

Weekly Newsletter 26th January 2026



Right of the Fortnight: Article 30:

Your Right to Use Your Own Language



Dear Parents/Carers,

Although January may feel like it's been a long month, another week has flown by and, as always, the children and staff have been really busy. Here at Oakdene we are **passionate** about providing an **exceptional, innovative education** that **inspires** and **empowers** our pupils, in every class, every day! We aim to develop **confident, resilient, independent, lifelong learners** and this has been evident in all of the lessons I have visited this week. I am always blown away by the children's articulation about their **learning**. The children are always so proud too!

Staffing Update

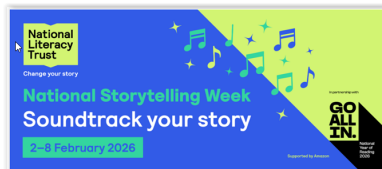
Congratulations to our Little Sycamores Teaching Assistant, Naomi Crawford, on the safe arrival of **baby Florie**, weighing 7lb 5oz.

We would also like to share that **Mrs Helen Rowe** will be retiring at February half term. Mrs Rowe currently teaches two days a week, providing PPA cover in EYFS, and has dedicated an incredible forty years to education, working in England, Scandinavia and the Far East. We thank her sincerely for her outstanding service and wish her all the very best for the future.

Important Dates

Please double-check the dates on the '**Dates for Your Diary**' page, as the **Y2, Y4 and Y6 open morning dates** have changed. We apologise for any inconvenience caused. Please remember school will be closed for pupils on **Friday, 30th January 2026** for teacher training. Enjoy the extra long weekend and we look forward to seeing you on **Monday, 2nd February 2026**.

National Storytelling Week 2026 runs from Monday, 2nd to Sunday, 8th February. This year's **theme, Soundtrack Your Story**, celebrates the powerful connection between **music, words** and **imagination**. It's a wonderful opportunity for children to explore stories through rhythm, sound and creativity, helping to strengthen their love of reading, writing and oral storytelling. The children will be taking part in workshops, activities and celebrations designed to inspire every young storyteller. Keep reading!



Finally, last Friday we received a wonderful surprise, a personalised letter from the **Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson**. This remarkable achievement is a reminder of what makes our school such a **special place**: teamwork, kindness, and a shared commitment to helping every child shine. **Well done** to our whole school community! **You can read the letter on the reverse of this page.** PLEASE TURN OVER.

Mrs E Bramley and Mrs S Osborne

A message from Bridget Phillipson



Dear Elizabeth,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at Oakdene Primary Academy achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

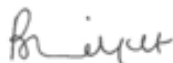
This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader - sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

There are real opportunities available for you to support improvement for a wider group of pupils including through:

- engaging actively with [your region's RISE networks](#) and partnering with nearby schools and trusts;
- contributing to regional roundtables and professional communities to spread the approaches that are working in your context; and
- sustaining excellence by continuing to focus on disadvantaged pupils

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your staff and pupils. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to raise standards for all.

Your sincerely,


Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education

Dates For Your Diary - Spring Term

Tues 27th Jan	AM Y2 Pirate ABC Sports Festival @ Durham University, Stockton
Fri 30th Jan	PD Day 4 for Staff Training (school closed for pupils)
Week Commencing 2nd Feb 'National Storytelling Week'	
Tues 3rd Feb	9.10am Open Morning for Parents/Carers of Reception Pupils Y4 visit Hartlepool Power Station
Wed 4th Feb	PM 15 pupils from Y3, Y4 & Y5 attend Active Learning Competition @ Durham University, Stockton

Week Commencing 9th Feb 'Children's Mental Health Week'	
Mon 9th Feb	Safer Internet Day - Online Behaviour Workshops Delivered by Bigfoot Arts Education to Y3-Y6 pupils.
Tues 10th Feb	KS2 Dance Festival @ Durham University, Stockton
Fri 13th Feb	9.10am Open Morning for Parents/Carers of Y5 Pupils Y5/Y6 Football Tournament @ Stockton Town FC
Mon 16th Feb	Launch Readathon
Tues 17th Feb	Chinese New Year & Shrove Tuesday 9.10am Open Morning for Parents/Carers of Y1 Pupils
Wed 18th Feb	Y1 visit Shildon Railway Museum & UV Dodgeball
Fri 20th Feb	Break up for half term



HALF TERM

Monday 23rd February - Friday 27th February
Monday 2nd March - Children Return to School

Tues 3rd March	9.10am Open Morning for Parents/Carers of Y2 Pupils
Wed 4th March	Careers in Medical Workshops PM Y5/Y6 Netball Competition
Thurs 5th March	World Book Day & Readathon Celebration
Week commencing 9th March Launch of British Science Week & Careers Week	
Tues 10th March	AM - Curling event @ Durham University, Stockton
Weds 11th March	9.10am Open Morning for Parents/Carers of Y3 Pupils Y5SW attend Trust Residential at Streonshalh Field Study Centre, East Whitby Primary Academy, Whitby.
Tues 17th March	9.10am Open Morning for Parents/Carers of Y4 Pupils
Wed 18th March	Wheelchair Basketball
Fri 20th March	Red Nose Comic Relief Charity Day
Mon 23rd March	World Maths Day & KS1 Theatre visit 'Gruffalo's Child'
Wed 25th March	9.10am Open Morning for Parents/Carers of Y6 Pupils
Fri 27th March	30 KS2 girls attend Wildcats Football @ Stockton Town FC
W/c 30th March	Consultation Evenings for Parent/Carers
Tues 31st March	PM 10 pupils from Y5/Y6 Hockey @ Norton Sports Complex
Thurs 2nd April	9.10am Open Morning for Parents/Carers of Nursery Pupils Children break up for Easter

EASTER HOLIDAYS

Friday, 3rd April - Friday, 17th April

Monday, 20th April Summer Term commences—children return to school



Congratulations to y4 pupil **Niamh Bellew**, who has achieved her **Stage 6 Trampoline Proficiency Award!**

Stage 6 recognises strong **control**, **coordination** and **confidence** on the trampoline, including skills such as **shaped jumps**, **seat landings** and the **safe linking** of movements.



Well done to **Dylan Allon** in Year 2, who was named **Man of the Match** in **Wolviston U7s'** first cup game of the season last Sunday. He showed great teamwork, supported his teammates brilliantly, and was strong in defence during their impressive **10-0** win.

A fantastic effort, Dylan!



Y2 pupil **Harry Robinson** was presented with the '**Man of the Match Trophy**'.

He was awarded it for playing well in a range of positions in his recent match. He even managed to get an assist when he was playing the position of goal keeper!

Well done Harry!

Year 4 enjoyed a fantastic visit to **York Chocolate Story** as part of their **Ancient Maya** topic. The children were taken on an exciting tour of the **museum**, where they discovered the **history of chocolate** and its journey from the **Maya civilisation** to modern-day treats. A highlight of the day was making their very own chocolate lolly. They were also fascinated to learn about **xocolatl**, the very first chocolate drink created by the Maya. The children had the opportunity to make and taste this traditional drink, giving them a real flavour of ancient Maya culture.

It was a **memorable** and **enriching** experience for everyone.



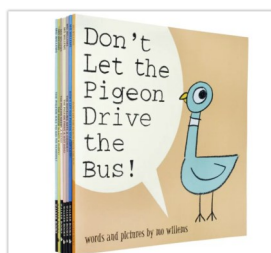
Recommended Read

This week's recommended read is from

Mrs Jackson

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!

by **Mo Willems**



This is a funny and lively picture book that quickly becomes a favourite with young readers. The story follows a very determined pigeon who desperately wants to drive a bus—and tries every trick to convince the reader to say yes!

With simple illustrations, playful humour & opportunities for children to join in by saying "No!", this book is a reminder about sticking to the rules.

There are 7 books in the series.

Week Ending 23rd January 2026

Stars of the Week at Oakdene Primary Academy

Class	Star of the Week 	Star Reader 	Star Writer 	Star Mathematicia 
Nursery Mrs Guest	Vinnie Manze	Ralphie Dodds-Day	Maisy Atkinson	Sophie Balogun
YRC Miss Dixon	River French	Mabel Dodds-Day	Oliver Metcalfe	Jayden Serrechia
YRK Miss Dignen	Douglas Chocholko	Ebony-Rae Lane	Lottie Cooper	Mason Walker
Y1B Mrs Brown	Annie Tunney	Harriet Smith	Joey Blasco	Lexie Manze
Y2D Mrs Durham	Scarlett Van Wyk	Louie Walker	Lucas Lee	Dylan Allon
Mrs Thompson	Vinnie Westwood	Jack Bourne	Harry Robinson	Willow Earle
Y3H Mr Horkan	Amani Mohammad	Ayla-Mae Lane	Henry Brown	Ariana Wilson-Hill
Y4R Miss Robinson	Leo Archer	Tia Cain	Lily Archer	Freddie Bell
Y5SW Mrs Smith	Gracie Dale	Daisy Thompson	Megan Squires	Jake Marshall
Mrs Wilson	Harley Wallace	Aalia Dobson	Edward Gardiner-Jukes	Anna Cooley
Y6C Mrs Cowan	Skye Stainsby	Ava Hammond	Max Devlin	Logan Daniels-Owen
Y6M Mr McConnell	Kain Carmichael	Autumn Lonsdale	Archie Purvis	Landon Quinn



YR & KS1
Isaac Stewart

Y3 & Y4
Aiden Turner

Y5 & Y6
Scarlett Allon