



February 2025

SCHOOL NEWS

<http://www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk/>

Dear Parents & Carers,

We have had a very positive start to 2025 here at school. Although we have missed Ms Blake and Mrs Humphrey this half-term, Mrs Benjamin, Mrs Spencer and Mrs Campbell have covered in Acorn and Oak classes both professionally and creatively. The children have continued learning well and had great fun. The chilly, often wet, start to the year hasn't stopped us getting on with all sorts of activities, both indoors and outside, as you will see in this newsletter.

Many of you will be aware that 2025 marks our school's 'official' 400th birthday. While the reality is that there has been a school on the site for longer than this, the datestone still remaining on the Old School site says 1625.

EDUCATION. The oldest established school in the parish was an endowed elementary school at Sibford Gower.⁴⁶ Its origin is obscure, but it was certainly founded before 1612 when the Commissioners for Charitable Uses ordered the restoration of the original division of the income of the town estate into three parts, one of which was for a school and schoolmaster.⁴⁷ It was stated in the 17th century that a schoolroom was built in 1623.⁴⁸



from Volume 10 of the Victoria County History

Our datestone

Surprisingly for an area so rich in local history, the Oxfordshire Buildings Record doesn't list any other datestones in Sibford Gower, Sibford Ferris or Burdrop. I am sure there must be some though. We thought it would be a nice idea to set the children a 'datestone' challenge. We have asked them to be Datestone Detectives, on the look-out for any datestones when they are out and about in the villages or area they live in—you may even have one on your house. They can then bring or send a picture into school for our datestone scrapbook. It will be interesting to see how many we get, and whether the children find any that are older than the school datestone!

Happy Hunting...and Happy Holiday!

With warmest wishes,

Jane O'Sullivan



Sporting Superstars!



We are SO proud of our Year 5&6 Rugby Squad. They took overall FIRST PLACE in the recent inter school tournament. Brilliant teamwork, brilliant play!

Best Class Attendance
this half term

Beech Class 96 %

Children return to
school on

Monday 24th February



ACORN CLASS NEWS

The start of a new year is always an exciting time in Acorn Class. Welcoming new nursery friends, talking about our festive celebrations and lots of new learning has kept us all very busy. This term we explored the changes we see during Winter, learning about animals that are native to the UK and those that are not and finishing our term with some fabulous Lunar New Year celebrations!



Winter (Learning) Landscape
When we returned after the Christmas Holidays, Acorn Class had been turned into a Winter Wonderland! In our role play area we have enjoyed our 'Hot Chocolate Cafe' - ordering cakes and biscuits (including bespoke playdough gingerbread men made to order no less) and hot drinks to warm us up. We have also enjoyed 'snowy playdough', a busy winter train and lots of independent mark making activities in our message centre, making lists and 'I-Spy' games.



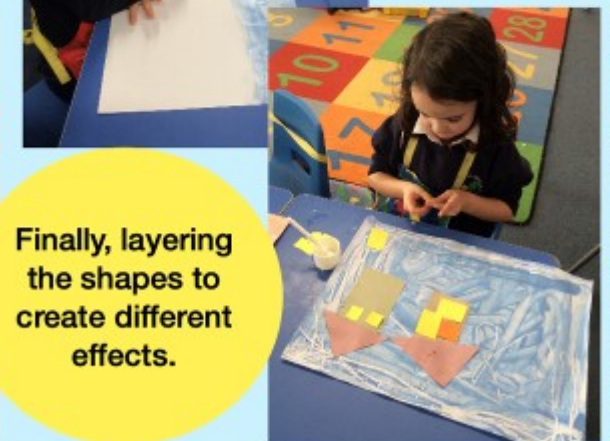
First we drew swirls and shapes with our wax candles...



Next we painted over a 'wash' of watery blue paint...



Once dry we added shapes to make houses and buildings...



Finally, layering the shapes to create different effects.

Winter Wax Resist Art

As part of our Winter topic, we looked at a series of photographs of winter skies. We were really excited to see that they are not always blue! We looked at grey skies, purple-y skies, red, yellow and orange skies and even pink-ish skies! Following on from this, the children looked at the cloud shapes that we see in the skies too, spoiler alert - they are not always soft and fluffy like we might immediately draw when we think of a cloud. Now it was time to create some art. Using wax candles we drew lots of swirling 'cloud' and 'icy' shapes, it was really fun as we couldn't see what we were drawing and were excited for the 'magic' to happen. There were lots of excited voices when the layer of watercolour paint was painted on top and our swirls were revealed. The final step was to add some different shapes to our dry paintings to create a village in Winter.

Mastering Maths

We use the NCETM Maths Mastery programme in Acorn Class. Children's chances of success in maths are maximised if they develop deep and lasting understanding of mathematical procedures and concepts early on. Both Reception and Nursery children are involved in our Maths sessions and it's wonderful to see the progress they are making.



In Acorn we are Maths Masters! This term we have been focussing on the composition of number and subitising.

Subitising is looking at a set of objects and not counting but just 'knowing' the number.

We do this by asking 'how do you know?' and 'what can you see?' To encourage the children to give voice to their mathematical processes.

We have looked at the composition of 5, 6 and 7. We have enjoyed rhymes such as '5 Little Speckled Frogs'.

We also enjoy using our maths resources which are freely available in our classroom.



And Finally...

Gosh! Still so many things to share with you about our adventures this term, in the style of the 'and finally' sections of news reports, here is a roundup of some of our highlights...



Learning about Lunar New Year - enjoying red and gold scented playdough, playing in our Chinese Restaurant, writing our own new year wishes for our wishing tree and taking part in a special yoga session.



Water, water, everywhere! Outside the warm, bubbly water has proved a big hit and inside the WOMBATS 'saving water' competition has lead to some great discussion and artwork.



Beech Newsletter

Shared reading during our writing lesson. We are learning how to include factual information in our writing as we write an information text about what you would need in an explorer's kit.



Writing: We are using the animation, 'The Black Hat' by Maia Walczak. Here, the children are writing expanded noun phrases about the beautiful bright birds.

In math's we are learning place value to 100. **(Please practice counting to 100 often – this really supports the children!)** Here we are counting in groups of 10 with manipulatives and pictorial representations:



Here we are measuring the length of children in Beech class in groups of ten. Our learning then progressed to adding and subtracting groups of ten.



Design and Technology: We kicked off the term with a Design and Technology Day. The design brief was to design and make a drawbridge. We studied drawbridges from around the world and identified different mechanisms. We applied what we had learned. To quote one of the children on the day, 'We have had a very successful first day back to school!' This was received by his peers with a great cheer so we took it as a huge win.



Science: We asked the question: **What are 3 of the groups that all things can be grouped into? (Alive, not alive, never alive).** Then we worked as scientists to group different things according to this criteria. It made for some interesting talk!



Wear your Scarf to School Day

We began the day with a special assembly where Harold the giraffe shared a story reminding us of the SCARF values,

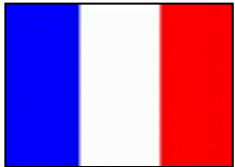
- ◆ **Safety,**
- ◆ **Caring,**
- ◆ **Achievement,**
- ◆ **Resilience,**
- ◆ **Friendship**



Willow Class Newsletter



What a busy , yet wonderful term we have had in Willow Class. We have fully immersed ourselves in our humanities theme 'Ancient Egyptians' and are very excited to be continuing with this next term (we have some VERY exciting things planned!). The children have created the most amazing pieces of writing, explored different mathematical methods and can now explain the new mathematical processes they have learned. overcome fears of swimming and just over all been **Wonderful Willows.**



In French this term, Willow Class were set the challenge of linking two halves of sentences about Egyptian gods and goddesses together . This meant that they had to use all their language detective skills to find clues to help them, and they also needed to draw on language they had learned before. They have done amazingly well, handling some pretty complex French language.



jeudi 30 janvier 2025

1. Elle est la fille
2. Elle est la sœur et la femme
3. Elle porte
4. Elle est
5. Elle est
6. Elle est

- a. d'Osiris, seigneur du monde souterrain et protecteur des défunts.
- b. le symbole hiéroglyphe d'un trône sur la tête.
- c. une bonne femme, mère et protectrice.
- d. l'une des déesses plus importantes de la mythologie égyptienne.
- e. guérisseuse et magicienne.
- f. de Nout et de Geb



We are thoroughly enjoying our 'Ancient Egyptian Topic'. We have been learning about 'The River Nile'.

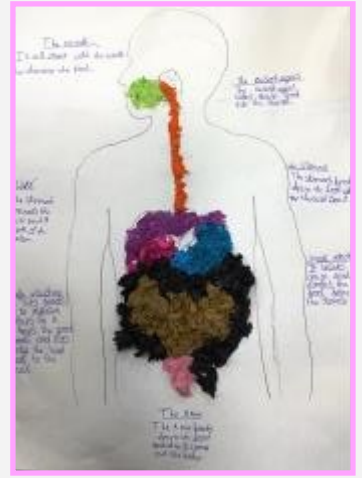
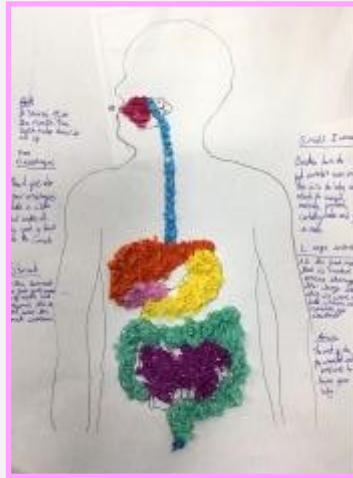
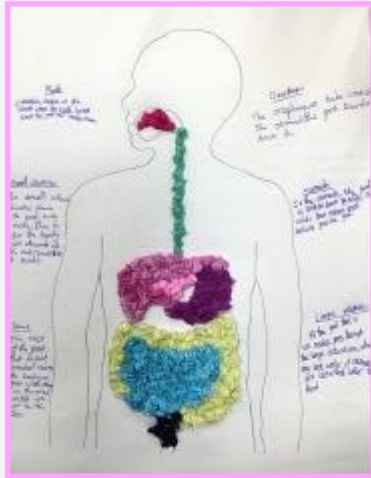
We created our very own 'River Niles' using soft pastels.



We have also been exploring the question: "Why is the River Nile important? P.T.O



In Science, the children have been learning about the digestive system and what happens to our food after we have eaten it. They showed their understanding by creating these colourful, labelled collages. We also welcomed a dentist into class to talk about teeth and how to look after them. A huge thank you to Mr Joe Lethbridge .



BOOK CLUB

This happens weekly in every class across the school. Book Club is a short session dedicated to the enjoyment of reading and the love of books. It can take many forms, from listening to stories, to sharing books or exploring a particular kind of book. The children really look forward to it.

Children in Willow Class shared some of their thoughts about Book Club...

We pick the theme for Book Clubs and we get to read with partners— Scarlett

I like it when we bring in our teddies and listen to a story. I get to cuddle Wolfie and listen to someone read at the same time! - Eleanor

I like it when the adults read, but we get to pick the book.—Jess

I really liked reading the Shakespeare books—Sofia

I like Book Club. It's different every week and it is my favourite bit of our reading sessions.—Cecily

I love the children's enthusiasm. It makes me feel like I have done my job well.—Mrs Davies

Sometimes, we get to hear the teacher's read their favourite books.— Mihali

I like it when we do paired reading—Curtis

You get to read with your friends—Isen

We can read inside or out. I liked reading in the outdoor classroom.—Robyn

We LOVE a good book. - Eleanor.



Reading for Pleasure



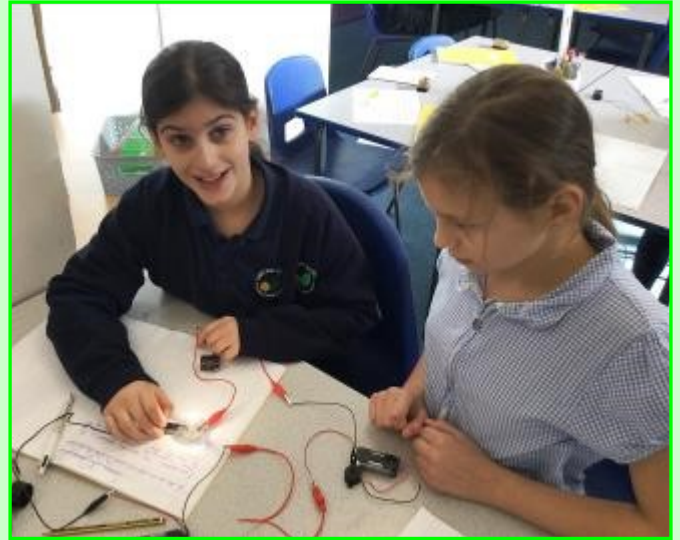
It was a genuine pleasure to welcome so many of our parents and grandparents into school during our termly Reading Week. The number of you who manage to pop in for this seems to grow each time we hold this event. Your presence in school, and the positive atmosphere you bring with you, really reinforces the message that reading is both important and enjoyable. Thank you.

"Families who enjoy reading together have more opportunities for discussion, developing empathy and attachment. Reading to their infant is one of the greatest gifts parents can give. By starting the journey of building a lifelong love of reading for pleasure, parents are giving their child the opportunity to be the best they can be: children who read for pleasure do better in a wide range of subjects at school and it also positively impacts children's wellbeing." **National Literacy Trust**

The **MORE** that you
READ, the more things
you will **KNOW**.
The **MORE** that you
Learn, the more places
you'll **GO**.
Dr. Seuss

Oak Class News

This term in science, we have been learning all about how electricity works and how to set up circuits. The children demonstrated their understanding by first setting up a human electrical circuit on the playground, everyone having a role to play either as a component in the circuit, or as a part of an atom. They then applied their knowledge to setting up real circuits and then working out how to change them by adding more power or different components. The final part of the topic will be to work together to make small electrical appliances.



Oak Class Year 6 went to an I.M.P.s workshop at The Horton Hospital where they learned emergency life skills, including how to resuscitate using CPR and how to place someone in the Recovery Position. As always, the children concentrated well and were able to share some of what they had learned in their class assembly. Well done, Cecily!



In Art lessons, Oak Class have been exploring the theme of identity. Do you recognise these children from their sketches?



In their assembly, the children showed as some of the gymnastic skills they have been learning in P.E





Our raised beds had become very overgrown. The children from Oak Class did a really excellent job of working together to get them cleared and planted out with vegetables and flowers. The work was hard, and rather messy, but the children took a real pride in doing it well.

Thank you, Oak Class!

To finish off their half-term exploring World War Two, the children paid a visit to the home of ex-governor, Mr Fred Inns. Mr Inns, a child at our school during the war, invited the class into his Anderson shelter so they could get a sense of what it would have been like when the sirens sounded a potential raid. Thank you Fred, and Mrs Inns, for helping to bring this aspect of the children's learning to life and for always being willing to share your experiences with them.



The bunker was well-hidden and it was very dark inside. The children asked some really good questions. When we came out, they were able to hold some original gas masks, a warden's helmet and a WW2 water bottle. One of the gas masks had been Fred's when he was little.





Sport at Sibford Gower

Indoor Athletics

Some of our years 4,5 and 6 children took part in an indoor athletics event after school.



They participated in a range of running events, long jumps and standing jumps and a throw. It was an extremely competitive

event and our children (as they always do) performed with great determination and resilience. We were extremely proud of them all.

An outstanding event!



Athletics... again!

(we have been busy!)

We had the opportunity to participate in another athletics event. This was great fun and enjoyed by all! The children learned the skills needed for all athletics events and are now 'pros' with running, throwing and jumping!

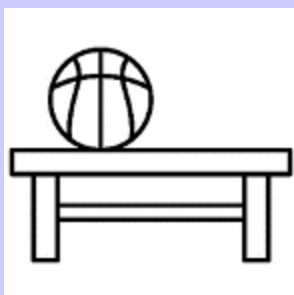
GO SIBFORD GOWER!



Bench Ball Club- What a success!

Bench Ball club has been a huge success this term. The children have grown in confidence with the game and learnt the rules of play.

It has been a pleasure!





Jemima Yeats-Brown started out as a gymnast, moving to judo after being told she wasn't 'elegant' enough for the sport.



Jemima won Commonwealth gold at Glasgow 2014. She then returned to the Commonwealth stage to take bronze at Birmingham 2022. Jemima showed her resilience to pursue a dream Olympic debut, finishing fifth at the 2023 World Championships, and eventually securing a place at Paris 2024.



OLYMPIC ATHLETE VISIT



Jemima took some time to chat with our Sports Leaders and pose for a photograph.



Doing our bit to take Care of our planet



Developing our Science & Well-Being Area

You may remember that we received a grant of £500 through the Tesco token scheme. We asked the children to share their ideas about what they wanted for this area and have been able to provide most of them. So far, we have installed a solar-powered fountain bird bath, 3 nesting boxes (for wren, swift & sparrow), bird feeders which Oak Class will keep topped-up, a tiered planter which Willow will plant out with fragrant herbs and tend to, an outdoor map of the world, an outdoor mirror, and a black board and a white board for recording observations in science investigations. We are on the lookout for some more raised planters and a sun dial, some binoculars and a telescope ... and any more great ideas!



The children have also dug over the raised beds. In two beds, Oak Class have planted winter vegetables as part of their Digging for Victory WW2 focus, alongside the strawberry plants and raspberry canes that were already growing there.



Our thanks to Barn Farm Plants Garden Centre in Wardington for kindly donating lots of seeds for the children to plant out — <https://www.barnfarmplants.co.uk/>

We have planted out another bed with seasonal bulbs and, as official Friends of the Honey Bee, we have planted out the final two beds with wildflower seeds to attract bees and other flying insects in the warmer months. We know how important protecting and encouraging the insects is to pollination and the food chain.





Doing our bit to take Care of our planet



NEWS from the WOMBATS !

Our elected pupil school council, the WOMBATS, have had a busy half-term. One of our whole school Learning Improvement Plan priorities this year is “To have a clear focus on sustainability within school through the development of a comprehensive Climate Action Plan “.

This climate action plan includes involving the children and the WOMBATS are playing a leading role. They decided to start with a focus on ways in which we can save water. This term, they led a whole school assembly all about Water. They shared information about why we need to consider water a precious commodity even though the amount of water on Earth always remains the same and how we can use less water in our daily lives.



This is how many litres of water there are on our planet. 97% of it is saltwater in the great oceans and seas. 2% is in the form of ice.



Only 1% of it is freshwater. This needs to be shared by every human, creature and plant.



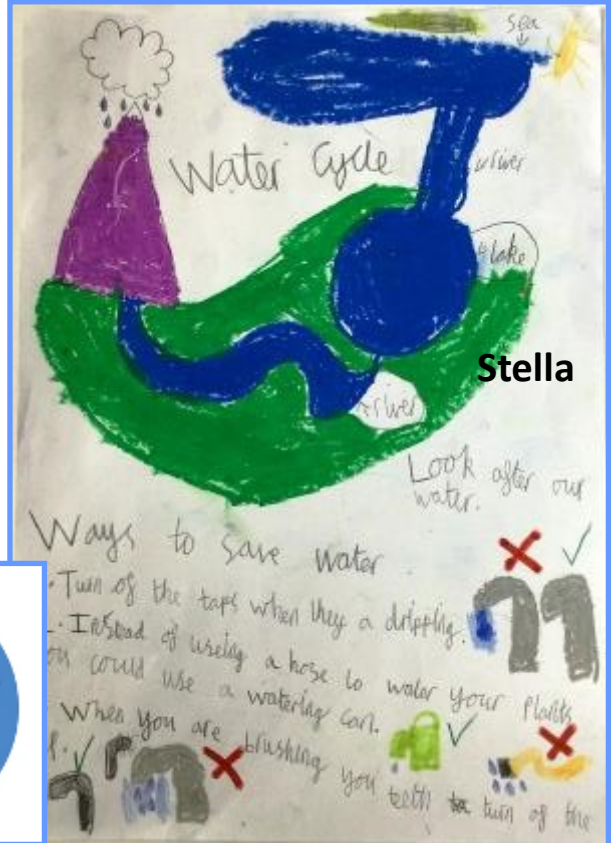
At the end of the assembly, WOMBATS launched a ‘How to Save Water’ poster competition ,with a prize for the best poster in each class. The purpose of the completion was to raise awareness of the importance of saving water and how we can do this. The quality of the entrees was very high and it took a lot of time and discussion to select the final winners, who each won a special insulated metal water bottle. **The winners were: Acorn: Pola, Beech: Stella, Willow: Freddie W-W, Oak: Freddie G.**



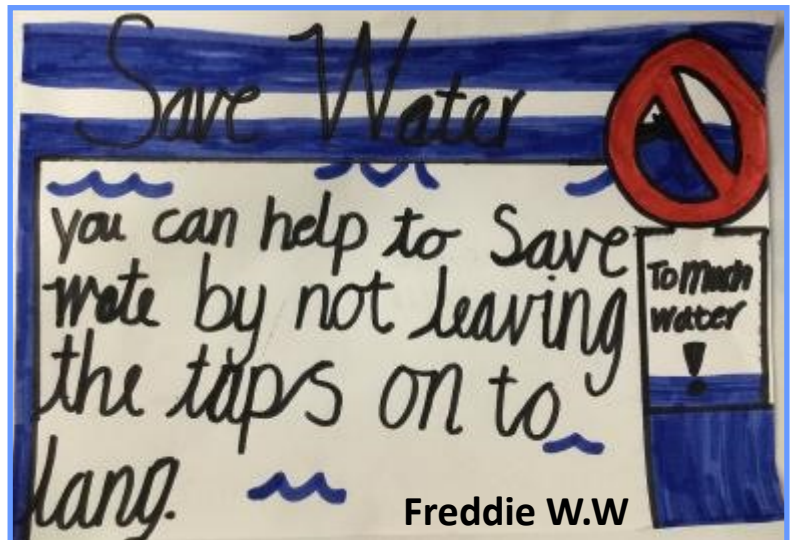
The winning Water Conservation posters



Pola



Stella



HAPPY HOLIDAY
EVERYONE!