



# Old Palace Newsletter

September/ October 2024

## WELCOME RECEPTION CHILDREN



A warm welcome to all the lovely new children and families who have joined our Reception classes. The children have settled very well, considering this is a new setting and that most had not attended fulltime. We understand that starting Reception is a huge milestone for children and parents and we aim to make the transition as smooth as possible.

In the first 6 weeks of school, staff have established routines and relationships with all children to support them with settling in and feeling happy, safe and secure in school. In addition, the teachers have completed the statutory Baseline assessment, which records the children's attainment in early Maths, Reading and Geometry skills upon their start in Reception. We are now arranging keyworker meetings for parents to meet with their child's class teacher to discuss settling in and Baseline assessments. In addition, we will be setting up your child's online journal on Tapestry, please look out for the activation email, which will be sent at the beginning of Autumn term 2.



## IMPORTANT DATES



### AUTUMN HALF TERM HOLIDAY

School finishes Friday 25th October 2024  
Return to school Monday 4th November 2024

### END OF AUTUMN TERM

School finishes Friday 20th December 2024  
Return to school Tuesday 7th January 2025

### SPRING HALF TERM HOLIDAY

School finishes Friday 14th February 2025  
Return to school Monday 24th February 2025

### END OF SPRING TERM

School finishes Friday 4th April 2025  
Return to school Tuesday 22nd April 2025

Please visit our school website for a full list of term dates for 2024-25 [www.oldpalaceprimary.co.uk](http://www.oldpalaceprimary.co.uk)

## CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

To tackle digital inequality in the East End, an innovative partnership made up of the Letta Trust, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council and Poplar HARCA kindly donated several Chromebooks to the school in order to support the learning of eligible families. In addition to receiving a Chromebook, eligible families have also been enrolled onto a comprehensive digital training programme, which will be delivered throughout the year to support digital literacy skills. We would like to say a massive thank you to the partnership as well as to Councillor Maium Takuldar, the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning for offering his support by attending the launch event.



## KEEPING THE SCHOOL UPDATED

Please remember that it is YOUR responsibility as a parent to keep the school informed regarding changes to your contact details. You MUST NOTIFY us of any changes to address, telephone number, emergency contact and collection details. The school will not be held responsible for any issue resulting from families providing inaccurate contact details. For more information, please visit [oldpalaceprimary.co.uk/privacy-policy](http://oldpalaceprimary.co.uk/privacy-policy)



# Positivity

Core Value Award : October 2024



The value for the month of October was "POSITIVITY".  
The following children were nominated for being excellent role models:

**Reception:** Musa A & Kawthar

**Year 1:** Nuraiz & Alyasa

**Year 2:** Musa H & Musa

**Year 3:** Ayana & Aleena

**Year 4:** Sairah & Yaqub

**Year 5:** Kaiden & Suhaib

**Year 6:** Rahil & Bilal

**Core value for November is COLLABORATION.**

# PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

## COFFEE MORNINGS & WORKSHOPS

### Welcome Meetings

Parents were invited to a 'welcome meeting' for each year group at the beginning of the academic year. These provided an opportunity to meet year group leaders, to find out about the year ahead and to be reminded of the school's expectations, for example in relation to homework, safeguarding, attendance and behavior. For those parents who were unable to attend, copies of the meeting presentations can be found [HERE](#). It is only by working together that we can ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential.

### Coffee Morning: AWA & School Social Worker

On Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September, the coffee morning was used to introduce some of the professionals who work with the school to support our families. Shanaz Choudhury, our School Social Worker explained how she provides support to schools in relation to safeguarding and securing the welfare and wellbeing of pupils. This provision aims to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families through the delivery of Early Help and direct preventative work with families. Shahnaz also delivers parenting courses alongside our Parent Support Workers.

Sonia Rowlings, our Attendance Welfare Advisor from LBTH, highlighted the importance of attendance and punctuality. She works closely with schools to secure high rates of attendance for all our pupils and helps the school to enforce the penalty notice scheme when the parents take their child/ren out of school for unauthorised leave. The government have increased the penalty notice to £80 per parent. Both Sonia and Shahnaz are available every Wednesday 9-12pm. Appointments to meet with them can be made via the school office.

### Coffee Morning: Board Games

On 19<sup>th</sup> September we held a board games coffee morning.



The aim of the session is to help parents to socialize, and in some cases, to also allow them to practise and build confidence in speaking English. This time parents chose the games 'Headbandz' and 'Connect 4'. Those attending had fun playing the games and one of the mums commented, "it's great our school holds sessions like this, it's light hearted, good social time,

which gives us the opportunity to get to know other parents and be updated on school events/activities that are coming up." Another mum added, "I have no family in the UK, so I feel like Old Palace is my family in the UK".

It is great to know that the little things we do, can have such a big impact on someone's life. We plan to hold another games coffee morning on Thurs 7<sup>th</sup> November. Please come along and join in the fun—we would love to welcome some new faces! Coffee mornings take place **every Thursday from 9am-10:00am in the Community Room.**

### First Aid Course

On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September parents were invited to take part in a First Aid Workshop run by British Red Cross. Suzanne Park, facilitated the workshop, teaching parents the basic First Aid skills that can make a difference in an emergency and save lives.

One of the key messages was always consider your personal safety when giving first aid. Look out for any dangers and only act when you are confident it is safe to do so. Thank you to the 17 parents who attended and earned a First Aid Skills certificate.

### ESOL Class

Last year, the school worked in partnership with the Ideas Store to deliver ESOL classes aimed at parents who want to improve their English as a second language. Due to its success, we plan to continue to offer the course this academic year. We have received much interest from parents. Those selected, completed an initial assessment with the tutor on 10<sup>th</sup> October. Classes started on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October. If you are interested in signing-up, please speak to Forida or Shelly as we have limited places.

## CELEBRATING OUR PARENT COUNCILLORS

On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, the Parent Councillors for last academic year were invited to attend a whole school assembly, where they were thanked for their contribution to school life. As an extra treat, they then attended a buffet arranged by Forida. We greatly value the work of the Parent Council and how this supports parental engagement and community events, such as our popular parent parties.

A coffee morning was held before the celebration assembly, to promote the Parent Council and recruit new Parent Councillors for this academic year. This was supported by former councillors, who were able to share the impact that they had made on helping to improve the school. If you were not able to attend and are interested in becoming a Parent Councillor, please speak to Shelly. We have extended the deadline until after half term. The first meetings will take place in November/December



## Mums' Walking Group & Badminton



We offer two events to support Mums' Wellbeing: Badminton and a Walking Group. These have proved popular and take place on alternate **Mondays from 9:00-10:30am.**

There is no need to book—just turn up on time in order to benefit from these sessions.

## Dads' Badminton



We resumed Dads' Badminton on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September. This takes place on **Tuesdays 9:30-10:30** in the Top Hall. It is great to see how energetic, committed and competitive the dads are.

The group has proved so successful that the dads have now arranged a second weekly event at another venue to play Badminton.

This offers a great boost to their fitness and wellbeing. There is no need to book—just turn up. Shelly can provide further information.

## Year 6 Secondary Schools Transition Workshop

A Year 6 Transition Workshop was held on 26<sup>th</sup> September, led by Aleha Khanum, the Transition Support Officer from Tower Hamlets. Aleha spoke about topics including: how to apply online (both in and out of your own borough), the application process for SEND pupils with EHCPs, what questions to ask when visiting secondary schools, how decisions on places are made, when parents will be noticed and the appeals process. She also allowed time to answer the parents' questions. Following the meeting, our parent support workers offered additional support, arranging appointments with those parents who were experiencing difficulties when trying to apply online.



The deadline for submitting paper applications to the Town Hall in Whitechapel is 21<sup>st</sup> October. **Online applications must be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> October.** If you need support, please speak to Forida before half term.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

- 24<sup>th</sup> October: Oracy Workshop, 9-10am
- 24<sup>th</sup> October: Free School Meals Applications, 2-3pm
- 6<sup>th</sup> November: Online safety & Cyber Crime, 9-10am
- 12<sup>th</sup> November: Anti-bullying workshop 9.45am



## HEALTH PROGRAMMES

### FLU IMMUNISATION

This year, the flu vaccine is being offered to all pupils from Reception to Year 6 as part of the school's Flu Immunisation Programme. The flu vaccine is a vital step in protecting children from the flu virus, which can spread easily and lead to serious illness. To learn more about the benefits of flu vaccination for your child, please click [HERE](#). Community nurses attended on 9th October to administer both the flu vaccine and nasal spray. They will be returning on the 18th November to see children who have missed out during the first round. Please complete the consent form [HERE](#) if you haven't done so already.

### RECEPTION & YEAR 1 FLOURIDE VARNISHING

We are pleased to inform you that fluoride varnishing will take place on 23rd October. Fluoride varnish is a safe and effective dental treatment aimed at preventing tooth decay by strengthening the teeth. Don't miss out—make sure that your child benefits from this important oral health initiative.

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Thank you so much to all the families who have been arriving at school on time every day.

### Just some reminders below:

If you are not attending Breakfast Club, please arrive at school between 8:50am-9:02am. The gate will close at 9:02am and any time after this will be considered as a late mark.

If your child is unwell, please contact the office first thing in the morning to update us so we know why your child is not in school. Continue to update the school if your child is not returning the next day.

We ask that you make appointments for your child after school or during half terms, however if this is not possible you will be asked to provide evidence of the appointment.

As the colder weather arrives, sometimes parents of younger children keep them off school unnecessarily due to minor ailments. Remember the school is able to administer medication, such as calpol, as long as parents go to the office to provide written consent.

The school tracks attendance carefully and we have already written to the families of pupils with poor attendance last year, to offer support. Here is a link to our [Attendance Policy](#) which explains our procedures in further detail.

In the Welcome Meetings, parents and carers were updated on the changes regarding extended leave during term time and the [Fixed Penalty Notice](#) that is issued in the majority of cases. If you do intend to take your child out of school during term time, you must go to the school office to complete an [Extended Leave form](#).

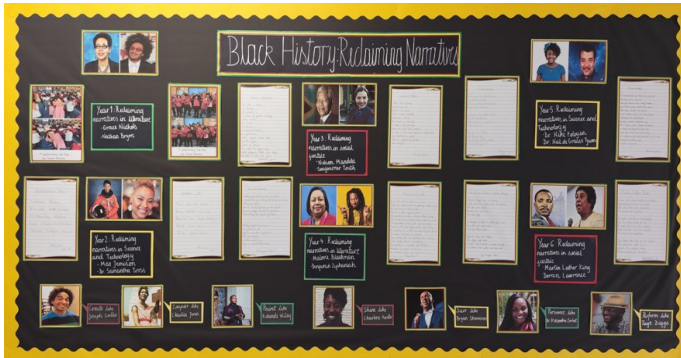
If you have any further questions in regards to attendance, please don't hesitate to speak to Shelly or the school office.

### FREE SCHOOL MEALS WORKSHOP

Our Parent Support Worker, will be hosting a **Free School Meals (FSM) Workshop** on Wed, 23rd October. This workshop is designed to assist parents and in applying for free school meals for their children online. If you are finding the application process challenging or would like some guidance, please join us! This is a great opportunity to ensure the school receives the appropriate funding for your child. What to Bring: **National Insurance numbers** (for both yourself and your partner, if applicable) **Benefit reference number** (located on your benefit letter) and **A valid email address**

## CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY NARRATIVES

This year, our school celebrated Black History Month with the theme 'Reclaiming History,' honoring the remarkable achievements of the black community. Year 1 & 4 focused on 'Celebrating Black Voices in Literature,' exploring authors like Grace Nichols and Benjamin Zephaniah. Year 2 & 5 delved into 'Black Contributions to Science and Technology,' studying figures such as Mark E. Dean and Charlene Hunter. Year 3 & 6 discussed 'Black Narratives in Social Justice,' highlighting icons like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. Pupils wrote poems to celebrate these influential figures.



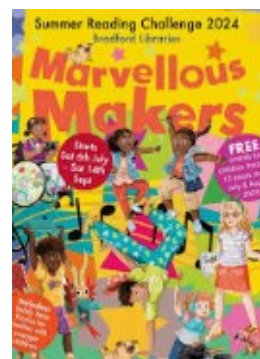
A highlight of the month was a visit from author Monique Duncan on October 7th, 2024. She captivated Year 3 and 4 with her picture book Freedom Braids and shared stories from her trip to Palenque, discussing themes of love, liberation, and legacy. The children enjoyed a colouring activity, and some were thrilled to take home signed copies of her book. Monique's visit made our Black History Month celebration even more special.

### AUTHOR VISIT BY MONIQUE DUNCAN



We were thrilled to welcome published author Monique Duncan to our school on October 7th, 2024, to meet our year 3 and 4 children. Monique shared her picture book Freedom Braids, and the children were captivated by the powerful story. She presented a slideshow from her trip to Palenque, which inspired the book, and discussed themes of love, liberation, and legacy—based on the true story of enslaved African women in Colombia who braided maps to freedom. The children enjoyed a fun colouring activity, and those who brought copies of the book, were excited to take home signed editions. This visit was a wonderful addition to our school's celebration of Black History Month, making it a truly memorable experience for all involved. We are incredibly grateful to Monique for her time and inspiring visit.

## SUMMER READING CHALLENGE



A massive well done to all the children who took part in the Summer Reading Challenge! As we start the new year, it's been brilliant to see everyone enjoying our school libraries. We are really fortunate to have two libraries filled with a fantastic range of books for all tastes. Whether you're into adventure, fantasy, science, or history, there's something for everyone. It has been great to watch the children browse the shelves, discovering new titles and sharing their favourites with their friends. Let's make sure that this love for reading keep going strong throughout the year!

## YEAR 6 JUNIOR CITIZENSHIP TRIP



This half term, Year 6 visited Shadwell Fire Station to learn important safety skills. The workshop discussed how to use public transport safely and how to stay alert and make smart choices while travelling. The interactive workshops helped students understand how to stay aware of their surroundings and handle different situations. The session also covered the importance of understanding how to protect themselves in challenging situations. The event was a valuable experience, emphasizing the importance of keeping safe in the community and teaching the children some of the skills required to support this.

## YEAR 6 CYCLE CONFIDENT TRAINING



20 children in Year 6 took part in the new Cycling Proficiency course - Cycle Confident. The children were able to bring their bikes in for repair, before practising their riding skills. Once confident, the children took to the roads, guided by the cycling coach, where they learned all about road safety and how to cycle confidently on the road. All children successfully passed the course and are now confident when cycling on the road. We'd like to say a big thank you to the Cycle Confident team, and big well done to the children that took part in the course.

## OLD PALACE PREFECTS & AMBASSADORS



Each year we carefully select our school ambassadors and Prefects. The children write letters, applying for their chosen post and are selected based on the strength of their application. We then elect Head Prefects who, in addition, must take part in an interview with Mr Palmer and Mr Heighington. Once appointed, the prefects and ambassadors are responsible for many different areas of school life, including managing the playground shop and games room and supporting the PE coach Mr. Maurice in the team games zone. In the summer, we will hold further interviews to elect new Prefects, so that all children who apply will have a chance to take on a role of responsibility. Well done to all those children who were selected this time, including our Head Prefects shown below:



As well as our year 6 children, we also rely on the support of pupils from year 5, who act as out lunchtime monitors and from year 4, who serve as Playground Friends in KS1. These roles teach the children about good citizenship, giving up some of their time to help the school community.

## YEAR 5 ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE TRIP



To support their learning about the Romans, children in year 5 visited the London Roman Amphitheatre. Once there, the children were introduced to Roman London and how the amphitheatre was discovered. The children were then able to feel Roman objects and share their opinions on them. To end the session, the children were able to show off their acting skills by recreating some of the games that would happen in the Amphitheatre. It was great fun!

## YEAR 4 TATE MODERN VISIT

This half term, year 4 have been learning about some of the different countries in Europe. As part of their learning they went to the Tate Modern to have a look at some of the inspirational works of European artists. The children were amazed by some of the eye catching artworks, like 'The Snail' a brightly coloured abstract piece by Henri Matisse. The children completed an Art scavenger hunt which helped them to find out more about artists like



Gustav Metzger & Gerhard Richter and movements such as Dynamic Suprematism. The children took away lots of inspiration for their future art projects.

## YEAR 1 VISIT MUSEUM OF THE HOME



During their visit to the Museum of the Home, year 1 had a great time exploring how people's homes have changed over the years. They got to walk through rooms that looked like they were straight out of the past, from the 1600s all the way to modern times. The children were amazed at how different the furniture and decorations were, as well as at how the way people lived had changed over the years.

The pupils had a chance to ask lots of questions and even discussed how homes today compare to the ones in the past. Overall, it was a fun and eye-opening trip, that really brought history to life for the children!

## YEAR 6 VISIT DOCKLANDS MUSEUM

As part of their History Unit on the Industrial Revolution and Victorian Britain, the children in year 6 visited the Docklands museum to learn more about the history of the area during that time. The year 6 team did a fantastic job of creating questions and tasks for the year 6 children to solve whilst exploring the museum. The year 6 children were then able to utilise all they had learned once they returned to school and continued with their History work. As always, the children behaved really well on the trip, representing the high standards set by the school.



## YEAR 3 VISIT NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM



This half term, Year 3 have been learning all about Rocks and Dinosaurs, as part of their Science topic. To support this, the children had the opportunity to visit the Natural History Museum, where they explored the famous dinosaur exhibits and saw life-sized skeletons up close. As part of the trip, the children participated in a hands-on workshop, where they learned about how fossils are formed and even had a chance to examine some real fossil specimens. The workshop was lead by the experts at the museum, who explained how paleontologists can identify the fossils of different dinosaurs by their features. The children particularly enjoyed the interactive displays, including the life sized robotic T-Rex model that moved and roared! Overall, it was a fantastic day, and the children gained a lot from the experience.

## PROPOSED FEDERATION WITH CHILDREN'S HOUSE



The governors of Old Palace and Children's House Nursery are currently consulting on a proposal to federate the two schools from September 2025. This would mean that the two schools would be governed by a single governing body. The budgets and staffing structures of both schools would continue to remain separate. The majority of the children joining our Reception classes come from Children's House. By federating, the sustainability of excellent early years education offered by both settings to the local community will be better secured for the future. Parent Meetings were held at Children's House on 9th October and at Old Palace on 10th October. There will also be a zoom meeting led by Dr Helen Jenner at 6pm on 7th November, which can be accessed using the following details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88647517192?pwd=bacrwaikXzDdVCPNYaUGo4t8nDzIcT.1>  
Meeting ID: 886 4751 7192 Passcode: 096348

More information on the proposed federation can be found [HERE](#). Response forms can be found at this link and are also available from outside the school office. Response forms need to be received by 3pm on Friday 22nd November, when they will be sent to Dr Jenner. Please complete one, as we are very keen to hear your views; should the federation go ahead, your feedback will be valuable in helping us to plan successfully for September.

### ONLINE SAFETY

- Online Safety continues to be a huge topic of conversation. LGFL provide some top tips on how you can keep your children safe online by encouraging an open conversation about what they see, hear or say: Please click [HERE](#) for top tips.

- In this day and age, technology is constantly evolving and it is hard to keep on top of different trends, safety features and what is appropriate. Common Sense Media is a useful website that gives reviews and age rating on apps, tv, movies, games and podcasts so you can get an understanding of what your child is accessing online [HERE](#).

- On **Wednesday 6th November at 9am**, we have PC Steve coming in to do a parent workshop on Cyber Crime and Online Safety. It will be an insightful session and he will be able to provide further advice on ways to protect your child and to report online hate and safety issues.

- If you do need any support in setting up online safety features, please do reach out to our Parent Support Workers- Shelly or Forida- who can book you an appointment with Abdullahi, our IT Technician.

## SCHOOL COUNCIL



After a fantastic year, it was time for our school council to step down and allow a new group of councillors to take over. Lots of children put themselves forward for the elections by presenting speeches to their classes and creating campaign posters. Classes then voted for 6 candidates each, who would be entered into the election. On the voting day, the polling station was opened to each class, complete with voting booths, ballot boxes and Polling station signs borrowed from Tower Hamlets Council. The children did an amazing job when casting their votes; the votes were stored securely and counted promptly so the successful candidates could be announced in an assembly. The elected councillors for 2024-25 are:

**Year 2: Adam, Aasiya, Sajid & Ruqaiya**  
**Year 3: Amaya, Liyaanah, Meeyad & Taimun**  
**Year 4: Ahyan, Inaaya R, Mahreen & Yunus**  
**Year 5: Aidan, Ghena, Ibrahim & Ruqayyah**  
**Year 6: Ahianul, Farhan, Inaya & Maryam K**

## CHILDRENS UNIVERSITY GRADUATION



After the East London branch of Children's University closed down at the end of last year, we have been eagerly awaiting for another branch to take over. Eventually, the Westminster Children's University branch came to our assistance and this finally allowed us to go ahead with the graduation for last year's year 5 pupils! The ceremony took place at Bow School's Riverside Theatre, and was introduced and run by Stella Wilson, the new lead for our branch of Children's University. The children donned their gowns and mortar boards and prepared to celebrate their achievements, following a year of collecting evidence to show the extra curricular activities they had completed. The children gracefully accepted their awards, which differed depending on how many hours of extra curricular activities they had completed last academic year. A huge well done to the children, and a big thank you to all their proud parents, upon whose support the scheme relies. We look forward to relaunching Children's University for our current year 5 & 6 pupils next half term.



We would also like to say a big well done to all the candidates that put themselves forward. Don't give up—next year may be your chance!

## BREAKFAST CLUB UPDATE

In September, the school launched its free breakfast club. This has been a great success with many families choosing to benefit from this provision. Breakfast Club offers a safe and welcoming environment for the children, before the start of the school day, where they can enjoy a healthy breakfast, socialize and complete fun activities. Digital devices are also available allowing the children to access Bug Club and Google Class-



room. The government had stated that it would support free breakfast clubs. This now seems to be delayed, with the government only pledging to support 750 free breakfast clubs from April 2025. Despite this, we are committed to providing a free breakfast club this academic year using monies from School Fund. Breakfast club is open to all children from 8:00am and 8:30am. Please note that **children arriving after 8:30am, will need to wait outside until the main school gate opens at 8:50am.** For further information, please click [HERE](#) or contact the school office.

**STAR CITIZENS - AUTUMN A 2024**

We would like to congratulate the following pupils for achieving the Star Citizen award this term. Well Done and keep up the good work.

**Reception: RB Safa & RP Kaisan**

**Year 1: 10 Mariyya & 1T Amine**

**Year 2: 2H Amanah & 2O Turjanul**

**Year 3: 3S Aliza & 3S Zain**

**Year 4: 4D Ibrahim & 4M Khaira**

**Year 5: 5D Elisha & 5H Sabrina**

**Year 6: 6A Mehreen & 6G \_\_\_\_\_**