

ROOTED IN THE COMMUNITY – GROWING FOR THE FUTURE

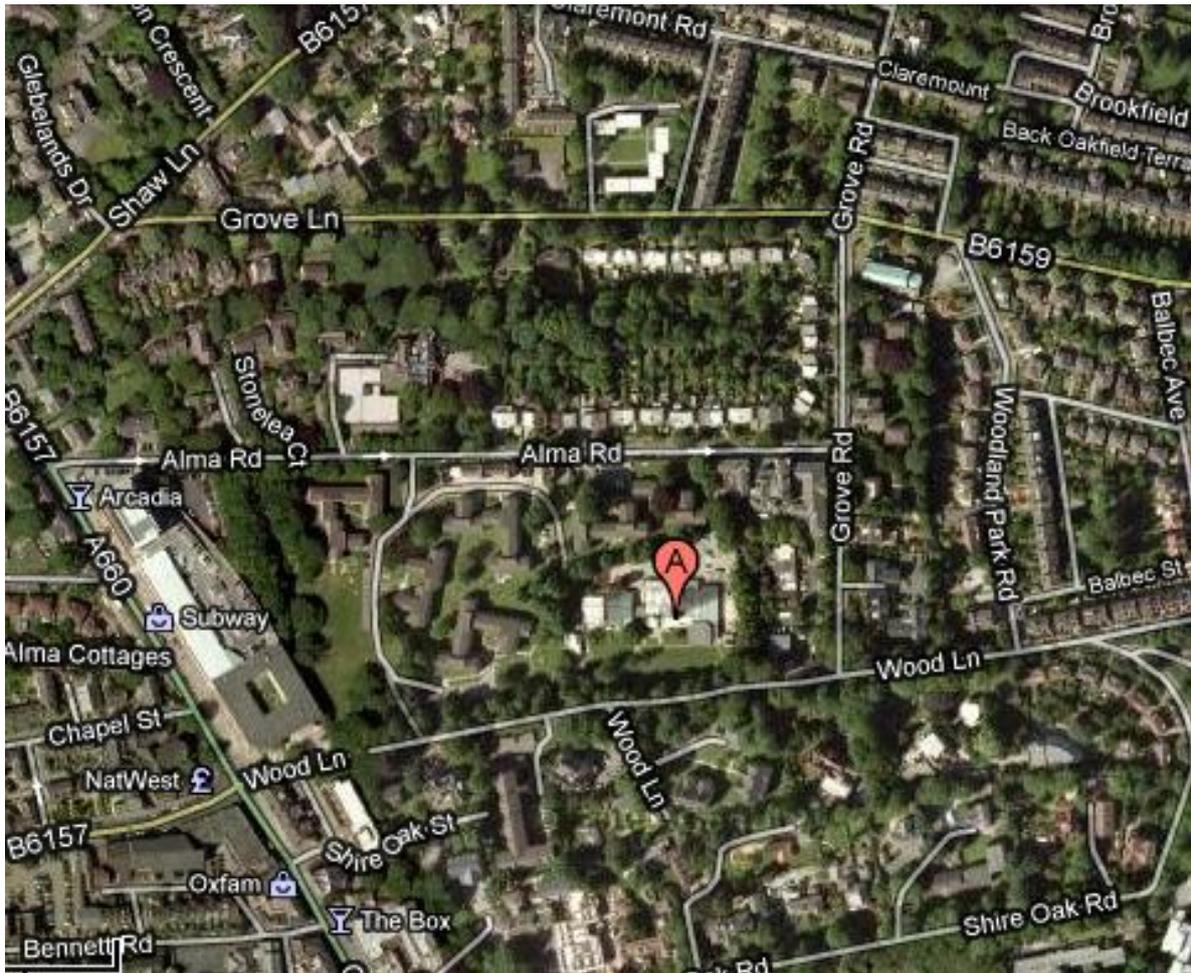


PROSPECTUS



SHIRE OAK
C of E (VC) Primary School

Welcome



Find us just off Otley Road in a peaceful, woodland setting.

Shire Oak CE Primary School

Wood Lane

Headingley

Leeds

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Welcome to Shire Oak CE Primary School. We're glad you have chosen to find out more about us.

Choosing a school for your child can be a very difficult thing to do and it can be hard to weigh up all the information you will be receiving. In the end you have to trust your instincts about a school, asking yourself where your child will be happy and understood, because we know those two things will make the biggest difference to how well they progress with their learning. I think that seeing a school in action and meeting the children who go there is the best way to make that judgement. We ask for our oldest children to take visitors on tours of our school during our regular Open Days – that way you can be sure that the things we talk about are really happening!

When the schools in this area were reorganised some years ago, Shire Oak was formed and now draws children from Headingley, Hyde Park, Meanwood and beyond. In the early days the focus was on establishing a positive ethos, and good cohesion between all the children. This has been done so successfully that we are now able to focus to an even greater extent on learning and progress.

At Shire Oak we are proud of our creative curriculum, our commitment to learning outdoors and our development of responsible local and global citizens. Please rest assured though, that creative and nurturing does not mean we are not rigorous in our pursuit of good standards in teaching and learning – quite the contrary! Knowing our children well and working hard to make the curriculum relevant, interesting and exciting to them is how we make sure that we support *all* our children to make great progress, prepare them well for High School and later life and stretch them to do as well as they possibly can.

Please do arrange to come and meet us so that I can answer any questions you may have.

Jane Astrid Devane

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Headteacher



Photo by Nathan, Y2

Currently some of our usual school arrangements have been modified due to the COVID-19 pandemic and our detailed risk assessments. As your child would be joining us for seven years, we have outlined our usual approach which we hope to return to as soon as possible. For more information about our approach to keeping our community safe whilst learning as normally as possible, please see our website.

On behalf of the Governing Body, thank you for considering Shire Oak Primary School and welcome to our School!

We are proud of our school community which consists of children, parents and carers, teachers, support staff and governors and I hope that very quickly you and your child feel a part of that community.

I remember, when I first visited Shire Oak as a prospective parent, how I was struck by the warmth of the staff team, the lovely school grounds, the fantastic learning facilities including a library and a music room, and of course, lively and engaged children throughout the building!

Since becoming a School Governor in 2017 I have gained a fascinating insight to all the work that goes on behind the scenes to make Shire Oak what it is. I am so proud of our staff team who work hard to provide a safe, caring and supportive learning environment for all our children whilst ensuring that we offer a broad teaching and learning provision, maintaining high standards of attainment and behaviour alongside supporting children to develop positive life values.

Shire Oak is committed to offering extra-curricular and enrichment activities both during school time as well as through a wide range of after-school clubs. Whatever your child's interests and talents we hope that there will be something on offer that they will find stimulating, challenging and enjoyable. At Shire Oak we take seriously our roles and responsibilities to the global community. We work hard to make a positive contribution on environmental issues and we are pleased to be active members of our local community.

The school's Governors are drawn from different groups associated with the school including staff, parents, the church, the local community and also from Leeds City Council. We have a wide range of skills and experience to be able to fulfil our role to support the Head Teacher and school staff to provide the very best education for your children.

Children joining school during 2020/21 may see some temporary arrangements in place due to Covid. Where possible we have aimed to minimise the impact of measures whilst ensuring that safety is paramount. Please ask for more details on this if you wish to find out more or you have any particular concerns.

If there are issues that you feel the Governing Body should be addressing, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Antonia Nicholls
Chair, Governing Body



This printed prospectus is deliberately short, as part of our commitment to sustainability. More information, and links to Twitter accounts that the children contribute to, can be found at

www.shireoak.org

How we learn

We all want our children to grow up to be confident, resourceful and well educated. We believe that strong skills in reading, writing and maths are vital for this and they are therefore woven into every aspect of learning here at school.

We know that children learn best when learning is done in a creative and exciting way, making links between subjects and topics and working in a variety of ways, e.g. independently, in pairs and in groups. We work hard to place all learning in a context, so that it is meaningful and relevant to the children we are teaching. Learning is tailored to meet the needs of all the learners in a class, through adult support, a range of activities and extra challenge when children are ready.



We take pride in the play based structure of our Early Years, as we understand that young children learn best through play. Our very skilled staff are good at taking children's own ideas and taking advantage of every learning opportunity within these. As well as a range of resourced learning areas within the classroom, Reception and Year 1 both have dedicated outdoor learning areas that they use throughout the day.

"We had to try to answer the question, 'Could a rhino live in Headingley?' The rhino bit fitted in with our topic on Africa, but we also went on a science trip to explore the habitats around here to see if there was everything a rhino needed. We had done lots of research about rhinos in books and on the Internet, It was good because now we know lots about Africa (especially the countries we each chose to find out about), researching on our own, presenting our work, rhinos and Headingley."

Georgia and Gabriel, Y6.

A distinctive feature of our school curriculum is our commitment to Outdoor Learning. We know that, especially for young children, speaking and listening skills improve when working outdoors. For all children the outdoors provides wonderful opportunities for problem solving and investigations. We are fortunate to have expansive school grounds in which we have created a wildlife garden, a community orchard, vegetable patches, a willow circle, two learning gardens and other areas that make a great place for learning. Meaningful opportunities for learning outside are identified and planned for throughout the whole year. For instance,



all children get the chance to grow their own food and then cook it and Year 3 have a weekly Forest Schools session.



As well as reading, writing and maths we teach children the full range of subjects in the National Curriculum. One of the subjects we especially value is music; every child in school has music lessons, they regularly sing and create music to share in whole school events. Y4 children are all



learning to play the djembe drum and all children have the opportunity to take up private instrument lessons, at a reduced rate, in school hours.



The challenge we face is to prepare children to work in jobs that do not exist yet, using technology that hasn't been invented yet. Whatever happens, having confidence and skills in using ICT is going to be so important and we are always looking for ways to develop our equipment and work in this area. Instead of seeing ICT as a distinct thing that is done in a computer suite, we encourage children to see the use of computers, Chromebooks,

interactive whiteboards, cameras, recording equipment, sensors, visualisers, etc. as a tool – in just the same way as pen and paper. We, therefore, have banks of laptops/tablets that can be used at children's tables and outdoors, as well as a mini suite of computers in each classroom to support group work.



We make sure that children have at least 2 PE lessons a week, as well as other opportunities to be active and play sport. PE lessons include games, dance, gymnastics and outdoor pursuits.



Children learn to swim from Y2 onwards. We have school rugby, gymnastic, football, cross-country running and sports clubs which are open to all, and some children from these groups choose to play competitively in tournaments and other events organised between Leeds schools as well as in our own House Team competitions. This is in addition to our other lunchtime and after school clubs which include languages, arts and crafts and choir.



Part of our creative approach to the curriculum is enhancing learning with a wide range of educational visits and invitations to interesting and engaging visitors. Recent visits have included The Deep, the Royal Armouries, Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, the universities in Leeds and the Media Museum. We regularly walk out and about in the local area. For instance, Reception class go

to the post office to post cards when learning about celebrations and Y6 walk along the Ridge to explore and classify local wildlife. School heavily subsidises these opportunities, as they are so important. When voluntary contributions are invited, they are collected in sensitively and cost is never a barrier to participating in the full range of school



activities. We have an Opportunities Fund to help children access enrichment activities such as music lessons and theatre trips or to remove other barriers to learning.



We plan at least two residential visits during children's time at school. During these visits children have the chance to learn in a different environment and develop some independence skills with adults they are familiar with and well supported by. Children go on a residential visit in Year 4, usually to Lineham Farm or Bewerley Park where they take part in a range of outdoor and adventurous activities. This visit is for two nights. Then in Year 6 the children are ready to take on the challenges offered at the Robinwood activity centre, including climbing and the infamous piranha pool!

As a Church of England school we value the importance of setting aside some time each day for worship and reflection. This usually takes place as a whole school, or in a key stage, within an assembly that has discussed or explored a topic or theme. Our assemblies reflect the faith backgrounds and cultures of all our children and the wider British community, and give the chance for children to develop their spirituality in an inclusive way. We generally finish with a reflection or prayer and use the words: "Put your hands together, close your eyes so you can concentrate and so that people may pray if they would like to." As a Voluntary Controlled school (not Voluntary Aided) we follow the Leeds Agreed Syllabus for RE, in common with the state schools. Children learn about and from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism in detail, as well as about other festivals and practices. Twice a year we all walk up to St Michael's Church in Headingley, for a special assembly to which family and friends are invited.



How well we do

Children at the end of Foundation Stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two achieve results that are at least in line with the Leeds and national averages – and often better - and we continue to work hard to improve from this solid base. As well as the standards we reach, the progress children make during their time with us is so important. One way we do this is to set challenging targets for all children to make good or better progress from Key Stage One to Key Stage Two and then closely track them to make sure this is achieved. Further information on our recent good results is on our website. <https://www.shireoak.org/results-2018-19>



We keep a really close eye on children's progress whilst at Shire Oak. If someone appears not to be doing as well as they should, we find out what they need and put it in place. This might be targeted individual or small group catch up work or additional resources and attention to support them in class. All children, whatever their ability, get the opportunity to work with dedicated extra adult support at the times they would most benefit, and



this includes extending the learning of the most able.

We value children's achievements from the whole curriculum as well as from activities outside school. One of the many ways we celebrate these achievements is in our weekly Superstar Assembly when we present Superstar certificates for exceptional effort, work or behaviour as well as a trophy for the Citizen of the Week. We also announce the weekly totals of House Team points earned throughout the week and children can share out of school accomplishments.

Although we think that visiting a school and talking to current parents is the most reliable way to judge a school, we were pleased that our latest Good Ofsted report highlighted many of the things we are proud of. There is a page on our website where you can see it and our Outstanding SIAMS (Church inspection) report.



The School Day

At Shire Oak, our school day starts with children forming a class circle on the playground, where their teacher welcomes them and says 'Hello' to families. We dedicate some time each day to coming together as a whole school or key stage for an assembly in the school hall which includes an act of inclusive collective worship, suitable for children of all faiths or none. Assemblies are usually based around a current topic or theme and provide opportunity for celebration, discussion and music. We regularly invite families to join our assemblies and the children enjoy preparing for these and showcasing their learning to the audience.



We're always busy and active with our learning and during the course of the day children will learn outside the classroom, visiting the library, the hall, the music room, the nurture room and our expansive school grounds. During some lessons the bank of laptops/tablets is wheeled in for whole class ICT work to supplement the fixed group of computers found in every classroom.

Children really enjoy their breaktimes and lunchtimes at

school and we work hard to provide a range of activities during these. Children get active playing football, netball, basketball, cricket, skipping and other sports. We have a stage area where children are often spotted making up and rehearsing dances and plays and then performing them for their friends. Children enjoy running and jumping on the tyre park or relaxing for a chat in the Quiet Area or on the benches under



one of our many oak trees. At lunchtime, children eating packed lunches and school dinners can sit together and socialise. Children having school dinners can always choose what they'd like to eat from the menu, which is different everyday and on display in school and shared via our website. The younger children are well supported in making their choices at lunchtime and for the first few weeks have a buddy from Year 6 to help them get used to the routines and make sure they have happy, fun-filled lunchtimes. At all times through the year children are supported by Peer Mediators who are well trained older pupils who can help with sorting out minor disagreements. There is also a Buddy Bench where children can sit if they are looking for someone to play with.



We offer on site wrap-around care from 7:50a.m. until 6:00p.m. provided by 'Kidzone' who plan a range of engaging activities, provide snacks and a space for your child to play and do homework or reading practice. Kidzone is based in the Community Room and the library and the staff are friendly, caring and well-loved by all the children, as confirmed in recent parents' questionnaires.



At Shire Oak, all children wear a purple school cardigan or jumper. We sell these new at the school office, or, as part of our effort to be a sustainable school, you can buy good quality second hand items from FOSOPS (Friends of Shire Oak Primary School). We are proud that our children come to school in uniform and sensible shoes, etc. that are appropriate for all the ways we work, indoors and out. We do ask the children to dress smartly and have a suitable PE kit, but there is no expensive uniform to buy and we don't discriminate against children for not having a specific item. We are always adding to our stock of wellies and outdoor clothing for children to use when gardening and working outside.

How we support our children

We know that all children learn well and make good progress when they are well supported and their emotional needs are being met. At different times in their school life, children may need an extra helping hand to help them make their next step. We have a range of support systems in school as well as always being kind and approachable.

Jane Hinchliffe is a very experienced Family Support Worker and Mentor. She supports children and their families and is the familiar friendly face that greets pupils each morning in the playground. This is a good time to have a quick chat with her about things that are happening at home that might affect children at school. Sometimes teachers ask Miss Hinchliffe to work with specific children and pupils can also request this support by putting a note in the Worry Box. Miss Hinchliffe helps children 1:1 or in small groups to manage their feelings and put in place strategies to help them deal with things in a positive way.



Jane also trains our Peer Mediators who are older pupils who can help children to play and make up games nicely, join in with others and use the playground equipment in a fun way. They are also trained in sorting out minor disagreements: They know when to get an adult to intervene, and when they can help children learn to stick up for themselves and sort out the issues themselves. We have a strong behaviour and anti-bullying policy at Shire Oak and believe that part of being able to tackle bullying is being able to tell the difference between a falling out and bullying. By helping our children develop the skills they need to tackle tricky situations in an assertive, but not aggressive way, they become more able to stand up for themselves and deal with the difficult people they will meet at High School and in later life. (This is made possible by knowing that a supportive adult is always on hand should they be needed and that the adults are

watching to see if there is behaviour that should be tackled.)

Our nurture groups and Drawing and Talking programme are run by Lydia Virgin. We aim for as many children as possible to benefit from this small group or 1:1 work at some point in their time at Shire Oak. Children learn and share a lot of skills in these sessions that complement the PSHCE (personal, social, health and citizenship education) curriculum. As well as some of the lovely art work you will see displayed at our assemblies and around school, they learn speaking and listening skills as well as social skills, such as turn-taking, how to be assertive and stick up for themselves and how to work collaboratively and peaceably with others.



We work very hard to ensure smooth transitions between every phase of your child's education with us. This begins with the option of receiving a home visit and invitations to settling in sessions before your child starts in Reception class. To ease the move to Key Stage One we plan for our Year 1 classroom to evolve over the year to change from a Reception style play-based classroom to one which has space for the whole class to be working at tables when they are ready. They also have their own dedicated outdoor area, which is used regularly too. From then on, careful planning takes place between class teachers to ensure continuity of care and challenge. In Year 6 we have a transition programme in place to help children feel more confident, in control and excited about the move to High School.

What are our values?

Children at Shire Oak enjoy creative teaching and high quality learning.

All our children are encouraged to fulfil their potential in a happy, safe and nurturing environment.

We express our Christian values in a sensitive way while, at the same time, welcoming families of different faiths and beliefs.

Children at Shire Oak recognise their responsibilities towards each other, the local community and the wider world.

How do we live our values?

Teaching and learning

Our aim is for all children to make the best possible progress through high quality teaching and learning.

We ensure children develop the key skills they will need for later life.

We provide all children with a broad and balanced education that meets their particular needs.

Children and staff are encouraged to be creative in all areas of learning.

The school works closely with parents/carers; we recognise that children are more likely to fulfil their potential when we work together.

A happy, safe and nurturing environment

Staff and pupils show mutual respect for each other.

We enjoy a stimulating and purposeful atmosphere in school.

Our school is a happy place; children know that their concerns will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Children learn to be good friends, to care for each other and work cooperatively.

School provides a safe and secure environment in which children learn to deal with risk appropriately.

Social responsibility and behaviour

We expect high standards of behaviour from all members of the school community.

Children develop an understanding of right and wrong.

Children are supported to play an active part in the life of the school.

Children develop the knowledge and skills to make positive life choices.

Through sharing and celebrating different faiths, children develop an awareness of the role of spirituality in everyday life.

The school and the community

Children are encouraged to play an active part in the local community and develop an understanding of their role as global citizens.

The school works closely with partners from our local community to provide a wide range of learning experiences.

We actively promote environmental sustainability in all aspects of school life.