



Oaklands FAQs

How early do I need to register my child?

Please register as early as possible as demand is high at our 3 main entry points; some children are even registered before they are born!

What age can my child start?

A child can join Lower Kindergarten at the start of term in which they turn 3.

If my child is due to start in September in Reception, when do you conduct the taster/assessment session?

Children are invited to school during the previous November.

What does the taster/assessment session look like?

The children are invited to attend in small groups. A selection of play based activities are on offer alongside some focused numeracy and fine motor tasks. The group also listens to a story.

We are looking at their characteristics – are they curious, independent, sociable?

Children attending the taster sessions for Reception places remain with Mrs Potts, Head of EYFS, and Miss Aston, Upper Kindergarten Co-ordinator, whereas parents remain with their child for LK and UK sessions.

How exactly do the sessions in LK/UK run? Can I add extra sessions?

We ask that your child attends for a minimum 3 mornings in LK and 5 sessions in UK, 3 of which must be mornings.

There are opportunities every term to increase sessions although sometimes it is possible to increase mid term if space is available.

I'm a working parent. Do you offer wrap around care?

Yes, we offer a dedicated EYFS breakfast club from 7.30am, and a separate one for KS1 and 2. Teatime for all ages is available until 6pm

What about holiday clubs for children in the Early Years?

An Early Year's club runs in the main holidays and is organised by our EY staff and sometimes EY staff from other Oak-Tree Schools. It is held in Upper Kindergarten. Children from UK also have the option to attend Multi Sports Club which runs every holiday.

How does the school prepare the pupils for 11+ examinations?

The whole curriculum is geared towards achieving success at the end of Year 6. Through the development of knowledge and the acquisition of skills in primarily Maths and English, together with all the Foundation subjects, pupils learn to research, question, debate, solve, create, evaluate and express themselves.

We introduce Problem Solving in Year 1 so that by the time they reach Year 5, they are secure in the different strategies they need to apply to reasoning and mathematical questions.

We adapt the timetable in Year 5 so that more time is made available to 11+ preparation, Maths and English. We introduce Interviewing Lessons to equip the pupils with the necessary skills to tackle the different types of interviews that they will experience as part of the 11+ process.

Teachers spend time studying past 11+ papers with the pupils and we hold 11+ mock exams so that the pupils experience the 'exam situation' before the actual exam dates.



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How do you help pupils and parents with the application process?

Parents are invited to two 11+ information meetings in Year 5; one in September that explains how the curriculum and timetabling is adapted and then a more in-depth meeting in May when I explain exactly how the 11+ application process works and what the secondary schools are looking for.

This is followed by a confidential meeting with each child's parents to discuss their aspirations for their child in Year 6.

Throughout the whole process, we are always available to help if parents have any concerns or questions.

What are your 11+ results like?

We are always very proud of our 11+ results. Obviously, every cohort is different but we always have a healthy percentage of pupils successfully gaining places at Chigwell, Bancroft's, Forest, St Edmunds and Brentwood, plus to our two Oak-Tree schools, Normanhurst and Braeside every year. Everyone achieves a place at one of their chosen schools.

How many pupils gain scholarships at the surrounding independent secondary schools?

This also differs from year to year but last year for example one pupil was awarded a scholarship, in 2019, 2 pupils were awarded one and in 2018, 3 pupils. We've also had a few pupils gain bursaries.

What is a typical day like in an Early Years class?

The children arrive to a selection of activities often linked to the topic that encourage fine motor development and social skills. During the course of the morning, the children may participate in specialist lessons, such as PE or Music. Number and literacy activities also take place. Topic and creative activities usually take place in the afternoons. All EYFS children experience weekly wild woods sessions in our own dedicated woodland area. Fresh fruit mid-morning snack and a child friendly lunch are provided.

How early do you start teaching phonics and writing?

Officially in Upper Kindergarten, but early skills begin in Lower Kindergarten with listening activities, rhyming games and fine motor skills activities – dough disco, squirry bottles, threading, pegs

In UK, fine motor assessments are carried out to establish a child's individual needs. Pre-writing patterns, pencil grip, Letters and sounds programme and RWInc are introduced.

What extra-curricular clubs does the school offer?

We offer a wide range of extracurricular activities that start in Reception with Busy Bees and Wild Woods. The number of clubs available to the children increases as they move into KS1, and then again when they enter Year 3 in KS2.

We aim to cater for the interests of all the children so we offer sports activities such as football, karate, netball, cricket, rounders, gymnastics and cross country; languages such as French and Spanish; expressive arts clubs such as Speech and Drama, creative writing, dance, art and cookery. All the clubs are incredibly popular and parents are asked to book in advance.

How much PE do the children participate in on a weekly basis?

This differs from year to year. We have a specialist PE teacher who sees all the children during the week for PE. Currently, all the EYs have three physical sessions each week of approx. 20-30 mins each.

As the children move up the school, the PE lessons become longer to include more advanced skills and 'game' situations. We introduce swimming at Loughton Pool in Year 3 and offer Year 4-6 opportunities to attend outdoor pursuit residential trips.

Many pupils attend the extracurricular sports clubs and represent the school in local and national sports competitions.



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How do we reward effort and progress equally among the pupils?

We have a reward system that includes everyone. We have a house system that rewards collective team work and individual pupils can receive house points for work they have completed or upholding our school values.

Merit, Good Behaviour and Friendship certificates are awarded fortnightly to two pupils in each Year 1-6 class in assembly. We also hold a 'Wow' assembly for each KS once every half term.

Class teachers award a number of different badges celebrating progress in handwriting, maths, creative writing and spellings each week. Our small class sizes mean that each child receives an award as a boost to their learning and self-esteem very regularly.

How do you deal with any bullying in the school?

We have an anti-bullying policy that seeks to support all the individuals that may be involved in a bullying incident. The children and their parents know we are a 'listening school' and will deal immediately with any issue that arises and take the appropriate action in line with our policy. We resolve the differences with sensitivity, whilst educating and helping both parties.

How many pupils do you have in each class?

There is a global pupil number for the school and the division of pupils between the year groups is decided by demand and the layout of the buildings on the school site.

There is no set number for each class as some year groups have 1 class in them, some 2 and Reception for example has three classes.

In comparison to state schools, our classes are much smaller. Each reception class this year has 14 children in with a fully qualified teacher and a fulltime TA. This means there is a ratio of 1:7. In Year 3, there are 16 pupils, with again a fully qualified teacher and a full time TA, giving a ratio of 1:8.

What do pupils gain from being in smaller classes?

Small classes mean a productive relationship between teachers and pupils. The pupils receive a great deal of individual attention, challenge and support in their learning. Marking and feedback is personalised to each child. The teacher has in-depth knowledge of each child's strengths and weaknesses and can set realistic targets to promote their progress.

How often are pupils assessed?

Assessment for learning occurs every day in the classroom and informs the teacher's planning for the following day. There is a mixture of formal and informal assessment throughout the year. We conduct Baseline assessments at the start of every school year so that teachers know the starting point for every child. Assessments in Maths and English occur every half term whilst spellings and timetables are tested regularly every week. We use a computer based programme called InCas which gives us each child's maths, spelling, reading and developed ability score at the end of each academic year from Year 1-6.

This robust assessment structure means we can efficiently and effectively track the progress of each child as they move through the school. Data is analysed on a regular basis so that intervention and support, or further extension challenges, can be applied appropriately. There is an equally substantial programme for the Early Years.

How do parents get to know how their child is doing in school?

We are always honest and open with our parents and value the high standard of communication we have with them. Whilst you are invited to 2 formal Parent Evenings during the school year and receive 2 written reports about your child's progress, we also organise more informal drop-in sessions each term for you to visit your child's classroom to discuss their work in their books or on display.

You can contact your child's teacher or keyworker by email or leave a message at the school office asking the teacher to call you later in the day or to arrange an appointment if you have any concern or issue you would like to discuss.