



# BRAYS SCHOOL FAMILY NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN TERM 1, 2025

Welcome to our latest edition of the Brays School Family Newsletter.

## HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME ...

As we reach the end of this first half term, I wanted to take a moment to reflect and share some exciting news with you all. It feels just like yesterday when I held my "golden ticket" — the day I interviewed for this role back in October 2023. It truly felt like winning the lottery, and every day since has been a wonderful journey with our amazing Brays community. It is always difficult to select the highlights for the half termly newsletter so please do be sure to follow our social media pages where we share more frequent updates.

This term, we have welcomed 20 new children and their families—almost a fifth of our school! It's been a pleasure to get to know you all and to see our school family grow. While we didn't welcome any new staff at the start of term, we are proud to share that Hayley has stepped into her new role as a Level 3 Teaching Assistant. We have also been busy recruiting for more TA posts and look forward to introducing new team members next half term.

We said a fond farewell to Jane Hogan, who has been part of the Brays family for over 20 years, starting as a lunchtime supervisor and growing into a valued Level 3 TA. We wish her all the best in her next chapter. Congratulations also go to Kam, who has been promoted to Level 3 TA—an achievement well deserved!

A huge thank you to all our families for supporting the Trust-wide half days. These sessions provide vital additional training for our staff, helping us to continually improve the care and education we provide to your children.

Looking ahead, Autumn 2 won't be action-packed with lots of exciting family events. I very much hope to see many of you there as we continue this journey together.

Thank you for being such an important part of Brays Special School

Kari



## HARVEST FESTIVAL

This half term, our Brays community came together to demonstrate one of our core values—**#kindness**—through generous donations for the St Thomas' Church Harvest Festival. We were overwhelmed by the large number of contributions from families - thank you.

Children from Cheeky Cheetah class had the wonderful opportunity to visit St Thomas' Church to deliver our donations. While there, they took part in sorting the food into categories, helping to prepare food parcels for local food banks. It was a meaningful experience for the children, giving them a chance to see how their kindness makes a real difference in our community.

Thank you to everyone who contributed. Together, we are making a positive impact beyond our school walls.



## ROALD DAHL DAY



We are delighted to share that Brays Special School raised over £70 for the Roald Dahl Charity, which supports seriously ill children and their families by providing vital care and comfort. Raising money for poorly children is a cause close to our hearts and reflects the caring spirit of our school community. This year, we enjoyed exploring Charlie and The Chocolate Factory in an accessible way, including fun treasure hunts for golden tickets. We're already wondering which Roald Dahl story we'll bring to life next year!



## CREATIVE SPACE - THE BODY

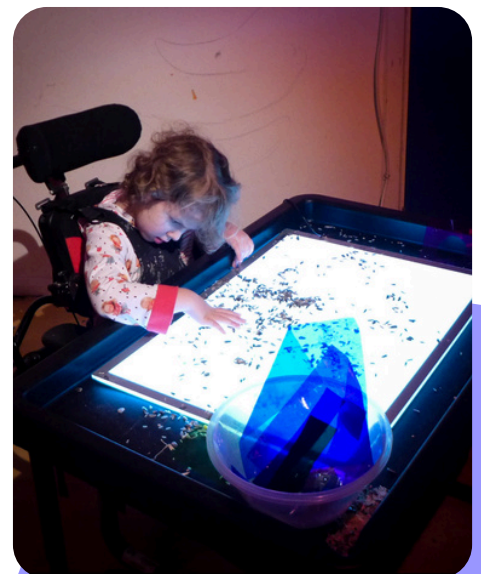
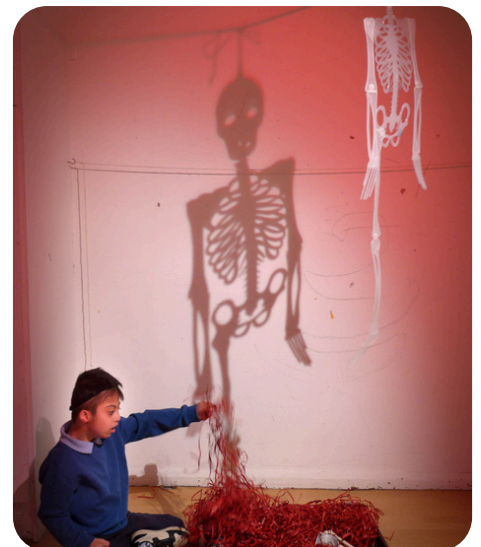
It's been a great start to the year in the Creative Space where we have been learning about our bodies. It has been wonderful to welcome lots of new children into the school and to see everyone working together.

First we looked at how bones join together to make skeletons. Then we rolled red balls down pipes in the same way that blood goes around the body, and all the children felt the vibrations of a heartbeat in a massive heart.

Then we showed how muscles are stretchy and twangy, just like elastic and guitar strings, and made patterns with light, playing special musical instruments at the same time.

Lastly we looked at faces and got dressed up ready to watch different photos of all the children in the school.

We're exhausted!





## BLACK HISTORY MONTH & SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

On Friday 17th October, Brays Special School proudly took part in Show Racism the Red Card by holding a non-school uniform day, raising over £70 for this vital cause. Racism is a topic we take very seriously at Brays, as it connects deeply with our core value of **#equality**—teaching our children to treat everyone with **#respect and #kindness**, regardless of the colour of their skin.

This event was part of our wider work during Black History Month, where children explored the lives and achievements of inspirational Black individuals. However, we firmly believe that celebrating diversity and promoting equality should not be confined to one month. Throughout the year, we ensure children access diverse resources and stories because representation matters—you can't be what you can't see.

In classes, learning took many creative forms. Some children discovered the story of Levi Roots and expressed their learning through multimedia artwork. Meanwhile, our Clever Cubs class created beautiful portraits inspired by the artist Bisa Butler, celebrating Black culture and creativity.

At Brays, we are committed to fostering an environment where every child feels valued, represented, and empowered to embrace diversity every day.





## GETTING HANDS-ON WITH NATURE: OUTDOOR LEARNING AT BRAYS

Our commitment to hands-on, experiential learning shines through every week during our timetabled Outdoor Learning sessions. Each class enjoys a special time outside where children connect with nature and develop valuable skills.

A favourite part of this experience is caring for our school chickens. Every week, children visit the coop to top up food and water and collect fresh eggs. A special thank you goes to our Lively Lions class, who have taken on the important job of cleaning the chickens each week this half term. Next half term, the responsibility will pass to the Cool Cats—we can't wait to see them in action!

Thanks to the amazing efforts of our community, we now have a dedicated outdoor learning area where children feed the fish and engage in a variety of outdoor activities. This space also offers opportunities for children to help maintain the area, which means lots of sweeping up leaves during this autumn season!



## BRAYS SPECIAL SCHOOL HITS A HIGH NOTE: CELEBRATING MUSIC MARK RECOGNITION AND MORE!



We are thrilled to announce that Brays Special School has been awarded the prestigious Music Mark Recognition Award 2025-2026! This accolade celebrates our commitment to delivering a high-quality, inclusive music education. As a Lead School for our Local Authority, we proudly hosted a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session for education professionals, showcasing how we creatively integrate music across many areas of the curriculum.

But that's not all—Brays is making waves beyond music! We are excited to share that we have been shortlisted in three categories in this year's Education

**EducationToday**  
*School & Supplier*  
**AWARDS 2025**

**PROUD FINALIST 2025**

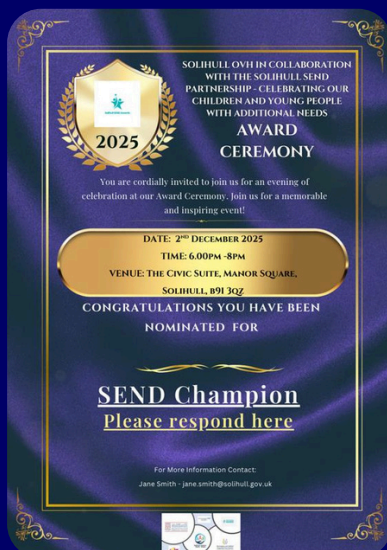
Riverbank Park Plaza Hotel, London | 5 December 2025  
EDUCATIONTODAYAWARDS.CO.UK

### Today Awards:

- Primary School of the Year
- Creative School of the Year
- Headteacher of the Year

We are also incredibly proud to celebrate one of our stars, Jackie S, who has reached the final five in the Solihull SEND Awards for Education Champion in a Special School. Jackie's tireless dedication and passion for supporting our children embody the spirit and values of Brays.

This half term, as we celebrate these remarkable achievements, we remain focused on our vision: providing a nurturing environment where every child can flourish, find their voice, and reach their full potential.



**Thank you for being part of our journey!**



# WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

We marked World Mental Health Day with a focus on helping children understand that it's okay to feel all kinds of emotions. We used this important day as an opportunity to teach children about recognising and expressing their feelings in a healthy way.

Our activities linked emotions to the colours of the Zones of Regulation, a tool we use across the school to help children identify how they are feeling and learn strategies to manage those feelings. This visual and practical approach helps children build emotional awareness and self-regulation skills.

Throughout the day, classes explored a wide range of ways to look after both body and mind. Children enjoyed activities such as gentle massage, yoga sessions, and sensory experiences with calming smells. These activities were designed to support relaxation, reduce stress, and promote overall wellbeing.



## THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY

This half term, we want to give a huge shout-out and heartfelt thanks to Graceful Hands and Mr Lloyd Jones for their wonderful donations to Brays Special School.

The talented volunteers from Graceful Hands have once again amazed us with their creativity and skill, providing unique and incredibly useful resources to support our curriculum. This term, we have had detailed models of lungs, hearts, eyes, brains, and even a whole digestive system! These hands-on resources are helping our children explore and understand their bodies in a fun and engaging way. Graceful Hands are currently working on making characters from nursery rhymes to bring these stories to life in our classrooms—something we are all very excited about!

We are also incredibly grateful to Mr Lloyd Jones, who kindly crafted a beautiful planter to celebrate our fantastic Ofsted result in June.



## FIRST SPECIAL SCHOOL IN BIRMINGHAM TO ACHIEVE INCLUSIVE ATTENDANCE BRONZE AWARD



We are proud to announce that after a dedicated 7-month commitment to the programme, Brays Special School has been awarded the Inclusive Attendance Bronze Award. This is a significant achievement and makes us the first special school in the whole of Birmingham to receive this recognition.

This award reflects our ongoing commitment to maintaining high attendance standards while supporting the unique needs of our children. It also ensures that our attendance strategy aligns with the law changes introduced in August 2024. Staying within legal requirements is vital for safeguarding our children's right to education.

This success is a true testament to the power of **#teamwork**—between the school, families, and external agencies working closely together. We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our families for their continued support and understanding of the school's legal responsibilities around attendance.

The impact of our work is clear: in Autumn 1 2024, children lost 763 days of school due to absence. In Autumn 1 2025, this reduced to 569.5 days. This means children attended school for an extra 193 days—equivalent to one child attending school every day for a full year (190 face-to-face school days).

We are now excited to be working towards the Silver Award as we continue to improve attendance and ensure every child benefits from the full Brays experience.



**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> November - **INSET Training - School Closed to Pupils**
- 4<sup>th</sup> November - **Children return to school**
- 10<sup>th</sup> November - **Interfaith Day**
- 10<sup>th</sup> November - **Communication Coffee Morning with Speech & Language Therapy**
- 10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> November - **Anti Bullying Week**
- 11<sup>th</sup> November - **Remembrance Day**
- 19<sup>th</sup> November - **Road Safety Day**
- 20<sup>th</sup> November - **School Closes at 1pm for Staff INSET Training**
- 21<sup>st</sup> November - **Children in Need**
- 24<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> November - **UK School Parliament Week**
- 8<sup>th</sup> December - **School Closes at 1pm for Staff INSET Training**
- 9<sup>th</sup> December - **Christianity Day**
- 9<sup>th</sup> December - **Jolly Jellyfish & Talented Turtles Perform The Twinkly Nativity @ 10am**
- 11<sup>th</sup> December - **Christmas Jumper Day**
- 15<sup>th</sup> December - **Sensory Singing @ 9.15am or Signed Singing @ 2.15pm**
- 16<sup>th</sup> December - **Class Christmas Parties**
- 19<sup>th</sup> December - **School Closes at 1.30pm**

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If you are on X(Twitter), please follow @BraysSchool1.

