



# Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust

## Winter Newsletter – December 2025

### Message from Lesley West, CEO.

Welcome to the Owlcotes winter newsletter which provides a brief 'round up' of some of the events that have happened in our schools during this term.

Owlcotes MAT continues to grow. We are a now community of 9 primary schools. In September, we welcomed Hovingham Primary School in Harehills to the Owlcotes Trust. Hovingham Primary is a wonderful school with a determination to achieve the very best for its pupils and the school community and we are delighted to be working together in close partnership.

Throughout this term I have been privileged to visit each Owlcotes school. It has been great to see and hear about some of the fabulous things that have been happening in our schools and to talk to staff and children about their learning.

I am, as always, impressed by all our schools, by the commitment of staff to provide a full and engaging curriculum for all our pupils, including trips, visits and visitors, indoor and outdoor experiences and participation in music and sporting events. It is fantastic to see how each school is creating wider opportunities for our children to experience life outside of the classroom.

As a Trust we are also committed to improving our school buildings and learning environments and we have completed a number of building projects to improve our school environments including playground improvements, library upgrades, redecoration and roof replacement work.

There are some changes for 2026: Rob Winstanley, Assistant Head at Pudsey Primrose Hill will leave Owlcotes at the end of this term to take up a promotion opportunity within another Academy Trust. Rob has made a fabulous contribution to Primrose Hill and to the other schools in our trust over the years, and he will be missed. We wish him every success in the future.

Looking ahead to 2026 we are looking forward to a number of things. We are excited about the annual Owlcotes Literature Festival in February; and we are planning the annual Owlcotes Debating Competition at the end of the summer term.

I hope you enjoy reading the rest of this newsletter, which includes information about some of the events that have happened in our individual schools.

If you want to keep up to date with what is happening or find out more about Owlcotes Trust you can do so by visiting our website: [www.owlcotesmat.org](http://www.owlcotesmat.org) or by following us on X [@owlcotesMAT](https://twitter.com/owlcotesMAT).

Thank you to all of the staff; pupils and families at Owlcotes schools.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year and I look forward to working with everyone again next term.



## News from Pudsey Primrose Hill Primary School

### Year 4 Mission Out - A sense of Adventure

Year 4 embraced their sense of adventure during their school trip to Mission Out. Not only did we work on our cooperation through team building games, we also jumped from huge heights and sailed across windy waters! Children took part in a range of challenges and activities including; balancing on a bench while having to arrange themselves in height order and not fall off, defuse a 'bomb' by lifting it up using 2 long pieces of rope, jumping off of 3 different sized platforms, sailing a raft to an island and back, mini golf, giant swings and an assault course! Everyone did amazingly!

### Poetry Workshop

After launching our Poetry Slam on Monday, Year 3 had a wonderful visit from poet Andy Tooze, who ran an exciting poetry workshop. He shared some of his own poems with the children and helped them create their own animal poems. The classes also learnt more about what makes an effective performance. The final of the whole school poetry slam was once again amazing! We marvelled at the courage, confidence and incredible oracy skills our pupils displayed. They performed to a big audience and our staff team who judged had the tricky task of deciding one winner per phase.

### Bee Update

Mrs Alderson and Mrs Vickers delivered assemblies across school about bees. Pupils enjoyed an informative, fast paced session learning all about our own apiary. They learnt about Gareth Walsh our beekeeper, types of honeybees, their life span and how bees make honey. Each class have had a jar of Primrose Hill honey delivered to their classroom this week. If they haven't had chance to taste it yet then they will soon! Our pupils have been challenged to compose a description of the taste, texture smell, and colour of the honey. They have also been asked to design a label for our next harvest of honey in 2026.



### Year 6 Residential

This week children in Year 6 attended an action-packed 3 day residential at Robinwood, Todmorden. They took part in wealth of indoor and outdoor activities designed to challenge their teamwork, problem solving skills, agility and strength. They have built self-esteem, resilience and effective communication skills whilst completing climbing, canoeing, archery, Nightline, Piranha Pool, Leap of Faith to name just a few... They returned to school exhausted, happy and with memories to last a lifetime! Well done Y6!



### Protecting Our Planet Day

As part of our new climate change curriculum, we had a whole school Super Learning Day to support our climate change scientific knowledge. Classes discussed climate change topics and produced labels, explanations and persuasive posters. Y1 discussed ways that we can protect our planet e.g., picking up litter, asking to walk to the shop instead of driving. We looked at a book called 'Weather: My First Experiments' and talked about the difference between weather and climate. We then worked in groups of 2 to read statements and decide whether it was

describing the weather or climate. Y6 spent an engaging day learning how to Protect Our Planet! They got to grips with scientific terms like the atmosphere, climate change, and greenhouse gas emissions. Through fun and informative videos, the children learned about the Earth's natural ways of cleaning the air, focusing on how growing trees, healthy soil, and oceans help remove greenhouse gases. The day ended with them putting their persuasive skills to the test by creating eye-catching posters to share their vital message!



### **Nursery Outdoor Area Revamp!**

Learning through high quality play outdoors plays an important role in children's development. Children in nursery are enjoying their outdoor area being further developed with a focus on the natural world, their senses and how we move. Mrs Alderson and Mrs Vickers are incorporating children's interests, and knowledge and skills we recognise children need greater opportunities to experience, as they explore and play outside. When the project is ready for children to use, we'll share more about this exciting development.



### **News from Pudsey Waterloo Primary School**

We are excited to launch the Waterloo Family Team, a friendly group of staff members dedicated to strengthening our school community and supporting every family. You will see members of this team wearing recognisable blue vests in the playground or near the gates at the start and end of the school day. Their primary role is to be an accessible, friendly face - someone available for you to talk to about anything, whether it's a quick question, a small concern, or just a moment to check in. Please feel free to approach any member of the Waterloo Family Team; they are here to listen, help connect you with the right resources, and ensure our school is a welcoming and supportive environment for all.



Alison Walker



Hayley Hainsworth



Rebecca Macdonald



Sue Nichol



### **New Pitch**

We are thrilled to announce the official opening of our fantastic new AstroTurf pitch on the school playground! This will be great for a wide range of activities, including quality P.E. lessons, organised games during playtimes, and a wide range of after-school sports clubs all year round. We need to say a massive thanks to the brilliant Friends of Waterloo, whose exceptional hard work and fundraising paid for this wonderful addition. Thank you, Friends of Waterloo, for giving our children such an amazing resource!

### OPaL Lunchtimes

The children have been absolutely loving their lunchtimes and the new OPaL resources. They've been having a great time on the new swings and climbing ropes, and the den-building has been a huge hit. They've also been busy with some great craft activities outside. Please remember that we play outside in all weather, so please ensure your child has suitable footwear and a waterproof coat to enjoy their outdoor time to the fullest.



### Flamenco Dancing

This week the Year 4 – 6 children really enjoyed the flamenco workshop by West End Schools. It was an interactive way for them to learn about Art Appreciation for the Owlcotes Elements and about Spanish culture. The whole session was buzzing with energy as they jumped into the action. They especially loved trying to get their fancy flamenco arms just right. You could feel their excitement as they stomped their feet hard to traditional Spanish music, which connected them to the dance's passion and history.

### Yoga

Sam from Happy Kids Yoga visited our school to lead a yoga class for Y2. She guided the children through various yoga positions, woven into a captivating story about a lion with a thorn in its paw. The session emphasised breath work for relaxation, and the children particularly enjoyed the bee and lion breaths.



### Mosque Visit

Year 4 had a fabulous visit to the Mosque. The children thoroughly enjoy learning about different religions and the visit was a great way for them to see and hear how people worship at the mosque. We would like to thank all the staff and volunteers for giving up their time to accompany the children. As always, we were very proud of the children's behaviour on this trip - they made Waterloo proud!

### Yorvik Viking Trip

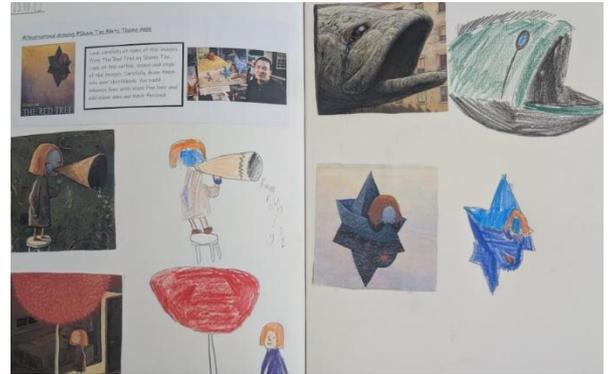
Year 5 had a great time during our visit to York as part of our Viking learning journey. After a long coach journey there, they were excited to get stuck into the many activities we had planned. Whilst at the Jorvik Viking Centre, they travelled back in time to take a tour of Jorvik in 960 AD. They then visited the museum where they saw lots of fascinating Viking artefacts - the world's largest fossilised human poo being a highlight for many! Our next destination was Dig, where they had the chance to hold Viking weapons and armour. They also acted as archaeologists by searching the ground for hidden artefacts. Overall, the children were amazing and the visit has really helped deepen their understanding of history.



## News from Calverley Parkside Primary School

### Arts Theme Week 2025

For our first theme week of the year, children explored the work of Australian artist, author, and filmmaker Shaun Tan. Pupils explored drawing techniques, symbolism, and visual storytelling through Tan's captivating illustrated books and surreal imagery. Activities emphasized core artistic techniques, cross-curricular links in emotional and visual literacy, geography studies of Australia and literacy activities that used Tan's artwork as a stimulus for descriptive and narrative writing. It was a rich and inspiring experience that fostered creativity, critical thinking, and a deeper appreciation for the visual arts among all our students. See some examples of pupils' amazing work below.



### Bikeability Success for Year 6

Our Year 6 pupils have successfully completed their Bikeability sessions this term, getting out and about on their



bikes to learn crucial road safety skills. The children learned how to safely cycle on the roads, covering essential topics such as lane discipline, correct signalling, and other key lessons necessary to ride out confidently and safely. The trainers were incredibly impressed with our children's excellent behaviour and attentive listening skills throughout the training. See some photos of our accomplished cyclists below.

### Active Wellbeing Experiences

Our children have been loving their active wellbeing experiences, a full day of enrichment every two weeks for each class in school. Miss Parker has been loving driving these sessions and is excited with some of the upcoming community projects and other

enhancements we are planning. I am not sure I would have tried the Reception mud cakes, but I would have enjoyed Y2s sensory experience on the park! The past term has been filled with such a range of rich activities and experiences that are in addition to the curriculum offer.



### Children in Need - Pudsey Bear visit!

The children had a brilliant start to the day for Children in Need, cheering on Gayle and Roxy's three-legged walk, which was a fantastic moment. We featured on Instagram and Facebook on the day, with a video of the children's amazing cheers. A

huge thank you to everyone who came to join in the event and make it such a memorable success.

### **Year 1 Zoolab Visit**

It was a great day when Zoolab visited the school! Our pupils were thrilled to get up close and personal with a range of fascinating animals, including tarantulas, snakes, and giant snails. The children learned so much about these creatures, and we particularly loved their imaginative description of the snake's skin as being 'like feeling orbeez'! Despite a few nervous moments, everyone showed great courage in overcoming their fears to meet our new friends.



### **EYFS Coffee Morning**

Thank you to all the families who joined us for our recent Community Coffee Morning! It was wonderful to see so many of you in school, spending time with your children and enjoying delicious cakes together. We are incredibly grateful for your generous cake donations; the money raised will go directly towards updating and enhancing our EYFS area.



### **Year 1 – Local Area Walk**

Year 1 enjoyed a wonderful walk exploring the local area of Calverley. The children navigated their way around the streets, spotting and discussing key local buildings, including the library. They also made excellent use of the new map outside the school to help them identify different landmarks and learn more about their community.

### **Year 4 Visit to Leeds Art Gallery**

Our Year 4 Class visited Leeds Art Gallery. The aim of the trip was to familiarise the year four children with a gallery setting before they make their own 'pocket art galleries' for their first art project this half term. The gallery staff were so impressed with how engaged and interested the children were. We were so proud of their questions, their curiosity and their behaviour on the trip. Well done Year 4.

### **Year 2 Walk to the Woods**

Year 2 went on an adventure to Calverley Woods. The purpose of the visit was to give children a learning experience for their 'recount' unit in their writing lessons. Children were encouraged to explore what they could see, hear, and touch to inspire them to create vivid descriptions in their writing; we can't wait to see their outcomes!

### **News from Armley Park Primary School**

Year 5 and Year 6 participated in a project with artists as part of Leeds Light Night. The children created images about how they like our city to be in the future and these were displayed in Wellington Place. They used special paint which when used with a light source behind, looked incredible!





We received a letter from Buckingham Palace! At the end of the summer term, Year 1 children had sent King Charles some letters about London and they were very excited to get a response.

As part of our festive celebrations, a group of children visited our local care home, Reivaulx House, to help the residents to decorate their Christmas trees.

Year 6 visited the Yorkshire Dales to look at different features of rivers to help them with their knowledge and understanding of the Geography topic.



## News from Manor Wood Primary School

### Foundation Stage

A truly magical and busy Autumn Term we have shared in our Foundation Stage. We are delighted that all our children, both new and returning, have settled into their Nursery and Reception routines amazingly well, forming strong bonds with staff and peers and demonstrating resilience and enthusiasm every day.



Our community spirit has shone through with our fantastic parental engagement events, including Stay and Shine to celebrate Diwali, and our recent Stay and Snow to welcome in the winter celebrations. The highlight of the season was undoubtedly our annual Christmas trip to The Green Moon, where the children loved meeting the woodland characters, exploring the exciting world of Swillygogs, and encountering the friendly dragon, Grimble Grumble. They showed great focus and teamwork while toasting marshmallows over the fire and created beautiful, magical wands from sticks they found.



We have seen remarkable progress across the unit, particularly with our Reception children who are flourishing in their early writing skills, consistently surprising us with their incredible sentence construction, labelling, and segmenting of sounds to express their ideas on paper.



We have embraced the natural world by exploring the changes in the seasons outdoors, and the children have skilfully used their woodwork skills to enhance our outdoor provision through bug hotels and bird houses. The children have also worked diligently on their observational drawing, capturing detail by focusing on natural objects like autumn leaves, conkers, and even the vegetables used in our cooking, enhancing their concentration, pencil control and beautiful watercolour techniques.

A final celebration has to be how incredibly hard our children have worked on their Nativity performance, which features a modern and playful twist, their musical skills and joy have sparkled and shone during rehearsals! We are so proud of everything they have achieved this term.

The Autumn term saw the arrival of the Owlcotes arts week. This was a fantastic week full of creativity, exploration and self-expression. The week was themed around a song by The Mowgli's called "I'm Good". Children learnt different parts to the song, danced along to and thought carefully about the words. They explored the theme of feeling good, identifying the things at home and at school that made them feel good. All children from our baby nest right through to Year 6 expressed these thoughts and feelings through a wonderful piece of art work. The fabulous outcomes are on display across the bridge in the main reception and through the corridors. During the week we had some visitors to enable children to try something new and feel good about themselves. Our visitors included 'Hip hop Phil' who showed our Upper Keystage 2 children how to break dance and express themselves. Steve from unbeatable energy worked with our foundation unit and Year 1 pupils using recycled materials to create music and with our Year 2, Year 3



and Year 4 completing a boomwhacker workshop creating music using plastic tubes. The week culminated in a display of art work and the production of a whole school music video to the song "I'm Good". It really is good to be at Manor Wood!



Year 5 have been learning all about the Rainforest. They have studied whereabouts in the world Rainforests are and what is contained within the biomes. They have learnt about the various species of animals you can find in the rainforest and the different layers that make their habitat. Year five made links to their Geography learning through literacy where they read 'The Explorer' by Katherine Rundell and wrote their own non-fiction information page about the Rainforest. Children also enjoyed a trip to Tropical world where they made comparisons to the biome that we live in and the tropical surroundings of the rainforest. We spent the time in Roundhay Park identifying trees and comparing our



experience at Tropical World.



Year 2 and Year 3 held sharing mornings at school inviting parents in to share some of their fantastic writing.

Year 2 had been studying 'The lonely beast' in English. The children learnt the story and thought carefully about the character and his feelings. They

then innovated the story thinking specifically about descriptive language and storytelling features. Children drafted and redrafted their parts of the story and published these in their own book. Children took great pride in sharing these stories with their grown-ups with a warm cup of chocolate and some cake.

Year 3 invited their parents into school to hear their persuasive adverts for visiting Paris. The children have studied 'A Walk in Paris by Salvatore Rubbino' where they focused on the setting and the language used within the text. Children used this knowledge to write their own persuasive writing to entice people to visit the city. Children were very proud of their writing and parents really enjoyed listening to their hard work.



## News from Spring Bank Primary School

### Bikeability

Towards the end of the last half term, our Year 6 cohort took part in the Bikeability program, and we couldn't be prouder of their achievements. The core focus of the week was building the practical skills and confidence necessary for the children to cycle to school safely. Every student proved to be an absolute superstar, tackling the challenges of road safety with maturity and focus.

The instructors were incredibly impressed, consistently singing the children's praises for their excellent manners and quick learning; as a result, every single child earned a special certificate to mark their success. Our Year 6s were a real credit to Spring Bank, representing both the school and their families brilliantly. We look forward to seeing more of our students commuting to school on two wheels!



### Year 3's Trip to Magna

Our Year 3 students had a truly "explosive" day out at the Magna Science Adventure Centre in Sheffield! The trip was centered around a hands-on Rocks and Volcanoes workshop, where the children turned into mini-geologists. They spent time investigating the different properties of various rock types and even put their engineering skills to the test by creating their own volcanoes.

The excitement continued as the children explored Magna's four famous elemental zones: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. The towering fire tornado was a clear favourite. Meanwhile, the water playground and the digging sites provided the perfect opportunity for sensory learning and discovery. It was wonderful to see every child from Spring Bank Primary embrace their curiosity and dive so enthusiastically into their science day out!

### Whole School Arts Week

Our whole school arts week was a vibrant explosion of colour, rhythm, and talent! The week kicked off with high energy as Northern Arts led dance workshops for every class, helping the children explore creativity through movement and rhythm. These musical vibes continued with bucket drumming—led by one of our talented parents for Years 4 and 5—while Year 6 took to the mic to experiment with their lyrical skills through rap and freestyle poetry. We were honoured to host a local artist who shared her professional portfolio with our younger students

and taught specialised drawing skills across the school. Other hands-on activities included Year 1 yarn-dyeing to create handmade dreamcatchers, and students exploring international culture by translating Chinese poetry and practising the intricate art of calligraphy. The week concluded with our very own Arts Museum, a proud moment where the children curated their work and welcomed the community to view the masterpieces they had worked so hard to create, truly transforming the corridors into a professional gallery.



## News from Morley Victoria Primary School

The Whole Child Approach at Morley Victoria continues to be further embedded into the school's offer to equip young people with social and emotional skills to cope with modern life both in and out of the classroom. This is reinforced by a strong PSHE curriculum, RSE offer, assemblies, and theme days like Anti-Bullying Week and Hello Yellow.

Key developments this year include the transformation of Mini Vic into a more usable space, and the ongoing love for the school's Guinea Pigs, Mario and Luigi. The Inclusion Team have been busy supporting children and families through group and 1:1 work, and the school continues to have a strong training offer for staff. Numerous Pupil Voice Groups are active, such as Eco Warriors and Digital Leaders. Community elements at Morley Victoria include the popular Greggs Breakfast Club, PFA events like the Christmas Fair and the Christmas Community Coffee Morning. We also have a wide variety of PE and Sports activities and clubs, including Ten Pin Bowling, Ice Skating, Podcast Club, and Science Club.

The children have settled well into their new classes. The School Development Plan is focused on five key areas: Oracy, Writing, Move and Learn, fine-tuning the curriculum, and Reading. This term we have had many Parent Events such as Meet the Teacher and Learning Review Meetings, alongside various Visits and Visitors like a Shakespeare Performance and a Great Fire of London Workshop. We have an extensive Music offer, including learning to play instruments like the Ukulele, Guitar, Glockenspiel and Violins, and preparation for Young Voices. The school's current Attendance percentage is just over 96%, with 149 children achieving 100% attendance, and a late gate is being used to improve punctuality. We have also had a packed Christmas, featuring Christmas Parties, the Christmas Fair, visits to the Leeds Christmas Market, Ice Skating, a visit to a live performance to The Snowman and Snowdog and visits from Santa!

## News from Fountain Primary School

We have had a very busy term at Fountain. Our children have experienced their first 'Wow days' of the year. Wow days are the start of our new topics the children get to be creative and try some skills that they will use later in the topic. The purpose of Wow day is to get the children excited about their learning, engaged in their topics and wanting to learn even more. Children travelled to the stone age in Year 6, scavenging and settling on the school field, to a Victorian classroom in Year 5, the classes in Year 4 were evacuated as War had broken out. The Year 3 class prepared for a Viking invasion, Year 2 learnt about the local area, exploring Morley, Year 1 were visited by some elderly relatives and Nursery and Reception found out about Fountain and the people who work here.



As part of their learning Year 5 went to Armley Mills and found about life as a Victorian child. Year 3 went to Jorvik and Dig to learn all about the Vikings and their invasion in York and how they lived. They even held some weapons and learned about how they attacked England. Year 4 went to Lotherton Hall and experienced being evacuees for the day as they learnt about World War 2. They practised Morse code, first aid and sang songs to pass the time during an air raid. Year 2 visited Bradford Industrial Museum where they went back in time and experienced what life was like for mill workers and their families.



Our first Owlcotes Arts week was a huge success! We studied artists such as Damien Hirst, Jackson Pollock and Cecily Brown. Our Artwork was amazing and we ended the week with a Performance Poetry Competition. The performances were inspiring. A huge well done to all the classes!



In October Nursery and Reception had their second wow day. Reception explored a dark classroom with their light sources and roleplayed being people who help us at night. Nursery explored outside and looked for changes that meant Autumn was here!



Antibullying week at Fountain was a great success. The NSPCC came to tell us about the 2Speak Out, Stay Safe2 campaign. Buddy and his friends helped us understand how we can stay safe.

Year 6 were lucky enough to visit Elliot Hudson. They watched a performance of Alice in Wonderland and learnt some circus skills.

The whole school were lucky enough to watch a live feed from Antarctica – the first time this event has ever been held. Our football teams have also been busy and played admirably, winning a number of matches.



Then Christmas arrived at Fountain! Our Christmas wow day was truly magical. Fountain travelled to Bethlehem in Early years, to Narnia in Year 3 and 4, and on the Polar Express in Year 5 and 6. In Year 1 and 2 they sorted out a Christmas calamity caused by Mog. Reception visited St Andrew's Church and told the story of the nativity and we had a pantomime for the whole school. Our choir and band performed for parents, we ended our term with Christmas assemblies and shared all our Christmas learning.

## News from Hovingham Primary School

### Looking Back on a Fantastic Term

This term has been packed with exciting trips, rich learning experiences, and tremendous progress from your children.

- A number of football matches for Y4, Y5 and Y6
- A group of our Y4/Y5 girls took part in a NW Girls Only Event
- A group of our Y6 boys took part in a Table Tennis Final

Year 2 had a fantastic visit to Skelton Grange Environment Centre where they finished their History learning about the Great Fire of London. Pupils took part in activities from learning about the fire triangle, putting out fires in a 'burning' building and making shelters. The pupils demonstrated their fantastic knowledge around the causes and effects of this event in history with such detail. A thoroughly great time had by all.

We've also had our Assessment Week, where we celebrated your child's progress and identified next steps to help them meet end-of-year expectations. In true Hovingham style, they gave it their very best! Teachers are now busy planning how to close any learning gaps moving forward.

### **Parent Engagement**

This term we've had our first Parent Open Morning of the academic year; parents got the chance to come into classrooms and look at their children's work; and our first Parent Consultation sessions of the year.

Can you believe we're already at the end of the autumn term? What an incredible journey it has been! This week marks the busiest—and most magical—time of the year, filled with singing, performing, and celebrating together. These moments are extra special because they allow us to welcome your support and love as families. Your children absolutely light up when they see you in the audience!

And of course... a special visit from Santa! Every child will receive a gift, and each family will take home a festive hamper on Friday—a little something to share the joy and warmth of the season.

### **Wishing You a Wonderful Christmas**

As we wrap up the term, we want to wish you all a joyful Christmas break. However, you celebrate, may it be filled with peace, love, and happiness.