



October 2025

SCHOOL NEWS

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

Dear Parents & Carers,

We have had a very calm and happy start to the new academic year. Children settled quickly with new classmates and new teachers, learning has been focused and play has been fun. As well as our new little Acorns, (always a pleasure), we have welcomed new children into Beech and Willow Class who bring so many positive things to our lovely school.

As you will see from this newsletter, all sorts of interesting and engaging learning has been going on across the school, as well as all those important Autumn term things like our School Council elections, appointing both Sports and Reading ambassadors and so on. Quite rightly, the children take these things very seriously and recognise the value of these roles within our school community.

Our school community is always very generous when we hold charity fundraisers or collections and this half-term was no exception. A huge thank you to everyone who brought in food bank donations to mark Harvest Festival and to everyone who either donated or participated in the Macmillan Cake Sale. This raised a very impressive £217.19, which is possibly our highest ever amount. Jeans 4 Genes raised £86.95 (and everyone looked very cool!) Thank you so much for your generosity.

Mrs Williams has signed us up for the Woodland Trust's Green Schools Award Scheme and is inviting children to get creative over the half-term break. (More info on page 2 of this newsletter). It would be really lovely if a lot of children took part in this.

We have a lot of exciting things to look forward to next half-term too. For now though, everyone—staff and children— could do with a well-earned rest!

On behalf of everyone here at school, I wish you a safe, happy and fun-filled holiday.

With warmest regards, Jane O'Sullivan, Headteacher



**Best Class Attendance
this half term:**

**ACORN
98%**



Reminder!

**Children return
to school on
Monday 3rd
November**



WEAR RED AGAINST RACISM



**HARVEST
COLLECTION**

Thank you for your generous donations for the Foodbank



A CHANCE TO BE CREATIVE

A special message for parents and children from Mrs Williams

As a school, I have signed us up with The Woodland Trust. They run something called the Green Tree Schools award scheme. If we take part in different projects and activities, we earn points for each project we complete, and gain awards. We start at Bronze, moving to Silver, Gold and finally Platinum.

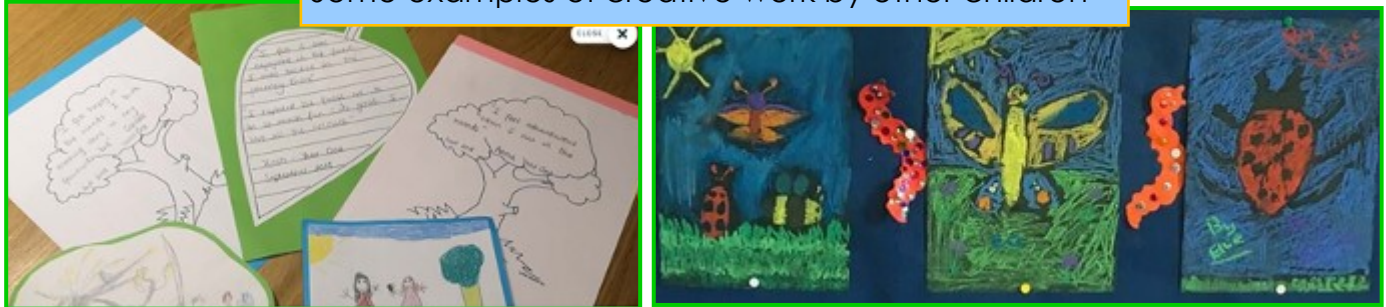
We would love it if parents could support us in getting started by taking or encouraging your children to explore woods and woodlands over the holiday and then sharing their experiences with us through words, art or photography.

Please can they bring their creative work to school during the first week of the new term (3rd -7th Nov), leaving it in the Library in Old School. Please make sure your child's name is on the work so I can return them.

I look forward to seeing all the exciting and creative pieces of work that they produce.
Best wishes, Mrs Williams



Some examples of creative work by other children



WOMBAT School Council



Our new WOMBAT School Council representatives have been elected by their classmates and have held their first meeting with the headteacher. As well as their role in representing their class views about issues relevant within school, the WOMBATS will continue to have a 'sustainability/environmental' focus. They have decided the theme for their annual awareness raising assembly and competition and will be revealing this in a whole school assembly next half-term
Go you WOMBATS!



ACORN CLASS NEWS

What a fantastic start to the school year! We have been so busy this term, welcoming back existing friends into Acorn Class and saying hello to new members of Nursery and Reception. It has been great fun getting to know everyone. We have had so many adventures together already, making and doing both inside and out. Read on to find out more!



Delightful Dough

Every week we have a fantastic adventure into the world of Story Dough where we let our imaginations run free as we shape our dough before bringing our dough to life with our special 'secret codes'. Story Dough, aside from being a lot of silly fun (have you ever heard play dough snore?!), is great for our fine motor skills - working the muscles needed for future writing success. The 'code' element of Story Dough also shows us that the marks we make carry meaning and have purpose.



Phonics Fridays

We have been doing so well learning our new sounds in our daily phonics sessions. On Fridays we go over the sounds we have previously learned and show off to Mrs Benjamin the new sounds we learned that week. She is always so impressed with how well we remember the sound, the actions and the song. On a Friday we do lots of different activities to help us remember the sounds we've learned that week. Look at how busy we have been!

What sounds can you spot?

Lots of our activities link to the songs we sing to help us remember the sounds!



Learning, learning everywhere!

In Acorn Class, learning takes many forms. We are incredibly proud of our child-centred, play-based approach and the children learn so much through their own exploration and play. What, on first glance, may look like one single skill, it is often multi-layered, hitting lots of areas of development. Take a look and see what this looks like in action...

When we play with playdough...

...we don't just use our imaginations, we also strengthen our arm and finger muscles, getting ready for writing.

When we are outside...

...we aren't just getting fresh air, we are also problem solving, collaborating, turn taking, strengthening our muscles and much, much more!

When we play dressing up...

... we don't just 'pretend', we role play different situations, develop empathy and kindness, co-operation, negotiation and language and communication skills.



When we play in the sand...

... we don't just like the feel of it, we also develop our fine motor skills with pouring, sifting and shaping, our gross motor with scooping and carrying, turn taking and problem solving.

When we are baking...

...we aren't just preparing a yummy treat, we are also practising early number skills, understanding the importance of doing things in order, fine motor skills and becoming scientists as we observe how things change.

So when it looks like we are 'just' playing...

...don't forget that play gives us vital time to practise, develop and learn new skills.

We love to play!

Beech Class News

In Beech Class, we have been learning about how Motte and Bailey Castles were brought to England. We found out about key figures such as; Harald Haradra and the Vikings, Harold, Earl of Wessex, and the Anglo Saxons, William, Duke of Normandy, and the Normans, and Saint Edward The Confessor.



The Battle of Hastings in 1066



The children were able to identify the Normans from the image on the Bayeux Tapestry. They recognised that the people might not be Vikings as they didn't have long



Shield making for the Battle of Stamford and the Battle of Hastings.

We have had Dance and Yoga lessons as our strands in PE. We began by exploring travelling actions, movement skills and balancing.

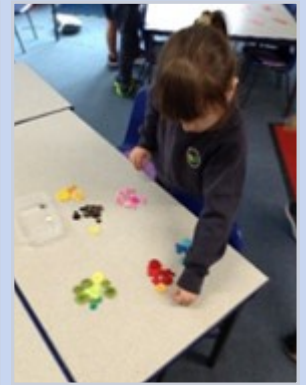
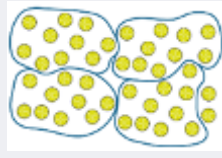


We explored actions, dynamics, space relationships, balance and jumping. We learned the importance of communication, respect, working safely and collaboration. The children had to work creatively, select and apply actions, provide feedback and recall pathways and actions from their own dance routines. It taught us about developing empathy, confidence, acceptance, determination and kindness.



The Principles of Maths Mastery being applied in Beech Class

Understanding the identity of one ten and ten ones before using more abstract representations later on, such as base ten/dienes.



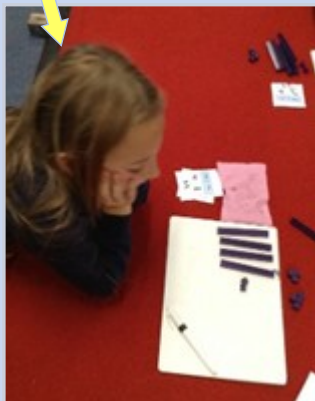
We discussed the importance of using groups of ten for efficiency when counting larger groups. We then made units of 10 with cubes and again practised counting the groups of tens and ones.



We then progressed to writing this on place value charts and naming the 2 digit numbers.



Shortly after, we introduced the base ten equipment. The children made the numbers using units of tens and ones, then recorded the numbers on place value charts. They could explain how many 10s and 1s there were in each number. Using these small steps, helped the children to build a solid understanding of the place value of numbers 20-99.



We explored trees and autumnal changes, making rubbings of tree-trunks and leaf-printing.



We have been practising our phonics and enjoying reading with grown-ups.

Willow Class News

What a wonderful term we have had. It has been full of excitement, engagement and hard work. We have enjoyed getting to know each other and becoming a Willow Class family!



Fabulous Forest School

To start our year off, we had a whole day of Forest School. This was a wonderful day allowing us to get to know each other and enjoy the skills and tasks of Forest School.



"I really enjoyed making small homes for the wildlife"

"My favourite part of the day was making a café with my friends. Mrs Davies said our apple stew was wonderful (Which made me laugh!)"

"We made the BEST bug hotel!"

"I LOVE my journey stick; I even learnt how to use different knots!"



Some of Willow Class had great fun making diva lamps and Rangoli patterns as part of their exploration of the Hindu festival of Diwali.

The Stone Age to The Iron Age



It was a real pleasure to welcome so many family members into the classroom to share our homework celebration. How varied and creative the children's contributions were! Just wonderful.



We have really enjoyed our theme this term. The children were extremely animated and learnt lots of new and amazing facts! We had a special visit from The Oxford Museum to enhance our learning about the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. **It was a fantastic morning.** We learnt lots of new information, created our very own human timeline, got to hold and explore REAL artefacts and to finish off; we had the opportunity to carve axe heads out of soap. It was brilliant day, a great opportunity for all!

OAK CLASS NEWS



In Art this term we have been 'Discovering Green' as part of our sustainability focus and nature all around us. The children took their own photographs in and around our school, they then picked their favourite and using art, interpreted their image using either pastels, watercolour or collage.



Such beautiful use of pastels!



In D&T this term, we have been looking at Archimedes and his invention – the Archimedes Screw. The children researched, planned and constructed their own version of the screw and then tested it out using water. Great fun, with lots of learning.



We are very good at working collaboratively.



This term in our science lessons, we have been having some fun investigating forces. We started by looking at the forces acting upon a scrunched-up paper ball and then moved on to looking in more detail at different types of force.

For contact forces, the children worked in groups to find ways to demonstrate the effects of air and water resistance and friction. For non-contact forces, the children created a piece of artwork for display in the classroom, showing the "battle" between gravity and magnetism (as you can see from the pictures).



To experiment with a whole range of different forces, we took on the "Mentos and Diet Cola Challenge", where we found out what happens when you drop 6/7 Mentos into a 2-litre bottle of Diet Cola - there was certainly plenty of evidence of push and pull forces, as you can see!



After half term, the children will be faced with one big, final forces challenge...

Sport at Sibford Gower

What a great sporting term it has been!

In school, we have enjoyed a range of PE lessons. We have participated in many sporting events this term- football, cross county and rugby and even qualified for the next round of Cross Country!

Meet our new Sports Leaders...

The children wrote their applications at the start of the year. I was **extremely** impressed and therefore they were all chosen!

The Sports leaders have already made an excellent start leading activities at lunchtime. I feel a good year ahead.



KS2 have taken part in the 'Annual Cross Country' event this term. A longer course for many as the event was at The Warriner.

All the children had a wonderful time and ran their little socks off!



KS1 have their running event next half-term. How exciting!

A special mention to Holly, Zachary Davies and Zachary Cringle who have qualified for the next round in December! **GO TEAM SIBFORD GOWER!**



Football Club SUCCESS!

We have had a fabulous term with our football club. Each week we have had more members join- this is great! Football club is continuing next half-term too.



UK weather conditions have contributed to 2025 being a "mast year," where trees produce an unusually large crop of fruits, nuts, and seeds. This meant we were able to contribute lots of apples from the school orchard to the local Apple Festival. It also meant that the large oak tree in the school playground shed a vast amount of acorns. The children had great fun collecting these up into bags and buckets as a present for Paisley Gale's piglets. The Gale family sent us these lovely photos of the piglets enjoying their feast.



WEEK OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

We are very fortunate to have Mrs Benjamin and Mr Cameron in school as teachers who take a creative approach to learning modern foreign languages (MFL) which makes it really engaging for all of the children. We also enjoy exploring the cultures of other countries and recently took part in a Week of European Languages across the school, culminating in a special sharing assembly.



Acorn Class sang the Days of the Week song in French.



Oak Class confidently recited the alphabet in Portuguese.



Willow Class shared some beautiful animal collages inspired by the highly colourful work of German Expressionist painter, Franz Marc, a founding member of art group, Der Blaue Reiter.



Some of our bilingual children shared their other languages with us; Portuguese, Farsi and Polish.

The teachers have lessons too!



Our friends from CATS (Cotswold Arts through Schools), based at Kingham lodge, came into school to run a printmaking workshop with teachers. As well as being great fun, this gave us lots of ideas for developing creative skills and projects with the children.



Art for the APPLE FESTIVAL



Oak Class artists produced these beautiful pastel observation drawings to display at the Sibford Apple Festival. It is lovely to see their individual styles developing.



Community Links

Our School Sustainability Pledge

As students, we care about our world and the future.
At school and beyond, we promise to learn, act, and lead in ways that protect our planet.

We pledge to:



Learn about the Earth

We will explore how nature works and why it matters — in science, geography, and beyond.



Think carefully about our choices

We will ask questions, think critically, and make decisions that help people and the planet.



Use school resources wisely

We will reduce waste, recycle properly, and reuse materials in our classrooms and projects.



Save energy and water at school

We will turn off lights, screens, and taps when they're not in use.



Make healthy, sustainable choices

We will bring less plastic in our lunches and understand where our food comes from.



Care for our school grounds

We will help keep our school clean, green, and welcoming for all.



Share what we learn

We will teach others about sustainability and take part in eco-school projects and events.



Work together as a learning community

We will listen, support one another, and lead positive change as pupils, teachers, and staff.

Please look on the 'Sustainability and Climate Action' page of our school website to find out a bit more about our plans for education and action regarding sustainability both at our school and across the other WMAT schools; <https://www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk/sustainability--climate-action.html>

Reading Ambassadors



Being a Reading Ambassador is an important role in school. Their role is to model a commitment to reading and to keep the profile of reading high across the school by thinking about ways we can encourage all the children to value reading.

These pupils are chosen because they have shown a particularly deep love of reading and a determination to develop their reading ability and/or range of reading interests.

‘Once a Reading Ambassador ALWAYS a Reading Ambassador’ so some of these faces are familiar, but each year we appoint new ambassadors as older children leave.

HERE'S THE IMPACT OF READING 20 MINUTES PER DAY!

A student who reads	A student who reads	A student who reads
20:00 minutes per day	5:00 minutes per day	1:00 minute per day
will be exposed to 1.8 MILLION words per year and scores in 90th PERCENTILE on standardized tests	will be exposed to 282,000 words per year and scores in 50th PERCENTILE on standardized tests	will be exposed to 8,000 words per year and scores in 10th PERCENTILE on standardized tests

We love to read!

Children who read...

Are more likely to overcome disadvantage caused by inequalities	Are more likely to be happier, healthier and experience better mental wellbeing and self-esteem	Are more likely to do better at school and make more progress across the curriculum	Are more likely to develop empathy and creativity

booktrust.org.uk/benefits-of-reading-news BookTrust
Getting children reading

It was such a pleasure to welcome parents and grandparents into all of the classes for our first ‘Reading Week’ of the academic year. What nicer way to start the day than sharing a book with someone?



The Attendance Page

Good attendance at school is a critical factor in ensuring that children are supported to reach their full potential as successful learners. We need to work together to ensure that high levels of attendance are maintained by all our pupils, as far as possible. **Our school day starts at 8:40 a.m. and from the beginning of their Reception year, children are expected to attend school every week day.**

The county attendance target is 95% and our school target is 97%. While the vast majority of our children manage to reach this attendance target across the year, we have a small number of pupils who are persistently absent. This is a real concern as we know this will have a very significant impact on their learning.

Most pupil absence is due to illness and so is unavoidable. However, it is very important that you are fully aware of your child's attendance record and make every effort to ensure that they attend school when they are well enough to be here. Learning is disrupted for children who are frequently late for school and we are required to record any unauthorised lateness after the register has closed as an unauthorised absence.

You can access your child's attendance record through the Arbor parent portal.

EVERY DAY COUNTS

HOW ATTENDANCE SHAPES YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS



95-100% ATTENDANCE

Excellent! Your child is on track to reach their full potential.



90-94% ATTENDANCE

Good! A few missed days can add up—every day matters.



80-89% ATTENDANCE

At risk! Frequent absences can affect learning and progress.



BELOW 80% ATTENDANCE

Serious concern! Missing school can significantly impact

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE EVERY DAY COUNT!

Parents are expected to...

All pupils	Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent	Pupils who are persistently or severely absent.
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered , including any <u>parenting contract</u> or <u>voluntary early help plan</u> to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>

This text is taken from DfE guidance on pupil attendance

To read our school attendance policy in full, please click on this link to take you to the policy page on our school website;
<https://www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk/policies-notice-and-reports.html>

HAVE A HAPPY HOLIDAY