



Braeside FAQs

How many pupils do you have per class and what's the maximum you will go to?

Our uniqueness is the fact we have small numbers per year group. We try to keep numbers manageable for the staff and pupils learning experience. It varies in every year group and tends to be around 12 in the juniors and average 16 in the seniors. We believe that small class sizes contribute to the happiness and success of every pupil.

How do you ensure that girls get to mix with boys?

As you most probably know, we plan to go co-educational from September 2021 from Reception down. However, I recognise that many parents are concerned that our pupils do not get to mix with boys. They do! We are part of the OTG of schools – the other schools are mixed schools. We get together with boys and girls from those schools for trips, events, competitions and whole school activities such as the Year 3 camp. We also take part in regional and national events through the ISA that involve all pupils from a variety of settings. In addition, some GCSE subjects are taught with Normanhurst pupils either on site here at Braeside or at another Oak Tree School. We aim to provide a balanced experience for the girls so that they are prepared to join Sixth Form and are equipped to work alongside their peers.

Being a small school, how do the pupils know what competition looks like?

Fortunately, we are part of the ISA and have some great opportunities to take part in events and competitions from the local to the national scale. This can be in sport, art, drama and writing to name but a few. We also take part in more local sports fixtures and also events and competitions with the other OTG of schools. We took part in a parliamentary debate last year for the first time and our pupils were awarded Best Newcomers Award. Healthy completion is important for life and we aim to give pupils exposure to these events to prepare for life beyond Braeside.

What are the benefits of such small class sizes?

Small class sizes mean a productive relationship between staff and pupils. Marking is meaningful and personalised to the learning of the individual. Verbal feedback can be given frequently and can focus on the specific strengths and areas for improvement of the individual child. Pupils get to know each other really well and develop lasting friendships that are supportive and caring. It means that as a Head Teacher, I can also get to know each pupils really well and celebrate their successes in a meaningful and sincere way.

Do you have bullying and how do you deal with it?

We have an anti-bullying policy that seeks to support all the individuals that may be involved. Being a small school means that issues do not go unnoticed and the class teacher or form tutor can deal with these quickly. We aim to involve and listen to all pupils that may be having an issue and resolve the difficulties with sensitivity.

What do you do to recognise and celebrate the talents of pupils throughout their lives at school?

We have a reward system that has been recently re-designed by the pupils. ALL pupils have the opportunity to take the lead and show their talents. The small class sizes mean that most pupils get an opportunity to shine in an area that they excel in. We have a house system that rewards collective team work and individual pupils can receive house points for work they have done, or upholding our aims and values through their positive actions. Pupils re-designed the way we gave out awards during the lockdown period. They wanted a whole school assembly that celebrated success on a weekly basis. Now, every Friday, we have a whole school assembly (albeit virtual at the moment) that awards pupils with certificates and postcards for their good work.



Braeside FAQs

What are the benefits of all-through education?

Pupils will tell you that they love being on a site that can accommodate pupils from Kindergarten all the way to Year 11. It fosters responsibility – pupils take on roles throughout the school that mean they have to look after and be a positive role model. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger pupils in play and in their learning experience. The younger pupils are thrilled when a senior pupil reads, tells them something that they didn't know before and this really develops strong relationships between all pupils. Staff find the all-through education incredibly rewarding. Many of our pupils start in kindergarten and continue their journey to Year 11. There's no feeling quite like seeing a pupils develop and gain confidence over the years to become a successful young person with a great personality and exceptional grades.

Why do Triple Science at GCSE for all pupils?

We like to give all pupils the opportunity to take Triple Science at GCSE. This means that science is taught discretely as physics, chemistry and biology. The staff are experts in their science disciplines which mean that pupils are taught precisely and their knowledge and skills are embedded to take these GCSEs on. I believe in maximising the opportunity for success and opening as many doors as possible from early on so that the entry to post 16 study is seamless for pupils.

Is it advisable for pupils to take a language at GCSE and does this help them with sixth form?

We believe that pupils should be given the tools via the careers programme that we have to make informed choices about their future. Pupils do well because they choose the GCSE pathway that they believe they will enjoy and be successful in. We encourage pupils to create a careers profile in Year 9 so that they have made a good decision for their learning style and their enjoyment. Whether they decide to take a language or not, I am confident that they have made the best decision for their future.

How many pupils go on to independent school sixth forms and how do you help them prepare?

Each cohort of pupils are different and they make different choices depending on their career path. Early in Year 11, we have a meeting (again it was virtual this year) about post 16 choices. Mrs Martin Burns and I met with parents and pupils in Year 11 to explain the application process to them. Once the applications are made, we prepare students for the interview by holding mock interviews and give them feedback. Mrs Martin Burns has been a director of sixth form in the local area and she prepares pupils for life beyond Braeside with advice about organisation, work experience and wider opportunities. We support every pupil individually whether they apply to sixth form (state or independent) or college.

Why haven't you got many PE facilities on site? How do you overcome this?

We have extensive grounds that are open and wooded on the site. We have an Early Years play area, a junior play area and a netball court on site. We are also fortunate to have other Oak Tree Schools nearby so that we can share facilities especially when we hold competitions. Adjacent to the site is a cricket pitch, copse and open playing field that we hire all year round. This is less than a minutes' walk from the school and is where we play football, rounders, do cross country and our daily mile. We also use Loughton Swimming Pool and the Peter May Sports Centre which are all short journeys away in our school minibus. We value the open space we have on site but we also recognise the facilities that surround the school support our PE and sport curriculum.

What does your curriculum look like?

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that addresses the needs and talents of all individual pupils. We follow the core subjects that you would expect to find in every school. The language that is taught since kindergarten is French and then pupils can learn Spanish in addition from Year 7. These are offered at GCSE too.



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To enhance our curriculum by including P4C from Reception to Year 6 as we think this develops pupils critical thinking and emotional intelligence. We offer this philosophical and ethical type thinking throughout KS3 and into GCSE especially as we offer Religious Studies that is based on Christian and Muslim ethics. Being part of an all-through school means that we can use specialist teachers in both the juniors and seniors – music, art, PE, drama, computing and French are all taught by subject specialists from Reception up.

How involved to the senior pupils get with junior pupils?

Unfortunately, because of the COVID restrictions, this hasn't been possible at the start of term,. However, the vision is that senior pupils will take responsibility for junior pupils in their houses. As mentioned by Mrs Copeman earlier on in this virtual tour, we have appointed Junior House Captains for the first time and they will be working to support the senior house captains with events in school.

What sort of support do pupils who need extra help get? What does this look like?

Support looks different for each individual pupil. Essentially, support is always best delivered by the class or subject teacher through Quality First Teaching. We recognise that some pupils need extra support in certain areas and we will work with pupils, staff, professionals and parents to discuss the next steps in support. As we are a small school, we can look at individual needs and make an informed and individual decision.

How do you assess pupils throughout the year and what do you do if someone is not where they should be?

Junior pupils are assessed at the beginning of the year with a baseline assessment from Reception to Year 6. This is an entirely computer based programme that younger children discuss the answers with teachers that are inputted for them.

The first assessment is INCAS which gives maths, spelling, reading and developed ability score. In addition we do an in-class assessments for maths and English. Throughout the year we assess all subjects in a variety of ways. Assessment for learning happens on a daily basis and can include short assessments. There is a mixture of informal and formal assessment throughout the year. In the seniors, pupils in Year 7 take a ability test that ranks pupils ability and the data is shared with staff so that we can benchmark and assess throughout the year. The same happens on Year 10 and pupils are given a grade band and also a minimum predicted grade. Pupils are encouraged to set themselves aspirational targets in addition. Pupils are assessed every half term and the data is analysed on a regular basis so that intervention and support can be applied appropriately. All pupils have end of year exams and feedback that follows. Regular pupil progress meetings between Senior Leaders and teaching staff mean that pupils are identified and intervention is appropriately put in place.

How do we (parents) get to know how our child is doing at school?

This is a really common question and we do this very well. We are extremely open and honest and you are highly likely to see junior staff at the beginning and end of the day so that you can speak to class teacher. Every half term, there is a drop-in morning in the juniors where parent can meet the teacher and look at the amazing work that your child has been working on. We have regular parents evenings for all pupils in the school where you can meet teaching staff and have a summative document that details your child's strengths and targets. Regular reporting occurs where parents can view their child's achievements through the portal system. We are always available to chat with you about your child's work.

How early do you start phonics and writing?

We begin phonics in Kindergarten and there is an element of phonics daily – these can be sounds and recognition.



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We look at blending in UK and Reception. We provide opportunities to write in Kindergarten – pencils, paper and other excited equipment is always available for pupils. They will start this journey when they are ready to take the next step. Lower kindergarten is about equipping pupils with the skills to be able to start writing and this can include developing their fine motor skills and learning to love all kinds of writing. We provide these opportunities to experiment with their writing either for purpose or for creativity throughout their school journey.

What does a Kindergarten day look like?

The days are different for a variety of reasons. This can be weather dependent, topic dependent, dependent on the seasons and time of year, the interests and talents that are displayed by pupils. But we do plan a day of activities that include phonics and number work. But like any good practitioner in Early Years, we seek opportunity to further develop pupil's knowledge and understanding of the world. We encourage spontaneous curiosity.

What extra-curricular clubs do you offer?

We offer a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. Breakfast club (the simplest) is offered to all pupils in the school from 7:30am. The junior school day ends at 3:30pm but we offer tea time club until 6pm. However, we offer a range of other clubs that are externally provided (as well as by the staff) and these include cookery, street dance, karate, art club, Spanish club, coding and a variety of sports clubs. These are incredibly popular and we ask that parents book in advance. Please see our website for more details. These also change every year and seasonally.