



# THE OAKS ACTIVITY CENTRE AND PRE-SCHOOL



# A History of The Oaks

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 Cope) 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.



*The Oaks - a painting from 1946*

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.

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The Oaks is a Nursery and Activity Centre for boys and girls from 2 – 4 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 2 – 5 years old term-time only and offer children the opportunity to enjoy a mixture of sporting, craft, and drama groups and provide 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,*

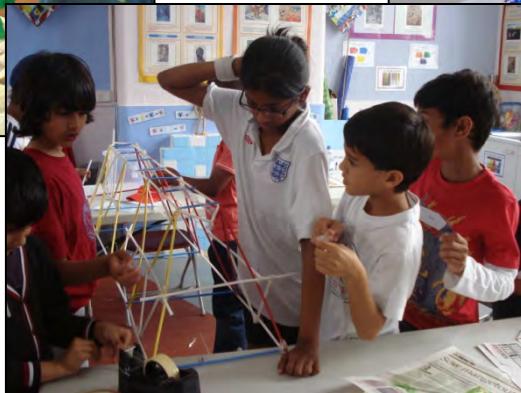
# The DANCE STUDIO



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. Hannah is a regular practitioner at The Oaks leading sessions including 'Movin Monkeys' with Marvin monkey!



# The Sunflower Room



The Sunflower Room is designed for our youngest children, offering a nurturing and stimulating environment where early learning begins. Through a wide range of carefully planned activities—including art, role play, and early number and sound exploration—children are encouraged to develop curiosity, confidence, and a love of learning. Our experienced practitioners support each child's individual development, helping them grow socially, emotionally and physically in a safe and welcoming space. The children take pride in producing colourful room displays and taking masterpieces home!

# The GYM and the ASTROPITCH



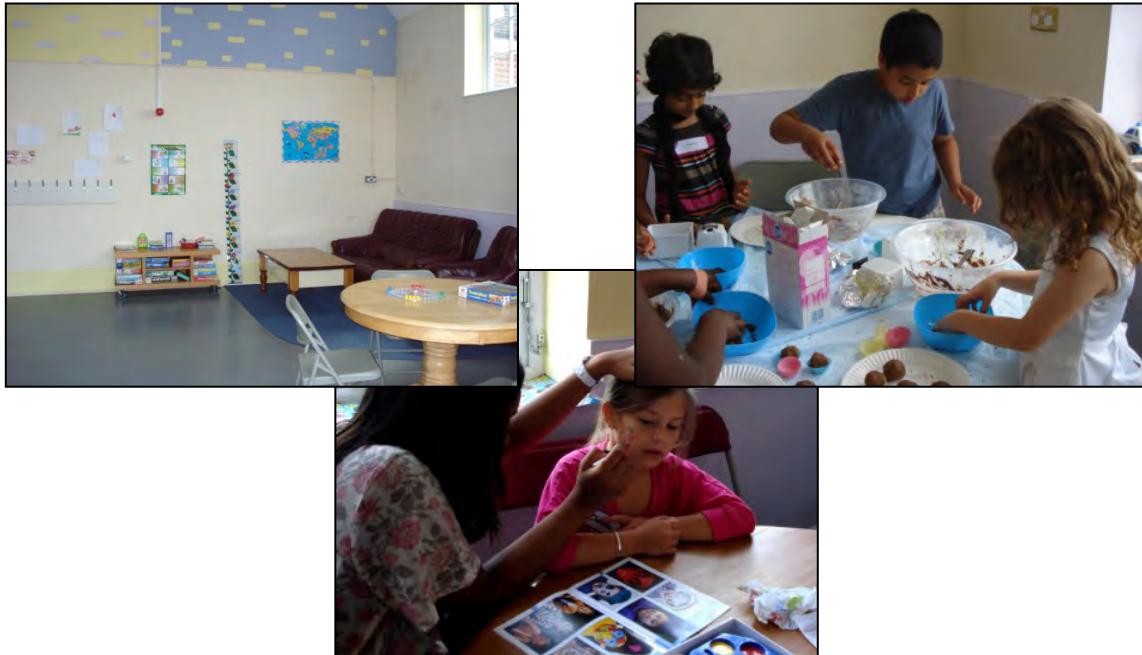
The gym has a child-friendly soft surface, and is used for all sorts of games – cricket, badminton, football, dodgeball – as well as activities such as gymnastics and breakdancing.



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 Bluebell Room



The Bluebell Room is for our older children who are ready to embrace the next stage of their learning journey. Our experienced practitioners provide a supportive and stimulating environment, offering a wide range of learning opportunities including messy and sensory play, early number and sound activities, story time and the development of fine motor skills. These experiences help to build confidence, independence, and a strong foundation for future learning.



# The GAMES ROOM



The Games Room is filled with engaging learning opportunities that encourage children to explore, think, and create. Activities include puzzles, small-world play, construction and fine motor experiences, all designed to support problem-solving, creativity and early development in a fun and stimulating environment.



# The GARDENS



Our beautiful gardens are full of exciting adventures waiting to be discovered! Children can dig, plant and grow in our allotments, watch birds visit the feeders, or relax with friends at our picnic tables. There is plenty of soft grass for running, jumping and playing games.

Little explorers love using magnifying glasses to hunt for minibeasts, kicking footballs and climbing, sliding and balancing on our age-appropriate play equipment, including mini climbing frames and slides. Imaginative play comes to life on our wooden train, where children can pretend to travel anywhere their imagination takes them, building confidence, creativity and friendships along the way.



# The OAKS ACTIVITY CENTRE



The Oaks Activity Centre is open from **7:30am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday during term time**. These special sessions are dependent on demand and are always well publicised in advance.

Our qualified practitioners provide a wide range of engaging indoor and outdoor activities, including games, sports, drama, dance, art, craft, cookery, gardening, and many more opportunities for children to learn and have fun.

Refreshments form an important part of the Oaks experience, with drinks, snacks, and hot meals provided. Free play is actively encouraged both indoors and outdoors, all under the careful supervision of our qualified and attentive staff, who are always on hand to support the children.

The Oaks is a fully equipped pre-school setting for children aged **2–4 years**, offering both full-time and part-time places. Our curriculum follows the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** framework as set out by the government, ensuring high-quality early education and care.

The Oaks Activity Centre and Pre-School is owned by **Mrs Christine Redgrave**.

## Registration and

### Activity Centre

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

### The Oaks Activity and Pre-school

Early registration is recommended to be sure of consideration for a place at 2+. 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 the December before they join reception. Late applications are considered if a vacancy occurs, but these children are not automatically included in the Eastcourt screening process.

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### Fees

The fees are listed on a separate sheet and are payable on a monthly basis. Payment can be made funds to clear by 6pm on the last day of each month by bank transfer into the Oaks account. Vouchers are accepted and should be paid in the same way. Penalties are incurred for late payments. Late applications are considered if a vacancy occurs.

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### Hours

The full range of options are listed on a separate sheet. We are open from 7.30am to 6pm term time only.

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### Attendance, Absence

Parents should telephone the centre about any absences before 9 o'clock on the first day.

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### Lunches

There are weekly menus which show the choices on offer. This is included in the price, there is no additional cost.

## Reports and Parents Days

### Open Days

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

### The Oaks Activity Centre and Pre-School

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 are 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

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### Policies

A copy of the Oaks Policies are available for inspection in the office during open hours. These include Behaviour, Equal Opportunities, Complaints, Bullying, Child Protection, Educational Visits, Admissions, Health and Safety, Disability, Emergency, Sex and Relationship Education, and Recruitment and Selection and many more.

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### 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).

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### Contacting Us

The telephone number for The Oaks Activity Centre is 0208 597 9171, and an answer machine is available during out-of-hours.