



# THE OAKS ACTIVITY CENTRE



# AND PRE-SCHOOL



# A History of The Oaks



*The Oaks - a painting from 1946*

In old days, when Hainault Forest extended right down to Marks Gate, it was said that the children of the farmers and foresters ran wild. The Victorians of 1847 had the answer. They built a school, paid for by upright citizens - aristocratic Lady Mildmay contributed from her Hampshire mansion; New College, Oxford, sent along some funds and, closer to home, Romford brewer Mr Ind (of Ind Coope) chipped in as well. Even the government granted £102. Hainault Forest School, as it was called, had 76 pupils in one big room - more, it was said, on a Sunday. The forest itself was soon cut down.

In time, the school, now isolated in the fields by Collier Row (as it is now), passed to the control of the Essex council. Just before the Great War, it was enlarged. The coming of the electric trains multiplied the local population, and in 1936 the older children were sent elsewhere.

After World War Two the state took over. The building, now a century old, was renamed The Oaks, a Church of England Primary School, but in the 1950s it was deemed too small and crowded. In 1957 it lost its infant department and within ten years, ill-equipped and in need of repair, it was closed.

The Borough of Barking and Dagenham decided to maintain the buildings, refurbished them and opened the site as a youth service resource centre, where it served the community for the next thirty years. By the millennium, however, the future was looking grim. The council had moved out, the vandals paid their visits, and the old Victorian building made an undignified appearance on a 'Derelict London' website.

However, the demolition men were held at bay by a council which recognised the building as a characterful reminder of much earlier times. Now 160 years old, the Oaks caught the eye of visionary teacher Christine Redgrave and her team. These pages bring the story up to date.

---

The Oaks is a Nursery and Activity Centre for boys and girls from 3 - 11 years old. It has no religious affiliation - we value parents and pupils of all faiths and none.

*My intention is that the Centre aims to work with parents to help children grow into caring, well-balanced individuals who have a good understanding and strong commitment to develop*

- *personal qualities that help the society in which we live*
- *an appreciation of others*
- *the tools for a healthy lifestyle*
- *tolerance and compassion to build a positive future*

Christine Redgrave, Proprietor, 2011



Dear Parents,

Choosing activities to keep your child healthy and active in their early years and throughout their primary schooling is not an easy task.

This prospectus is intended to give you an introduction to our centre: the facilities we provide and the activities we offer. If you are interested in finding out more about us, we hope you will attend an Open Day or arrange an appointment to view us in action on a working day.

We welcome pre-school children aged 3+ and those of primary school age. There are nursery, breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs offering children the opportunity to enjoy a mixture of sporting, craft, and drama groups and providing them time to play and learn in a safe environment.

The pages which follow give more information about what goes on, but if there is anything else you would like to know, do get in touch.

We hope to hear from you.

*Yours sincerely,*

# The DANCE STUDIO



The dance studio is the brainchild of well-known local dance teacher Vikki Pontefract. An experienced actor, dancer and teacher, Vikki has taught in schools, run performing arts groups, and staged musical theatre spectacles, encouraging pre-school and primary-age children to develop their confidence and talents. Vikki is a regular playleader at The Oaks during our holiday clubs.

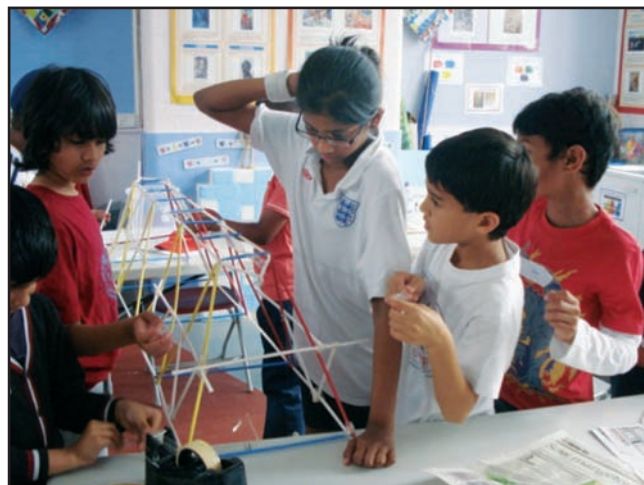


# The ART WORKSHOP



This light, airy room, equipped with everything you could possibly need to draw, paint, assemble, create or simply experiment with, is a welcome setting for our arts and crafts sessions. The children take pride in producing colourful room displays and taking masterpieces home to mum and dad!

The Art Workshop also hosts science and DT activities.



# The GYM and the ASTROPITCH



The gym has a child-friendly soft surface, and is used for all sorts of games – cricket, badminton, football, dodgeball – as well as activities such as gymnastics and breakdancing.



The astropitch, with its soft all-weather artificial grass, has goalposts at each end and a half-way line to satisfy footballers of all ages, but doubles quite nicely as a cricket ground and a place for a wide variety of other ball games.



# The DEN



The Den is the heart of the Centre - providing a base for many activities – cookery and face-painting among others! It is a meeting place, an eating place, and a space for quieter group and individual games when the weather keeps us indoors.



# The GAMES ROOM



This is our indoor play area, with table tennis, snooker, table football, chalkboards and a giant Connect 4 offering all kinds of opportunities for free and structured play.

# The GARDENS



Outdoor possibilities in our landscaped gardens include allotments for those with green fingers, bird feeders for nature lovers, picnic tables for the exhausted, and plenty of grass to play on.



# The OAKS ACTIVITY CENTRE

is open from 3.30 – 6pm Monday to Friday during term-time, and at special times during half-terms and school holidays. These special times do depend on demand, but are always well-publicised in advance.

Qualified playleaders provide indoor and outdoor games, sports, drama, dance, art, craft, cookery, gardening and many other activities for children to enjoy. On schooldays there is even time for homework in the Den!

Refreshment in the form of drinks, snacks and hot meals are part of the Oaks experience, and free play is encouraged, both indoors and outdoors, supervised by qualified staff who are always on hand.



## STEPPING STONES

opens in September 2012, a fully-equipped pre-school setting for 3-5 year-olds, with full and part time places available. The curriculum is that laid down by the government for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Stepping Stones Pre-School is run by Mrs Linda Sumner, assisted by Mrs Lesley Morgan. They will work together with Mrs Jane Forbes, the Oaks Manager, who coordinates the Art Workshop and deals with day-to-day enquiries, and Mrs Vikki Pontefract, who leads the Performing Arts section.

## Registration and Admission

### Activity Centre

Early registration is recommended to be sure of consideration for breakfast, after school or holiday club places. Waiting lists operate once all places are full.

### Stepping Stones

Early registration is recommended to be sure of consideration for a place at 3+. Those children wishing to join Eastcourt School should indicate this on the form included so children are automatically included in the screening sessions which take place in December. Late applications are considered if a vacancy occurs, but these children are not automatically included in the Eastcourt screening process. There is no provision for EAL or SEN pupils at Eastcourt.

---

## Fees

The fees are listed on a separate sheet and are payable on a monthly basis. Payment can be made to clear by 6pm on the first of each month by cash/cheque into the Oaks or Eastcourt Office. Vouchers are accepted and should be paid in the same way. Penalties are incurred for late payments. Parents will be asked to pay back charges caused by cheque irregularities. Late applications are considered if a vacancy occurs.

---

## Hours

The full range of options are listed on a separate sheet. We are open from 7.30am to 6pm throughout the year.

---

## Attendance, Absence

Parents should telephone the centre about any absences before 9 o'clock on the first day. A written note will be needed on the child's return.

---

## Lunches

There are weekly menus which show the choices on offer.

## Reports and Parents Days

### Activity Centre

Open Days are held in November and March for prospective parents.

### Stepping Stones

A detailed written report is sent to parents at the end of the Summer Term, a copy of which is forwarded to the child's primary school.

Informal assessment is ongoing providing information about development in all areas of learning. Parents are welcome to speak briefly to staff when they deliver or collect children. Staff will also catch parents informally as necessary. Appointments can be made for longer meetings but of course, any concerns which are not routine will be dealt with immediately.

Staff make appointments to see parents once a term to discuss general progress and preparation.

---

## School Rules and Policies

A copy of the Oaks Rules is available for inspection in the office during open hours, as are all policies. These cover Behaviour, Equal Opportunities, Complaints, Bullying, Child Protection, Educational Visits, Admissions, Health and Safety, Disability, Emergency, Sex and Relationship Education, and Recruitment and Selection.

---

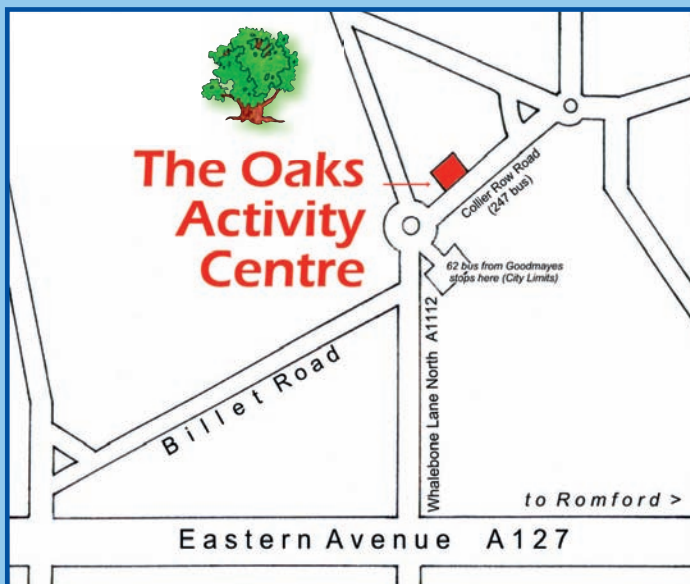
## Uniform

We have attempted to minimize the amount of uniform needed. We have a winter uniform which can be mix-and-match for the summer months. Children wear tracksuits with PE kits underneath for warm weather.

---

## Contacting Us

The first point of contact at The Oaks Centre is the Administration Officer, who is available during opening hours to answer queries of all kinds from any parent. The telephone number is 0208 597 9171, and an answer machine is available during out-of-hours.



The 247 bus runs from Barkingside to Romford (stop on Collier Row Road) and the 62 bus runs from Barking to Collier Row (stop at City Pavilion), both 3 minutes walk from The Oaks.

## The Oaks Activity Centre

Collier Row Road, Romford, Essex RM5 2DD

Telephone: 0208 597 9171 Email: [oaksactivitycentre@btconnect.com](mailto:oaksactivitycentre@btconnect.com)

Website: [www.oaksactivitycentre.co.uk](http://www.oaksactivitycentre.co.uk)