

Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2024



It gives me great pleasure to write to all community members for the last time this academic year. Every day I see the skill and effort staff members put in to make a difference to our pupils. The pupils amaze me continually with the things they achieve and how they conduct themselves. This year in post, like the two before, has been a privilege and a pleasure. There have been many positives in our schools this year so I'm just highlighting a few.

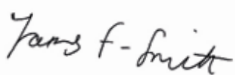
Elms Bank received its Ofsted visit in September and received outstanding across all areas, we of course know how strong this school is, but it is always nice to receive external validation. I was thrilled for Orienne Langley-Sadler Headteacher and the whole community. You'll see that we have appointed a new Headteacher at Elms Bank, Trustees and I are thrilled with the appointment of Gemma Parkes who will start in September. Due to our growth as a trust, we are expanding our executive team and Orienne will take up the role of Executive Director of Education, it's a great example of how a trust can keep hold of talented leaders, and they can have a wider influence across all schools.

Jo Grundy, Headteacher at Unsworth Primary School (and Trust primary Lead) completed a full year in position. It's been a joy to see the positive developments in the school under her leadership. A highlight is the outcome of year 6 SATs, 77% of pupils achieving expected in all areas which is an 18% improvement on last year and will move the school into the top ten schools in Bury.

Hazel Wood High School goes from strength to strength, and we are expecting strong outcomes in the summer. There has been much positive work around providing pupils with wider experiences and knowledge ensuring they receive a well-rounded education. We were particularly pleased to be invited to a meeting with the department of education to discuss how we had achieved such positive attendance figures for year 11.

As we grow it will be difficult for me to cover all schools in my welcome, but it felt important to do this one last time. In September we are growing substantially and will become six schools. Spring Lane PRU are also due to join in the new academic year and we are working with two associate primary schools in joining. We also have a new school opening in September 2026. It is an exciting time, and we know these developments will help us build more comprehensive support for our communities.

Thank you as ever for everyone's support and I hope you have a lovely summer.



James Franklin-Smith
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)



Growth within our Trust

In September we are growing as a trust and welcoming new schools to our partnership. The Governing Body of a Bury secondary school, Philips High School voted to join Oak. We have been collaborating for much of this school year and working behind the scenes for them to join on September 1st. Alongside this our CEO has been working with a small trust in Blackburn, Champion Education Trust. Two of their schools, Blackburn Central High School and Crosshill Special school will also be joining on September 1st. We are thrilled to be expanding and welcoming these diverse partners and we know this will strengthen us as an organisation.

This development will allow us to unlock more benefits for our communities such as sharing of resources, financial efficiencies, staff retention, sharing of good practice, professional development for staff and wider opportunities for pupils.



We are thrilled to announce that Fairfield Primary school, Bury, have chosen to become an associate member of our trust with a view to joining officially over time. We are really excited by this development. Fairfield is highly inclusive, has many strengths and the pupils feed into Hazel Wood High so there is something strong we can do around transition. They join Lowercroft Primary school who continue to be an associate member.

We continue to support Spring Lane PRU who will join once we have finalised an agreement on buildings with the Local Authority. We are also working behind the scenes on the opening of a new special school which is due to open September 2026.





Meet our new Trust systems and Data Manager Paul Butt



I'm joining the team at Oak Learning Partnership as the Trust Systems and Data Manager, having a solid background in education spanning 14 years. My journey began as a qualified teacher, and over time, I transitioned into roles focused on data management and digital education leadership. Having worked in schools in the UK, Malaysia, and Abu Dhabi, I've gained a comprehensive understanding of educational systems and the significance of data-driven decision-making. Throughout my career, I've maintained a passion for the use of digital technology in education, consistently seeking innovative solutions to enhance teaching and learning. My aim at Oak Learning Partnership is to develop and optimise trust systems and data processes, and I look forward to contributing to the pursuit of educational excellence.

Meet our new Headteacher of Elms Bank School & College Gemma Parkes



I am absolutely thrilled to have been appointed as the new Headteacher of Elms Bank. I have previously worked in secondary education in a range of roles including Head of English, SENCO and Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Inclusion, and for the past three years I have served as Bury's Virtual School Headteacher. This is a statutory role for all LAs and my responsibility is to promote and champion the education of all Bury's looked-after children, closely monitoring them as if they are in one school (hence the term "virtual school") and ensuring that they and their schools are supported so that they can fulfil their potential and succeed in their education. As the VSH, I currently work closely with the schools in Oak Learning Partnership; the ethos and values of the Trust, with inclusion at its heart, closely align with my own. I am absolutely committed to ensuring that our most vulnerable learners have the best educational experience possible, and I am honoured to be joining the team at Elms Bank. The staff team at Elms Bank are fantastic: their commitment and ambition for their students shines through and it will be a privilege to lead this next exciting phase in the school's development. I'm really looking forward to getting started.

Christine Reynolds Director of School Improvement retires after 34 years

In April 1990 I was delighted to be appointed as a teacher at Unsworth Primary School after spending six years teaching in Tameside. 34 years later, as I prepare to retire in July, I find myself reflecting on the time I have spent associated with Unsworth and, more recently, with Oak Learning Partnership as Director of School Improvement.



I came to Unsworth as a class teacher, first in Year 5 and then in Year 6. Next, I became the deputy headteacher, still teaching Y6 and then headteacher in 1997. When I became the headteacher, I was a young mother myself. I wanted to surround the children in our school with a community of adults nurturing and supporting them to build a sense of belonging and understanding. Exactly what I would want for my own children and what every child should experience.

Partnership with parents, carers, grandparents, and other family members was, and continues to be, the bedrock for this. It is a privilege to be given the responsibility by families to nurture and educate their children and to work together to achieve this.

The staff in every single role across a school or a trust are the driving force behind any achievement. Their hard work, creativity and resilience is evident every day. I have loved working alongside and helping to develop such talented and dedicated individuals in their careers both in Unsworth and across Oak Learning Partnership.

I have been lucky to be given the opportunity to work outside of the school and alongside colleagues who have supported my own development or who have brought their expertise to all of the schools in our trust. Governors, trustees, other headteachers and members of Bury Local Authority have all been instrumental in navigating the challenges and celebrating the successes of our community of schools. Partnership has been central to what I have wanted to help build as a teacher, a headteacher and as a leader in our trust. That is why we wanted to include the word when we named the trust.

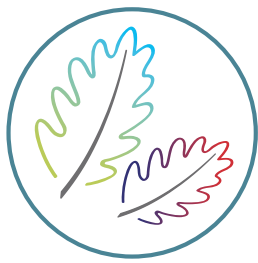
And most importantly, to the pupils, past and present. They have been the heart and soul of our school and our family of schools. Their curiosity, enthusiasm, and willingness to learn have been a constant source of inspiration. Watching them grow, learn, and achieve has been the most rewarding aspect of my career. They have taught me as much as I have taught them, and I am immensely proud of each and every one of them.

True partnership is built on respect, trust and kindness. I have been fortunate throughout my career to have been surrounded by amazing people who have shared the vision to work together 'to build understanding' and create the community that is so important to our children. I am sure that every person connected with our trust will continue to keep the values of partnership in their heart and together they will thrive in the future.

Christine Reynolds

Director of School Improvement





Oak LP Outreach

Inclusion feels as though it is well and truly at the heart of the trust. What an incredible year we have had at Oak LP Outreach.

We are driven to ensure that outstanding SEND practice is embedded within all our schools and that is why we are investing heavily in ensuring that all of our schools acquire the Sendia award. This year has been fantastic, working together as a team of school SENCOs to shine a light on best practice, collaborate to ensure effective systems are embedded in school practices and also work to ensure that inclusion is built into all of our school systems and structures, rather than a bolt on.

It has been fantastic to visit each of our schools in turn and spend time with our Trust SENCOs, what a fantastic team of highly committed professionals that are all driven to ensure quality first provision for all learners. Thank you for your hard work this year and pulling together evidence across your settings.

The Bury 'One for all' offer of SEND support run by the Oak LP Outreach team, has had a fantastic attendance. This offer of support is offered to all schools in Bury with the ambition at bringing multi agencies together to collaborate on effective practice, the sharing of local and national headlines and the opportunity for multi agencies to give support on student cases. The average attendance this academic year has been 45% of all schools in Bury attending to the One for All offer, with a total of 87% of Secondary Schools utilising our support, 49% of Primary Schools and 50% of Special Schools.

Opening of the Oak LP Centre

Finally, this term saw the opening of the **Oak LP Centre**. The vision is for this training venue to host inter trust meetings and provide training opportunities for trust schools and beyond. The space has been refurbished to allow for training events and meetings to be held here with refreshments and comfy seating also available to ensure that guests feel comfortable within the surroundings. Following discussions with local businesses we also decided to make a community defibrillator available and a big thank you to the sites team that ensured that this was appropriately fitted. It was a huge team effort in pulling this together. But what an achievement. A massive thank you to everyone that contributed to the opening of this, and we look forward to running events here in the future.

Social media continues to give updates as does our website, please visit our website (oaklp.co.uk) to see what we offer and visit our X (previously twitter), [@OakOutreachBury](https://twitter.com/OakOutreachBury) to see what has been happening.

Nicola Pemberton
Head of Outreach



The New Oak LP Centre



Oak LP Staff Experience and Wellbeing Survey

In February 2024, we commissioned a staff experience and wellbeing survey for all staff across the trust to complete for the second year running.

We have found that our staff are very satisfied with the communication between the trust and the school staff, they feel that our trust Ethos is embedded in the culture of our school where there has been a significant increase of 25% of positive responses above the national average.

Here is a word cloud where school staff have shown what they appreciate most about their workplace.

Thank you for sharing your feedback!

RESPONSES

264

RESPONSE RATE

84%

We're truly thankful to everyone for their time completing the survey.

We've received a lot of valuable feedback and comments.

The work on analysis starts now and we wanted to share a small glimpse in the results. Here's a word cloud of what we all appreciate most!





Elms Bank School & College

Arts Week 2024

This half term we held our annual Arts Week, celebrating Music, Art and Drama across the whole of school. Using the theme 'One World. One Chance'. Staff delivered a range of workshops giving the students opportunities to explore new and exciting activities, such as song writing and pot throwing. A range of artists and performers came in to school to work with our students such as Aestus quartet from the Royal Northern College of Music, All Days petting farm and Freak Dance.

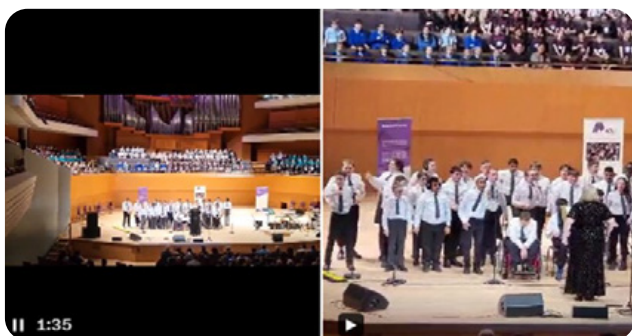
We also had the pleasure of inviting Y5 students from Unsworth Primary School to work with our students to make ceramic bird houses.



Bridgewater Hall

This term, the Elms Bank choir joined forces with lots of other learners within our local area to perform at ALFA's annual showcasing event. Pupils from various schools joined to create an unforgettable musical spectacle, set against the majestic backdrop of one of Manchester's cultural gems.

This event was a celebration of community, collaboration and raw talent as the audience had the opportunity to witness a variety of musical performances from ALFA learners. Elms Bank wowed the audience with their rendition of 'Sweet Caroline' and 'A Million Dreams' which was received with a standing ovation and lots of cheering from the crowd!



This year was packed with exciting activities-residential trips and, day trips, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, Bendrigg and football trips to name a few.

Our senior students enjoyed a magical Prom Night at the college. The evening was filled with laughter, dancing, and stunning outfits. It was a night to remember, celebrating the hard work and friendships that have been built over the years.

Our annual Art Exhibition was a great success, displaying the incredible talent of our students. From stunning paintings to intricate sculptures, the creativity and dedication of our young artists is truly impressive.

On 22 August 2024 we are looking forward to celebrating with our Y11 and Y14 their achievements at Results Day. I would like to say how proud we are of all our students and everything they have achieved this year!

As the school year comes to a close, we bid farewell to our graduating students and several beloved staff members. To our seniors, we wish you all the best in your future endeavours. Remember that you will always be a part of our school community. To the staff members who are moving on to new adventures, thank you for your dedication and contributions. You will be greatly missed!

This is my last write up as the substantive Headteacher of Elms Bank, as I move into my new role within the trust as Director of Education. I want to pay tribute to all the staff and students that I have worked with over the last 10 years. Elms Bank is truly a remarkable place and one that has a huge special place in my heart. I am exceptionally excited to see how Elms Bank will grow under the leadership of Gemma Parkes, and I know Elms Bank will continue to be successful in everything it does. Elms Bank team will look forward to seeing their students and welcoming the new year 7's on 4 September 2024.

We all hope that you have a wonderful summer break.

Orienne Langley-Sadler
Executive Headteacher- Special Provision

Bendrigg

What an amazing week at Bendrigg Trust with a wonderful group of students and staff.

Everyone enjoyed canoeing, climbing, abseiling, zip wiring, biking, swinging and great times together in the outdoors!! Canoeing in the lakes enjoying the scenery followed by campfire and marshmallows.





Hazel Wood High School

Spanish Residential Trip

Hazel Wood ran its first overseas residential since the pandemic in February, with 36 of our students from Years 9 and 10 enjoying a trip to Barcelona via France. Students enjoyed a range of fantastic experiences which extended and enhanced their cultural capital. These included a visit to the Vimy Ridge Canadian War Memorial as well as a fun-packed day at Disneyland Paris in France, followed by experiences of Las Ramblas and Camp Nou in Barcelona. Bravo to all involved!



It has been another successful year at Hazel Wood High School and our Spring and Summer terms saw both staff and students build on the foundations of the strong and positive start we had to the academic year.

Throughout the year, our staff have continued to show an unwavering commitment to drive standards and ensure that every child has a high-quality education at Hazel Wood, I am particularly proud of the work the school continues to do to give our students valuable life experiences outside of the classroom. This academic year has seen the launch of our 'Oak Experiences', a range of free experiences that aim to enhance our students' cultural capital. This has allowed our Year 7 students to experience an overnight bushcraft residential (more detail below), our Year 8 students to enjoy an immersive learning day both visiting and using resources from the Imperial War Museum North, structured work experience placements for our Year 10s and a leavers package for our Year 11 students which included a celebration evening and leavers' hoodies. In addition to this, students have also enjoyed the first year of our 'Living Your Best Life' programme – a selection of challenges and life experiences we have tasked our Year 7 students to achieve by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 3, the completion of the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and a Spanish residential trip.

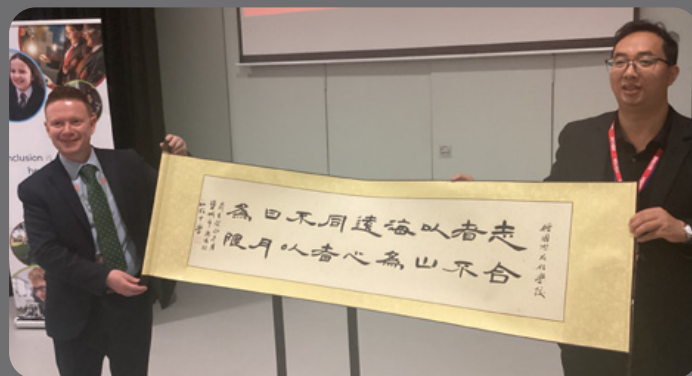
A key focus of the Summer term has been preparing our Year 11 students for their final exams and we continued to provide additional learning opportunities for our students through our after-school Session 7 classes and Saturday Aspiration Academies throughout the term. These were positive and productive sessions and, alongside the revision masterclass at the Village Hotel in June, allowed our students to enter the exam series with the tools to achieve their academic potential. We wish them all the best for the future, knowing that Hazel Wood has provided them with the foundations to build a successful future.

As the academic year draws to an end, I would like to say how proud we are of all our students and everything they have achieved this year, and I am excited to share with you a taste of what our students have experienced in the Spring and Summer terms.

Paul Greenhalgh
Headteacher

Suman Chinese Exchange

Over the last academic year, students at Hazel Wood have been welcoming international children from various provinces across China, with the latest of these exchange experience days taking place on 30th and 31st January. The children come over to the UK on an exchange programme that is organised by a local education company. So far, we have welcomed over 150 Chinese children into Hazel Wood, where they have been 'buddied' up with one of our students; joined them in their lessons and been taught by our teachers. The international students come to us on placements of up to three days and are fully immersed in our school and culture. Our students fully embrace the days when our international guests join us and there is a brilliant buzz around school, as Hazel Wood High students proudly show our guests everything that we have to offer, both in school and in UK culture.



MMU PrintCity Visit

Year 10 pupils visited MMU PrintCity for a 3D print and CAD Taster Day on Tuesday 13th February in which students transition from zero knowledge to being able to design their own finished, rendered products. Students began the day by learning basic tools in Autodesk Fusion 360, aided by MMU student ambassadors. The pupils eventually designed a bespoke water bottle, exploring different tools and applying decals and modifiers. Pupils were then challenged to use all the skills they had just been taught to design an alternative product to hold a drink, with the winners both receiving £10 amazon gift vouchers.



Year 7 Castle Howard Residential

Hazel Wood High School offer a range of experiences that enhance our students' cultural capital via our 'Oak Experiences' programme. As part of this, sixty-nine of our Year 7 students enjoyed a fully funded overnight residential to Castle Howard in Yorkshire on Monday 17th June, enjoying bushcraft activities surrounded by beautiful lakes and landscapes within 2,100 acres of private woodland. During their time on camp, students experienced living in the wild and sleeping under canvas. With a wide range of activities focused around Bushcraft, they developed new practical skills and learnt more about our woodland environment, all in a fun and engaging manner.





Unsworth Primary School

World Book Day

World Book Day this year was enjoyed by everyone in school. Children and staff dressed up as book characters. We also held a competition to design a world book day character using a potato! The designs were amazing, so creative and we celebrated three winners from each class!



This year has been very busy at Unsworth Primary School. We have enjoyed lots of fabulous learning opportunities and I continue to be immensely proud of all our children's achievements. Our staff work so hard to ensure that our children receive the best possible education, fulfil their potential through their personal development and academic achievements.

Earlier in the term, we welcomed a team to conduct an external review and were so pleased with their findings. Unsworth Primary School is continuing to improve. They noted that children were polite and happy in school and positive about the rewards for their behaviour. They were impressed with the provision we provide and the standard of learning and teaching across school.

We are pleased to be developing our Forest Schools provision, Year 4 have completed their swimming lessons. Many classes are taking part in their annual educational visit to enhance their learning and bring their curriculum projects to life. Year 6 are ready to shine and show off in their leaver's performance!

Jo Grundy
Headteacher & Primary Trust Lead

New Outdoor Area in the Linc Garden

In September our resourced provision known as the Linc (Language inclusive classroom) opened in our extension. Over the Easter Break we had a new play space created in the garden area. This garden will be accessed daily by children learning in the Linc space. It will also be used as an outdoor learning space for children across school.

Before



After



Forest Schools

Each class is enjoying a forest school session this term to enhance their learning. Year 6 have visited the forest school's area with their reception buddies. This special session for the two classes to enjoy time learning together. It has been wonderful to see how the buddies have developed a special bond together this year.



Al Sylvester - Oak Experience

Al came to school in February to work with our Y4 & Y6 children. He also presented a whole school assembly. Al is an inspirational speaker and really motivated the children, providing them with clear messages around resilience and independence; including to never give up and ask for help.

He was so impressed with the behaviour of our pupils and their thoughtful and knowledgeable questions. He spent time in Year 6 and Year 4 sharing further details of his experiences working for Mountain Rescue and his Antarctic Trek: linking to the learning in Year 6 about Antarctic and Shackleton's Journey. Children in Year 6 wrote some informative biographies all about Al's life.



Keep up to date

To keep up to date with everything that takes place within our trust you can follow us on X and Facebook.

Click on Welcome to Oak Learning Partnership (oaklp.co.uk) and choose your school.

Join Our Trust

Are you passionate about working within an educational setting. As a trust we are always looking for enthusiastic, hardworking individuals to join our team. Please follow the link to visit our vacancy page on Vacancies at Oak Learning Partnership (oaklp.co.uk) to apply for the latest vacancies within our schools.

As the Spring/Summer term ends, we wanted to thank all our trust staff and parents for their dedication, hard work, and support which has helped shape our growth and success. Wishing you all a lovely break and look forward to seeing you in September.



Our Schools

The Oak Learning Partnership is a Multi-Academy Trust comprising of Unsworth Primary School, Elms Bank and Hazel Wood High School.

- Unsworth Primary School is a Primary school with the motto 'Together We Build Understanding'. The five chosen values of happiness, honesty, friendship, respect and learning are at the heart of developing children's social and academic understanding and ensuring that they enjoy making progress together.
- Elms Bank is a generic secondary special school for pupils aged between 11 and 19 years old. Elms Bank works in partnership with many other agencies to ensure that the specific needs of each pupil are met so that they can grow in confidence both socially and academically.
- Hazel Wood High School is driven by the core values of Pride, Respect and Aspiration. Pupils are members of a very inclusive school community which offers them the opportunity and encouragement to aim high and excel.

To learn more about the schools in our Multi-Academy Trust, please follow the links below.

