



December 2021

# SCHOOL NEWS

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

Dear Parents & Carers,

After a very busy, learning and fun-filled term, I am sure we are all ready for the Christmas holiday.

The end of term has had a lovely, Christmassy feel with carol singing, our Acorn & Beech Nativity, Freshstart Christmas Lunch, Christmas Jumper Day and the beautifully decorated Christmas tree in the school hall (thank you to Mrs Smith & Dr Watkins of our PTA). As well as these Christmas traditions, we have been exploring seasonal festivals from religions other than Christianity too, as you will see later in the newsletter.

We will see less of Mrs Roseblade for a while after Christmas. Although her maternity leave does not start just yet, Covid guidelines mean she will not be classroom-based from January. Although we will miss seeing her every day, she will be in from time to time, and we are all delighted to be welcoming the very talented Miss Keogh to our staff as Beech Class teacher.

The term has not been an easy one, with quite high levels of both staff and pupil illness, but spirits have remained high and everyone has pulled together to ensure there are no gaps in provision for our children. On behalf of all the staff here, including myself, I would like to thank all of you for your ongoing support and understanding when we have had to introduce additional protective measures and adapt or cancel events in response to Covid. All we all want is to get back to normal in terms of school life, but we are not there yet.

Your positive response when we have had to make difficult decisions has been greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Once again, we will all be hoping for an easier New Year, but we do all have blessings to count, including the 102 delightful children who currently attend our lovely school and nursery.

We hope you all have a safe and happy Christmas.

With warmest wishes,

Jane O'Sullivan (Headteacher)



## Freshstart Christmas Lunch



**The Freshstart Christmas Lunch was really delicious! Our littlest Acorns came over to eat in the school hall for the very first time, and great fun was had by all! Huge thanks to Mrs Quist and Mrs Cran for their wonderful cooking and their care.**

For more information about how to book a Freshstart meal please go to <https://freshstartcatering.uk/>

**Best Class Attendance  
this half term:**

**Beech 97%**



**Children return to  
school on Wednesday  
5th January**





# ACORN CLASS NEWS

This term our topic has been 'Festivals of light—Who are you?' and we have enjoyed finding out about different cultures and traditions and people who help us and work when it is dark such as emergency workers, doctors, nurses and cleaners. This term has also coincided with the festivals of Diwali, Chanukah and, of course, Advent and the lead up to Christmas - some wonderful festivals of light to learn about and explore.



The term started off with Bonfire Night. We talked about firework displays we had seen or were going to see. We also created our own (very safe!) bonfire in our classroom and learned some bonfire songs with actions.

We have been learning about some religious festivals of light that take place at this time of year. First we learned about Diwali, we made diya lamps from clay and crafted them from paper plates. We enjoyed making patterns on our lightbox using different shapes.



We also enjoyed learning about Chanukah. We found out about the Chanukah story and how Jewish people celebrate. We made Chanukiahs and learned about the yummy oily foods that are eaten such as doughnuts and potato latkes.



This term also saw Remembrance Day and Children in Need. On the 11th November the children took part in an age appropriate act of remembrance and we talked about how pictures and symbols such as a poppy help us remember important things. We then enjoyed making 'poppy art' using circle shapes of different sizes.



For Children in Need we loved seeing all the children's spotty and striped clothes! They looked fab! We did lots of Pudsey Bear activities including practising our number skills with a game where we had to add spots to Pudsey's bandana.







We had a visit from First Responder Chris and the first aid trainers Trish & Aileen from Fat Panda First Aid who helped us recognise how to stay safe at home and taught us some basic first aid including important things grown ups should have in their first aid kits. Chris showed us his First Responder car and demonstrated some of his equipment. We were all very relieved to see that Mrs Perkins has good oxygen levels!



In our outdoor area we have been enjoying playing with the cars. The children loved using the outdoor chalks to make a roundabout and a safe zebra crossing. We have had a lot of fun practising our road safety!

At Forest School we had a great time using different materials to do some den building. Through experimenting and working together we found good ways to make our dens stay up the way we wanted them to and used natural materials such as the Autumn leaves to make soft den 'floors' for us to sit on.



As part of our topic we have been looking at people who help us. We have enjoyed the books 'Night City' and 'The Jolly Postman' and created these fabulous creative responses to each - a night city collage and a story map to show the Jolly Postman's very busy route. We also have enjoyed using junk modelling materials to make model emergency vehicles.





## BEECH CLASS NEWS

This term we have absolutely loved finding out all about the Arctic. We launched the topic with our own iceberg experiment in the classroom and then went on to find out about how to locate the Arctic on a map. We have learnt about different animals who survive in this polar region and written our own fact files about polar bears.



In science we learned about how animals can be sorted into different groups. We initially sorted the animals using our own criteria such as has wings, does not have wings. Then we learned about how scientists classify animals and sort them according to the criteria for mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, fish and amphibians.



We absolutely loved our class book for this term 'The Princess and The White Bear King'. We made our own crowns inspired by the book and then each wrote a letter to persuade the king that our crown was the best.



We had a fantastic time at the cross country and were so proud of how well everyone did.

Special mentions must go to

- Holly who came 1<sup>st</sup> out of 130 girls!
- Jake who came 1<sup>st</sup> out of 150 boys!
- Oliver who came 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 150 boys!
- Fraser who came 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 150 boys!





# WILLOW CLASS NEWS

## Stonehenge brought to Sibford Gower!

We are sad to see our Autumn Term theme of 'The Stone Age to the Iron Age' come to an end. However, we have loved learning and exploring so many aspects of the topic, one being *Stonehenge*. We decided to bring Stonehenge to Sibford Gower and I think you will agree it looks wonderful...

We created the base for our stones and then painted it with different shades and material to give a natural effect.

After this, we all moulded our very own stones to be placed on our 'grass base'.



We are very proud of our Stonehenge.

**Bronze Age Weaving- Willow Class Style!**  
We really enjoyed learning the history behind weaving and the importance of it for the Bronze Age period!



**Merry Christmas**  
**Love from Willow Class x**



Don't forget to visit the Willow and Oak class page to see our recording of our Christmas carols.  
<http://www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk/willow--oak->

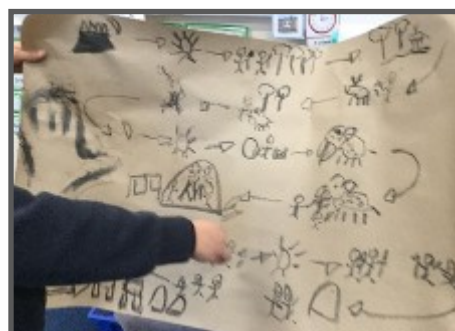
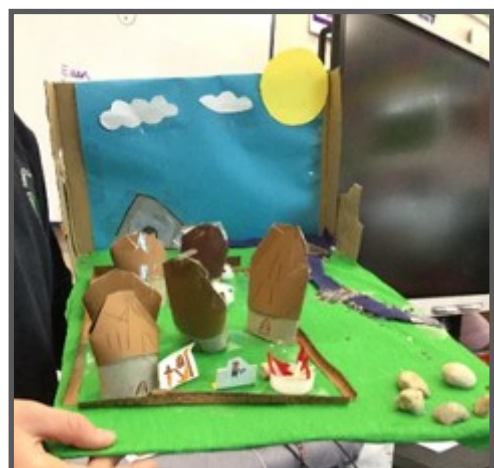
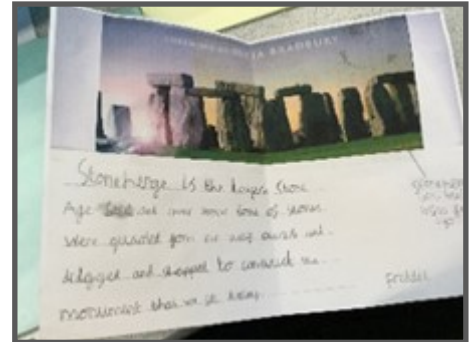




# WILLOW CLASS—A Homework Celebration



Wow! I am so proud of the children. They have designed, created and presented the most amazing homework projects. They have worked with a range of media, creating 3-D projects, power points, artwork and stories. We have thoroughly enjoyed our homework celebration week and taken great pleasure in watching each other present and share our work.







# OAK CLASS NEWS



We have had another busy term learning and having lots of fun in Oak. As always, the children have worked really hard and, while we have continued with our Ancient Greece theme, they have produced some amazing and creative work spanning learning themes across the wider curriculum – I am so very proud of them all.



## DIWALI



To celebrate Diwali, the children made some lamps that lit up our classroom. They had to read and follow some very complicated instructions to produce their lamps and they all did a brilliant job. The 'divas' look absolutely beautiful.

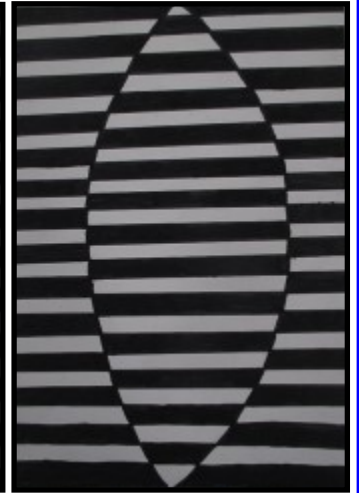
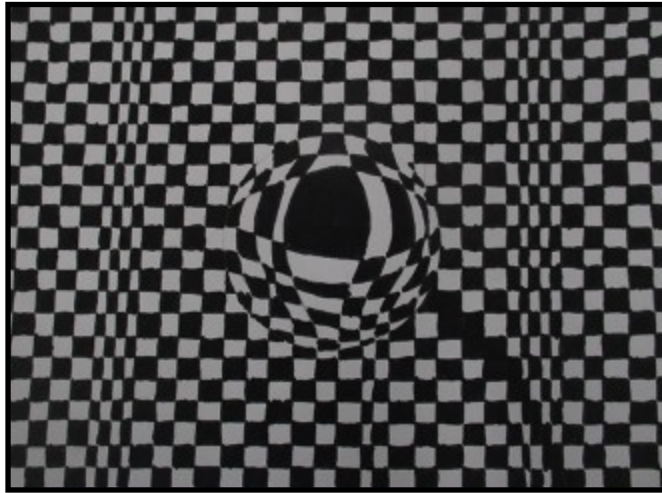


In Art this term we have been focussing on geometric patterns. The children had to draw a repeating geometric pattern first and then had to colour it in symmetrically. Very tricky, but as you can see they produced some lovely finished pieces.





Still working methodically, the children also explored Optical or 'Op' Art. They then had a go at creating their own pieces. Very well done!



## We love Forest School!



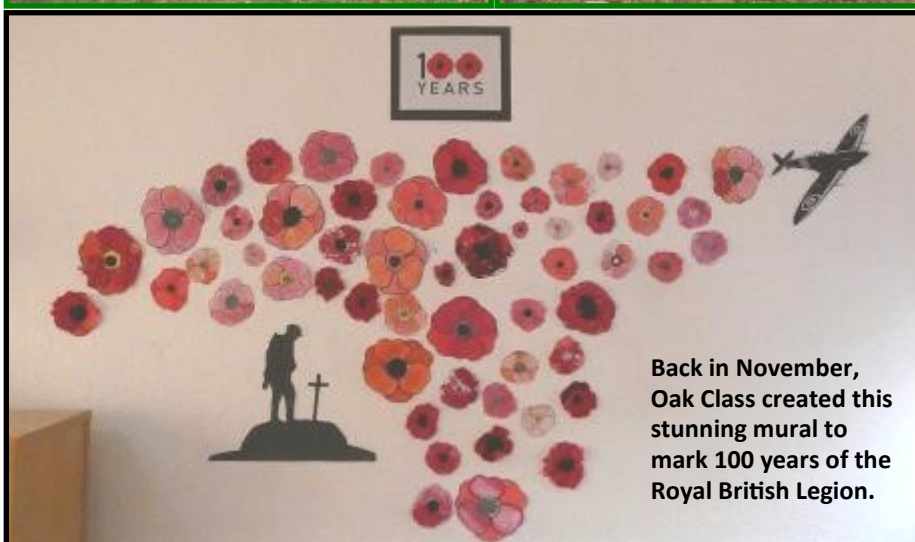
Oak Class had a great Forest School day



They made swings....  
...and they swung in swings!  
Everyone had fun!



They stretched Learning Muscles in the four Learning Dispositions:  
Resourcefulness, Resilience, Reflectiveness and Reciprocity



Back in November, Oak Class created this stunning mural to mark 100 years of the Royal British Legion.





# WOMBATS School Council

Our democratically elected School council, WOMBATS, have had a number of meetings this term, Although we do lots of fundraising in school, they wanted to do a bit more in support of an environmental cause. Care of our environment is something that our children always raise as something that is very important to them.

The school council members worked together to create resources for a whole school assembly which they led to introduce their chosen fundraiser, the TeamSeas' project, which is removing plastic from the world's oceans.

As we have more news about the ways in which they plan to fundraise, we will share these with you. You can find more information about Team seas on their website at <https://teamseas.org/>



We had great fun on Children in Need Day. The theme for the day in school was Spots and Stripes and, in the afternoon, we ran workshops exploring this theme through circle (the spots) and line (the stripes).



Children  
In  
Need



Inspired by the art of quilt maker Maritza Soto and traditional Mexican talavera patterned tiles, the children in Willow and Oak cut circles which they decorated with oil pastels. A little more cutting and sticking and we had made our own tiles. Simple but effective.

Inspired by the work of artist Georgia Gray, our youngest children, in Acorn & Beech classes, created concentric circle patterns using collage and paint. We arranged these on paper and then took our pastels for a walk in and out and all around, exploring colour through blending and line and creating these very striking artworks.



**And we raised a wonderful £130.13 for a great cause!**



# ACORN & BEECH CLASS NATIVITY PERFORMANCE



The nativity show was absolutely enchanting. The children were confident and they acted and sang beautifully. It was such a Christmas treat to be able to invite parents into school to watch, even if in very small, socially-distanced groups! **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**



Special thanks to Mrs Wright for supporting with the costumes



Our fantastic **P.T.A** have been working hard to find every opportunity to raise funds to support the school and to make things lovely for the children, even though all sorts of events are not currently possible! So far they have given their time and thought to contributing the following this term-

- Planning a spring term disco (covid restrictions allowing)
- Providing Christmas crackers for the Christmas dinner.
- Organising a second hand uniform sale in KS2 playground, which was well received. **Please note- We are looking to collect uniform for aged 9+ for some of our taller children!**
- Decorating the Christmas Tree in the school hall.
- Fundraising- The Christmas cards, mugs, wrapping paper, etc. looked great and raised £213.00.





## We created our very own Christmas tree ...

We were delighted to be invited to create a tree to display at Holy Trinity Church in Sibford Gower as part of the Christmas Tree Festival. Our creation is intended to reflect some of the things which are important to us at our school, including Forest School and outdoor learning, working together, Art and Science.

Children across the school gathered small branches from around our beautiful site. We then sorted them so we had plenty that were the right size for the job.



Children bring the branches they gathered to Mrs O'Sullivan's office.

It was important that they were thick enough so that we could drill a hole through the middle without them breaking.

Mrs O'Sullivan did the drilling because the drill was very powerful and we had to work fast!



Once the holes had been drilled, we arranged the sticks from longest to shortest and began to construct the tree.

Next we made some simple decorations using air-drying clay. All the children in Willow and Oak made at least one. We cut shapes out using some very tiny biscuit cutters. Then we let them dry overnight.



The next day, Mrs O'Sullivan threaded each one with special wool made from real camel hair. (We hope no-one has been shaving the camels that belong to the three kings !)

Using just three pots of poster paint in the primary colours, red, yellow and blue, we double-dipped our decorations to make the secondary colours too, orange, purple and green. One star made of twigs later, and our beautiful Christmas tree was ready for the festival!



Our finished tree.

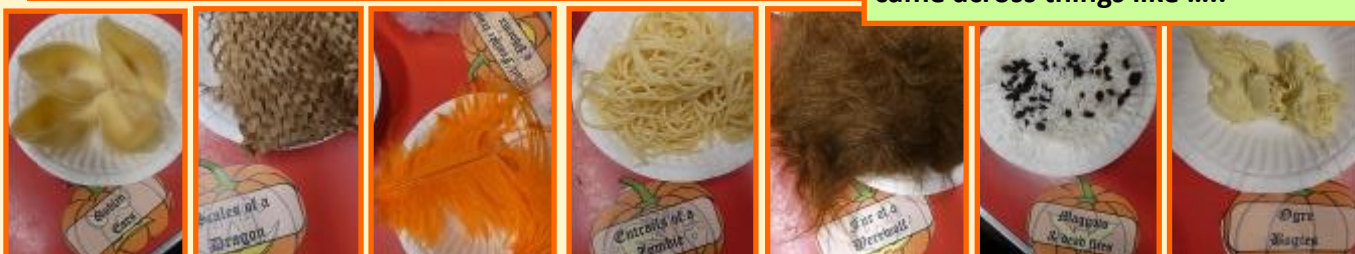


## AMAZING AFTER SCHOOL CARE (ASC)

Miss Coffey and Ms Alvarez work both hard and thoughtfully to ensure that the children have great fun at After School Care and it is fast becoming 'the place to be'! The children have already had two parties this term and have loved every second of them.



First came the Halloween Party with a haunted house where the children came across things like .....



... goblin ears, dragon scales, phoenix feathers, zombie entrails, werewolf fur, maggots and flies, and the very delicious ogre bogies! Yummy!



The food they actually ate was very different and included the usual plentiful fresh fruit and vegetables alongside all sorts of wonderful party food.



**What do the children say about ASC?**

**"Miss Coffey and Ms Alvarez are really kind, they always make it nice and really fun!"**

**"It is such fun and a happy place."**

**"It's exciting, everything about it is exciting."**

**"The food is always fresh and yummy."**

**"I like colouring with the felt tips."**

**"I like playing pool and I'm very good at it."**

**"I like playing castles."**

**"I like making bug houses outside."**

**"I like playing chess with Zachary"**

**"I like playing chess with Jake!"**



The Christmas Party was just as fabulous and the children had a wonderful time.

Huge thanks to the ASC staff for making ASC such a great place to be.

After School Care only costs £9 for a 2 hour session (£12 for 2.5.hours), which includes a healthy snack and provides a child-care lifeline and peace of mind to many of our working parents. To find out more about our terms and conditions and how to register your child, please look on the Wraparound Care page of our school website at ; <http://www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk/after-school-care.html>



# A message from our Chair of Governors

Dear Parents and Carers

This is just a short update on what the Academic Committee has been doing to support the brilliant work done by all of the staff in the School.

Firstly I would like to welcome two new Governors to the Academic Committee: Simon Chard and Oli Broom. We would like to thank them, on behalf of all of you, for volunteering to join and to help us work alongside the School staff to ensure the high standard of education in our School. I can assure them that their input will be highly valued and extremely useful.

We have continued to meet virtually to discuss what has been happening in the School as well as the occasional, and very enjoyable visit into the classrooms. We have all undergone additional training about the roll-out of the new WMAT Curriculum, as well as refresher training on the Role of the Governor. Holly Cringle is our new Early Years Governor and has been in to look at the new Nursery Provision – she has also volunteered to help out with the Nursery Open Days and to support the wonderful work being done by the Early Years Team.

The School underwent a Peer Review recently; when the WMAT CEO, Annabel Kay, the WMAT School Improvement Director, Steph Lovett, a Head Teacher from another WMAT school, our Head Teacher, and myself were looking at Teaching and Learning in relation to the new Curriculum. It was an absolute joy to talk to the children about what they had learnt, how they learn and what they will be looking at next. Without exception you should all be very proud of your children as they were outstanding in what they were able to tell us about their education. The Peer Review was a resounding success as far as our school was concerned – thank you to everyone involved.

Finally a thank you to all of the staff and to my fellow Governors for all that they have done.

On behalf of the Academic Committee I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy, Healthy New Year.

Kind regards

Paul Manthorpe

Chair of Governors

Ps We do still have places for Governors ...!



# MERRY CHRISTMAS