



FIVE ACRE WOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY (TERM 3/4):

Tues 2nd Jan	First day of term 3
Weds 10th Jan	Parent Group (AAC and Colourful Semantics)
Fri 9th Feb	Last day of term 3
Mon 19th Feb	First day of term 4
Thurs 22nd Feb	Parent Group (Sensory Processing and Sensory Circuits)
Thurs 7th Mar	World Book Day
Mon 11th & Tue 12th Mar	Staff training days (pupils not in school)
Fri 15th Mar	Comic Relief Day
Weds 20th Mar	Parent Group (PECS)
Thurs 21st Mar	Socks for World Down Syndrome Day
Sat 23rd Mar	Spring Family Fun Day
Weds 27th Mar	Spring Fair
Thurs 28th Mar	Last day of term 4

A MESSAGE FROM PEGGY...

Welcome to our Winter 2023 newsletter. In this edition you can find out what our class teams have been up to this term, read all about our wonderful Christmas events, latest fundraising activities and some exciting happenings in the OLE.

We have had some new staff start this term and hope that they have all received a warm welcome into the school.

Welcome also to our new pupil Rhio who joined us this term and has settled in well.

At the end of November, I was delighted to hear that we once again met the

standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark

(IQM) to maintain our Flagship School status.

The IQM is a nationally accredited award which recognises the exceptional inclusion arrangements



that Five Acre Wood has in place. Thank you to everyone involved for helping us maintain this status.

Towards the end of term, the school started to feel very festive with Christmas trees popping up, classrooms being embellished, and doors being decorated in Christmas themes. The Christmas door challenge has become a Five Acre Wood School tradition and the competition was very difficult to judge this year with everyone producing some very creative ideas as you can see from the photos on pages 18-20. It has brought much excitement and festive cheer into the school.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all parents, carers and families for your valued support this year.

Please keep communicating any updates to the school:

WINTER 2023



please remember it is your responsibility to ensure all information on Healthcare Plans is kept up to date for the benefit of your child.

I look forward to welcoming everyone back to school on Tuesday, 2nd January and wish you all a lovely Christmas and happy new year.

Peggy



Happy Christmas from Sandy, one of our therapy dogs

CLASS UPDATES

HONEYSUCKLE CLASS

This term in Honeysuckle we have enjoyed activities related to our books; *It Was a Cold Dark Night* by Tim Hopgood, *Colour Monster* by Anna Llenas and *Stick Man* by Julia Donaldson.

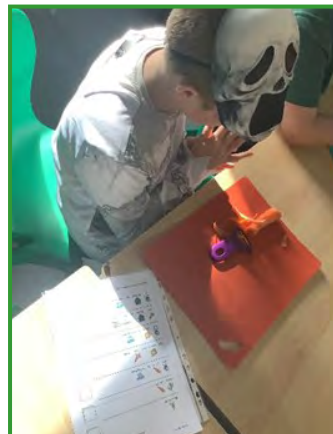


We had fun exploring tuff trays and making art related to our stories as well as bonfire night and Diwali. Other activities have included playing with sensory circuits and turn taking games, as well as gardening and assembly.

DORMOUSE CLASS

Dormouse class has had a lot to celebrate in term two including Halloween, Diwali and Remembrance Day. We have also been engaged and excited to learn about winter, including winter clothing and weather, as well as life in the Arctic. We have explored Arctic animals and discovered how people live in winter conditions.

Towards the end of term, we enjoyed a variety of Christmas celebrations which included lots of enjoyable arts and crafts. We decorated our classroom with the decorations we had crafted, made greetings cards and even decorated a Christmas tree!



SWALLOW CLASS

Joshua and Woody, dressed up as a skeleton and werewolf for Halloween. Here they are cutting vegetables.

In maths, we have been learning about money. Ruby was finding all the twenty pence pieces from a selection of coins on the computer.



CLASS UPDATES

ANT CLASS



Ant class have had a fantastic term exploring Autumn/ Winter in the outdoors. Pupils had lots of fun exploring



Saplings and have all done so well with their transitions this term.

We have created some lovely artwork using the natural objects collected from the Sensory Garden and Saplings, as well as making bird feeders and nature wands. More recently, we made 'fizzy snowmen' using pipettes and vinegar to make them fizz!



PINE MARTEN CLASS



This term Pine Marten pupils have been visiting Ladybird class to read aloud to them during some of their story times. This was a lovely opportunity for the children to



read for a purpose and was great for developing their confidence.



As part of their learning about 'Gaming and wellbeing', pupils designed their own gaming character and detailed the scenes in which the character would be seen. We have used computer based tools for learning throughout the term and have also reflected on how screen time can make us grumpy and what to do if we need a break. The class were over the moon to be the winners of the Christmas door competition and really appreciated having pizza on the last day.

CLASS UPDATES

FOX CLASS

This term, Fox class made their first outing to Saplings. All pupils transitioned well and loved being in the wilderness and exploring the seasons. We will continue to go to Saplings and witness how the weather effects the environment and discover the natural resources available.



Fox class also joined in with the Children in Need celebrations and dressed in themed clothes. We really enjoyed the danceathon and engaging in sensory activities with Pudsey.



In addition to learning about Autumn, we have explored all things Winter through sensory play. We have looked at ice, winter scenes, arctic animals and created some process art using winter colours. We were very excited when we started to get ready for Christmas. We had fun

decorating our class and tree and took part in lots of exciting sensory activities. Our parents and carers even came for a festive stay and play experience!

ROE DEER CLASS

This term in Roe Deer we have been learning about the changing seasons, life in the Arctic and developing our cooking skills, as well as role-playing different shop and cafe scenarios to practice our use of money, societal rules and turn taking with conversations.



Pupils got fully into the Winter/Christmas swing and enjoyed a

variety of different Christmas activities including making igloos out of marshmallows, writing letters to Santa, carolling songs in and out of the classroom and investigating the changes down in Saplings with nature hunts.



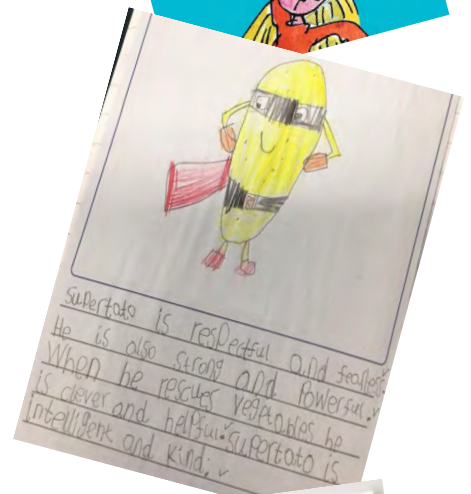
CLASS UPDATES

TURTLE CLASS



Turtle class have thoroughly enjoyed their Young Farmers sessions this term with Laura at Apple Tree Yard. They have been able to develop their teamwork, communication and animal care skills. Children have learnt how to clean out the animal's enclosures, prepare their feeds and have even taken part in making enrichment activities for the animals. The pupils have had the privilege of getting up close and personal with the animals and particularly enjoy their cuddles with the rabbits and guinea pigs.

Turtle class have also been working hard within the classroom. In maths, pupils have particularly enjoyed learning about division and they put their skills to the test practically by sharing sweets amongst peers. In our literacy learning, the children have enjoyed taking part in tasks based on key books. The pupils have enjoyed their work on *Supertato* and *The Magic Finger* the most and created some wonderfully creative pieces of writing.



CLASS UPDATES

ROBIN CLASS



Pupils in Robin class have been working hard this term preparing their own lunch. They have worked on identifying the ingredients required, making a shopping list, and going to the supermarket to purchase what was needed. Shopping completed, pupils then prepared their main meal and pudding.



Robin class have also enjoyed learning to go to the cafe; accessing the Grow19 and Morrison's café on a weekly basis. It has been a fun and busy term!



MAPLE CLASS

This term, Maple class have had the best time learning and having fun. Every week, we have enjoyed going to signing choir and some pupils represented the class at the Carolathon in Fremlin Walk. In PHSE we looked at Remembrance Day and what the four coloured poppies signify. We also learned how to keep ourselves safe when crossing roads and online. It was very

exciting when we got to apply our road safety knowledge when going to the cinema to see Trolls. The day got even better when we went to McDonald's for lunch! In history, we looked at the Tudors and created our own collage Tudor roses. We had fun exploring and making circuits in science and thought about electricity and how to keep ourselves safe around

electrical items. When Christmas magic started to happen in our classroom, we could not contain our excitement. First, a tree appeared, then, a new book arrived (which was for us all to take turns to be the teacher and read to the class) and then, an advent calendar. Maple Meerkat, our class mascot, also joined in and spent fun weekends with each of us.

CLASS UPDATES

CEDARWOOD CLASS

boost of goodness to keep them strong over the coming Winter .

The lunchtime clubs have included fitness activities/ games through boxing and stage and acting, with singing and dancing activities with EDC Stage school. Our friends from both Oxford Road and Palace Wood also participated.

Pupils have also been very creative. They have made wreaths with written messages to the soldiers for the Remembrance assembly, decorated cakes to sell for Children in Need and made Christmas art and craft to sell at the Winter Fair.

Pupils in Year 12 took part in a residential at Kingswood Residential and Activity



Centre in Ashford. They dared try the

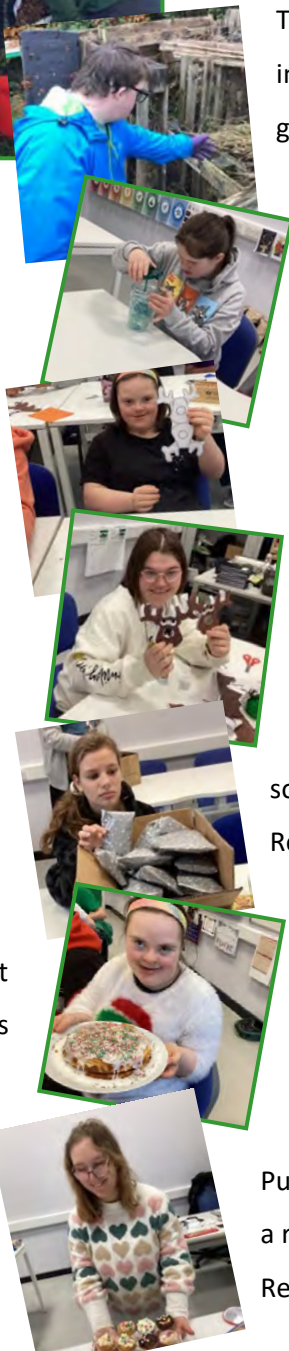
challenging outdoor activities

offered and came back from their five-day stay with their peers enthused and proud of their achievements. Everyone is very proud of them and glad that they had a great time at trying things they had never done before!

What a busy term, working hard and supporting our partner school, helping with the wrapping of Christmas gifts in readiness for the school's Christmas shop. Our pupils are looking forward to their well-deserved Christmas break. We wish them and their families a pleasant festive holiday and a magical time this Christmas!



This term we kept busy working on our accreditations and developing our community cohesion and life skills when spending time out in the community. Pupils took part in leisure activities in school and at their local partner school's allotment, Greenfields Primary School. With the lovely Community Engagement Officers from KCC, pupils enjoyed mulching around saplings planted last Spring and gave the young trees a much-needed

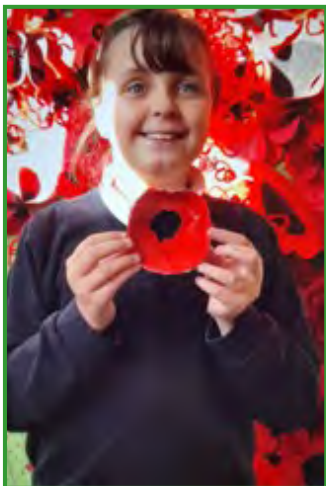


CLASS UPDATES

WHALE CLASS



At the beginning of term, we found out all about the Gunpowder Plot and why we have bonfire night. We also learnt about Remembrance Day and remembered the soldiers who fought in the wars.



One thing that we really enjoyed was going to the cinema. We got to watch Paddington and afterwards, went to McDonalds where we got to choose and order our own lunch.

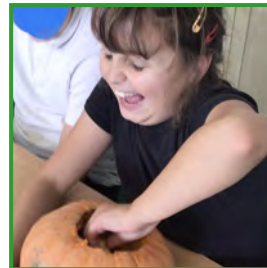
Towards the end of term, we had fun preparing for our Winter Performance.



VOLE CLASS

This term Vole class have been working hard on their turn taking skills, playing lots of turn taking games whilst increasing communication between pupils.

We have also been practising road safety awareness, preparing our pupils for visits in the community.



CLASS UPDATES

LADYBIRD CLASS

We have had a jam-packed term exploring many different themes. We started off the term with Remembrance Day and practised our fine motor skills by painting poppies using pom poms and tweezers. We also practised counting poppies and matching pom poms to the number. We enjoyed looking at fireworks, splatting paint and making our own fireworks pictures. We also made our own fireworks sounds using drums and shakers.



The Ladybirds have been enjoying our loose part activities, especially when we used the scales and weights to see if we could get the scales to move. During our Nursery Rhyme week we sang many songs, made our own Incy Wincey spiders, enjoyed a tea party and sang I am a little teapot.

We have engaged in our food explorer sessions where pupils have

been practising their cutting skills and exploring new foods by touch, taste and smell.



The Ladybirds have thoroughly enjoyed our Saplings sessions and



have been having great fun playing



together and making up their own games e.g. following the leader using a hose, and what started out as collecting items in the woods turned into a great turn-taking game of being pushed in the wheelbarrow. We have had great fun learning to be friends and have fun this term.



HALLOWEEN

WREN CLASS

Wren class had lots of Halloween fun; dressing up and carving pumpkins.



ROBIN CLASS



TURTLE CLASS



VOLE CLASS

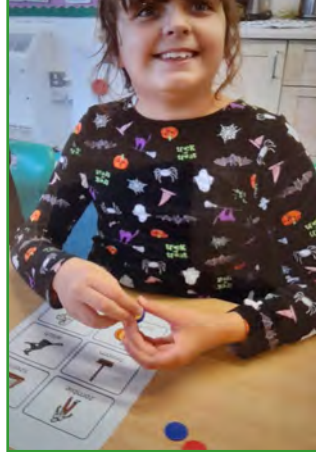
Vole class made some delicious Halloween pumpkin pizzas.

YUMMY!



HALLOWEEN

WHALE CLASS



DRAGONFLY CLASS



WILLOW CLASS



PUMPKIN CARVING FUN!



CHILDREN IN NEED

On Friday 17 November, the school was a hive of activity with events taking place for Children in Need including a nature-thon in our outdoor learning environment and a dance-a-thon in the hall. The money raised was donated to both Children In Need and Arthur's Quest – a local charity who are a patient advocacy group dedicated to improving the lives of children and families affected by SLC6A1. Thank you all for your generous donations!



A big shout out must be given to Iestyn and his Hazelwood team for their amazing efforts in raising £600 for Children in Need! There was much fun had at Snodland including a name the baby competition, and all the excitement of watching Iestyn cycle 100 miles in a day! Well done!



MUSIC VIDEO

Even though it was still November, in amongst the spots and pyjamas, some pupils donned their Christmas jumpers ready to sing "We wish you a Merry Christmas" in front of the camera! Our friends at DeeVu Records came to film a video that will be released



on various platforms in time for Christmas and was played at the 'Variety Golf Christmas Lunch' at the London Hilton Hotel! We can't wait for you to see it.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

Well, what a busy term we have had. It has been non-stop what with Children in Need, Winter Wonderland and other Christmas fundraising events in school, work on the FAWrient Express café, and our “new addition” to the fundraising department; a sheep (more on that to follow)! I’m very much looking forward to keeping up this momentum next year!

Thank you to the many generous people and businesses who have donated money, prizes, time and energy. Because of people like you, our pupils can benefit from the extra opportunities we are able to provide with the additional income raised. We are very grateful. I would like to wish you all a fantastic Christmas and New Year!

- Hannah

DONATIONS

It has been an incredible term for donations:

- * Global-MSI made a very generous donation of PPE resources which are being used by our pupils at Snodland who attend sessions to learn a different trade (e.g. woodworking, mechanics and gardening).
- * Persimmon South East kindly donated £500 after being nominated by one of their employees (who is also a parent of Five Acre Wood School). We couldn't be more grateful!
- * Davies Turner in Dartford held a ‘dress down day’ and raised a fantastic £123 for our charity! Thank you!
- * Thank you also to Viscofan who recently visited Snodland and donated lots of resources including stationary and sensory items.

Luke Western Art Ltd. presented us with some fabulous prints from the ‘Art for Good’ campaign after being



nominated by a parent. We were blown away by both the generosity and quality of the prints received. They have been shared amongst classes and sites and will be used in a variety of ways including on our classroom walls and within art lessons.

WALK AND TALK

Our monthly walks, which are open to all, have got off to a flying start and we have really enjoyed meeting our families and getting to know everyone who has joined us.

Due to Christmas, our next Walk and Talk is on an earlier date of Sunday 17th December. So grab your favourite Christmas jumper and join us at 2pm outside the Mote Park café, where we will set off on a Christmassy stroll.

Please share our Walk and Talk with anyone you may know who would benefit from our walks.

OTHER THANK YOUS

We would like to give a huge shout out to our local Sainsburys for their food donations and RRT (Rapid Relief Team) for their food boxes and the Early Bird Programme. Both organisations have been a pleasure to work with and we look forward to continuing our partnership in the new year.

During November, pupils and staff were able to support the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal to raise awareness and support our Armed Forces community. We raised an incredible £150.92.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

FAWRIENT EXPRESS

Renovation work has begun on our 64 foot long former buffet train carriage aptly named the 'FAWrient Express'. The project is finally underway and will see us, with a lot of help and support from some amazing businesses, friends, and fundraising, transform the carriage into



a functioning café for pupils to learn skills in hospitality. Currently wrapped up for Christmas (in a large sheet of tarpaulin), work will continue next year so watch this space.

SOFT PLAY BUS

In-keeping with our train carriage on site, we were very lucky to be gifted a double-decker bus from Nu-Venture bus company, to add to our vehicle collection. In November, we were thrilled to receive a visit from Norman Kemp, the owner of Nu-Venture, who kindly handed over the keys, and we hope to work with them closely going forwards to help develop pupil's confidence in using buses. The bus was donated to the school this term and it will be turned into a soft-play facility and the cab area will be retained in order for pupils to learn how to board a bus. A massive thank you to Nu-Venture for this amazing gift and the support you have already provided us. We have been meeting with different vendors about the renovations and hope to bring you further news in the new year.

WINTER FAIRS

We hosted our first ever Winter Fair at our Snodland site, as well as one at Loose, in the final week of term. Pupils had been creating items to sell at the fairs in their classes and there were some wonderful things on display. Thank you to everyone who came along!



SHAUN IN THE HEART OF KENT

Did you hear the 'baa-riliant' news? We have joined the 'flock'! We are delighted to be supporting the Heart of Kent Hospice by decorating our very own Little Shaun sculpture. He will be one of many Shaun's hitting the streets of Maidstone and surrounding areas as part of an art trail from 29th June to 30th August, 2024.

In the new year we will be sharing our journey with Little Shaun and taking part in different fundraising activities for this fantastic charity.



For now, over the last few weeks our Little Shaun has been a busy sheep, taking part in 'Meet and Greet's' with our pupils.



WINTER WONDERLAND

On a typically chilly Saturday in December, we held our second Winter Wonderland event in Apple Tree Yard. Despite the bitter cold, it was lovely to see so many of you come along to what was an enchanting day filled with crafts, elves, animals, much needed refreshments and even Father Christmas and the Grinch! We were very excited to have some guests visit, Woody and Lily, two



An enormous thank you must also go to the OLE team who organised the event from start to finish, working tirelessly to prepare the Yard for its magical transformation,



preparing the grotto ready for Father Christmas's visit, sourcing the twinkly lights and snow machine, setting up the signage and making everything safe, volunteering on the day to help the event

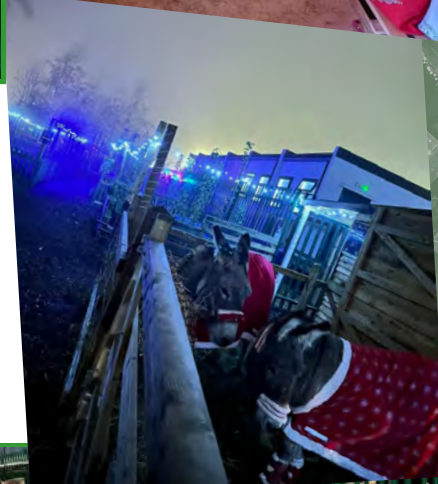


run smoothly and of course, wrapping up all the animals in cosy

Christmas clothes! We raised over £1500 and had so much fun in the process so thank you everyone!



donkeys who were very kindly brought to the Yard. A huge thank you to Carol for letting us admire them for the day. Thank you also to Verralls Vintage Treats for providing the hot drinks, cakes, and other delicious refreshments!



THE YARD



Jessie, TJ, Trixie and Bo, our four female guinea pigs, were moved indoors at the end of November as they were expecting babies. We already have some exciting news... on a Sunday, early on in December, our guinea pig world grew larger as four beautiful pups were born. This is our first ever birth at Apple Tree Yard. Both mum and babies are doing well and will stay indoors until mid to late February when they should be old enough to go outside. The male babies will be separated later before they are able to breed again, and we will be looking at various ways to house and rehome the males. We look forward to watching them grow and introducing them to the children.



BIKEABILITY

"It was fun I really enjoyed peddling and it made feel more confident and independent. The teachers were nice. I would like to do it again."



As part of developing their independent skills, pupils took part in a bikeability session. We look forward to working with Nick and Andy from Seven Training to progress their skills further.

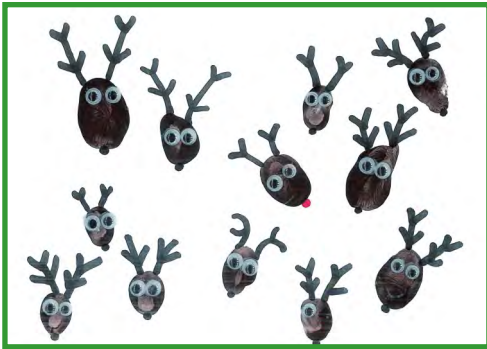
"I was scared at first the teachers helped me and I rode the bike without any help. It made me feel happy and proud. Yes, I would certainly like to do this again."

"They showed all about safety of the bike. How to sit on it more comfortably, how to balance and how to use the brakes."



CHRISTMAS EVENTS

CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION



Snail class of 2022/23

Each year pupils are invited to design a card for our Christmas card competition. Three winning designs are then printed to be used for our school Christmas cards the following year and sent to pupils, staff and external contacts.



Jamie—Wren Class



Daisy class of 2022/23

A big thank you to everyone who entered last year. All of the designs were amazing which made it difficult to choose the winners though congratulations go to Jamie, Joseph and pupils from Snail and Daisy class ('22-'23)!



Joseph—Birch Class

PANTOMIME

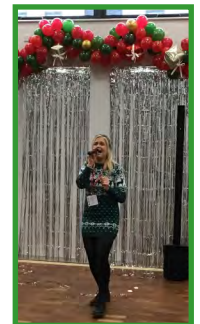
Sparrow and Cuckoo class were lucky enough to go to the pantomime to watch Snow White. Both classes represented themselves and the school exceptionally well and even managed to get a picture with the cast.



'ELFRIDGES'

From the 11th to 13th December, pupil's were able to do a spot of Christmas shopping at 'Elfridges', our very own gift shop at Loose, Snodland and Palace Wood sites. Organised by TEAM, pupils could choose their own Christmas gifts for their families which were wrapped and labelled, all ready to be presented to a loved one on Christmas day.

WINTER PERFORMANCES AND CLASS CELEBRATIONS

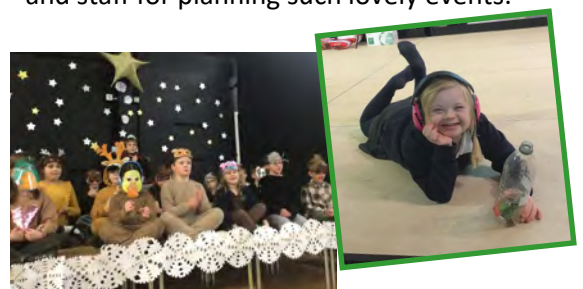


This year, classes took part in Christmas celebrations appropriate to their needs and engaged in lots of different activities across three days. There were Winter Performances, Stay and Play events and

even a Snow Ball. Thank you to everyone who came into school to join in

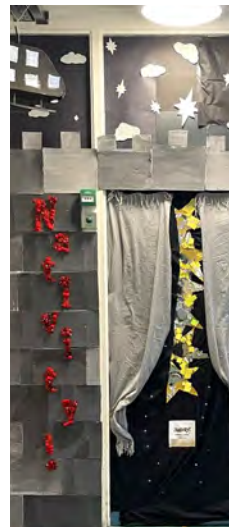


the festivities and well done to the pupils and staff for planning such lovely events.



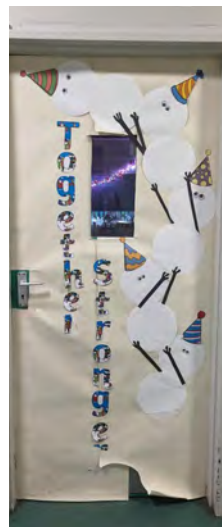
CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS DOORS



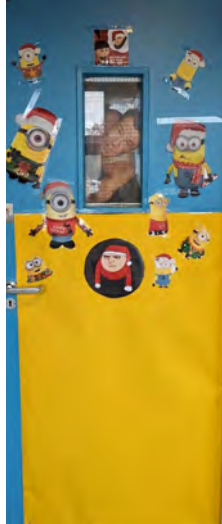
CHRISTMAS

AND THE WINNERS WERE...

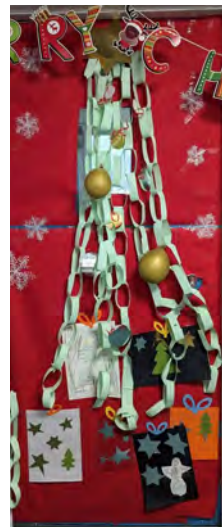
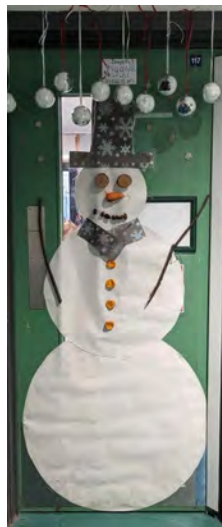


CHRISTMAS

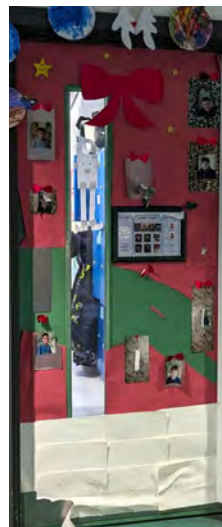
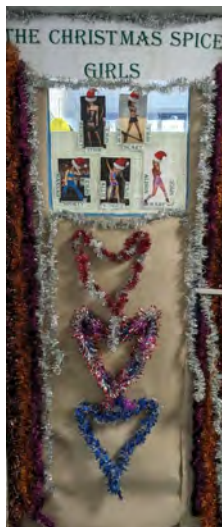
REDWOOD AND PINE MARTEN! WELL DONE!



WINNER!



WINNER!



CHRISTMAS EVENTS

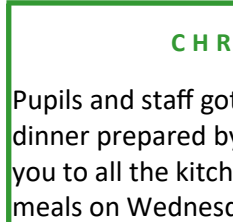
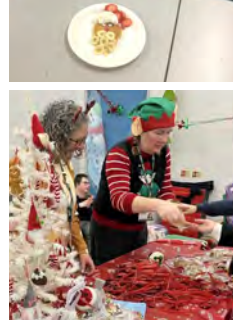
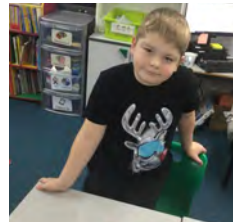
A VISIT FROM FATHER CHRISTMAS

On Thursday 15th December, we had a visit from an iconic festive figure - Father Christmas! The children could not contain their excitement when he arrived, delivering gifts to classes throughout the day.



The last week of term was an exciting time with lots of lively activity. There were Winter Fairs, "Elfridges" Christmas shopping, Christmas parties and the staff even dressed up as elves for a day!

LAST WEEK OF TERM



CHRISTMAS DINNER

Pupils and staff got to enjoy a scrumptious Christmas dinner prepared by our fabulous kitchen staff. Thank you to all the kitchen staff team for serving over 400 meals on Wednesday 13th December, but also for all their hard work throughout the year.



HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!

Term Dates with Diary Dates 2023/24

Date	Time	Event
<u>Term 3</u>		
Tuesday 2nd January 2024	N/A	First day of term 3
Friday 9th February 2024	N/A	Last day of term

<u>Term 4</u>		
Monday 19th February 2024	N/A	First day of term 4
Thursday 7 th March 2024	All day	World Book Day
Monday 11th March 2024	N/A	Staff training day (pupils not in school)
Tuesday 12th March 2024	N/A	Staff training day (pupils not in school)
Friday 15 th March 2024	All day	Comic Relief Day
Thursday 21 st March 2024	All day	Socks for World Down Syndrome Day
Saturday 23 rd March 2024	TBC	Spring Family Fun Day
Wednesday 27 th March 2024	TBC	Spring Fair
Thursday 28th March 2024	N/A	Last day of term

<u>Term 5</u>		
Monday 15th April 2024	N/A	First day of term 5
Monday 6th May 2024	N/A	Bank holiday (pupils and staff not in school)
Friday 17 th May 2024	TBC	FAW charity football match
Friday 24th May 2024	N/A	Last day of term

<u>Term 6</u>		
Monday 3rd June 2024	N/A	First day of term 6 for pupils
June 2024	TBC	Sports days
July 2024	TBC	Sports day – FAW Snodland
Friday 5 th July 2024	All day	Transition day
Monday 8 th July 2024	3.45-6.45pm	'Meet the new teacher' parents evening
July 2024	TBC	Secondary summer performance
July 2024	TBC	Secondary prize giving
Tuesday 23rd July 2024	N/A	Last day of term

NOTE TO PARENTS/CARERS REGARDING MEDICATION

To ensure that your child is given the most current prescribed medication of the correct dose and at the right time, please read these guidelines:

1. Please ensure that all medicines sent into school are in the ORIGINAL pharmacy containers/packaging clearly labelled with:

- Your child's name
- Name of prescribed medication
- The dosage and frequency of administration
- How medicine should be given, e.g. by mouth, via feeding tube
- Date medicine was dispensed
- Expiry Date

Any nurse will have the right to refuse the administration of medication to your child if this information is not clearly shown on the label.

2. Please inform the school nurse of any change to your child's regular medication, including alterations to dose, frequency or medication being stopped as advised by a doctor. These alterations need to be confirmed in writing by the prescriber. **We cannot accept verbal alterations and will be unable to give an amended dose unless we have the medication in its original contained with the correct information printed on the label or receive the changes in writing from the prescriber.**

3. If your child is prescribed emergency medication (Diazepam/Midazolam for epilepsy or Anapen/Epipen for allergy) please inform the school nurse immediately. Further information from your child's doctor will be needed regarding when the emergency medication should be given and this will be kept in school so all staff are aware of what care your child needs in an emergency.

4. Please ensure there is a sufficient supply of all the medicines your child needs whilst in school. We will contact you to advise when we are running low.

5. When sending in medication, it must not be put in your child's bag. Instead, it should be handed directly to a member of the class staff. If your child comes into school by taxi, the medication should be given to the escort who will then hand it to a member of the class staff when they arrive at school.