

# NEWSLETTER

## December 2023



### Headmistress's Message

Dear Parents

The second half of the term saw the arrival of our Christmas tree, the Early Years Festive Fun Day, the Reception to Year 8 trip to Hackney Empire to see Aladdin, the return of our Winter Fayre and the Kindergarten to Year 2 'Wiggly Nativity' performances. It was wonderful to see up to three generations all under one roof - this is truly special, as there is nothing quite like performing in front of friends and family. What a wonderful way to start the festive season.

At this time of year we do not forget those in need in our local community and the elderly residents at the Spinney Care Home. We have shared some of our festive cheer and made cards, sung carols and made contributions towards the local food bank. In challenging times and moments of reflection, it is important to remember how fortunate we are.

This December edition of the newsletter will give you an indication of the many opportunities the pupils have enjoyed. We too have enjoyed organising these experiences to extend our students' learning and develop their characters.

I would like to wish our Normanhurst families a peaceful and joyful festive season, please stay safe and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year. The spring term begins for pupils on Tuesday 9 January.

With my best wishes

**Mrs Jacqueline Job**  
Headmistress

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## EARLY YEARS NEWS

The Early Years Department began the festive season today during **'Festive Fun Day'**. The theme of the day was 'The Night Before Christmas' and the children and teachers wore their favourite pyjamas. We enjoyed making Christingles, crafting wreaths and working together to make paperchains to decorate the classroom. We learnt a little about how Christmas is celebrated in Italy and tasted the traditional 'pandoro' cake. We ended the day with a special music lesson with Mrs Scott.



## EARLY YEARS NEWS continued

Today the **Early Years** children had a special Christmas lunch where they enjoyed a traditional roast and pulled crackers with their friends. After lunch, Kindergarten and Reception had lots of fun playing party games, dancing to festive songs and crafting snowflakes. We finished the day by heading outside into the garden to play in the 'snow'.



## EARLY YEARS NEWS continued

The **Early Years** children took a walk along Station Road to look for signs of Christmas and we spotted lots of lovely trees and decorations.

The children enjoyed hanging the decorations that they had made on the Christmas tree and looking at the Nativity scene in a church.



## EYFS TO YEAR 2 NATIVITY

The children at Normanhurst School put on a wonderful Nativity performance this year 'Wriggly Nativity'. The children were fantastic and the performances were truly heart warming.

Well done to all the children and staff involved!



## JUNIOR NEWS

Pupils in **Years 3 to 6** took part in an interactive Road Safety Show delivered by For2Feet. The Red Man, Green Man Road Safety Show was exciting and informative and the pupils really enjoyed learning the ways to stay safe when crossing and walking near to a road.

Erdogan in Year 6 said: "I enjoyed the show as it was engaging and the actors made us laugh."

Nehanda in Year 3 said: "It was REALLY good!"



**Years 3 to 6**, as part of our final event for Diversity Month, spent the day at the V&A Museum in South Kensington. The purpose of the trip was for the children to appreciate and experience incredible art from around the world. The children toured the museum, undertaking drawing activities, as well as going on a scavenger hunt. One of the children in Year 6 commented, 'The South East Asian Room had things I thought I'd never see, such as beautiful dresses and artwork.' Another pupil said, 'Just walking around the museum was cool!'

Well done to all the pupils for being well-behaved and making the trip so enjoyable.

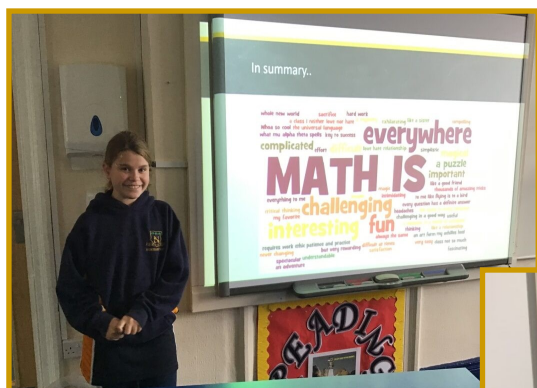


On Wednesday 15 November, Normanhurst took part in the annual **Oak-Tree Schools Maths Bee** at Braeside School. Each year group representative from Normanhurst competed against the other school's teams. There were a lot of arithmetic and reasoning questions, and skills were definitely tested in mental calculations, working speed and accuracy! After many rounds, each Normanhurst pupil made us proud with their determination. We came third at the end of the competition after all the points were calculated.

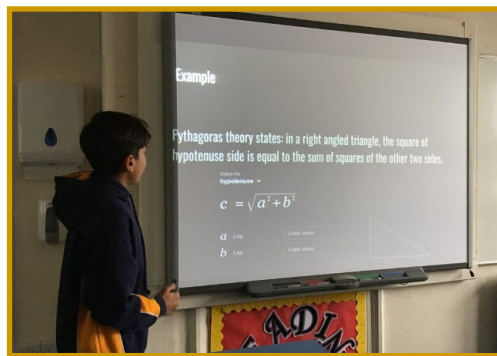
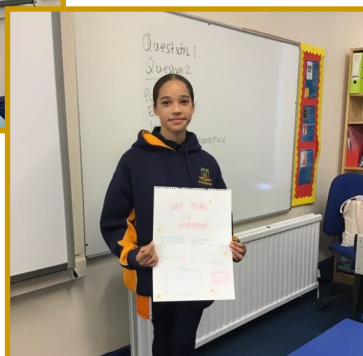
A big 'Well Done' to our Normanhurst Maths Bees!



## SENIOR NEWS



**Year 7** amazed their teachers and peers with their fantastic half-term maths homework. They were set a task to complete a research project of their choice, such as famous mathematicians, specific topics or why maths is important. The Year 7 pupils then presented their research to their peers. Miss Osbourne, Mr Davies and Miss Stone were blown away by the standard and the variety of information the pupils presented. Well done Year 7!



**Black History & Diversity Month Poetry Workshops** On 15 November, to celebrate Diversity Month, Joseph from Eastside Music in Stratford, visited Normanhurst School and ran poetry workshops for Years 7 to 10. The students took part in a range of thought-provoking and engaging activities, which included responding to lines of poetry; listening to and discussing a rap and creating their own poems. The students participated really well and made some valuable contributions. Normanhurst School would like to thank Eastside Music for providing this for us.

**Year 8 Theatre Trip** On 7 December, the Year 9 students went to see a magical production of Charles Dickens's 'A Christmas Carol' at The Old Vic Theatre. The students have studied this text, in preparation for their GCSE English Literature exam, and the production offered a really interesting and heart-warming performance of this classic tale.

Highlights included Scrooge being performed by Christopher Eccleston, lovely live music, fake snow and delicious mince pies and tangerines.

The students were totally engaged in the performance, and were a credit to the school.



## SENIOR NEWS

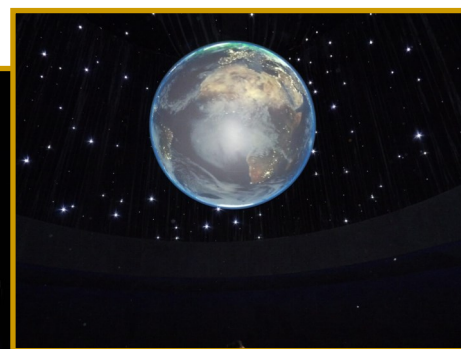
**Year 8**, Mr Clair and the science team enjoyed a wonderful outing together to the BBC Earth Experience. Emphasising the message of sustainability, we travelled by tube. The team at the centre were absolutely brilliant and the event was well organised and received by our students. The experience itself, based on the 'Seven worlds, One planet' documentary narrated by Sir David Attenborough, was both awe-inspiring and relaxing at the same time. Here is what the workshop lead at the centre had to say about our students:

"I wanted to extend a heartfelt thank you for visiting us at the BBC Earth Experience. Your students were exceptionally well-behaved and their enthusiasm during the workshop was truly infectious. It was inspiring to see them so deeply engaged and curious about the diverse wonders of our seven continents. Seeing the genuine curiosity, enthusiasm and respect your students expressed for the natural wonders across our seven continents was a truly heart-warming experience."

Here is what our students thought of the trip:

Kingsley 8B - "It was great as I learnt more about nature. I did not think our planet was so beautiful."

Caleb 8B - "The video was incredible and very immersive."



**Year 10** Our GCSE Year 10 music students really enjoyed a special trip to central London this term. They visited the Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank with hundreds of music students from across London to hear their examination set musical works played live by the London Philharmonic Orchestra. It was especially wonderful to hear Lord of the Rings themes played by the same artists who played in the film! They also heard works by Haydn, Mozart and Handel.

Afterwards our students then visited Handel's house where he lived in and composed all his famous music in Brook Street, just off Oxford Street. A further surprise was that Jimmy Hendrix had lived there a few hundred years later!

Students loved trying out a harpsichord, as would have been played by Handel, and seeing the very room where all his famous compositions were written on parchment - such as The Fireworks, The Water Music, Zadok the Priest (written for and played at all our Queen's and King's coronations) and the very famous Messiah. It was a very inspiring and enjoyable trip.



## SENIOR NEWS continued

On Tuesday 21 November **Year 9** students were very privileged to take a trip to Tonbridge to the Christmas Shoebox Distribution Centre. We sorted and packed the shoeboxes and were the last ones to wrap these boxes before they were shipped to other countries to be opened by a child for Christmas.

The children were amazing and worked like little elves.

Thank you to all parents and pupils who donated a shoebox and, as a school, we took 75 boxes to the centre.



**Year 11** went for a meal at Epic Burger in Chingford to celebrate their end of year GCSE mock examinations and the festive season!

### Senior Christmas lunch



## ICELEND TRIP 10-13 NOVEMBER

**A memorable and spectacular trip to Iceland...** Bright and early on Friday 10 November, Normanhurst pupils and staff embarked on a trip to Iceland to explore the wide range of geographical and cultural topics that this unique country has to offer. With a very swift journey to Heathrow and a smooth flight, pupils were welcomed by our tour guide and our driver who stayed by our side until we returned. Karen was a very experienced tour guide and full of local knowledge and geographical insight.



Our first stop on the tour was Iceland's iconic attraction, offering 360 degree panoramic views and was our first opportunity to see how stunning this country really is. Students enjoyed a homemade ice cream with many commenting that "this is the best ice cream I've ever tasted". Later that evening, we enjoyed letting off some steam with board games. The students were enthused to learn new card games with their friends and to share different versions of games with each other.



The first stop on Day One included soaking up the beautiful scenery at Thingvellir National Park (a Unesco World Heritage Site). This National Park is where Iceland's parliament was established in 930AD and has been significant for Icelanders since this time. Our next stop was the local dairy for an ice cream together. Some pupils even tried the famous local yoghurt, Skyr. The next stop took us to the spectacular Geysir, the world famous spouting hot spring that gave its name to all of the world's geysers. Although Geysir hasn't spouted for a number of years, we did get to see its neighbour Stokkur erupt a number of times, reaching a height of around 30 metres.



Later that afternoon, we visited the extremely impressive Gullfoss ('Golden Falls'); an incredibly powerful waterfall and despite being very cold and windy at the viewing platform, the pupils remained full of energy and enthusiasm.



To end our day we visited the Frioheimar Tomato Farm, where we gained an insight into the processes of greenhouse horticulture and learnt that it's possible to grow vegetables in this cold climate, by creating warm Mediterranean conditions all year round.

On Day Two, after breakfast, the students embarked on a small hike to see the Solheimajoull Glacier. The glacier showed us some great examples of glacial deposits as well as giving us a good idea of the overall scale of glaciers, whilst reflecting on the amount of ice lost over time due to climate change.



Next on the itinerary was Black Sands beach, located on the South Coast near Vik, which was a marvellous example of coastal landforms and Karen gave the pupils an insight into the scale and processes involved in the formation of the landforms.

In the afternoon we visited the immensely powerful Skogafoss, which has a steep climb (527 steps to be precise) to get to the top viewing platforms, but we were rewarded with spectacular views of the landscape. To wrap up the day we also visited a secret waterfall, where we were soaked by the sheer strength of the water spray and, for many, this was the highlight of the day.

In the blink of an eye our final day had arrived. In the morning we visited the Lava Centre, an exhibition of volcanoes, where we learnt about the volcanology of Iceland, equipping us with valuable baseline knowledge on the current situation in Iceland. Students enjoyed some free time in the local area exploring the local bakery and supermarket before departing for the airport.

We didn't get to see the Northern Lights, but we all returned home after having seen a whole range of spectacular and simply awesome geographical features! It was a privilege to travel with forty pupils and everywhere we went we received compliments on the politeness and positivity of the group; they were a true credit to Normanhurst.



## PANTOMIME TRIP

**Reception to Year 8** went on a journey to a magical world, as the much-loved tale of *Aladdin* flies into Hackney this festive season!

Aladdin dreams of finding love and making his fortune. When he discovers an enchanted lamp and meets a mysterious genie, it looks like all of his wishes are going to come true. But are they, or will forces of evil stand in the way...?



This is Widow Twankey. She is Aladdin and Wishy's mother. She is lovely (for most of the show!) and her costumes will make you smile.

Year 2 were asked to describe the show in two words:

"Terrifying and amazing"

"Fantastic and funny"

"Magnificent and colourful"

"Action and strong"

The children were fantastic and I hope they all enjoyed themselves. A lovely tradition of going to the Pantomime is reborn again in Normanhurst.



## PUPIL NEWS

Nina (Year 6R) and her Flyers Elite Poison Apples team mates came 2nd in the Future Cheer International Competition in Paris! It has been many months of training and overcoming a number of challenges but they really came together as a team on the day and under pressure and they hit all their stunts perfectly!

We are all very proud of Nina and her dedication to this sport!



## SPORTS NEWS

### Netball - Normanhurst vs Braeside

On 15 November our netballers endured a nail-biting match against Braeside. The girls took an early lead going into the second quarter 1-0 with Braeside taking the second quarter 4-1. Normanhurst didn't stop there; Lucy, Aurora and Shade made some excellent interceptions in defence, contributing to a couple of turnover balls, allowing the centre court (Leyla, Daisy and Tegan) to drive the ball into the shooting circle. Palesa and Elizabeth made excellent work of their defenders bringing the score line back to Normanhurst 5-4 going into the final quarter. With final goals from Palesa and Braeside with each team trying to steal the win. It was a wonderful match, highlighting the progress the students have made since September - well done girls!

Player of the match: Palesa



### ISA Cross Country

On 16 November, 24 students from Years 4 to 9 travelled to Abbots Hill to participate in the Regional ISA Cross Country Competition. Lucia, Morven, Elin, Jessica, James, Victor and Aryaan competed in the U9 age category. Morven narrowly missed out on Nationals, finishing 18<sup>th</sup> in her race. Lily, Sienna, Farah, Nina, Ronnie and Tommy competed in the U11 age category, with some exceptional running from all students. Daisy, Lucy, Elizabeth, Leyla, Zarkaria, Michael, Yaseen and Sinan competed for Year 7, with Zak marginally missing out on

Nationals, finishing in 13<sup>th</sup> place! Finally, Yusuf, Nicolas and Bobby competed for Year 9 with our strongest team finish with all students in this age category, finishing in the top half of the race. All of the students should be extremely proud of themselves as the course was incredibly hilly and muddy!

### Oak Tree U11 Indoor Athletics

Tuesday 28 November saw our Year 6 team go to Peter May to perform in the Oak-Tree Indoor Sports Hall Athletics Tournament. On one side of the hall were the 'track' events, which the girls tackled first. Students took part in competitive races such as shuttle relays and obstacles. On the other side of the hall, the boys started with the 'field' events; the circuit of activities including standing long jump, vertical jump, speed bounce, chest push and javelin. Once everyone had had a turn at each activity, the girls and boys swapped places. We had lots of first place finishes in the girls' track events and the boys' had lots of second place finishes behind a very strong Oaklands team.

All the students really enjoyed participating in this Oak-Tree event, cheering each other on and working together to score as many points as they could.

Well done to all those who took part!

## CLUB NEWS

Well done to the members of the Thursday morning Running Club who braved the cold weather on their morning run.

A perfect way to start the day.



## NSPA

Dear Parents

The school year is coming to the end of the first term and what a busy term! As this goes to print the final preparations are taking place for the Winter Fayre. The NSPA facilitate events and fund trips to enhance the children's experiences at school and we need your continued support to make this happen.

We would love to see you at future events and the next one is the Junior Disco on Friday 2 February from 6-8pm. We look forward to seeing you and further information will follow.

Please do contact us at [normanhurstschoolpa@gmail.com](mailto:normanhurstschoolpa@gmail.com) if you would like to join the NSPA team or if you would be interested in supporting any of the events. New ideas are always welcome so please do get in touch if you feel inspired.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas

With best wishes

**The NSPA Committee**

[normanhurstschoolpa@gmail.com](mailto:normanhurstschoolpa@gmail.com)



**NSPA**  
Normanhurst Parents' Association