



# North Kidlington Primary School Newsletter



Nurturing Potential, Growing Success

## Key Dates

### February

5th—Rec/Yr 6 Heights & Weights  
10th—Mock SATS week (Yr 6)  
14th—3:15 Finish  
17th—Half Term Break  
24th—Back to School  
26th—Young Voices (Choir)  
28th—Entertainer (FoNKS)

### March

6th & 7th—World Book Day  
W/C 17th—Parent Consultations  
25th—Full Governing Board Meet  
28th—Mother's Day Wrapping (FoNKS)

### April

1st—Rec Vision Screening  
2nd—LKS2 Play  
4th—1:30 finish  
7th—Easter Break  
21st—Bank Holiday  
22nd—Back to School

[Term dates can be found here](#)  
(This is a link)

## The Burrow

Calm, caring and fun before  
and after school provision.



## Spring at NKS

The days are starting to lengthen and it was lovely to have a dry day with a bit of sun yesterday. We were thrilled to discover that Oxford University Press' children's word of the year for 2024 was [KINDNESS](#). As I am sure you are aware, this is our school value and something we try to live by at NKS.

Recently I have spoken about Kindness to the Environment during my weekly assemblies and many children have spoken to me about this and shared what they are doing to try and reduce their energy use.

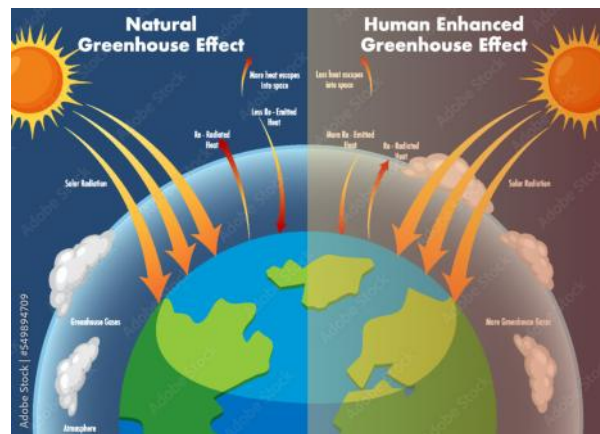
If you want to discuss climate change more with your child there are some great resources out there you can use to help:

<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/kids-guide-to-climate-change/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2021/10/climate-change-facts-actions-for-kids/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/45880633>

<https://www.booksfortopics.com/booklists/topics/geography/environmental-sustainability/>



### Marie Gardner

One of our fabulous and long serving TAs, Mrs Gardner, is retiring at the end of February. Mrs Gardner started here as a volunteer 42 years ago and has held a variety of roles over this time. I wonder how many of you remember her from when you were here as a child. I have loved working with her as she is funny, hardworking, puts the children first and will always volunteer her time when we need some help—a true servant to education. I know you will join me in thanking Mrs Gardner for her years of service to the children of North Kidlington.



If you want to read  
our new play policy  
you can find it  
[here](#).

## OPAL Update

### A parent's view...

Being on the OPAL working group has led me to reflect on my school playtimes and the amazing freedom and opportunities for play we had – a very different experience to that commonly seen in schools today. So, on a recent lunchtime visit to NKS, I was delighted to see many of the aspects of playtime that I fondly remember.

One of the first changes under OPAL was to open up the playgrounds so that the children are free to play anywhere and with anyone. This has resulted in groups of children of different ages playing happily together. While some of the younger ones were content just to remain in the familiar surroundings of the infant playground, other children wandered across to join the older pupils or explore the butterfly garden and other previously out of bounds areas. Similarly, older children seemed to enjoy a return to their former stomping grounds.

On the day of my visit, the wild garden and grass areas of the site could not be used, there was a sports club taking place in one section of the playground and young leader groups further reduced the space. Despite all this, the site did not feel crowded. There has been very little change to the physical area available for play under OPAL and it is a small site compared to some, but it felt as though the large number of children had plenty of space to play. There were both busy areas and quieter spaces for those who wanted a more peaceful playtime.

Although the OPAL programme has only just begun, there are already opportunities for a range of play. There can be dressing up, scooters and trikes, swingball, giant Connect 4, tyres, Lego, small world play, music and swings, in addition to the fixed play equipment and ball games that have always been available.

While the children have more freedom, and inevitably there is more risk, they are still well supervised with staff positioned at key points. The children appeared to know the playground rules and the boundaries for different activities, for example the fixed circuit for scooters and trikes. Regular 'play assemblies' (where rules for new play equipment are discussed with the children) are an important part of OPAL. At the end of playtime, the children helped to tidy up and knew where everything needed to go.

My overall impression was that the children were having fun and developing in many ways. There was a largely positive response from the children when asked about the changes to playtimes. They most frequently said that they enjoyed being able to play with children of all ages – playing with friends or siblings in different year groups, having a hug with siblings, and taking care of younger children. As one said, "it's good because we can look after the younger ones and help them develop skills". The lunchtime supervisors were also positive about the changes, reporting fewer first aid incidents and fewer disagreements amongst the children.

The range of play opportunities will steadily increase over the coming months to further improve playtimes at NKS. Please keep an eye out for requests for donations and volunteers!

*Helen Dunmore*

We are very grateful to Helen and Rebecca Pyrah who are volunteering their time to be on the OPAL committee.



# Donations Welcome!



We are super excited to become an OPAL school and are keen to get our children enjoying more creative play at break and lunchtimes.

We would love to start collecting some of the following items to help get things moving...

## Dressing up

- Anything goes: old skirts, coats, dresses, trousers and accessories in child or adult sizes. See the examples photos below for ideas:



## Music and noise making!

- any old metal pans, kitchen utensils and containers that the children could fashion into musical instruments



If you have any items you would like to donate, please bring them into school and hand them to your child's class teacher or at the office.



Fun and exciting ideas for play and learning for 5-11 year olds in Oxfordshire. Try all 50 Things, learn new skills and discover your local area!

[Click Here](#)

## Gymnastics & Swimming Gala

As always, we have been out and about for sporting competitions. So far this term, we have taken a group to a Kidlington Swimming Gala and another to a gymnastics competition. I hear that we did very well at both and the children behaved brilliantly, showing what a wonderful school we have here.



Well done to our swanlike swimmers: Matthew U., Thomas U., Felix M., Eva K-L., Ella D., Isabelle B., Ethan H., Annabel D., Matilda-Rose R., Jude L.,

Well done to our graceful gymnasts: Eris R., Maira W., Ivy R-H., Megan M., Harrison E., Matilda-Rose R., Robyn N., Ayla I., Ella D., Eris R., Lola P., Aryanah A., Millie W.

## Be Kind to Others

You may have seen in the office window that the children raised a massive amount for Children in Need this year—£2508.76!!!! Every year I am astounded at the money we raise for this brilliant charity. Thank you so much.

## Running Late?

If you are ever running late for pick up, please give us a ring so we can let the class teacher know. After 3:30 we take children to the office to wait in the warm and so the teachers can do their vital preparation and assessment work. However, from 3:45, because of staffing, we will take your child to The Burrow where they can have a play with their friends. We will have to charge you for a short session if this happen though.

I went for a wander and look what I saw...





# JOIN THE JUNIOR PARKRUN FAMILY

**WALK, JOG, RUN, VOLUNTEER**

or simply come and watch – it's up to you!

## **FAMILY-FRIENDLY 2K EVENT**

Every Sunday morning

## **FOR 4 – 14 YEAR OLDS**

Adults can join in with the kids too

## **EVERYONE WELCOME**

Walk, jog, hop, skip or jump – it's up to you!

## **FREE AND EASY TO TAKE PART**

No special kit needed – wear whatever you like

## **HAVE FUN BEING ACTIVE**

Share high fives and big smiles!

## **MAKE FRIENDS**

Meet lots of new people

## **LEARN NEW SKILLS**

Kids and adults can volunteer in lots of roles

## **FEEL HAPPY AND PROUD**

Try your best and celebrate your achievements

## **Park Hill Recreation Ground Junior parkrun**

Starts at 9:00 am, every Sunday morning at:

Park Hill Recreation Ground (off Benmead Road), Kidlington, OX5 2DB.

Register your child for free at [www.parkrun.org/register](http://www.parkrun.org/register) and bring their unique barcode with them.

For more information, check our Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/parkhillrecreationgroundjuniors](https://www.facebook.com/parkhillrecreationgroundjuniors) or email us at:  
[parkhillrecreationgroundjuniors@parkrun.com](mailto:parkhillrecreationgroundjuniors@parkrun.com)