

AUTUMN 2025 NEWSLETTER



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Head Teacher Update

This term has been shaped by the wider challenges facing SEND schools across the country. Recruitment remains difficult, funding pressures continue, and the cost of living still affects many families but also our school. Even with these challenges, our school has had a positive start to the year

A key part of our work has been investing in our staff. We have strengthened our coaching and appraisal model so that colleagues receive clearer support, better guidance and more opportunities to grow. This will help us to continue to build stability and consistency across classrooms, which directly benefits our learners.

We welcomed a significant number of new pupils in September. They have settled remarkably well and are now part of the rhythm of school life. Staff have made thoughtful adjustments to help each child feel secure and ready to learn, with a focus on long-term progress rather than quick fixes.

The early signs are encouraging, and we are proud of the way learners, families and staff have worked together.

We continue to collaborate closely with our trust, especially around professional learning and future planning. This joint approach helps us share expertise, think ahead and develop solutions to some of the challenges special schools face nationally. It also ensures that our pupils benefit from the strength of a wider community.

As we move into the festive season, I want to thank all families for your support throughout the Autumn term. Your partnership with us makes a real difference. We look forward to building on this strong start as we move into the new year.

Mounir Meghalsi



Sustainability at Calthorpe

November marked National Tree Week, giving us the perfect opportunity to celebrate the outdoor learning experiences embedded across our curriculum. Through carefully planned activities in all pathways, learners are supported to enjoy meaningful time outdoors, helping them connect with nature while building valuable skills.

As an inner-city school, we deeply appreciate the small green spaces we have been able to cultivate. National Tree Week encouraged us to cherish these areas even more and make the most of them to promote outdoor learning, wellbeing, and a lifelong love of nature.



The school also took part in Switch-Off Fortnight, a national campaign that inspires everyone to reflect on their energy use. Staff were encouraged to consider their own habits and, where possible, involve learners in monitoring classroom energy consumption. Each day, we shared a fun fact to spark curiosity and remind us that small changes to our daily routines can make a big difference.

We look forward to continuing our journey towards a greener, more environmentally conscious school community!

Aimee Prentice



Jessie's Fund

This term, we were very happy to welcome back Jessie's Fund to support our Foundations for Life teachers with musical strategies that help our learners communicate. Jessie's Fund is a UK charity that helps children with additional and complex needs, to express themselves through music. Music offers a powerful way for children to connect with others, especially when communicating with words can be difficult.

Their visit has made a very positive difference. Our learners have thoroughly enjoyed the musical sessions, showing great enthusiasm, engagement, and joy. Staff have also grown in confidence through paired teaching in classes, learning new ideas and approaches they can use every day. Jessie's Fund also delivered a workshop for teachers, which helped build skills and understanding across the team.

We are grateful for this continued partnership, which is helping us provide high-quality, personalised musical experiences for learners across our FFL pathway.

Laura Williams



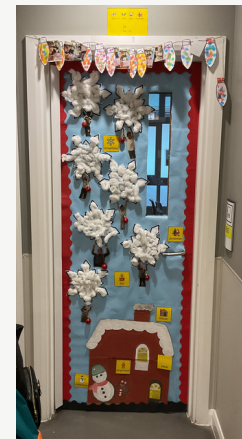
Festive Creativity at Calthorpe

As the Christmas is approaching, our school is alive with festive spirit as the 2025 Christmas Doors Competition gets underway. Learners and staff have transformed their doors into creative, colourful displays that celebrate the season, reflect our diverse community, and highlight key CRC rights such as creative expression and participation in cultural life.

These wonderful designs have brought excitement to our corridors, sparking conversations and strengthening our sense of togetherness. The competition continues to support our SMSC development by encouraging collaboration, imagination, and community pride.

Take a look at this year's entries—and pick your favourite!

Laura Williams



Post 16: Community, Confidence and Independence

Pupils in 6L4 enjoyed a wonderful visit to the German Christmas Market this week as part of their community engagement, social skills development and showing an awareness to multicultural festivals. For many, it was an exciting new experience filled with festive sights and sounds.

Learners had the opportunity to ride on the traditional carousel and were also treated to a complimentary hot chocolate, kindly provided by the Frankfurt Christmas Market. 6LF were able to also use purchase treats for themselves as part of the visit. It was a fantastic day that helped our pupils build confidence, interact with their wider community, and create lasting memories.

We have secured new allotment space at the Bordesley Green Allotments, thanks to the support of Saquib Ali (6F2 Teacher). This will once again provide pupils with the opportunity to consolidate a range of curriculum based skills in an outdoor learning environment through site maintenance and the cultivation of fresh produce, subject to weather conditions.

We have access to the space for two sessions per week and intend to expand this provision over the course of the year. Pupils are thoroughly enjoying engaging with the local community and taking responsibility for our designated plot.

Suraj Singh



Learning for Life: Building Skills Through Football

Learning for Life learners have been taking part in a weekly lunchtime football club.

During these sessions, they have been developing key football skills such as ball control, passing, dribbling, and shooting. Some pupils have progressed even further, working on goalkeeping, penalty kicks, and improving their positional and tactical awareness. Many of the activities within the club also support curriculum-based skills, including coordination, communication and teamwork.

Each session concludes with a football match, giving learners the opportunity to experience competitive play within the familiar context of school sports hall. To further generalise and apply the skills they have developed, pupils also attend a monthly football tournament held at the Aston Villa Academy.

At the most recent tournament, the team delivered their strongest performance to date, going unbeaten in four out of five games, securing three consecutive wins, and conceding only two goals—demonstrating impressive ability in both attack and defence. We are especially proud of the positive way they worked together to achieve this collective success.

Tom Willott



Engagement for Life: Settling In, Working Together, Growing Independence

It has been a busy and exciting first term of the school year. We are incredibly proud of all our new starters and how well they have settled into life at Calthorpe Academy. To celebrate this, we held a parental workshop where families had the opportunity to meet the teachers, learn more about their child’s school day, and explore how we support learning across the curriculum. We highly value our partnerships with parents and look forward to offering more workshops in the New Year for all of our parents.

A key achievement this term has been our continued development following the award of our Gold MOVE Quality Mark. The MOVE Programme is now fully embedded across our curriculum, ensuring that every learner has opportunities to develop essential physical skills, including sitting, standing, walking, and everything in between. This approach is strengthening learners’ independence, confidence, and capacity for meaningful progress.

Aimee Prentice



Foundations for Life: Strong Beginnings, Shared Success

We are delighted to share how brilliantly our learners in the Foundations for Life Pathway at the main site have settled into the new academic year. From the very first day, they have embraced our embedded routines and support structures, helping to create a calm, purposeful, and happy learning environment where everyone can thrive.

A special mention goes to our new learners—whether joining us fresh to Calthorpe or transitioning from Belgravia School. Your curiosity and unique ways of engaging have brought so much joy to our classrooms. It has been wonderful to see you building confidence, forming relationships, and beginning to explore new opportunities. You’ve quickly become part of our community, and we couldn’t be prouder of the progress you are making.

We were equally thrilled to welcome our new parents at our recent Open Morning. This event was a fantastic opportunity to share our curriculum in action and give families a chance to visit classrooms, meet staff, and see the learning journey firsthand. The positive feedback we received was heartwarming, and we truly appreciate everyone who attended and contributed to such a successful morning.

As we look ahead, we are excited for a year filled with growth, achievement, and collaboration. Thank you for your continued support in making Foundations for Life a place where every learner can flourish!

Jila Chishimba



Belgravia School News

A Warm Welcome to Our New Belgravia Learners.

We are delighted to welcome many new learners to Belgravia this term! Our school is once again filled with energy, curiosity, and the excitement of new beginnings. As our learners settle in, we have been focusing on supporting them with communication, interaction and regulation, helping each child feel secure, understood, and ready to learn.

To further enhance this support, we have started to develop our Learning Zone regulation space. This area provides learners with opportunities to engage in activities that develop physical wellbeing skills, self-regulation and emotional readiness. It has quickly become a valued part of our daily rhythm, offering a safe and supportive environment that encourages independence and confidence.

Our learners have also been enjoying a range of wonderful experiences beyond the classroom. Swimming sessions at the main site continue to be a highlight, giving learners the chance to build confidence in the water while developing important physical skills. For some of our learners, additional support has been offered through Pony therapy and Music therapy, both of which provide calm, enriching experiences that encourage communication, expression and emotional regulation. These sessions have already created many beautiful moments of interaction and joy.

We are incredibly proud of how our learners have settled into the term, embraced new experiences, and continued to grow with confidence.

Leanne Maguire



Oakland School News

A warm welcome to all our learners, especially to our FO1 students, whose enthusiasm has filled Oakland School with joy and energy.

They've truly brightened these autumn days. We're delighted to see every learner settling in beautifully and engaging in their daily routines and learning.

As part of our Community Participation learning strand, it has been a joy watching classes make full use of the Oakland Park Playground. Learners have been interacting positively with staff and enjoying a wide range of exciting outdoor activities.

This term, we have also supported our learners in exploring and understanding British Values. They have taken part in an inspiring array of multicultural and enrichment experiences, including Diwali, Bonfire Night, Remembrance Day, Hanukkah, and of course, our very first Christmas at Oakland. The festive spirit is now well underway as learners busily prepare for the celebrations ahead.

Over the final two weeks of term, learners will enjoy a whole host of special activities, from the Christmas door competition and classroom visits from Santa to a festive school dinner and an exciting visit from Animal Man, to name just a few.

Finally, we extend our sincere thanks to all the parents who joined us for our November Coffee Morning. It was a wonderful event filled with positive feedback, and both staff and learners were thrilled to showcase the fantastic work they create together.

Looking ahead, Oakland is energised and excited for a brilliant start to 2026!

Antonio Ferraz



Parental Engagement

Thank You to Our Parents and Carers

A heartfelt thank you to all the parents and carers who have attended our workshops this term. Your involvement has created a warm, supportive environment where families can learn, share experiences and build confidence together. We truly appreciate your time, commitment and contributions to each session.



Bring it on Brum!

Bring it on Brum! Is running FREE activity clubs in Birmingham for those aged 4-16 who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals, they can join the Bring it on Brum! holiday clubs throughout the winter holidays.

Dates: Monday 22nd December 2025 - Friday 2nd January 2026 (excluding weekends and Bank Holidays).

Bookings at www.bringitonbrum.co.uk

Your Bring it on Brum! (FSM) code is: « 3307013»

Masuma Rajwani



Upcoming Parental Workshops Next Term

We are pleased to share our upcoming workshops for parent and carer for next term. As a special school, we proudly support and cater for all children with SEND, and each session has been designed to offer practical strategies, expert advice and opportunities to connect with other families.

Next Term's Workshops:

- Meditation Workshop
- Supporting parental wellbeing, stress reduction and relaxation.
- Nutrition and Achieving a Healthy Balance Diet
- Practical guidance on planning meals and supporting healthy eating habits.
- PSHE/RSE Workshop
- Understanding personal, social, health and relationship education and how to support your child at home.
- Communication Workshop
- Practical strategies to support speech, language, interaction and alternative communication approaches.
- Therapeutic Art Session
- A creative, calming session to explore emotional expression and wellbeing through art.
- NHS: Toilet Training & Incontinence Products
- Information from NHS professionals on toileting support, suitable products and the ordering process.
- Arbor Parent App Support Session
- An interactive session to help parents explore and navigate the new Arbor app, including guidance on accessing information, managing attendance and communicating with school

Dates and times will be shared soon. All sessions are free, friendly, and open to every parent and carer in our school community.

Masuma Rajwani



Attendance Update

Every child has a right to education!

Thank you to all the parents and carers who have supported us since the beginning of September by ensuring their child is in school and arriving on time each day. We understand that this can take extra planning and effort and we truly appreciate everything you do.

Your support helps your child access important learning experiences throughout the year and ensures they receive the consistency and routine that is so important for their progress and wellbeing.

As we move into the colder months, we would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone about the Importance of good attendance and punctuality. Every day really does count in your child's learning Journey. We have noticed an increase in learner absences due to illness. Please be reminded that if a learner is absent for more than 3 days medical evidence will be required to support your child's absence from school.

Our school motto is that your child's attendance should be above 88%. We understand that at times this can be extremely challenging. Please contact the school if you require any support.

Attendance rewards

Learners across the departments will be celebrating good attendance with a movie afternoon at school complete with popcorn and chocolate.

Reminder to booking Medical Appointments

To reduce avoidable absence, please book routine appointments like dental check-ups outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, we encourage people to book appointments at the start or the end of the day to minimise disruption and maximise your child's time at school.

If your child is absent for an unavoidable reason such as illness, please contact school on **0121 773 4637** to speak to us, or leave a voicemail.

Reminder to Pupil Leave of absence (Holidays in Term Time)

The 2 weeks school holidays are nearly here and many parents wonder about whether they can go on holiday early or during term time. We are really clear that going on holiday in term time is unlawful unless you have the advance permission of the head teacher to do so.

By law, Pupil leave of absence (holidays) can only be granted in exceptional circumstances and because of this, almost all holiday requests are denied and parents will be issued with a fixed penalty notice or court fine by the Council. For this academic year so far 14 parents have been fined from the council for holidays taken during term so we encourage parents to not book holidays in term time. Every day in school is precious and Attendance matters. Birmingham Education intervention Legal team have shared for parents/ carers penalty notices are issued per parent per child.

If you are struggling with your child's attendance and would like support please contact us on **0121 773 4637**

Reporting absences

If your child is absent for an unavoidable reason such as illness, please contact school on **0121 773 4637** to speak to us, or leave a voicemail.

Rabia Hassan



Term Dates

Spring Term 2026

- Term Starts: Monday 5th January 2026
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- Half-term: Monday 16th February 2026 to Friday 20th February 2026
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- Term ends: Friday 27th March 2026

Summer Term 2026

- Term Starts: Monday 13th April 2026
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- Half-term: Monday 25th May 2026 to Friday 29th May 2026
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- Term ends: Monday 20th July 2026

Teacher Training Days:

- Monday 23rd February 2026
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- Friday 17th July 2026
-
- Monday 20th July 2026

The Academy will be closed for an additional Trust Training Day - the date for this has not yet been confirmed

Rabia Hassan

