

NEWSLETTER

TERM 2 2025



Our Cover Stars:

The FAWever Choir on the cover of their new single, *This Is Me* (turn to page 3)

Inside this issue:

- FAWever Choir Single Release
- Work Placement Opportunities
- Christmas Events

Dates for your diary:

Monday 5th January — First day of term 3

Monday 26th January — HPV immunisations (Year 8 pupils only)

Friday 13th February — Last day of term 3

Monday 23rd February — First day of term 4

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Snodland The Wolfe Building, Malling Road, Snodland ME6 5HS Telephone: 01634 566890

Oxford Road 29 Oxford Road, Maidstone, ME15 8DF Telephone: 01622 392205

Peggy's Message

Welcome to our Term Two Newsletter! This edition captures the energy, achievements, and celebrations that have filled our school community over the past few months, including the excitement of the build-up to Christmas.

Firstly, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest pupils and families who have joined us. We hope your first terms at Five Acre Wood have been positive, welcoming, and full of opportunities to shine. A warm welcome also goes to our new staff members, who have quickly become valued parts of our team.

I am delighted to share that this term the school was awarded once again the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA). This recognition reflects our ongoing commitment to building strong, collaborative relationships with families and ensuring parents and carers feel informed, involved, and supported. The reassessment report praised our strong sense of community and identity, our tailored communication approaches, and our inclusive family events. Our stay and play activities have proved popular, giving parents valuable opportunities to see how their children learn and how the school supports them. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to achieving this award and for your shared commitment to putting pupils first.

I must also mention how well our pupils, and staff, have coped with last minute changes to classrooms and workspaces at our Loose site while building work takes place. Although these changes are temporary, they can still cause uncertainty for some, yet everyone has adapted brilliantly. The building work will continue into the new year, but the additional space it will provide will be invaluable for further learning and play.

Christmas activities and events around the school have been a joy to watch and hear about. From carol singing to stay-and-plays, winter sports day, fairs, pantomimes, and the wonderful displays of Christmas jumpers and decorations, our school community has truly come alive with festive spirit. I hope you are able to carry this joy home and enjoy a wonderful Christmas and New Year with your children.

Here's to a fantastic year ahead at Five Acre Wood School!

Peggy



Finding Their Voice: FAWever Choir Shine with New Single

It has been another busy term for our FAWever Choir. Not content with releasing a single earlier this year, they managed to squeeze in another before Christmas – and this time, it is entirely them. Free from autotune or overdubbed backing vocals, *This Is Me* is the choir's latest release, already having achieved an impressive number 7 spot in the iTunes Dance Chart. Pupils have worked incredibly hard this term, taking recording and filming pressures in their stride as true superstars.



The music video was filmed around the Loose school site, capturing pupils in their element alongside their friends, singing their hearts out and being unapologetically themselves. Recording also took place locally, with support from our fantastic connections to achieve the best possible sound and final result. Now familiar with the process of releasing a single, the choir embraced every challenge, and the song perfectly showcases their talent and confidence. Their unfiltered performance reinforces the message at the heart of the track: be proud, be confident, be yourself. This is them.

The pupils' confidence did not waver when they performed a live premiere of the track at the Variety Golf Christmas Dinner at the London Hilton on release day. Despite a long journey, they were full of energy, wow-ing the audience with a performance that will be remembered for a long time. While we cannot bottle that experience, the song and video are available to stream on YouTube.



A huge thank you to everyone involved in bringing this single to life: Lee Rose, DeeVu Records, Kevin Thorpe, Mark Doggett and Big Jam Productions. Our FAWever Choir practise whenever possible and have performed at a range of events this term. While their popularity continues to grow – let us ensure they keep showcasing their talents and confidence and enjoy every moment as they continue their rise to stardom.

Costa Work Placements

Opportunities for our Students

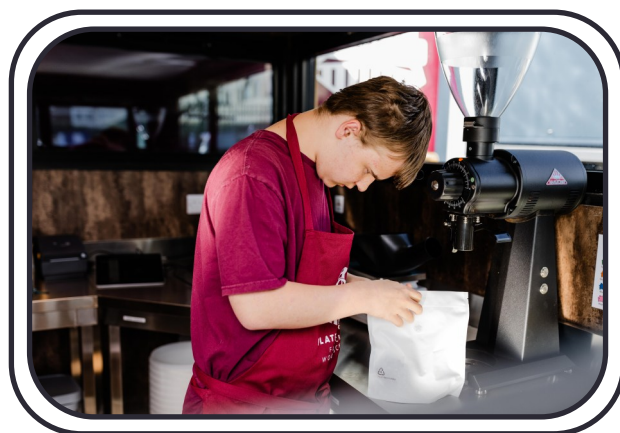
Since the opening of the FAWrient Express Training Academy café, our collaboration with Costa has gone from strength to strength — and we could not be more grateful. From sharing knowledge and expertise to providing funding, volunteers, and invaluable connections. Their continued commitment has helped us create meaningful Preparing for Adulthood pathways for our young people.



Pupils have thoroughly enjoyed visiting the café, which has supported their transitions, boosted their confidence, and enabled them to practise ordering independently, handling money, and building friendships outside the classroom. For our older learners, the experience has provided meaningful training that they can build upon —

offering structured training and a safe space to explore what working life could look like. And, with Costa's further support, they have been able to do exactly that!

Costa has kindly taken some of our older students into local stores, offering them opportunities to experience real workplace environments first-hand. Drawing on everything they learnt aboard the FAWrient Express — along with specialist training from Esther at Hope Espresso, who helped establish our own small roastery, Platform FAW — the students have begun applying their skills in coffee making, customer service, and teamwork with growing confidence and independence. This combination of Costa-led workshops, hands-on barista training, and real business experience is helping them prepare for life beyond school in a powerful and authentic way.



We have received wonderful feedback from store managers who have praised the students' work ethic, growth, and determination. From being given endearing nicknames, to forming new friendships, to making drinks like seasoned baristas, each student has been thriving in the working world.



We are immensely grateful to the Costa team for their ongoing support and for championing inclusive opportunities that empower young people to thrive, and proud of all of our students for their hard work. With more students set to take part in the coming months, we are excited to see what new accomplishments lie ahead — watch this space!

How Being Helpful Helps Me

I first met Matt on his second anniversary of working at Costa Coffee as a Service Engineer— although he wasn't working that day. He was on annual leave yet chose to spend it with us. After previously giving a talk to our Preparing for Adulthood students, and at a later date, returning to help build planters in the OLE, he felt a strong pull to come back once again – this time, to help build a new polytunnel.

Recently diagnosed with ADHD and autism, Matt instantly felt a connection with our pupils. They remembered him too — proudly calling him “the man with the van” after being fascinated by how he can control the temperature of his vehicle from his phone.

We spoke about everything from engineering to emotions, from fishing to figuring out life. It became clear that Matt has so much wisdom to share — practical, honest, and rooted in his own neurodiverse experiences. So, this term, we're launching a new column where Matt offers simple ideas for staying calm, regulated, and grounded in everyday life. He's also keen for me to mention that everything he writes comes purely from his perspective and lived experience (not Costa's), which makes it all the more personal. We hope you enjoy learning from him as much as we have.

Michelle Aslett,
Communications Officer

First, I want to say a huge thank you to Michelle for giving me the chance to write a little something in the Five Acre Wood Newsletter over the next year. I'll be sharing my experiences with ADHD and what it's teaching me about myself.

It's been a busy year at Costa Coffee, where I recently became a Lead Engineer, now supporting a team of eight. It's exciting and challenging, so I'm always finding new ways to manage the load.

FAW has become a really important emotional outlet for me. Every time I arrive, I feel a sense of calm that's hard to describe, and it always puts a smile on my face. I still remember my first visit when I delivered the “Day in the Life of a Costa Engineer” session. I met three groups of amazing young people who were getting ready for their next steps into adulthood and work. Their curiosity, humour, and enthusiasm really stayed with me.

During that visit, I also had a full tour of the school and was genuinely blown away by the dedication of the staff and how much they do to support your children as they grow and prepare for the future. It humbled me in a way I hadn't felt before.

Alongside volunteering, I've been learning about ADHD and Autism, and I'm beginning to understand myself better than ever. It feels a bit like pieces of a puzzle finally connecting—what once felt confusing or negative is slowly becoming something more positive and meaningful.

Something I've learned is that many people with ADHD feel fairness and equity very strongly. I recognise this in myself, and it's part of why helping at FAW means so much to me. Knowing I can contribute, even in small ways, helps me manage those difficult feelings and reminds me that I *am* doing something good. I sometimes wonder if that's selfish, but I've realised that the positive impact on the students far outweighs anything I get from it—and that's what truly matters.

I write this on a Sunday in November, our Christmas tree is up, my daughter Eliza and I have baked cookies, and it's freezing outside. But despite the cold, we've nearly finished the new polytunnel, put two pergola-style planters in place, and the OLE welcome area benches and signage are ready to go.

This year has taught me that volunteering is a gift—one that enriches, inspires and energises me. So I'll leave you with a question: *What would you like to learn in 2026, and why?*

I hope you all have a peaceful end to the year and enjoy your time together. I'll start thinking about my next piece soon... but first, I think a cookie is calling my name.

See you next term, **Matt**



NEWS FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL

Spooky Clothes Day

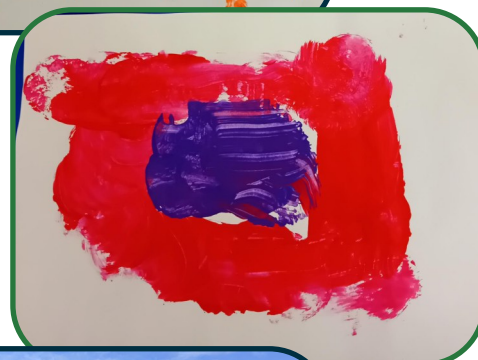


Pupils and staff alike had fun dressing up in spooky outfits on Halloween. From pumpkins to ghosts, witches and bats, everyone looked fabulous—if a little bit scary! We think Lorraine in Loose Reception might need to do a bit of dusting, however; those cobwebs are getting out of hand.



Remembrance Day

Students at Snodland created remembrance wreaths, which were proudly displayed in Snodland Reception. They also learned about the history of the poppy and the origins of Remembrance Day. Students showed great consideration and respect as they took part in a two-minute silence.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL

Arts Award Trips

Students from Years 10 and 11 have enjoyed a fantastic range of enrichment experiences this term as part of their Arts Award course.

Wicked – West End Musical

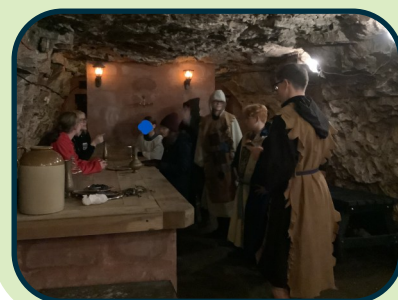
Twenty students travelled from West Malling to London Victoria to see the West End production of *Wicked*. The journey provided a valuable opportunity to develop travel training skills, and the performance itself left everyone captivated. Students are now working on written reviews of the show as part of their qualification.

Filming Project at Chislehurst Caves

A student undertaking their Arts Award chose to work on a filming project, supported by eight enthusiastic volunteers from across the year groups. Labyrinthe LARP generously offered access to sections of Chislehurst Caves, as well as costumes and props, enabling the group to bring their dramatic ideas to life. Students had an amazing time filming, exploring, and learning about the history of the caves. We look forward to seeing the final edited film and are incredibly grateful to Labyrinthe LARP for their support.

National Gallery Visit

Another group of twenty Year 10 and 11 students visited the National Gallery in London. Alongside further travel training, students explored a range of artistic styles and movements, including Romantic and Rococo works, as well as iconic pieces such as Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. Each student selected artworks to analyse, which will inspire the personal art projects they are developing for their course.



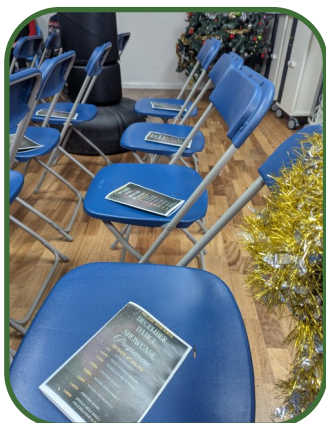
Trip to Pumpkin Moon

Thompson Class enjoyed a fantastic trip to Pumpkin Moon towards the beginning of term. The pupils had a wonderful time exploring the fields, and choosing what looks like the biggest pumpkins they could find! Trips such as these would not be possible without the generous support our charity's Acorn Funding, which we are incredibly grateful for.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL

Dance Showcase



Students have been working hard on the Dance Showcase since October. Dance offers powerful benefits for students — through structured movement and music, pupils have built coordination, developed social skills, and boosted their confidence.

As part of Dance Club, students have explored different dance styles, genres of music, and ways in which dance can be used to help with wellbeing. Everyone has shown enthusiasm, a positive attitude, and growing confidence since the very beginning.

Dance has become a key part of students' learning and has been tailored to every ability, ensuring all students can participate, express themselves, and shine. Choreographing their own routines has allowed them to express their personality, make choices, and take ownership of their learning. This creativity boosts self-esteem, encourages problem-solving, and gives students a meaningful way to communicate their ideas.



This year's music choices were selected by the students, based on popular songs discussed during sessions. A popular choice this year has been *KPOP Demon Hunters "Golden"*. As soon as the music plays it boosts motivation, helps them engage more quickly, and creates a sense of joy and comfort—perfect for encouraging creativity and participation in dance.

Kent Schools Disability Tournament



This term, our football teams from Snodland and Loose took part in the Kings Hill SEND Football 7-a-side Tournament.

It was lovely to see everyone thoroughly engaging and playing brilliantly throughout the day, showing fantastic teamwork and impeccable behaviour both on and off the pitch. Both teams were super supportive of not only each other, but of other teams and their sportsmanship earned them a special trophy for their encouragement and positivity.

Congratulations to the enthusiastic Snodland team also who received a

trophy for being the first to arrive at the tournament!

There were wins, draws and losses, fabulous goals, defensive play, and above all, great teamwork. A fantastic day for everyone—thank you to Kings Hill football Club for hosting — we can't wait to do it all again next time!

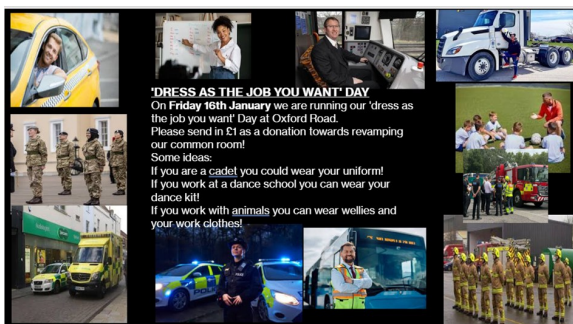


NEWS FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL

Student Council

Oxford Road's Student Council have been very busy coming up with creative ideas to raise money for their common room. Their aim is to make it a more homely and welcoming space for students and staff to relax during break times.

They have had some amazing ideas, and are launching their own tuck shop, which will run most breaktimes for all students and staff at Oxford Road. The student council representatives will be run the tuck shop independently, handling money, giving change, taking stock etc – providing valuable and meaningful work experience.



In addition, they are also planning a 'Dress as the Job You Want' day in the New Year to raise further funds. The Student Council have created posters asking for donations towards the common room, reminding everyone that even £1 can make a difference.

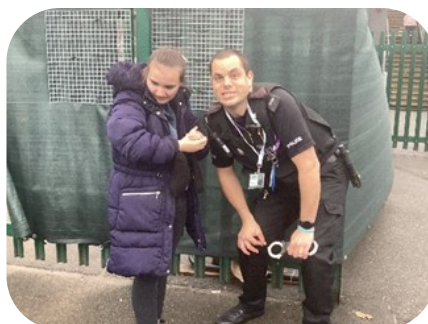
If you are able to support this initiative, please email hmorrell@five-acre.kent.sch.uk.

A big well done to Hannah, Chris, Adam, Harry, Amy, Samuel and Max for their enthusiasm and commitment.

Community Day

Our Secondary Structured pupils have been learning about 'People Who Help Us', and finished the term with an exciting Community Day, welcoming local police officers to the site in their police car. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed sitting in the car and even had the opportunity to turn on the sirens and try on the officers' hats – a fantastic way to step into the role of a police officer. After being shown how handcuffs are used, several staff members were even 'arrested' during the session!

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event possible, and a huge well done to our pupils for their hard work and impeccable behaviour, not only during the event but throughout the entire term.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL

Radio FAW All

Our radio station has been a hive of activity this term with a wide range of classes recording content for various shows. This has included a Christmas Show prepared by Edison Class, an awareness recording from Austen Class, introductions to favourite songs, and even recipe segments. Two of our Oxford Road students have also been enjoying their work placements, with one job entailing creating a fantastic Christmas Party playlist.

Pupils have shown increasing confidence and enthusiasm for radio, which is having a significant positive impact on their self-belief and willingness to get involved. The station has also welcomed a number of visitors, including Maidstone Riverside Rotary Club, Young Lives Foundation, Hearsay Charity, Social Enterprise Kent, Stay Connected, Kent Police, DJ Mark Anthony and Pato Banton – best known for the number one hit *Baby Come Back*.

Pato Banton achieved his number one single in 1994 after collaborating with Robin and Ali Campbell from UB40. One of the presenters from the Bacon Butty Show had previously seen Pato perform live in Maidstone in the late 1990s, which led to a request for a Christmas message. Coincidentally, Pato's son lives in Maidstone, and Pato was travelling from Los Angeles to visit him which resulted in an unexpected and exciting visit to our studio. Pato runs a foundation supporting children's education in Africa, while his son is also a musician and rapper who works closely with a children's charity. Their visit was an inspiring experience for both pupils and staff alike.



Pupil Spotlight

Well done to Miriam from Ennis-Hill Class and Tommy from Thompson Class who have both achieved their Rebound Therapy Grade 1 badges. They have shown significant progress, not only in their trampolining skills but also in their confidence and ability to follow instructions. Both pupils will begin working towards their Grade 2 badges in the New Year.

Snodland PE and Wellbeing

This term has been filled with energy, enthusiasm, and plenty of festive spirit across the Snodland site. Our students kicked off the season in style with the much-anticipated Santa Dash, where they braved the chilly weather to complete an impressive

800m run, all while sporting their Christmas hats. The atmosphere was buzzing with excitement as students embraced the challenge and earned valuable house points for their efforts. It was fantastic to see so many smiling faces and such determination on display.

Year 7 students also had the opportunity to take part in the SEN Move Now Festival – a vibrant event designed to encourage participation, teamwork and confidence-building. Pupils explored a wide range of activities, including indoor curling, basketball and table tennis, demonstrating adaptability and enthusiasm in every session. Their positive attitudes and willingness to try new things truly embodied the spirit of the festival.

Another major milestone this term was the whole site's involvement in the Kent County Council Youth Elections. Students engaged in a real-life democratic experience by voting for their chosen representative to sit on the Disability Committee. Using official voting slips and marking their choice with a traditional 'X', students demonstrated maturity, responsibility, and a keen interest in shaping positive change. It was inspiring to witness young people taking such an active role in local democracy. Overall, it has been a term full of achievement, participation, and community spirit—an excellent reflection of the values we continue to champion at Snodland.

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Christmas Card Competition

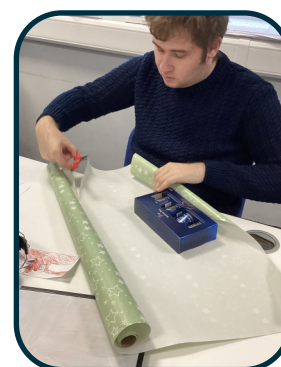
Each year, our pupils are invited to get creative and take part in our Christmas card design competition. We are delighted to share that the winning designs from last year — created by Alfie McIlroy, Chloe Clark, and Kayleigh-Mai Hogben — have been proudly featured on this year's official school Christmas cards, now sent out to staff, pupils, and external partners.

A huge well done to all of our talented designers! And best of luck to everyone entering the competition this year — we cannot wait to see your festive creations.



'Elfridges' Christmas Shops

Another annual tradition that takes place is the Christmas gift shops, or 'Elfridges'. They provide an opportunity for pupils to buy affordable gifts for friends and family from a selection sourced by TEAM Family Support. The children always enjoy their shopping experience and it is lovely to see them putting thought into their gift selections. We hope that they chose wisely and that you enjoy your surprises!



Students at Oxford Road also enjoyed a festive shopping trip into Maidstone, where they shopped for gifts, ordered and ate lunch, spent time with friends, and then returned to wrap their purchases.

Christmas Jumper Day



CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Class Celebrations

Primary classes held a wide variety of Christmas activities this term, including Winter Sports Days, Sensory Snow Balls, Stay and Play sessions, Festive Fairs, school trips, class parties and other celebrations.

Thank you to everyone who came along to celebrate with the pupils—we hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

Carols and Mince Pies

Dahl, Seuss and Carroll Classes at St Katharine's have been busy preparing festive songs to perform for their parents and carers over the past few weeks. This culminated in our Carols and Mince Pie afternoon, where pupils showcased their songs and shared poems, beautifully read by children from all three classes.

Parents and carers commented on how lovely the afternoon was and how amazing the pupils were. We are incredibly proud of the children and are feeling extremely festive! A big thank you to all staff who supported the day and helped make it so special for everyone.

Pantomime visit

Year 11 students enjoyed a visit to the Hazlitt Theatre to watch the Pantomime Dick Whittington and his Cat. This wonderful experience was organised so that students working towards The Arts Award Qualification can reflect on a professional arts event as an audience member for their course.



The students were a delight and had a fantastic time. There was a special section in 3D in which students were able to wear special glasses for a new dimension that was added to the show.

Christmas Doors



The halls were certainly decked and full of festive cheer, with classes decorating their doors as part of our annual Christmas Door Competition. Congratulations to the winners – Adeptan Class, Wright Class and Verne Class. All of the doors looked fabulous and truly brightened up the school towards the end of term.

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

EYFS Winter Stay & Play

This year, our EYFS Winter Stay and Play was once again transformed into a wonderfully festive celebration thanks to our ongoing collaboration with the OLE team. Together, we created a magical outdoor Christmas experience that our children, families, and staff will remember for a long time.

Throughout the event, children participated in a variety of activities: roasting marshmallows over the fire, visiting the hot chocolate stand, decorating biscuits, making reindeer food, and creating their own Christmas wreaths, reindeer decorations, and baubles. Each station offered opportunities for sensory exploration, creativity, and joyful festive engagement.

One of the biggest highlights was meeting Santa in his magical grotto. Every child had the chance to greet him, and many treasured photos were taken to capture the moment. Jingles the Elf was also on hand, spreading Christmas cheer, while the snow and bubble machine, along with festive music, added to the fantastic atmosphere around the site.

This special event wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and support of the OLE team. A heartfelt thank you to Paul, Cheyenne, Michelle, Holly, Daniel, and Laura, who once again helped us deliver an incredible experience—one that many of our pupils may

not otherwise be able to access due to the challenges of busy public environments.

The feedback truly moved us from parents, many of whom shared how meaningful it was to enjoy the festive activities with their child in a safe, happy, and inclusive setting. Their appreciation highlights exactly why events like this are so important.

All pupils, staff, and families had a fabulous time, and we are already looking forward to celebrating and recreating this magical experience again next year after such a huge success.



CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Last Week of Term



FUNDRAISING

It has been a wonderfully busy and festive term, and we are thrilled to share what we have been up to in fundraising.

Fundraisers and projects:

Please join us in giving a huge congratulations to Jag, who on Sunday 26th October ran the Dublin Marathon to raise funds for one of our upcoming projects — a play therapy bus!

Despite the wind and rain, Jag absolutely smashed it — crossing the finish line in an incredible 4 hours and 52 minutes!

A massive well done from everyone at FAW, Jag — your dedication and hard work have truly paid off.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Jag, she smashed her target and raised an incredible £1,081.00.



A huge thank you to all the parents, carers, and families who joined us for our Winter Fair on Wednesday 10th December. It was fantastic to see everyone enjoying the Christmas spirit and celebrating the beautiful items created by our pupils. We are delighted to share that, thanks to your incredible support and generosity, we raised an amazing £514.00.

Five Acre Wood Magical Grotto

This year we held our second Five Acre Wood Magical Grotto — and wow, what a day it was! From cheeky elves to a magical and fun walk-through, festive activities, and of course meeting Santa in our beautifully transformed grotto, the whole event was truly special.

We received some amazing feedback from families:



“ It was so lovely from start to finish. All of the elves were so friendly, happy and helpful! I loved that it was done in small groups too. We loved it, thank you”

“The attention to details. Santa's room was so brilliantly decorated and felt like we were in Santa's lounge and the presents falling down the chimney after the bell rang, well, that amazed us all.”

Comments like this mean so much and remind us why we love putting on events like this.

We cannot thank our incredible staff and volunteers enough for making the day possible. The biggest shout out to our students at our Snodland site who in their DT lessons worked extremely hard to help create decorations for the event.

It was an absolute joy and honour to host this event, and we are already looking forward to next year!

A huge thank you to all parents and carers who returned permission letters for their child to be featured on our new charity website. We are excited to share that it will be launching next term, alongside some other exciting news.

Head2Head Pantomime

In November, we were delighted to welcome the wonderful Head2Head Theatre team to Five Acre Wood for a weekend of storytelling and fun. They delivered two fantastic performances of *Jack and the Beanstem*, engaging pupils and families every step of the way. Their friendly, inclusive approach created a truly magical experience filled with smiles, laughter, and excitement — we are so grateful for such a brilliant visit.

'It's rare to find events we can all enjoy together but this was one thank you'

'The setting was so relaxed it was perfect for SEN children and toddlers first panto experience. It was fun and interactive.'



The Core@FAW

In partnership with Core The Gym, we are creating The Core@FAW — a fully accessible gym built inside a converted shipping container at our Oxford Road site.

This life-changing project will support pupils to access tailored fitness and therapy sessions, build confidence and independence, and take part in supported work experience. Some of our pupils have already been lucky enough to visit Core The Gym in Maidstone and are feeling the benefits — gaining strength, confidence, and new skills. Having access to a similar adapted space on site means they'll be able to enjoy these incredible opportunities all year round, with Core The Gym sharing their expertise and passion to help us bring this vision to life — but we need your help to make it happen.

You can support the project by donating funds, materials, or time. Simply search **'The Core@FAW'** on Peoples Fundraising. Look out in January for details of an exciting fundraiser involving pupils, staff, and our local community.

Acorn Funding

Acorn Funding is a special fund provided by our charity that classes can apply to for extra support. It helps cover the cost of school trips, create memorable experiences, and ensure every pupil can enjoy something special.

Over the past year, the fund has supported a wide range of opportunities, including visits to Harry Potter Studios, crazy golf, and the Rare Breeds Centre, as well as new equipment for our Design and Technology department. This year, Acorn Funding has continued to make a difference, supporting activities such as a trip to bowling and a visit from a very special guest...



Community Volunteering

What a fantastic term it has been for volunteering! We were honoured to welcome colleagues from Lloyds Bank in November, who kindly spent time with us creating Christmas decorations for our Magical Grotto event. The day was full of creativity, festive cheer, and plenty of Christmas songs, and their support truly helped bring the event to life. A huge thank you to everyone who volunteers with us throughout the year — we are incredibly grateful for your time, energy, and ongoing support.

Hannah, Fundraiser



Practical Learning Approach

In our Practical Learning Approach, we start with core skills. Learning is planned around what pupils need most to engage with the world around them.

We focus on:

- Communication and interaction
- Independence and self-care
- Emotional wellbeing and relationships
- Functional literacy and numeracy
- Community and life skills

In Primary, learning is built around familiar and engaging themes such as:

- Home and family
- Celebrations and culture
- Community and people who help us
- Animals, nature, and stories
- Exploring places and the wider world

Subjects and topics are then used as meaningful contexts to practise and embed these skills.

Learning is active, hands-on, and sometimes outdoors, supporting curiosity, confidence, and early independence.

We know pupils learn in different ways, so we use a flexible and responsive approach, including:

- Structured play and sensory learning
- Carousel of activities
- Practical, real-life activities
- Topic-based learning
- Repetition, routine, and clear structure

In Secondary, learning develops towards adulthood through themes including:

- Identity, aspirations, and wellbeing
- Being active and healthy
- History and understanding change
- Work, careers, and independence
- Travel, transport, and navigation

These themes support communication, life skills, and preparation for the future.

Practical Class Updates

Bolt Class

This term in Bolt Class we have been learning about a range of celebrations, including Diwali, Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah and, of course, Christmas. We have used our listening and thinking skills to explore similarities between festivals from different cultures, as well as sharing our own favourite parts of the celebrations we have experienced.

The children have enjoyed a variety of practical activities, including making hotdogs and sandwiches, as well as creating some very tasty treats in the mud kitchen during forest school sessions. Alongside this, we have been working hard on recognising shapes and developing our writing and descriptive skills.

We would like to wish you all a safe, restful and happy Christmas.



Adlington Class

What a wonderful and busy term we have had! The children have worked incredibly hard this term and we are delighted to share some of the highlights from our learning.

In Literacy we explored two inspiring books - *Coming to England* and *The Girl at the Front of the Class*. Through these stories, we talked about respecting different cultures and understanding other people's experiences. We also practised using adjectives and nouns, and the children created fantastic sentences using colourful semantics and sentence starters to help build their confidence and structure their ideas.

In Maths, we strengthened our adding and subtracting skills through practical activities and problem-solving. We also learned about the properties of 2D and 3D shapes, recognising them in real-life objects and using the correct vocabulary to describe them.

Cooking has been a real highlight! The children have grown so much in their independence and can now make pigs in blankets, pitta bread pizzas, and Rice Krispies cakes with no assistance. Our weekly trips to the supermarket have also been a big success. The children enjoyed choosing ingredients, comparing prices, and have built great confidence in using money in real-life situations.

We have continued to work on developing communication by practising asking and answering who/what/when/where questions. It has been lovely to see how comfortable and confident the children have become in conversations with one another. We also practised making phone calls safely and politely, and learned how to write using Microsoft Word, including typing sentences and saving our work.

Thank you for your continued support throughout the term. We are incredibly proud of all the progress the children have made and look forward to more exciting learning next term!

Practical Class Updates

Adeptan Class



This term has been full of memorable experiences and fantastic learning opportunities. One of the standout moments was our class trip to the cinema where pupils enjoyed watching *Ocean* by David Attenborough. The children were captivated by the underwater world and engaged brilliantly with the documentary. This was accompanied with a special treat at McDonald's, which they thoroughly enjoyed.



Pupils have continued to develop their independence skills. They have been practising real-life tasks such as shopping for ingredients, purchasing items in the café, and preparing simple meals. Using visual recipes, pupils have shown growing confidence and independence in cooking tasks, taking increasing ownership of each step in the process. Our Tessellation Dance sessions have been another highlight. These sessions have supported teamwork, coordination, and creativity, allowing pupils to express themselves and engage with music in a fun and collaborative way.



In the classroom, pupils have risen to the challenge of learning new topics across both Numeracy and Literacy. They have shown great resilience and adaptability, approaching new concepts with enthusiasm, and demonstrating steady progress throughout the term.



Murray Class

This term has been a very busy one for Murray Class!

In Literacy, pupils have continued to develop their sentence-building skills alongside improving their reading comprehension. We have focused on reading our class story and sequencing events, supporting pupils' understanding of order and meaning within texts.

In Numeracy, we have been working on subtraction using manipulatives to help pupils secure their knowledge and confidence. We have also begun introducing multiplication through repeated addition, which pupils have engaged with really well.



Murray Class have also enjoyed learning about different celebrations from around the world, including Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and Christmas. Pupils showed great interest in exploring different cultures and the activities associated with each celebration.



Throughout the term, pupils have also worked hard to develop their turn-taking and communication skills, making encouraging progress in these areas.



Practical Class Updates

Beckham Class

Beckham Class have had a fantastic term, taking lots of opportunities to explore our different topics as we moved from autumn into winter. One of our highlights was our outdoor learning experiences where we got to explore the environment by climbing rope ladders, swinging in hammocks, making musical items from natural materials and Christmas bunting, and enjoying our much-loved nature hunts.

Everyone has worked incredibly hard this term, learning about 2D and 3D shapes and enjoying traditional tales in Literacy.

Our term concluded with our Christmas celebrations, and everybody loved having their families share our Winter Festival Fair. We also enjoyed a Christmas trip to the Hazlitt theatre to watch *Dick Whittington and His Cat*,

followed by a visit to McDonalds for lunch. Beckham Class modelled exceptional communication and behaviour throughout the trip. We had a wonderful time!

We hope everyone has a lovely Christmas and look forward to another amazing term.



Thompson Class

This term, Thompson Class have enjoyed exploring cultural elements from around the world, including food, traditional clothing and important places, as part of our *My Global Family* theme. We have developed our number skills during maths sessions and shared our ideas, thoughts and feelings through language learning.

In November, we visited Pumpkin Moon to choose and pick our own pumpkins. In December, we visited the Hazlitt Theatre to see the pantomime *Dick Whittington*, and we also enjoyed wearing our Christmas jumpers.

So far this year, we have had lots of opportunities to learn in the community. We have made weekly visits to Morrisons to shop in preparation for our cooking lessons and to visit the café. We have also enjoyed trips to the cinema and theatre, and even visited the Fawrent Express. Pupils have applied their learning in real-world settings brilliantly.



Practical Class Updates

Williams Class



Williams Class has continued to grow ever since the beginning of Term 2. Pupils have developed a strong understanding of firm boundaries and expectations, which has enabled us to begin accessing the community with confidence. We enjoyed our very first school trip to the cinema to watch *Garfield: The Movie*. In addition, the class took part in Practical Stay & Play, the Winter Fair, and even posted letters to Santa.

It has been a very positive start for the new Williams Class, and we are incredibly proud of each and every pupil.

Simmonds Class

This term in Simmonds Class, we have been getting into the festive spirit as we prepare for Christmas! The children have loved creating colourful paper chains, sparkling decorations, and handmade crafts to brighten up our classroom. They showed fantastic creativity and teamwork as they chose materials, shared ideas, and supported one another to bring their festive designs to life. The classroom feels wonderfully warm and joyful thanks to their hard work.



In Maths, we have been exploring shape through a wide variety of engaging, hands-on activities. The children have investigated 2D and 3D shapes through building, sorting, printing, and even using playdough to create their own shape-inspired designs. It has been lovely to hear them using shape vocabulary so confidently during play and making connections

between the shapes they see in school and those they notice in the world around them.



It has been a joyful and busy term, and we're looking forward to even more festive fun as we move closer to Christmas!

Practical Class Updates

Hamilton Class

This term in Hamilton Class, we have loved exploring a range of festivals from around the world. The children learned about Diwali, Hanukkah, and Christmas, discovering the unique traditions, colours, and customs that make each celebration special. They particularly enjoyed listening to different styles of music, exploring artwork inspired by each festival, and tasting foods linked to the celebrations.

In Maths, we have been learning about 2D and 3D shapes, exploring their features through lots of hands-on, practical activities.

In Literacy, we have focused on strengthening our information-recall skills and understanding the key events in our weekly stories.

We have also enjoyed creating some beautiful artwork inspired by the books we have been reading.

Holmes Class



Holmes Class has well and truly settled into the school setting this term. Pupils now have a strong understanding of their daily routines, helping them feel safe, secure, and ready to learn each day. One of their greatest

achievements has been building meaningful relationships with both staff and peers.

Pupils have been developing their culinary skills—preparing and cooking a range of dishes, including pasta, sauté potatoes, salad, crumble and custard, and delicious brownies.



We have continued our regular shopping trips which provide fantastic opportunities to practise road safety, independence, and practical life skills.

Forest School has once again been a highlight this term. Pupils look forward to the outdoor activities and spending time with the wonderful Forest School staff.

We have also enjoyed a variety of festive activities, such as helping with the Winter Fair, taking part in Christmas Jumper Day, and enjoying a scrummy Christmas dinner.

Team Holmes would like to wish everyone a very happy holiday and a wonderful New Year.



Practical Class Updates

Ennis-Hill Class

This term has been a wonderfully busy and productive one for our pupils. They have shown a fantastic attitude to learning, working hard and getting stuck into every task with enthusiasm. It has been lovely to see their confidence grow as they tackle new challenges and support one another along the way.

In Literacy, we explored the powerful story *Coming to England* by Floella Benjamin. The pupils engaged brilliantly with the themes of the book, asking thoughtful questions and producing some excellent written work. Their discussions showed great empathy and understanding, and they took real pride in their reading and storytelling activities.

Our Numeracy lessons this term have focused on addition and subtraction. Pupils have made great progress, practising new methods and applying their skills to real-life problems. They have shown determination and resilience, and their hard work is definitely paying off.

We have also enjoyed two exciting class trips. First, we visited the cinema to watch the film *IF*, which the pupils absolutely loved. Their behaviour was exemplary, and they represented the school beautifully. We celebrated the festive season with a trip to the Hazlitt Theatre to see *Dick Whittington and His Cat*. The pantomime was a big hit, filled with laughter, cheering, and plenty of Christmas spirit.

Overall, it has been a fantastic term, and we are incredibly proud of all the pupils' efforts and achievements. We look forward to seeing what the next term brings!



Applegate Class

Applegate Class have had a busy and brilliant term! We have enjoyed getting out and about around school, taking part in sensory circuits and exploring the Trim Trail. We have loved cooking this term - the s'mores were a particular hit!

We loved all the Christmas activities and our Stay & Play Fair was a highlight! We have read stories such as *Bear Says Thanks*, *Stick Man* and *The Jolly Christmas Postman* in Literacy and we have been adding and subtracting (one more and one less) in Maths.

We would like to thank all parents and carers for their help and ongoing support so far this year. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We can't wait to see you all again in 2026!



Practical Class Updates

Jordan Class



This term, the pupils have been busy developing a range of key skills across all areas of learning. In Numeracy, they have been working on counting up to 20 and sorting objects under the correct headings. They have also been learning about the different values of coins.

During cooking sessions, pupils have taken part in preparing snacks for their peers, developing practical skills such as peeling, preparing ingredients, and following simple steps. Snack time has also provided opportunities to practise using the toaster, helping to build independence, safety awareness, and confidence when following everyday routines.



The class enjoyed a sensory activity where they scooped the seeds and pulp from a pumpkin, exploring its texture and smell. They have also been developing their fine motor skills through art activities, including painting within the lines. Pupils have also continued to work on important self-help skills such as washing and drying their hands independently, promoting both good hygiene and confidence in daily routines.

To support communication and social interaction, pupils have taken part in pretend food games, encouraging turn-taking, speaking, and cooperating with peers. They have also been practising passing messages to and from the school reception, helping to build communication skills, independence, and positive interaction with different adults around the school.

In Forest School, pupils have taken part in play and building activities, learning how to work with others as a team. They listened to the story *The Stick Man* and created their own stick figures. As part of their visit, they also practised crossing the road using the zebra crossing on the school premises.

Computer-based activities have helped pupils practise counting objects on screen and develop increasing control when using a mouse, supporting early numeracy, fine motor, and technology skills while P.E. activities have helped to strengthen their coordination, and confidence in physical activity.



THANKS FOR READING



Parent/Carer Reminder:

In the interest of your child's health and safety, it is your responsibility to ensure all information on Healthcare Plans is kept up to date. As always, if you have any issues accessing any Apps, Portals or just need general assistance, please email office@five.acre.kent.sch.uk and someone will get back to you.