well-known Swedish furniture retailer!) It is every day that you make a difference to the pupils you are working with, either directly or indirectly, and it is every day that you create an inspiring and engaging learning environment for your pupils.

Nothing is more motivating than achieving success, but surely for one exception. That is knowing that you have enabled that success! Seeing the powerful reward the children get from learning something new, feeling safe and being part of a community that cares about them and wants them to have every opportunity in life, is what drives us all on.

I have had the privilege of spending time in your schools this term, and it has ensured that I never forget why we are all here. Whether it was seeing the year 3 children's glee at reconstructing Stone Henge out of custard creams at The Willows, or watching the Year 6 pupils finding the value of 'x' in missing angles with such confidence, at Handford Hall, it was the engagement and the joy of learning that struck me.

You all work so hard every day, I hope you take time over the Christmas break to remember the richness you are adding to pupils' lives on each of those days. Having a Year 2 pupil read me her story at Springfield Infants with such pride and confidence; watching the Year 5 pupils set about their filtering investigations at Halifax with such focus; observing a 2-year-old in the nursery at Grace Cook, discovering that he could make a musical instrument play louder by hitting it harder; and discussing, at length, the meaning and choice of vocabulary for a historic text with Year 6 pupils at the Grange, told me just how much they all love and value their schools.

Please don't just take my word for it either. I had the privilege of sitting in a room of 15 headteachers and 4 directors from the Unity Schools Partnership as they discussed and reflected upon their observations of pupils' everyday experiences at Brooklands. And to quote them directly, **'Wow! Genuinely wow!'**

We have so much to be proud of, and we want to keep building on this for our children. That is why the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) made up of your headteachers, CFO and I have been working hard to set out our ambitions for our schools in the future. We want a trust that sustains the highest possible standards and expectations for our pupils by: working together to drive school improvement; setting the benchmark for adaptive teaching and providing an inclusive provision that ensures we meet the needs of all our pupils to the very best of our abilities; and being the employer of choice, by offering you the opportunities for development within your career. We also have ambitions for what might seem less exciting aspects of school life, but will ensure that we sustain a safe and well-maintained environment for us all to work in. I sincerely hope that you start to see and feel the benefits from these plans in the coming months and years.

But for now, thank you so much for your hard work this term, enjoy the stories from across our schools below and have a very well-earned rest.

Wishing you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Alastair Heath-Robinson
CEO



Grace Cook Primary School and Nursery



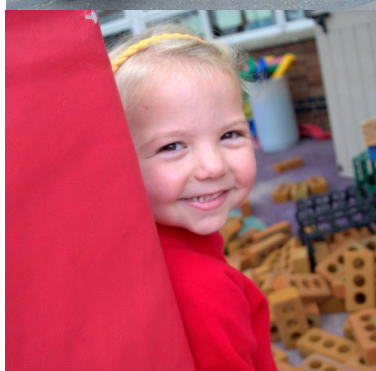
A magical end to the term for the pupils of Grace Cook Primary school. Also, a Grace Cook first! All children and families were invited to St Peter and St Mary's church, Stowmarket to our very first Christmas Carol Concert. The children learnt a number of songs linked to the Christmas story, shared readings to accompany this and were joined by over 300 family members to enjoy the experience. We were also lucky enough to witness the Stowmarket Christmas Tree festival that is currently taking place with over 300 trees decorated to the theme of Christmas carols. Including our own pictured below.

Merry Christmas from us all at Grace Cook Primary School and Nursery.

Springfield Infant School & Nursery



As a school we were awarded a prestigious, 'Opal Platinum Play Award' in November 2023, something we have been working towards throughout the last school year. Springfield Infant School achieved a mark of 95%, this means we are in the top 0.5% of UK schools for the quality of the play, that we provide for all our children. We worked with OPAL Play, designing new areas and zoning off the play spaces into different sections. The children now have access to the wildlife area, football, bikes, trikes and scooters, music and dressing up, sandpits, mud kitchens as well as small world and art every playtime. Our appreciation goes out to all the staff who manage and maintain the equipment every day, along with our special thanks to Miss C, who has worked tirelessly organising staff and resources to enhance the children's play.



Brooklands Primary School

Brooklands takes great pride in being able to regularly share and learn with others. It is good to see how Brooklands embraces opportunities to share their best practice both at a national and international level. The school frequently receives

visits from other school leaders looking to learn from what they have to offer in terms of exceptional and innovative practice. Recent visitors, this term, have been interested to learn more about Brooklands curriculum design and delivery, seeing first hand, how the different subjects are being taught across the school.

Earlier this month Brooklands hosted eight schools from different areas of the country, including Norfolk, London and Essex. During the day they visited lessons, talked to teachers and leaders, saw pupils learning and heard directly from pupils themselves. Brooklands has also hosted over 20 school leaders from across one multi-academy trust (covering Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk) to see and learn from their Early Years practice.

If you interested in giving Brooklands a visit, please get in touch!



WHERE LEARNING IS UNSTOPPABLE AND ASPIRATIONS HAVE NO LIMITS

Halifax Primary School

Let the music play...our musical opportunities...

Like all OMAT schools, Halifax is very proud to offer a varied curriculum underpinned by experiences for all our children during the time they are with us. We are looking forward to celebrating the festive season with our Musical Extravaganza, where all the pupils will perform for each other in our last Assembly of the year. We will have so much talent on show, with each year group singing festive songs, our Year 5's performing a song on the clarinet, our violin and brass players showing off their skills and our Ukulele Club leading a good old sing-song too!

At Halifax, all pupils take part in highly participatory music lessons, with every child singing and playing instruments in the course of their lessons. We have enjoyed being part of the OMAT Carol Concert in December and are looking forward to participating in the 8000



Student Year 6: "I love playing my violin, because you get to learn it, practise at home and learn new things. The sound can be squeaky, but when you get to play it better, it's a lovely sound!"

strong children's choir at the London O2 arena in January. We are also fortunate to have some specialist teachers teaching a variety of instruments.

But don't take our word for it, here are some pictures and quotes from the children.



Student Year 6, Trombone: "I love playing the trombone because once I've learnt to play it completely, I can play what I want! I'm going to teach my brothers to play."

Student Year 6, Cornet: "It's inspirational to all kids younger than us who might want to play. I love playing instruments and I can show this to the people I'm connected to and love."



Multiple Intelligence

People SMART and importance of Mindfulness

At Handford Hall our children learnt about the importance of everyday practice of Stopping and Noticing breaks to capture an important life-skill: being able to step back from the busy-ness of habitual activity and the relentless chatter of the mind. Our Enrichment Opportunities offer greater space and clarity to make choices that support well-being of all pupils and staff in variety of ways.

At Handford Hall we are very proud of our fantastic Enrichment Curriculum, which provides experiences beyond the classroom.

Universal cultural capital is defined as the accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that a pupil can draw upon and which demonstrates their cultural awareness, knowledge and competence; it is one of the key ingredients our pupils will draw upon to be successful in society, their career and the world of work.

At Handford Hall Primary School we work tirelessly to build our pupil aspirations and expose them to a range of experiences to help them achieve goals and become successful.

We recognise that for pupils to aspire and be successful academically and in the wider areas of their lives, they need to be given rich and sustained opportunities to develop their global understanding of the world and see all the opportunities it has to offer.

There is no stopping us!

Exploring Jazz

Year 5 Jazz Project at Ipswich School

Handford Hall Year 5 students explored different types of music genres and worked alongside the award-winning jazz pianist, composer and educator, Pete Letanka. In the series of workshops, they learned to play several pieces of jazz music and performed in a concert at Ipswich School.



WHERE LEARNING IS UNSTOPPABLE AND ASPIRATIONS HAVE NO LIMITS

The Willows Primary School

What a fantastic start to the year it has been at The Willows! Much has changed since the summer and I am so incredibly proud of how the children have adapted to new staff, routines and expectations; growing in independence, confidence and resilience every day. So many children have risen to the challenge we set for them to be 'Ready, Safe & Respectful' and it has been fantastic to see their smiles as we have celebrated the huge effort they have made.

Engagement has been a key theme this term, with staff working hard to make learning adventurous, memorable and meaningful.

In **Reception** work on emotions led to some beautiful birds inspired by the book 'Love is...

Year 1 have enjoyed exploring our outdoor spaces searching for British wildlife and learning about the parts of plants.

Year 2 have been inspired by some stunning starts involving letters from crayons and a visit from Paddington which have led to some wonderful writing.

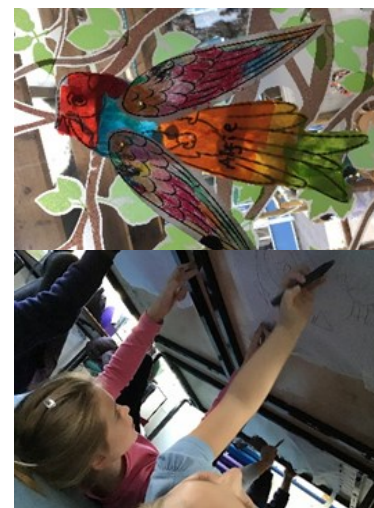
Year 3 enjoyed a day in the Stone Age, tackling mammoths, building fires and homes and creating cave paintings by laying under their desks!

Year 4 became Anglo-Saxons for the day, creating their own spears and cooking on an open fire. They are definitely our future MasterChef champions, cooking homemade alternatives to their processed favourites!

Year 5 welcomed the local police officers to find out more about what they do, how they can help and taking advice for our own future choices.

A real highlight of the term was watching our choir made up of **Year 6** and **Year 4** children perform at the trust Christmas concert. They were a shining example of all we are striving to achieve for every child in our school; displaying confidence and a genuine pride in themselves and their work.

We move into the new year filled with positivity, hope and expectation; looking forward to the next chapter of the new story we are writing at The Willows.



Grange Community Primary School



Almost time for some rest, time with family and enjoying the festive period. But first, let's reflect on this fun filled, action-packed, busy term at Grange...

The term began in full speed, well...two wheels. The Tour of Britain rolled through Felixstowe, Mrs A and the children created some wonderful land art which was captured by a drone and it even made the paper!

Yr 6 have covered some miles this term, using many forms of transport. Once again, they visited PGL Bawdsey via the Felixstowe Ferry. They spent 5 days

enjoying the adventurous and problem-solving activities, not to mention the arrival of Storm Babet – so they had to batten down the hatches while the waves crashed onto the quay.

Continued...

WHERE LEARNING IS UNSTOPPABLE AND ASPIRATIONS HAVE NO LIMITS



Later this term they ventured into the heart of London to immerse themselves in the rich history of the Tower of London where they were treated to a 40 gun salute! There was wide-eyed wonder at the world-famous collection of sacred and ceremonial artifacts amongst the Crown Jewels.

There was grisly delight when being regaled with tales of crime and punishment from times gone by. The subsequent walking tour of the Westminster area took in such famous landmarks, as Westminster Abbey, Horse Guard's Parade and Buckingham Palace. The opportunity to see so many iconic venues, up close was a hugely memorable experience for all.

The past week has been a festive treat, with a wonderful Christmas Play 'Hey Ewe' performed by Year 2. The whole school was baaamy for this original play told from the perspective of a curious sheep.

Our Reception Robins put on a wonderful Christmas singalong to the school and their families, sporting some very festive Christmas jumpers.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



OMAT Christmas Concert

A final word of thanks to all the pupils, staff and families that attended and made this year's OMAT Christmas concert at the Corn Exchange on 6th December, such a memorable night with particular thanks to Mr H for co-ordinating the event and for being the compère on the evening.



Merry Christmas!

WHERE LEARNING IS UNSTOPPABLE AND ASPIRATIONS HAVE NO LIMITS