

Fir Tree Newsletter



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February 2025 Issue 371

Dear Families,

I am sure those who joined us for our Y3 production on Thursday will join me in congratulating the children on an outstanding effort. I was impressed by the way that the children, who have only been with us for a matter of months, delivered their lines so clearly and confidently. A note of thanks, too, for the fundraising carried out by our PTA volunteers which enabled us to improve the lighting and sound equipment in the hall. It really added to the occasion.

Lots of great things have been happening in school recently, and term 4 will be no different. We look forward to you hearing about the new projects as they get underway.

Attendance for this academic year stands at 96%, which is above the national average. We are optimistic that we will be able to maintain this momentum for the remainder of the year. You don't need me to tell you that when children are in school regularly they give themselves the best possible chance to achieve well and to form and maintain excellent friendship bonds.

Thank you to our staff who go above and beyond each day. I hope that they and you enjoy a relaxing break over half term.

We look forward to seeing you all on Monday 24th February.

Warm regards,

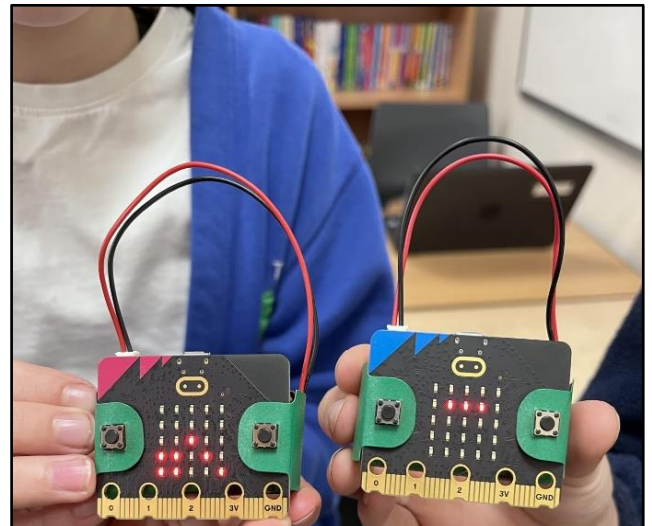
Mr Knight

Recently Jesse in year 5 competed in the first leg of the 4 Nations Kickboxing Tournament which was the England open. He brought home a gold and a silver medal and also achieved 4th place in a 10-12 year old category. Next stop is the Welsh open in April which is the 2nd leg of the tournament. Go Jesse!



News from Sycamore – Year 5

Sycamore have been using their programming skills to create code for different projects using their BBC Micro:bit. So far, we have been able to make: changing text scroll across the LED screen, changing icons/pictures, played rock, paper, scissors, used it as a dice for board games, used it as a Bluetooth walkie talkie and used the sensor to blow away LED pictures. We are very excited to take our skills further by using the Micro:bit as a data logger within science next term.



News from Ash – Year 4

In Ash Class, we have been learning about 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and inspired by this play, we designed finger puppets of characters from the play. After designing, we then began making. We started with cutting out the base of the puppet using felt, then using a running stitch each child hand sewed their puppet. Next, everyone used different resources to design the character on the front of their puppet, including felt, pipe cleaners and googly eyes. Each child will be taking their puppet home on the last day of term.



News from Maple – Year 4

Now that the term draws to an end, here are some of the things that Maple Class have been up to:

In English, children have been writing to persuade. They have written letters 'in role' as one of the characters from of A Mid-Summer Night's Dream, and have tried coaxing another character to go along with their idea. It has been a lot of fun pretending to be someone else, and being able to brag about oneself (or repulse others) whilst learning how to compose a letter, write rhetorical questions and emotive language.

Science has often been the highlight of the week. We have played about with electrical components, making complete and incomplete circuits. Children have had the opportunity to problem solve and experiment. When a circuit hasn't worked properly, what could be the reason? Faulty components or incorrect connections? Also, are potatoes, foil and wooden spoons insulators or conductors?

The children are in the process of making their own 'A Mid-Summer Night's Dream' themed finger puppets. They have designed their own, mocked up their ideas in cardboard and sewn together the pieces. We are going to finish them off using various materials and a glue gun. Hopefully, they will put on a good show when they bring them home.

Learning about websites and using the internet safely, has been a focus in computing. We have learnt about the World Wide Web (WWW) and who owns, and operates it. The whole school has an assembly about how to keep safe when using the internet for various applications that they it for.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 14 th February	End of term 3 – 3:15pm finish
17 th – 21 st February	Half term
Monday 24 th February	Term 4 begins – 8:45am
Wednesday 26 th February	Year 5 swimming
Wednesday 26 th February	PTA Meeting at Fir Tree – 6pm
Wednesday 5 th March	Year 5 swimming
Monday 10 th March	Year 6 Weighing and Measuring Programme
Wednesday 12 th March	Year 5 swimming
Thursday 13 th March	Year 6 Junior Citizens visit

News from Silver Birch – Year 6

After mummifying a real life corpse this week with Claire -o- Patra and Tutan-Sian-mun, Silver Birch learned that the organs removed were placed in canopic jars. Each jar represented the four sons of Horus. After a morning of moulding, sculpting and blending, the expert embalmers used clay to create their own versions of canopic jars. We know you'll agree that the jars produced are incredible!



All students passed their level 3 embalming course yesterday with flying colours! They extracted the brain with precision and removed the organs using obsidian (cocktail stick). After thoroughly washing the body with water from the river Nile, the cadaver was wrapped in layers of bandages and placed in its homemade sarcophagus. Claire - o - Patra a.k.a Mrs Bailey commented on how professional all of our expert embalmers were. Well done team Silver Birch!



News from Chestnut – Year 5

Oxford University Earth Sciences Workshop

Volatile Volcanoes

We got to try on a real suit worn by volcanologists and learned a dance to help us remember the 3 different types of movement on plate boundaries (divergent, convergent and transformative).

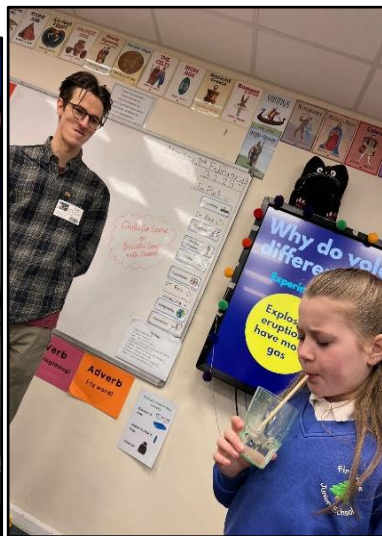
Igneous Rocks

We investigated the properties of different types of rocks made in volcanoes and used our detective skills to predict which part of the volcano they were made in. We guessed that pumice was made in the ash cloud because it had lots of bubbles and was very light.

Types of Eruption

We learned that levels of gas, pressure and viscosity of magma can change the type of eruption in a volcano. By adding effervescent tablets, we increased the gas which made an effusive eruption, whereas putting the tablet in a small container with a lid increased the pressure which created an explosive eruption.

Finally, we tried to blow bubbles into different viscosities of liquids (water, honey and golden syrup) and Charlie (Dr Rex) explained that the gloopest 'magma' (golden syrup) created a more explosive eruption because it created a greater build up of pressure.



Extraordinary Earthquakes

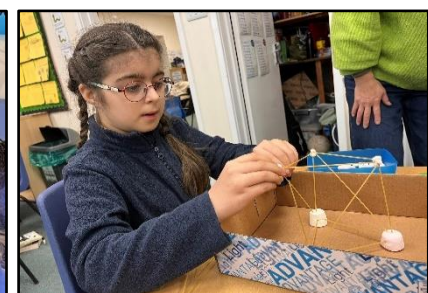
In our earthquake workshop, we learned that seismologists are the scientists who study earthquakes and we discovered that earthquakes happen in the layer of the Earth called the crust, at points where two tectonic plates meet each other. When they push together, this creates a build-up of pressure which is released in a jolt of energy, leading to an earthquake.

Waves

We learned about two types of waves: P waves (which move forwards and backwards) and S waves (which also move up and down, as well as forwards).

Earthquake Proof Buildings

We put our engineering skills to the test to create structures which could withstand a small, medium and large earthquake, using a board which simulated the movement of a quake. We remembered to use triangles as these were strong shapes when we made our bridges last term.



Music at Fir Tree

On Friday 24th January, courtesy of our generous PTA, 50 children enjoyed a visit to the Sheldonian Theatre to watch an entertaining concert performed by members of the Oxfordshire County Youth Orchestra. They enjoyed a varied programme including the main theme from Star Wars written by John Williams and a piece with an unusual combination of beatboxing and orchestra together.

Here are some of their thoughts;

Sorrel (Y5): It was brilliant and very loud!

Alex (Y3): The Star Wars Music was the best bit.

Maggie (Y3): The beat boxing was unbelievably good.

Malek (Y5): The beat boxing was Really fast; it reminded me of famous rappers.

Holly (Y4): I loved the sound from the orchestra.



On 28th January, many guitarists from school who learn with Create Music, performed to a packed hall for 45 minutes. The music was varied, encompassing a range of styles, skills and techniques. They all performed from memory, which is quite a skill in itself! Many Year 3's were performing for the first time. Everybody did very well. Children who had previously performed in the last summer term had made significant progress. Our thank go to Paresh, their teacher, for his hard work and commitment. Many children in the audience listened and strummed along throughout. If your child is interested in learning, please do contact Create Music and make an enquiry.

News from Cherry – Year 6

Over the last few weeks in Cherry Class, we have had a fantastic time learning about all things Ancient Egyptian! Following on from our trip to the Ashmolean Museum, we started to learn about the mummification process. We discovered that this was a gruesome process which involved the removal of lots of organs, including the brain. To help us understand the different steps involved, we transformed our classroom into our very own embalming workshop and undertook the process ourselves (don't worry – no humans were harmed during this process).

First, we washed our 'body' in water to purify it and then made a small slit in the 'abdomen' to remove the internal organs – an eye watering process! We then cleaned out the inside with natron salt, before stuffing it to help keep the shape of the body. Finally, we wrapped the 'body' in layers of bandage and placed it in its final resting place. Look at the pictures below to see if you can follow the steps.



Is WhatsApp safe for my child? – NSPCC

Despite its 13+ age rating, we know that some of our pupils use Whatsapp. Please take the time to read this article from the NSPCC, which details some of the potential dangers of children using Whatsapp, and also some great tips for parents to keep their children safe on Whatsapp.

Please click [here](#) for further information.



Year 3 Production

This term has been incredibly hard-working and rewarding for the children. Year 3 have been working with such enthusiasm and dedication to put together a fantastic Enormous Crocodile show. Through this they have gained many skills including confidence building, cooperation, listening skills, expression and clarity. Many children overcame their fears and stepped out of their comfort zone for this project. The Year 3 team have enjoyed developing the children's skills, strengths and their confidence. We couldn't be prouder of their accomplishments. We were delighted to be the first year group to use the new stage lighting. It transformed our stage into a theatre. Huge thanks to the parents once again for their support with costumes and line learning.

Here are some of our wonderful reflections:

"I'm happy to be involved in the play. I like having the opportunity to perform in front of an audience." Emily M
"I am not scared of talking in front of a giant crowd anymore." Maggie

"This is my second time being on the stage with an audience, and I am really enjoying it." Molly

"I've got better at speaking slowly, not caring what other people think of me and being loud." Penny

I've loved doing the hip hop dance to the music." Jovi

"I have got better at speaking with expression, plus I have overcome the habit of mumbling." Feyinti

"This is our first performance in Year 3, I am scared because I want to do a good job." Phoebe

"I have got better at knowing how to do a dance off by heart." Gwen

"I've enjoyed being a narrator and all the extra parts I've been given." Edie

"I had so much fun doing it. I learnt how to be confident."

"I like the whole experience, it's a lot of fun!" Emily C



Thank you!

We raised £143.65p with our Year 3 cake sale.

Thank you to everyone who supported this event.



Sports at Fir Tree

We were recently awarded a fabulous looking trophy for our commitment to girls' football last year. In addition to two partnership tournaments, our girls also won the Vale league. It was a great year for the girls and we hope to rejoin the league next year.



Twenty year 6's visited Wallingford school recently to participate in the Year 5/6 Sportshall Athletics tournament. There was a range of events from relay, sprint, 6 lap parlauf, obstacle, soft javelin, chest push, standing jump and triple jump and each athlete could compete in a maximum of 5 events. Our team really shone in the throwing and jumping events and overall we came a magnificent 2nd place. Well done for great teamwork and determination!



Our amazing year 3 dancers recently took part in The Oxfordshire Schools Dance Festival. With over thirty schools participating, our year 3's were the youngest group to perform and they also received a special mention for performing the oldest type of dance in the show, which was a country dancing routine. Dressed in their Fir Tree blue sashes and jangly bracelets, they took to the stage and performed with such confidence, professionalism and enthusiasm and completely stole the show (in my opinion!) Thank you to all the parents for their support and a special thanks to Sanusha for buying the bracelets that they wore.

Discover Bucks
Museum
& Roald Dahl Children's Gallery

Discover Bucks Museum
Church Street
Aylesbury HP20 2QP
discoverbucksmuseum.org
01296 331441

February Half Term

15 - 23 February 2025

This February half term at Discover Bucks Museum, enjoy Wild Science animal encounters, funky frame craft, interactive storytelling, and more! Perfect for family fun and hands-on learning adventures.

For more event details, charges and to book please scan the QR code or visit discoverbucksmuseum.org

