



Christmas 2025 EDITION

Message from the Principal - Munira Said



As we come to the end of a busy and rewarding term, and with Christmas just around the corner, OPA has once again been filled with a wonderful sense of warmth, excitement and hopeful anticipation. This season always brings out the very best in our school community, and it has been a joy to see students, staff, parents and families joining together in celebration.

The academy looks truly magical. Our building has been beautifully transformed with festive decorations, thanks to the hard work and creativity of our Site and Reception teams. Their efforts have made OPA sparkle, especially our magnificent Christmas tree in reception, which could easily rival the one in Trafalgar Square. The Art team has also outdone themselves; the stunning Christmas cards showcase the extraordinary talent of our young artists who continue to brighten every corner of the school.

In the lead-up to Christmas, OPA has been alive with activity. Laughter has echoed through our corridors and the joy on the faces of our students has been a reminder of just how special this time of year is. From the magical Christmas Grotto where excited children met Father Christmas, to our bustling Christmas Market, brimming with hand-made gifts and festive treats, the spirit of community has been evident everywhere.

Our Christmas Cracker Show brought families together for an evening of entertainment and festive sparkle. And of course, a huge thank you must go to our brilliant catering team, who pulled out all the stops to prepare a delicious Christmas dinner for every member of our academy. Their care and commitment ensured that everyone enjoyed a warm, hearty meal and the shared joy that comes with it.

Throughout this festive period, our PARK values (Perseverance, Aspiration, Responsibility and Knowledge) have been at the heart of everything we do. We have seen students persevere through challenges, aspire to achieve new heights, act responsibly within our school community, and continue to grow in knowledge every single day. These values guide our actions, shape our culture, and remind us of what makes OPA such a vibrant and inspiring place to learn and work.

As we prepare to pause for the Christmas break, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our staff for their unwavering dedication, to our students for their enthusiasm and hard work, and to our parents and wider community for their ongoing support. I wish each and every one of you a joyful Christmas and a peaceful, well-deserved rest. May the holiday season bring you happiness, good health and precious time with loved ones.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



P A R K

Perseverance Aspiration Responsibility and Knowledge



Ms J Hassan



A Christmas message from Jodie Hassan,- Executive Principal

As we reach the end of the Autumn Term and prepare for the Christmas break, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what has been a busy, positive and successful term for our school community.

Our ethos, 'Believe and Achieve', has been evident in so many ways this term. Every day, our students are encouraged to believe in themselves, in their potential and in the power of education to open doors. In turn, they are achieving not only academically, but also in their personal development, confidence and character. It has been a pleasure to see students rise to challenges, set ambitious goals and take pride in their progress.

Our PARK values (Perseverance, Aspiration, Responsibility and Knowledge) continue to underpin everything we do:

- Perseverance has been demonstrated by students who have shown resilience and determination in their learning, particularly when faced with demanding work or new expectations.
- Aspiration is clear in the ambition our students show for their futures, whether through their commitment to lessons, involvement in enrichment opportunities, or thoughtful planning for next steps.
- Responsibility is reflected in the mature way students conduct themselves, take ownership of their learning and contribute positively to the life of the school. Our students are really a delight, and they make us proud every day.
- Knowledge remains at the heart of our mission, as we strive to provide a rich, challenging curriculum that equips students with the understanding and skills they need to succeed.

Christmas is also a time to think of others. Throughout the term, students and staff have shown generosity, kindness and a strong sense of community, reminding us that believing in ourselves goes hand in hand with supporting one another. This was illustrating perfectly through the abundance of donations from our students, their families, and staff for Thurrock Food Bank. It was so heartwarming to see how generous and kind our community really is. Thank you for everything you do.

I would like to also thank our staff for their dedication and hard work, and our families for their ongoing support and partnership. Together, we are creating a school where





Mr Aron Whiles



Message from the Education Director OPA

As we come to the end of the year, it is a good time to celebrate the ongoing positive progress and improvement being made at Ormiston Park Academy. I am particularly pleased that pupil attendance has continued to improve over the Autumn Term. The importance of pupils attending every day is crucial to their enjoyment and success at school. When I visit the academy, I am always impressed with how confident and polite the pupils are and the strong culture and sense of belonging across the school community. On my most recent visit in December, I had the pleasure of meeting a number of the Year 11 Student Leaders who are excellent role models for the younger pupils whilst also making a valuable contribution to the day to day running of the school.

I would like to thank all the pupils for their hard work this year, our parents and carers for their ongoing support, and to our dedicated staff for their hard work and commitment. Wishing everyone a happy, safe, and restful Christmas and a successful 2026.

Best wishes
Aron Whiles

Message from Lynsey Padmore- Vice Principal

As Vice Principal, I lead on Personal Development, Student Experience, and Inclusion across the academy. This means ensuring that every student feels safe, supported, included, and valued, while also having access to opportunities that help them grow academically, socially, and personally. My role is about championing students' well-being, celebrating their successes, and making sure our academy is a place where all young people can thrive and feel a strong sense of belonging.

This term, I have been particularly pleased with our student leaders, who have truly risen to the challenge of leadership. They have played a key role in organising and leading events such as World Mental Health Day, Black History Month, Anti-Bullying Week, Remembrance Day, Christmas Jumper Day, the Christmas Market, and the Christmas Cracker. These events are excellent examples of students coming together to support important causes, raise money for charity and strengthen our academy community.

Our enrichment programme ensures there are many opportunities for students beyond the classroom, including a wide range of careers events, sporting fixtures, trips and extra-curricular clubs. It has been fantastic to see students engaging so positively and making the most of these experiences. I am especially delighted to see the library buzzing with activity every lunchtime, providing a welcoming space for reading, learning, and social connection.

I absolutely love the positive energy in corridors, the enthusiasm in classrooms, and the strong sense of community that continues to grow each day. Thank you to our students, staff, and families for their ongoing support and commitment. I am very proud of all that has been achieved this term and look forward to what's ahead.

Wishing you all a restful Christmas break!



Mrs L Padmore

SAFEGUARDING & ATTENDANCE



Ms S Gakungu

Safeguarding is
Everyone's
Responsibility

SAFEGUARDING

As we approach the Christmas break, we want to take a moment to thank all our students, parents, and carers for working with us to keep our school community safe, connected, and supported this term. This time of year often brings excitement, celebration, and opportunities to rest and reconnect with loved ones. However, we also recognise that the holidays can bring added pressures, changes in routine, or feelings of uncertainty for some families. With this in mind, we want to gently remind everyone that safeguarding remains our priority, and support continues to be available should students or parents need it over the festive period.

Support for Students and Families During the Holidays

Although school will be closed, help is still available from:

- Local Authority Children's Services (Thurrock MASH) - Tel: 01375 652802
- NSPCC Helpline – Advice and support for adults worried about a child 0808 800 5000
- Childline – Free, confidential support for children 0800 1111
- If a child is in danger, please call 999

If you need to contact the school

Our safeguarding email opasafeguarding@ormistonpark.org.uk and the safeguarding student report line 'Whisper' will be monitored at set intervals over the break. Please note that this is not for emergencies, but a member of the safeguarding team will respond as soon as school reopens.

We wish all our families peace, joy, and rest over the festive season. We look forward to welcoming students back safely in the New Year.

ATTENDANCE

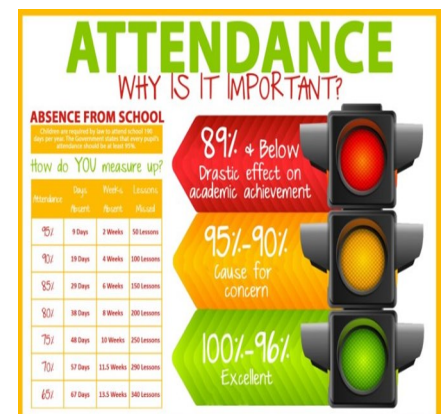
We want to thank all our families for their continued commitment to excellent attendance. Every day in school truly matters: strong attendance helps students stay connected, make progress, and feel confident in their learning. Over the Autumn Term, we have been encouraged by the efforts students have made to arrive on time, attend regularly, and make the most of the opportunities available to them. We appreciate the vital role parents and carers play in building positive routines at home and supporting children to come to school ready to learn.

As we prepare for the Spring Term, we ask families to continue supporting good attendance by:

- Ensuring students return to school on the first day back after the holidays
- Avoiding term-time holidays or unnecessary absences
- Encouraging regular sleep routines and punctual morning habits

Our Attendance Team is always here to help. If you have any worries, or feel your child may benefit from additional support with routines, wellbeing, or engagement, please get in touch on attendance@ormistonpark.org.uk

Thank you for your continued partnership in helping every child achieve their best through excellent attendance.



Celebrating Student Leaders

We are incredibly pleased with the commitment and enthusiasm shown by our wonderful team of Student Leaders this term. Every tutor group has now nominated a Student Leader, and we are proud to say that all students have received their gold Student Leader tie, marking their important role within the academy.

Our Student Leaders have also taken part in safeguarding training, alongside peer mentor and anti-bullying ambassador training, equipping them with the skills, confidence and understanding needed to support their peers effectively. These sessions ensure that students know how to listen, support others appropriately, and seek help from trusted adults when needed.

Providing students with opportunities to lead is incredibly important. Student leadership empowers young people to develop confidence, responsibility, and empathy, while also helping to create a school culture where everyone feels heard, valued and supported. Our Student Leaders play a vital role in promoting positive behaviour, kindness, and respect across the academy.

Their hard work linked closely with Anti-Bullying Week and Odd Sock Day, where our community came together to celebrate difference and reinforce the message that bullying is never acceptable. Our Student Leaders were central to these events, helping to promote awareness and champion inclusion throughout the school.

We are extremely proud of all our Student Leaders and look forward to seeing the positive impact they continue to make within our academy community.



PEER MENTORING



SAFEGUARDING TRAINING



**STUDENT
LEADERS**



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English Department News

Theatre Commedia Visits OPA

On Thursday 18th December, OPA was transformed into a winter wonderland as Years 10 and 11 were treated to a performance of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens presented by The Complete Commedia Company. Children got an insight into a key GCSE English Literature text and increased their cultural capital, as well as having an experience to another way of learning and a chance to indulge in some Christmas cheer.

The response was universally positive, with students saying they got a greater understanding of the text and that they were enthralled by the excellent performances.

There was even a chance for the director to come on stage afterwards and take some questions from the audience, who were eager to question her on the artistic choices that had been made with the retelling of the Dickens classic. Student behaviour was universally excellent, with the director telling us afterwards that the OPA children were a "credit to us all". Some Year 11 students went backstage at the end of the performance to thank the actors personally on the enjoyable event. Others said that they had acquired a desire to take more theatre trips in the future.

The visit comes with OPA's renewed focus on enrichment and ensuring children have opportunities to have memorable experiences outside of the classroom.



A Christmas Carol

OPA Literacy Courses

Reading, whether guided or independent, broadens knowledge, improves concentration, and enhances imagination. It supports success across all subjects— from understanding exam questions to interpreting complex ideas. Together, literacy courses and regular reading empower students with the skills they need to excel in school, in exams, and in life beyond the classroom.

It is with this in mind we say a huge congratulations to all students who have successfully completed the OPA Literacy courses: Lexonik Leap & Advanced, Guided Reading, and Literacy Leaders! Your dedication and achievement are something to be incredibly proud of.

Well done!

Mrs Everitt- Literacy Lead





BT Group 'Work Ready' Careers Trip

On a beautiful sunny winters day in December, ten students from Years 8 and 9, with an interest in the tech industry, were chosen to spend the day at the BT Group head office in Central London. The students took part in an all-day workshop in the magnificent 17th floor office with far reaching views over the city.

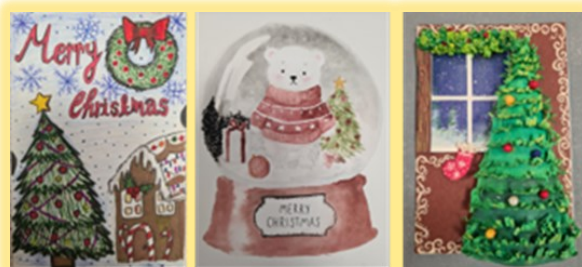
After meeting the BT Group ambassadors from a wide range of roles across the business, students learned about careers, salaries, pensions and entry routes into BT, as well as having a tour of the building and exclusive customer experience centre. Our OPA techies had to work in groups with students from other schools to come up with a tech solution to a problem and present their ideas to our hosts. The day was a real insight to a future possible career pathway.

We are super proud of how fantastically our students represented OPA and how well they interacted with the BT staff and their peer group, asking some really mature and well thought out questions throughout the event.



Celebration of student Art work Term One

We have had a great first term in Art and the students have been producing some fantastic work, too much to include in one newsletter. We have run a Christmas card competition with the top three entries included below. Congratulations to the winners and very well done to all that entered

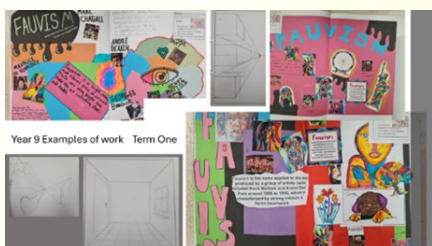
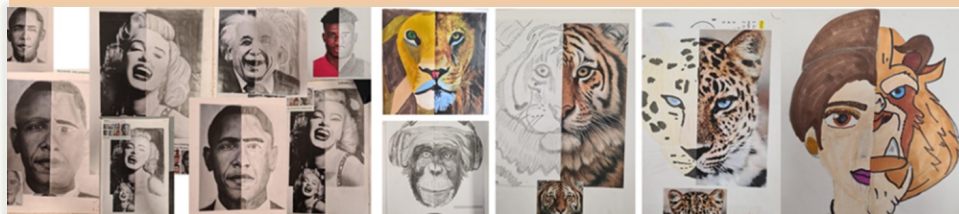


Christmas Card Competition

This Term **Year 7s** have been learning the key foundation skills to start their journey in Art. They have taken these skills and produced a drawing of a basketball considering Line, detail, Tone and Colour. They have all made a great start to the school year.



Year 8 have produced some fantastic work, both in lesson and in their set homework. We have been looking at Portraiture and The Figure studying both 2D and 3D Artworks.



Year 9 Examples of work Term One

Year 9 have started their introduction to Technical drawing and Perspective, these skills will lead into the start of their Architecture project starting after Christmas.

Year 10



Year 10 Art and Photography classes have made a very positive start to their GCSE course work and have been producing some very considered and creative pieces of 2D drawings and Digital work.

Photography students are learning Photoshop and how to merge their photos together and Art and Design students have been producing some beautiful paintings as well as other mixed media works.

Year 11 Art and Photography classes are working hard in the last stretch before the start of the Externally set assignment at the start of the New Year. Wishing everyone a well-deserved rest over the Christmas break.

A fantastic start to the Year 7

As we approach the festive season, I want to take a moment to celebrate the incredible start our Year 7 students have made at Ormiston Park Academy. They have settled into academy life brilliantly and have shown maturity, enthusiasm, and resilience throughout their first term.

Year 7 have not only impressed in lessons but have also achieved the best attendance across the school—a testament to their commitment and eagerness to learn. I have seen students making wonderful progress, and the engagement and participation in lessons has been outstanding.

It's also fantastic to see so many Year 7 students getting involved in our enrichment clubs—including chess, football, netball, or choir. Their energy and willingness to try new things is inspiring. A number of awards have already been given out to celebrate this brilliant start.

Our recent pantomime trip was a huge success—a truly enjoyable day for both students and staff (oh yes it was!). Another highlight has been the Passports initiative, which has encouraged students to embrace new experiences and challenges. Those who have completed their Passports have done exceptionally well, and after Christmas, we will be moving on to our new Passport: Aspiration.

As we head into the holidays, I want to remind everyone of the importance of maintaining high attendance, punctuality, completing homework on time, and continuing positive behaviour—both in lessons and during break, lunch, and transitions.

Christmas is a time to enjoy time with family, relax, and recharge for another busy and exciting half term ahead. I wish all parents, carers, and students a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Mr Clark—
Extended Leadership
(Behaviour), HoL Y7 and CL
PE**





Celebration Success at OPA



This week, Ormiston Park Academy proudly celebrated the incredible achievements of our students. Our Heads of Learning delivered inspiring achievement assemblies, recognising attendance, academic success, PARK values, and outstanding individual accomplishments. It was fantastic to see so many certificates and prizes awarded, showcasing the hard work and dedication of our students.

Adding to the celebrations, the best-performing tutor group enjoyed a special breakfast filled with delicious treats—a well-deserved reward for their commitment. To conclude the week, three students from each year group were invited to an exclusive lunch with our Principal, Ms Said. This heartwarming occasion allowed students to share their successes and reflect on their achievements so far this academic year. Well done to all our students—keep up the amazing work!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone at OPA!



Congratulations to all our students on their well-earned achievements. We are incredibly proud of their efforts and look forward to even more successes next term.





LUNCH WITH THE PRINCIPAL

Our end of term **pizza lunch with the Principal** is always such a lovely afternoon and a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the success of our wonderful students.

Heads of Learning nominated students who have achieved well this term. Students arrived proudly with their golden tickets to enjoy lunch together, with recognition given for achievements such as most improved, outstanding effort, and consistent commitment to learning. It was great to see some new faces there, highlighting success across the academy.

These celebration reflects our PARK values. These students have demonstrated perseverance in their learning, aspiration to achieve their best, responsibility in their conduct and attitudes, and a strong commitment to developing their knowledge.



Charity and Fundraising at Ormiston Park Academy

We are incredibly proud of our students for their continued generosity and commitment to supporting others. Over recent weeks, students have been bringing in food donations for our food bank collection, demonstrating kindness, compassion, and a strong sense of community.

Collecting food and raising money for charity is important as it helps support those facing difficult circumstances, both locally and nationally. It also encourages our young people to develop empathy, social responsibility, and an understanding of the impact they can have by helping others.

Our student leaders delivered the donated items to the Thurrock Food Bank, who were extremely grateful for the generosity shown by our school community.

This term, we have also raised funds for a number of important charities, including Macmillan Cancer Support through our coffee morning, The Royal British Legion, The Anti-Bullying Alliance, and Diabetes UK. These fundraising efforts highlight our students' willingness to stand up for causes that matter and support those in need.

A huge thank you to all students, parents, and carers who have contributed. Your support and generosity are truly appreciated and make a real difference.



**Believe
and
Achieve**



Enrichment

This term has been exciting and enriching, marked by new initiatives, community action, and experiences that have enriched student life.

Halloween Scare Fest

One of the most popular events of the term was the brand-new Halloween Scare Fest, an idea put forward by a Year 8 pupil through our student voice programme. Their suggestion quickly gained momentum and staff worked with student leaders to bring the idea to life. The event welcomed over 100 Year 7 and Year 8 pupils into the Academy theatre, where they enjoyed a Halloween movie while dressed in fantastic fancy-dress costumes.

PARK Teams

This term, we launched our new PARK Teams system, rooted in the Academy's values of Perseverance, Aspiration, Responsibility and Knowledge. The initiative strengthens students' sense of belonging and school pride while fostering a strong community identity.

PARK Teams promote positive relationships across year groups, with older students taking on leadership roles as House Ambassadors. Through friendly competition across academic, creative and community challenges, students earn house points that contribute to team success while building skills, confidence and character. Overall, the PARK system embeds our core values into daily school life through teamwork, leadership and shared purpose.



Year 7 Pantomime Trip – Peter Pan

Our Year 7 students kicked off the festive season with a magical visit to the Thameside Theatre in Grays, to see the much-loved pantomime, Peter Pan. For many students, this was their first live theatre experience, and it certainly didn't disappoint. The interactive performance, lively music, and classic pantomime humour had everyone laughing, cheering, and fully immersed in Neverland. The trip not only supported our cultural enrichment aims but also helped our newest cohort bond as a year group.

Christmas Jumper Day – Supporting Save the Children

On December 11th, the Academy was awash with colour as students and staff took part in Christmas Jumper Day to raise awareness for Save the Children. From sparkly snowflakes to singing reindeer, the creativity on display was impressive! More importantly, the event encouraged our young people to think about global citizenship and demonstrated how small acts can contribute to meaningful change. Donations collected throughout the day will help support vulnerable children across the world.

Robotic Technology

We are proud to have introduced state-of-the-art robotic technology to line-mark our sports fields with precision and efficiency. Using advanced GPS systems, this innovation ensures consistently accurate markings across all pitches and tracks, meeting professional standards while reducing human error. This initiative saves valuable time, enhances the quality of our facilities, and reflects Ormiston Park Academy's commitment to innovation, excellence and providing the best possible environment for physical education and sport.



PE

This term has been a strong showcase of talent, determination and school spirit at Ormiston Park Academy.

Key Highlights

Football

- Year 7: National Cup victory vs Portside (3–2) and league win vs Ockendon (2–0). Progressing to the next round of the National Cup in January.

- Year 8: League win vs Riverside (3–2). Narrow defeats in both the National Cup and Essex Cup after very competitive fixtures.

- Year 10: Essex Cup win vs Shoburyness (3–0). Despite strong performances and resilience, the team narrowly missed progression in both the Essex and National Cups.

Basketball

- U14: Outstanding National Cup win vs St Edmunds (103–33) and Essex Cup win vs Mayflower, alongside further victories against Great Baddow (75–72), Southend High School (90–42) and New Hall.

- Year 7: Essex Cup win vs Basildon Lower Academy.

Netball

- Year 7 & 8: Strong performances for both year groups where they remain undefeated so far this season.

Cross Country

- Fantastic participation at the Borough Competition with notable finishes from Amelia and Cameron. We are excited for next half term as we continue to grow, build on these successes.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS AT OPA



The Christmas season truly came alive at OPA. It has been wonderful to see our academy filled with such a festive and joyful atmosphere.

One of the highlights was seeing so many students arrive at school wearing their Christmas jumpers to raise money for Save the Children, we raised a total of £131 for Save the Children. The day was special as staff and students sat together to enjoy lunch, pull Christmas crackers, and share lots of laughter. It was a lovely opportunity to come together as a community and the atmosphere throughout the academy was warm, festive, and full of Christmas cheer.

In the evening, OPA hosted our annual Christmas Market, which was a fantastic event. Stallholders were selling a range of Christmas gifts, and it was great to see so many of our students attending alongside family members, the sense of community spirit was clear to see and made the evening a real success.

A special mention must go to our Year 11 students, who raised money towards their Prom by selling hot chocolate, a very popular stall on a cold winter's evening! Visitors also enjoyed the magic of Santa's Grotto, adding to the excitement for younger family members, before everyone settled down for performances in *The Christmas Cracker*.

Thank you to everyone who came along to support our Christmas Market, to celebrate the OPA community and a perfect way to end the term.



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS AT OPA



CHRISTMAS MARKET





Farewell to Mrs Shorey

After an incredible 26 years of dedicated service, we say a heartfelt farewell to Mrs Shorey, who is retiring from Ormiston Park Academy.

Throughout her time at the academy, Mrs Shorey has led PSHE and RSE with commitment and care, always placing students at the heart of her work. She has been a constant source of support for our young people, known for being firm, fair, and consistent. Her high standards, calm guidance, and genuine care have earned her enormous respect from both students and colleagues alike.

Mrs Shorey's impact on our school community has been profound, and her contribution over more than two decades will not be forgotten. We are incredibly grateful for her hard work, dedication, and unwavering support.

We wish Mrs Shorey a long and happy retirement. She will be greatly missed by staff and students, but her legacy will remain a valued part of Ormiston Park Academy.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

We look forward to welcoming all students and staff back to school on Monday 5th January 2026.

