



The Oak-Tree Group of Schools

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Group Managing Principal

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29 January 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Future Plans for Braeside School

As we near the halfway point of this academic year, I am writing to announce some exciting news for Braeside with two important developments that I will be introducing from the start of September 2020.

We are currently in the fifth year that the Oak-Tree Group has owned Braeside since the purchase in September 2015, and we have worked hard over the years to refurbish the buildings at both sites, build new facilities, extend the curriculum for each year group, develop our communication and generally improve the education for pupils of all ages.

There have been several large building developments since 2016 at the Main Site, including an extension and major refurbishment to provide new kitchens, a suite of new desktop computers, refurbished Science Labs, a new Science Prep Room and a Music/Drama Studio upstairs in the Science/Technology Block. We have also reorganised and redecorated the space on the ground floor. Simultaneously, the junior site has also been modernised over recent years.

Bringing the Juniors and Seniors together

It was clear for many years before Braeside joined the Oak-Tree Group, and subsequently following our programme of improvements, that both Braeside sites have scope for increased use.

It was always the ambition of the previous Braeside owners to bring the school together onto one site to allow for more effective continuity and progression through the key stages. Although we have looked for opportunities since 2015 to do the same, it is only recently that we have felt the time is right to do so as part of a well-managed development plan.

Therefore, I am pleased to announce that from September 2020 all children at Braeside will be taught at the Main Site on the High Road adjacent to the cricket ground.

This is exciting for Braeside's long-term future. The model of the other schools in the Oak-Tree Group is to have all children taught together on the same site, which has brought many benefits for the children. Having studied the Braeside model since September 2015, and especially how our Year 6 children are half way between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, I would like our pupils to benefit from the same structure and opportunities open to their counterparts elsewhere.

Although there are around 150 children at Braeside, there are only ever 75 or so on each site. The Main Site has ample space in both the main building and Technology Block to accommodate all children from Kindergarten upwards.

The plans for the Main Site are overleaf so that you can see how the classes will work. Our youngest children will be on the ground floor, closest to the outside play areas, and we will be resurfacing one of the playgrounds over the summer holiday to create a better space so that the older and younger children can play separately. In addition, there will be a programme of classroom reorganisation, refurbishment and redecoration during the Easter and summer breaks to prepare for September 2020.



Braeside School

130 High Road, Buckhurst Hill
Essex IG9 5SD
020 8504 1133

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Company no: 0783067



Coopersale Hall School

Flux's Lane, Epping
Essex CM16 7PE
01992 577133

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Company no: 3524644



Normanhurst School

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North Chingford E4 7BA
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The Oak-Tree Group of Schools

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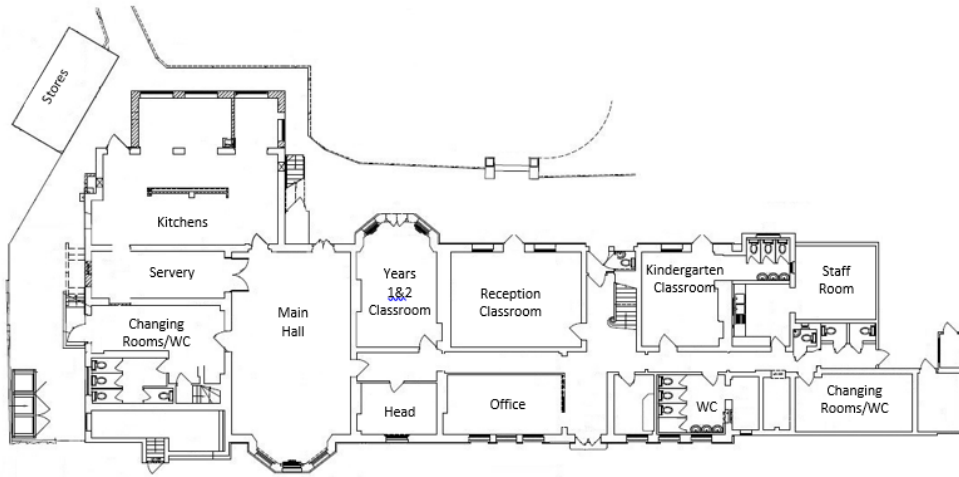
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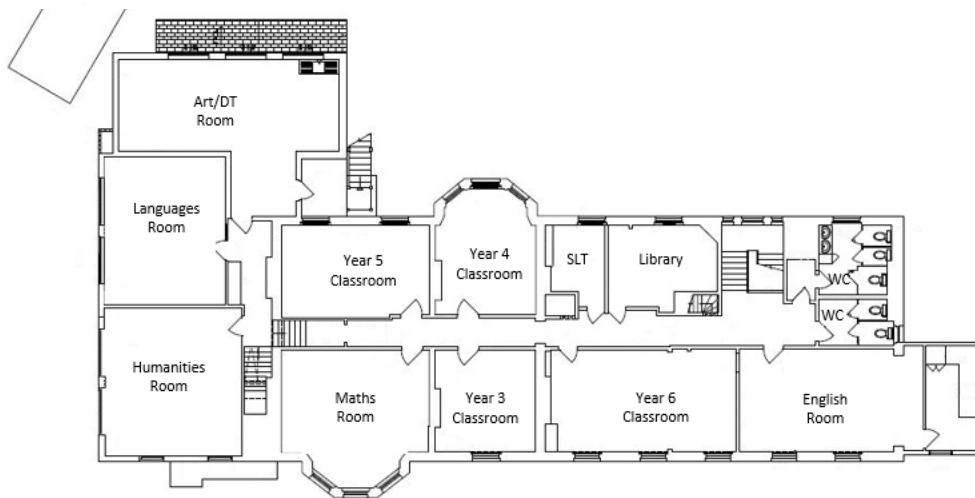


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Main Building:

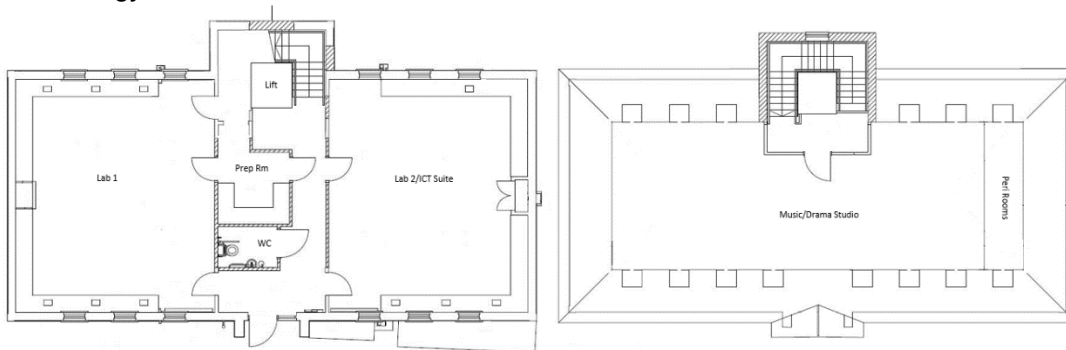


Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

Technology Block:



Technology Block Ground Floor Plan

Technology Block First Floor Plan

Whilst we will be retaining two Science Labs in the Technology Block, the ICT Suite will relocate to Lab 2 to form a large multi-purpose technology room. Other specialist areas, such as the Art/DT Room, the Music/Drama Studio and specialist classrooms, will remain as whole school facilities. The Library will be relocated and restocked ready for the full range of ages.

We have already looked at the new timetable for September 2020 and will be aiming to extend our generous provision of specialist teaching as far as possible into the junior section of the school. Many members of staff, including for PE/Games, Music, Art and Computing already teach both junior and senior pupils. This will help with the transition.



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We will continue to use local facilities such as St James' Church, Loughton Leisure Centre, Old Loughtonians Hockey Club and the Peter May Centre. All pupils will benefit from PE lessons on the large cricket pitch next to the Main Site and also our internal playgrounds, and our younger children in Kindergarten and Reception will be able to take part in more forest walks as we will be closer to Epping Forest. Our sporting provision has been further enhanced this academic year and we are looking at even more opportunities for competitions and sporting fixtures for children from Year 3 upwards both with and against the other Oak-Tree Schools.

Our provision for the senior-aged pupils will remain the same, and you will see from the plans how the specialist classrooms will mainly stay as they are. These are also used for form rooms, registration and PSHE. Our House System, which is used to bring children of all ages together pastorally, will be further enhanced when juniors and seniors come together. This will help to increase the community spirit at Braeside and add more weight to school competitions and charity work for all ages. It will also make our rewards system even more effective when more children are involved.

Independent all-through schools are renowned for the strong relationships cultivated between children of all ages. Older children enjoy looking after younger children around the school site and as reading buddies or prefects. Younger children love the interaction with the older children. These relationships will grow over time on one site.

I am very pleased that we will be taking the opportunity to bring the two halves of Braeside together into one all-through school. For the first time, there will be a seamless transition from Kindergarten to Year 11 with all children clear about where they fit within the school. This will help our teachers, particularly throughout Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) as we look to develop a team on one site that will be able to track progression and prepare for the move into Year 7 and beyond.

Although I am currently exploring various uses for the current junior site, including the creation of a nursery, the main priority will be to oversee a structured integration of pupils as we look to reshape the school for the future.

Please do read the attached FAQs for further information.

The move to Co-education

In conjunction with bringing the two schools together, I am delighted to announce that we will be extending our provision to boys from September 2021, starting in Kindergarten and Reception.

Braeside's first pupils back in 1944 (in old Braeside building that is now Loyola!) were the founder Miss Wakefield's godson and his twin brother – both boys. Returning the school to its roots will see a phased plan over many years starting with Kindergarten and Reception from September 2021. Importantly, our much-loved aims, ethos and values will remain unchanged as we will ensure that the happy and creative atmosphere that has been central to Braeside since its creation some 75 years ago will remain.

We believe that a co-educational environment is in the best interests of the children and will benefit their learning and development as we move forward in the 21st Century. The working world is co-educational and continues to evolve at great speed. As such, mixing boys and girls together builds life skills as they learn and thrive together as equals. The move will also enable whole families to take part in the Braeside experience and educational journey, benefitting from all we offer. The world is changing, and an increasing number of new Braeside parents are indicating that they would prefer an excellent family school that serves their sons as well as their daughters.

We have seen the impact of socialising in a co-education setting for children from Kindergarten age upwards at the other Oak-Tree Schools. As they pass from year group to year group through the school, children become used to the co-educational teaching and learning, developing the social interaction skills that prepare them for later life.



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Continuing to develop the highest academic standards is, of course, a core priority for Braeside, regardless of the gender of our learners. Our academic ethos, teaching staff, curriculum and small class sizes are the most crucial elements to our academic standards. The move to co-education will bolster the existing programmes of development in our classroom standards by continuing to develop a rigorous culture of academic independence.

The attached FAQs give more in-depth information about the impact that we expect this development to have on the school.

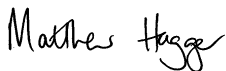
Although many of the developments outlined above and in the attached FAQs will have no impact on the majority of current Braeside pupils, I realise that there is much to take in. To this extent, we will be holding an information evening on Wednesday 5 February from 6pm at the Main Site to talk about the future plans and to answer any questions that you may have. I will be present along with Mrs Osborn, Mrs Moon, Mrs Copeman and many of the staff. So that we can gauge numbers, the School Office will send a text for you to reply to on Monday 3 February.

Please do come along to the meeting if you would like to discuss any aspect of our future provision. In the meantime, please do feel free to email me using the address info@oaktreeschools.co.uk if you would like any further clarification before next week.

This is a wonderfully exciting time for the future of Braeside. I am delighted that the children will be able to come together as one school from September 2020 and that we will be able to keep families together as we take boys into the school for the first time from September 2021. This is an excellent school and I am pleased that we have found the right shape for the future in which our pupils can learn in a purposeful environment that will become even more vibrant.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Matthew Hagger
Group Managing Principal



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