



December 2023

SCHOOL NEWS

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

Dear Parents & Carers,

We have had such a lovely half-term here at school. The icing on the cake for us was our Ofsted report, which gave such a positive affirmation of all the 'outstanding' aspects of school life here. Although well-deserved, it still felt like an early Christmas present! This half-term is always great fun in school, beginning with Firework Night which leads into our celebrations of various Festivals of Light. It includes all sorts of Christmassy events where we can meet as a school community; the Nativity Performance and the Carol Service, Christmas Jumper Day, the Santa Fun Run and the Freshstart School Lunch.

The children in Willow and Oak classes helped to make our special tree for this year's Christmas Tree Festival in the local church. The birds they made are very lovely! All of this, and the children have still been doing lots of academic work in classrooms, exploring all aspects of the WMAT curriculum.

On behalf of all the staff here, I wish you a safe and happy holiday and a Very Merry Christmas!

With warmest wishes,

Jane O'Sullivan (Headteacher)



Our 'Winter Tree', brightening up the church

Carol Service at the church

Thank you to everyone who was able to join us at the Church. As always, your children were wonderful.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR GOVERNING BODY

Dear All,

On behalf of the Governing body I would like to wish all members of our school community, staff, students and parents/carers a well deserved restful break.

This term has been a very busy and intense one with so many highlights. We can all look forward optimistically to what the school can achieve in 2024 as we build on this year's successes.

Thank you for your support and the part you all play.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
Alex Greenhalgh, Chair of Governors



Best Class Attendance
this half term:

Willow
98.33%



Children return
to school on



Tuesday 9th January
2024

ACORN CLASS NEWS

This half term, as Autumn has given way to Winter and the darker days have slowly crept in, Acorn class have been exploring the theme of 'Who Are You?'. This topic has allowed the children to explore their own lives, lives of others within their local community and people further afield. The children have enjoyed looking at various seasonal celebration, starting close to home as we talked about their own birthday celebrations and then moved on to significant celebrations in the wider world, Bonfire Night, Diwali and Chanukah to name a few before, of course, thinking about Christmas celebrations as we rehearsed and performed 'The Twinkly Nativity'.

Writing labels



We love the whiteboard in The Message Centre!



In Write Dance we use our whole body to help us develop our Writing Muscles!



Phonics in Nursery

Wonderful Writing and Phenomenal Phonics Acorn Class are amazing writers, this half term the children have enjoyed writing in so many different ways. The Reception children now know lots of sounds from our Jolly Phonics sessions and they love to practise their writing on our whiteboard in our Message Centre and put their new found skills to good use. One such example is when a child wanted to keep their super creation in the Maths Area so penned a little note for others reading 'plees leev' - so we did! The nursery children enjoy their phonics sessions too, gaining early phonological awareness through stories, games and crafts - all important stepping stones for future success. All the Acorn children enjoy 'Write Dance' which combines music, big gross-motor movements through dance and then two-handed fine motor 'scrimblings' on HUGE rolls of paper! All these muscle movements help us build the strength and stamina needed to further our writing and mark making skills.

Marvellous Maths!

Acorn Class are excellent mathematicians. This term we have continued our maths journey of discovery learning about different shapes, creating pictures using circles and triangles with our 'Tap Tap' boards; we then had great adventures describing position as we hid teddies around our classroom and had to describe where they were in relation to the objects around them. We have also continued to find out more about number - finding, representing and subitising numbers up to 5 and looking at 1 more and 1 less. We do maths all the time in Acorn Class, our daily routines see us counting our friends, looking at number formation as we write how many children are here, using a tens frame in our self-registration area and counting 'snowballs' in our daily book vote. We also have free access to our maths area which we love exploring. It may look chaotic but every piece on that table has been sorted with purpose and reason. The construction area also gives us opportunities to problem solve with our friends.



Sorting and Ordering



Problem solving



Describing position



Celebrations All Around Us

The children in Acorn Class have enjoyed observing the changes as the golden hues of Autumn give way to the frosty coatings of Winter. We have also talked a lot about how it is much darker in the morning as we come to school and in the afternoon as we make our way home again. This has been the perfect setting to talk to the children about the various cultural and religious festivals involving lights at this time of year. Term started with a bang as November 5th, Bonfire Night, was upon us. We enjoyed some 'firework themed' Write Dance activities and in the making area art straws and curling paper and ribbons become sparklers and rockets.

We also had a wonderful assembly from Mrs O'Sullivan all about Diwali, the children thought it was magical as we walked into a darkened hall to a wonderful array of glowing Diya lamps and sparkling material. Back in our classroom we used our strong fine motor muscles to make diya lamps (having practised with the clay earlier in the week) and made the special shapes by rolling, squishing and pinching the clay into shape. After leaving them to dry, we enjoyed decorating them with special pens. We also made diyas from paper plates, practising our scissor skills to make the glowing flame.

Recently, we also learned about another festival of lights at this time of year, the Jewish festival of Chanukah. The children learned about how the festival lasts for 8 nights and enjoyed looking at a Chanukah, dreidel and - possibly best of all - enjoyed helping to make (and eat) doughnuts as one of the foods traditionally eaten during the festival.



Beech Class News

Through the curriculum theme of 'Arctic Explorers', the children have expanded their growing knowledge of the world by learning about the polar regions, with a focus on the Arctic. They have learned about the animals that live in the Arctic and had first hand experience of mini 'icebergs' They have also found out about three explorers who all claimed to be the first to reach the North Pole and why one of them was all but written out of the history

Geography: Locating the Arctic Circle



The children have been learning about the climate in the Arctic and the way of life there, including that of the Inuit community.



The ice felt hard and cold when we touched it. We could see beautiful patterns inside.

Although the ice was really heavy, it floated in the water. The level of the water went up. We learnt that this is because of 'displacement'.

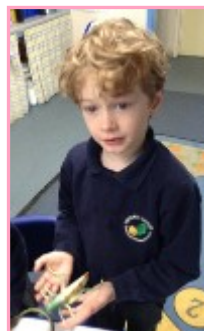


We are sure that this little cub's parent will come along soon!



We made Arctic habitats inside boxes, and had great fun doing it!

Forest School Fun: we gathered lots of interesting things in nature and used them to make art.



Sometimes, just being outside in the fresh air makes us happy!

Science: Exploring the features of mammals and sorting animals into different groups.

Willow Class

It has been a lovely term; full of learning, hard work, resilience and, of course, a few giggles along the way. Willow Class always work hard but I have been really impressed with their increasing motivation and independence this term.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our 'theme' of 'The Stone Age to the Iron Age' over the Autumn Term. The children have become really immersed in Humanities lessons and have particularly enjoyed their learning within history, both at school and in their homework learning projects! Very well done!



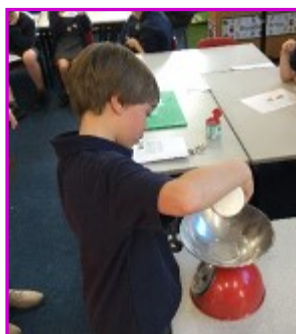
Bannock Iron Age Bread

In Design Technology this term, we have been learning about Iron Age food! We were able to make comparisons between Stone Age and Bronze Age food and explore ancient cooking techniques!

We had great fun cooking our very own BANNOCK! (The recipe is on our class page). We also focused on hygiene and being safe when cooking.



We prepared lemon juice and added it to fresh milk to make buttermilk.



Then we carefully weighed out the correct amount of flour and mixed in the buttermilk.





Using a modern version of an open fire, the children cooked their Bannock Bread.

"I cannot wait to make this at home!" "That was SO yummy!" "I really enjoyed cooking at school."

Advent in Willow Class

Our yearly tradition!

We love learning about Advent and Christmas in Willow Class. We have really enjoyed learning about Christmas 'around the world' and how other cultures celebrate it.

Every year we make our very own 'Advent Wreath' with Mrs. Williams.

It is one of our favorite Christmas activities. Every child in Willow Class had a part to play.

I think you will agree, it looks beautiful!



A wonderful term!

**A huge thank you to our Willow Families; your support is greatly appreciated.
Have a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year!**

Oak Class

Art This term in Art, our focus has been the making of a visual poetry zine, using collage and monotype. We choose 'Ghost in the Garden by Berlie Doherty' as our inspiration and recited it out loud to get a real feel for the sound of the words and the senses/images that they evoked.



With the sense and imagery evoked by the poetry in their head, the children started to mix colours that they wanted to use as a background colour. The children explored how they could mix a variety of hues and tints so that the colours they used were quite subtle.



The next step was to paint different size pieces of cartridge paper with a selection of colours to build up a collection of painted sheets for the collage aspect. Once this had dried, the children listened again to the poem to decide what shapes they would cut.



Experimenting with the shapes, the children then used their shapes to collage backgrounds on the pages of their blank zine. The final stage was to use the monotype technique to overlay imagery over the painted and collaged backgrounds.



French - The children took part in a fashion show at the end of term, when they described in French what each other was wearing, using clothing language and the correct use of adjectives. There were some wacky outfits and some very confident catwalk technique!



Science - The climax of our topic of forces this term has been the "Ball Bearing Challenge". The children needed to devise a way of transporting a ball bearing from one side of the hall to the other using at least 5 different examples of forces ... without touching the ball bearing!



Remembrance & Armistice Day



We always make sure that we mark Remembrance Day, even when, as this year, Armistice Day falls at the weekend. We explored Remembrance in a special assembly and held a two-minute silence at school. The children brought money in for poppies and we broke our record for the collection, raising an impressive £210. Thank you so much for your support with this important fundraiser for the Royal British Legion.



Mrs Williams ran some art lessons with Willow and Oak Class using the motif of the poppy. Oak Class enjoyed using watercolour paints to create observation paintings that were then arranged to make a poppy field.

Willow Class used collage to create 4 different poppies;

Red poppy: Memorial to World War One and following conflicts,

Purple poppy: To remember animal victims of war,

Black Poppy: Commemorates the contributions of black, African and Caribbean communities to the war effort,

White poppy: Remembers people who died in conflict with a focus on an end to war

Music at Sibford Gower



Our wonderful Mrs Benjamin has been running a lunchtime Ocarina Club for children in year 5 this term.

The ocarina is a small woodwind instrument and the name means 'little goose'.

Leo: "We learn new notes every week and the way of learning is helpful."

Emily: "It's fun. I thought it would be really hard but then I discovered I could play Jingle Bells."

Our little Ocarina Orchestra sounds sound great!

Sport at Sibford Gower

What a term it has been! We have participated in many sporting events this term (Which have been great fun!), enjoyed a range of PE lessons and even qualified for running finals!



KS1 Cross Country



KS2 Cross Country



Our Finalists

Well done to Nell, Molly, Henry, Jake and Holly who qualify for the 'cluster finals'!



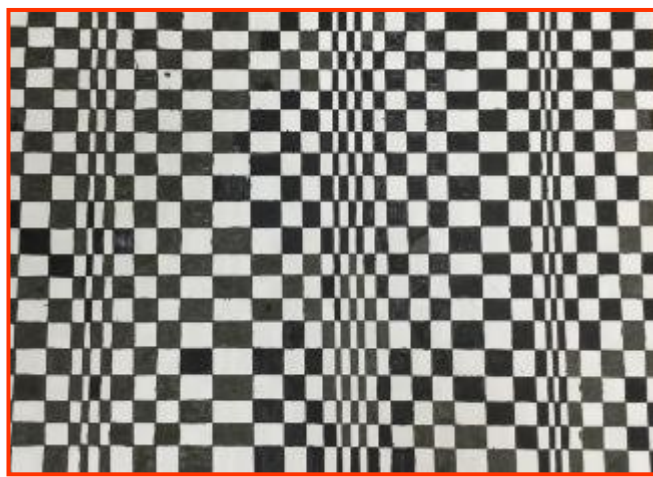
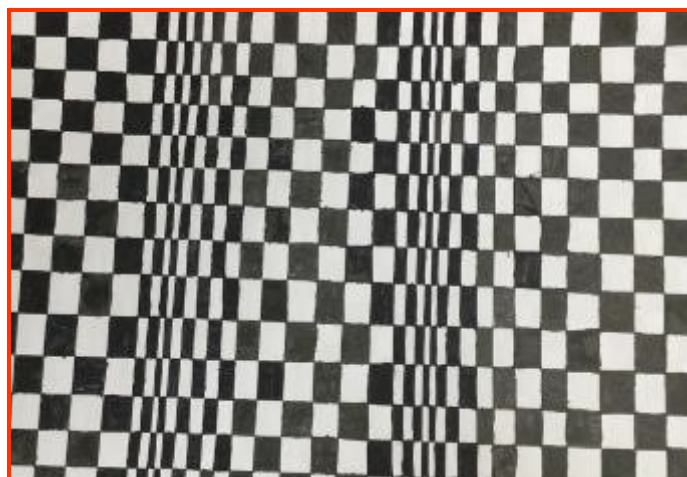
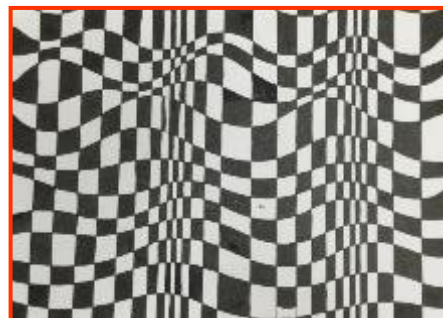
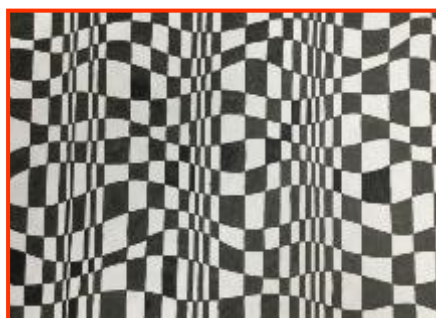
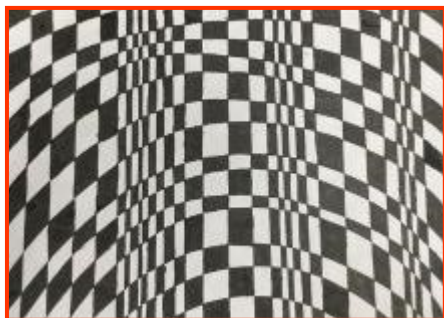
A special **Well done** to Holly! She came third OVER all and also qualified!



A special **Well done** to Henry! He came first OVER all and qualified for the county finals next year!

Op Art & Mindfulness: Our 'op art' mobile in the Old School library lost its balance because some of the sections dropped off! Anyone who knows about mobiles (incl. our KS2 children) knows that you have to build them from the bottom, so we decided it would be easiest to make a new one. We liked the 'op art' look in our book space though, so there is a connection between old and new.

Some of the children in Oak Class volunteered to spend some of their lunchtime working collaboratively (one of our school values!) to create some sheets of 'op art' designs.



Our Marvellous Mobile

Then we built from the bottom, being very careful with 'balance points' and constructed a mobile in the style of artist, Alexander Calder. We are very pleased with how it looks now it is in position.

WOMBAT CORNER

Our pupil School Council have been very busy this term, collecting and collating the children's Hot Spots and Grot Spots. You can see the finished document on the WOMBAT page on the school website at

www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk/wombats-school-council.html

Their final job of the Autumn Term was to present these to the whole school during a Friday Assembly.

They did an excellent job, sharing the Hot Spots & Grot Spots powerpoint on the big screen

Well done, WOMBATs!

Fantastic Fireworks

The night skies over the Sibfords were lit up by the fabulous firework display organised by our P.T.A. The rain cleared away just in time for the start of this event and it was lovely to see so many familiar faces, old and new, as attendees made their way up the slope to the Big Field. The music and refreshments were excellent, and the firework display and bonfire were stunning.

Thank you to our P.T.A and all those friends of the P.T.A who made this sparkling event happen.



Celebrations & Festivals of Light



Mrs Benjamin led a whole school assembly all about Hanukkah. She shared a video of her family lighting candles to celebrate Hanukkah at home and we learned about some of the other ways in which members of the Jewish faith celebrate this festival of lights.

The Drama of Diwali

All of the children have explored the festival of Diwali, through assemblies, story & story-telling. The children in Acorn Class had a lovely time making divas out of clay and finding out more about this important world festival as part of the Early Years curriculum.



We gathered for a special whole school assembly. First, we watched a film exploring some of the traditions and customs linked to Diwali, including cleaning the house in readiness for guests, making rangoli patterns with brightly coloured powders, lighting candles and divas and enjoying fireworks. We learned that Diwali is celebrated all over the world.



We reminded ourselves of the story of Rama and Sita by watching an animated film, as our own divas lit the path for Rama and Sita to find their way home after their long years of exile!



Christmas is coming and much fun has been had ...

For the third year running, we contributed to the Christmas tree Festival at the church in Sibford.

This year, we have gone for a different look and used a bare winter 'tree' to offset the beautiful bird decorations made by children in Willow and Oak classes. As part of our 'eco' ethos, we were determined to make our tree out of things that were found or recycled, Charlie was given the special job of helping to assemble the tree. We wrapped up warm and took a walk down to the Orchard to gather sticks and branches that had broken off of the trees in the Autumn winds.



The tree fitted the base very securely. Well done Charlie!

There was sawing and cutting and sticking to prepare our tree and to make a strong base. Charlie knew how to saw carefully because of craft work he does at home with his dad.



Willow and Oak had an extra art lesson to make decorations for the tree. First we made observation drawings of real feathers to explore 'featheriness'. Then we made small collage birds to hang from our winter tree—each one unique, colourful and full of character.



Martha made an excellent job of colour matching our paper trunk to the real tree branches using pastels. Harry and Charlie added some 'snow' and our job was done! Our little tree was ready for the Christmas Tree Festival at the church.





Everyone enjoyed this year's SANTA FUN RUN.

We had a fabulous time taking part in 'Santa Relays' and games in the warm and dry school hall!

A huge thank you to everyone who donated.

We raised a brilliant £84 for a very important charity.



Freshstart Christmas Lunch was excellent!



Thank you, Sam & Sancha!



Barbara Foster, the Church Warden from the church in Sibford, made two special visits to the school this term. She came to assembly to explain the custom of 'Christingle' and how to make one. She also visited Oak Class to talk about Christmas in Sibford during war time. This was an excellent opportunity for the children to make connections with their learning in history.

THANK YOU P.T.A

- For organising and running Firework Night. It is such an important opportunity within the school year for school to welcome the community, as well as being a brilliant fundraiser!
- For decorating the school hall ready for Christmas with a lovely tree and the crackers to make our Christmas lunch extra special.
- For organising and running the Christmas doughnut stall and the school uniform giveaway.

If you would like to find out more about our PTA and ways in which you could support, please contact;

Ali Smith seaecho10@gmail.com
or Charlotte Watkins chirpie34@hotmail.com





ACORN & BEECH NATIVITY



From the youngest to the oldest, the children from Acorn and Willow classes put on a brilliant show for their families, and for the older children and staff. They all sang beautifully, everyone remembered their cues (not !!) and they looked enchanting in their special costumes.

Huge thanks to Miss Blake, Mrs Oliveira, Mrs Perkins, Mrs Benjamin, Mrs Evans, Miss Reeves and Mrs Jones for all the hard work and patience that went into making this such a success for the children.

A special thank you to Mrs Evans for all her work with the costumes.

All the children looked great and the sparkling stars were especially beautiful.



THE EXCELLENT ASC CHRISTMAS PARTY

Mrs Coffey and Mrs Williams love a party and the ASC Christmas Party is an annual event that the children really look forward to! Everyone had such good fun this year, with lovely food, dressing up, Christmas music and party games. Thank you ASC!



Dress the Snowman Game



We have a winner!



To find out more about our After School Care Facility, please look on our school website at:
<http://www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk/after-school-care.html>

The P.T.A Doughnut Stall



Simple, inspired, and hugely successful!
What a great idea for an end of term fundraiser. Thank you PTA!
<http://www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk/pta.html>



Huge thanks to Clemmie Broom and friends for organising the Christmas Quiz Night in aid of the school. Everyone who attended had a fabulous time. Excellent!

MERRY CHRISTMAS !