

# Fir Tree Newsletter



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December 2024 Christmas Issue 369

Dear Families,

What a busy Autumn term it has been!

It is important that we thank our wonderful PTA volunteers for their efforts in the run-up to Christmas. The Christmas Fayre was a great success with around £2,500 raised, which will go towards supporting the educational opportunities we provide for our current pupils.

As ever, our Christmas lunches were a roaring success – many thanks to Siva, Sanusha and the very many parents who gave up their time to support us, not forgetting our teaching and support staff who all 'mucked in' together.

We will be saying goodbye to Mrs Baker at the end of term. We thank her for her efforts in her short time with us as well as wishing her well for the future. Mrs Durman will be teaching Maple class from January and is very much looking forward to getting started. Mr Shallis and Mrs Coleman recently joined our team as Teaching Assistants – we hope they are very happy here at Fir Tree.

The Spring term starts at the usual time on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025. It is a six week half-term, which ends on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February. The second half of the Spring term starts on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February, and ends for the Easter break at 14.15 on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April.

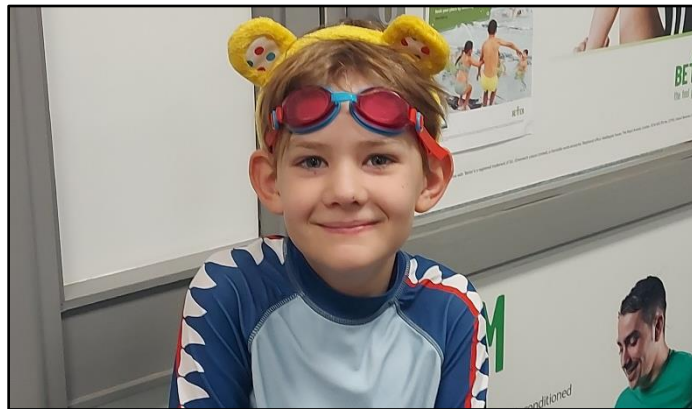
We will be in touch in the new year with information on term dates for the 2025/2026 academic year.

I hope you are able to find the time to relax over the festive period.

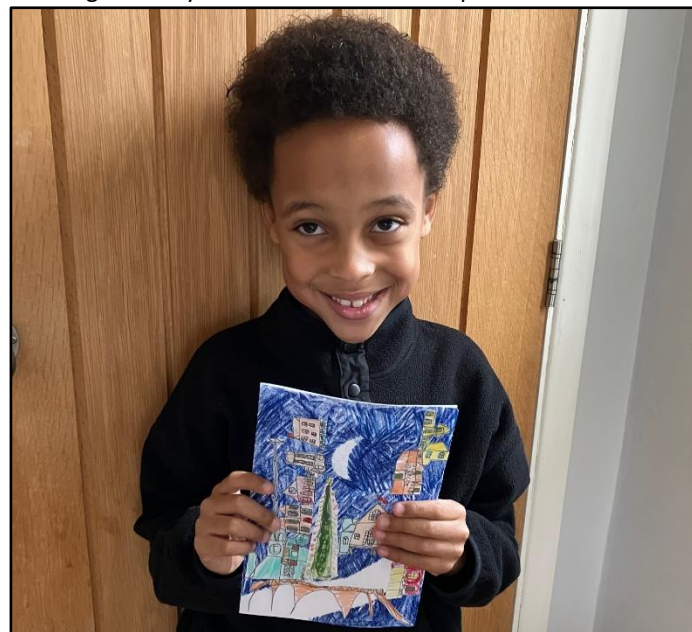
Merry Christmas!

Mr Knight

Rory in Year 4 was inspired by Children in Need and decided he wanted to do a sponsored swim to raise some extra money towards this charity. His target distance was 56 lengths (this is just over 1km) which he completed. He raised £121 and we're super proud of him.



A huge well done to Hudson in Year 3 who won this year's Wallingford Mayor's Christmas Card competition.



Ronan in Year 3 took part in a gymnastics competition and did really well. He won 4 medals for first and second places. A ribbon for fourth place and the coaches trophy for being the best in his group. Well done!



**NSPCC**  
**Still here**  
**for children**



- Childline remains open for children and young people throughout December, including Christmas Day, for any questions, concerns or worries they may have.
- Last year, our Childline service delivered almost 5,500 counselling sessions to children and young people over the 12 Days of Christmas (24 December 2023 to 4 January 2024), averaging more than 450 a day.



**Well**  
**DONE!**

### News from Year 3

For many children, it was their first time at a pantomime when we went to watch Sleeping Beauty at the Oxford Playhouse. The pantomime performance was filled with fun and laughter with some spectacular special effects too. We absolutely loved the show as there was plenty of audience participation. We had an amazing time! Here are some of the comments the children made about it.

“It was so good, there was so much to watch going on!”

“It made me laugh, especially when Nelly was ‘in love’ with Sam who was just a teacher from another school who was sat in the audience.”

“Some people got sweets they were so lucky!”

“We had to do a very silly dance and swing our pants!”

“I did so much booing and hissing!”

“There were so many effects - bubbles, confetti, pies to splat in faces, glitter ball sparkle and magic. Someone disappeared in a cupboard!”

“I hope we can go again and sit nearer the front next time. Next year, the Year 3’s should definitely go!”

“The stage kept changing – it was so clever how everything moved around for different parts of the story.”



Recently, Year 3 got the opportunity to plant golden trumpet daffodil bulbs with Mel and then take them home to nurture over the winter. Compost is made from organic materials that have decomposed, such as: leaves, food scraps, grass and tree clippings, straw and more.

We learnt not to pack down the compost too firmly so that the bulbs had room to grow. We had to remember to plant the bulb the right way up (which meant hairy roots go down and the pointy nose end sticks up!). The bulbs needed to be covered over with compost in order to grow. Many children thought that the bulbs looked like an onion, however, we learnt from Mel that they are actually toxic, meaning poisonous or harmful. Mel gave us a top tip of not over watering them and showed us the drainage holes in the pot. The trickiest part of this session was pairing up the gloves at the end of the session. We rolled them up, like you would do with a pair of socks. More practise is needed at this (maybe a learning activity/skill to be learnt over the holidays?).

When your bulbs grow into splendid daffodils in the Spring, why not take a picture of them and bring it back it to school to show everyone, do an observational drawing or painting of it, or measure it every couple of days to see how quickly it grows.



Date	Event
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> January	Term 3 begins – 8:45am
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> January	Cherry Bikeability week
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 5 swimming
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> January	Silver Birch Bikeability week
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 5 swimming
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 6 Ashmolean visit
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	Year 5 swimming
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> January	Sheldonian Theatre Visit
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> January	Y3 Dance Festival – New Theatre
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> January	Y6 to watch Wallingford School Production
Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 5 swimming
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> January	Y6 Woodlands Parent Meeting – 3:30pm

### Christmas Craft Fayre

A huge thanks to our dedicated PTA for organising another fabulous craft fayre which resulted in raising £2500!

We are extremely grateful to all those involved and all the generosity from stall holders to raffle donations. THANK YOU!



### PE Days

Please check your child's class page for their revised PE days after the Christmas holidays

<https://fir-tree-junior-school.secure-primariesite.net/class-pages/>

### News from Ash – Year 4

In Ash Class, we learnt about different street and graffiti artists. We used research from the artists and online videos to learn how to write the word 'Art' in a graffiti style. Then, we used what we had learnt to write other words, such as 'sea', 'castle' and our names.

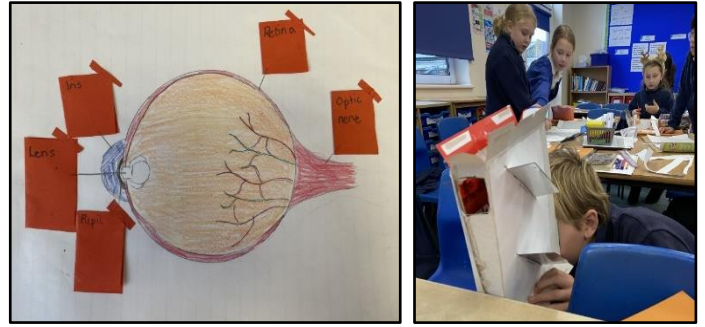
After that, we learnt about Andy Warhol and inspired by his work, we created our own pictures in the style of 'Pop Art'. Each child drew 4 pictures, changing the colour of each sketch and trying their best to make their picture identical.



### News from Cherry – Year 6

In science this term, we have been learning about light and how we see things. To begin with, we learnt about different light sources and we then looked at different parts of the eye and the jobs that each part does.

After this, we looked at how reflections are made and used this knowledge to create our very own periscopes from cereal boxes and mirrors. We learnt that a periscope works by reflecting an image from the bottom mirror to the top mirror; as the light bounces off each mirror, the image reflects into our eye. We were able to see how they were used in the trenches in WW1 to allow soldiers to see over into No Man's Land.



### Christmas Lunches

On Tuesday and Wednesday this week the children enjoyed their Christmas lunch days.

The lunch tables were dressed up and the children were served their lunches by staff.

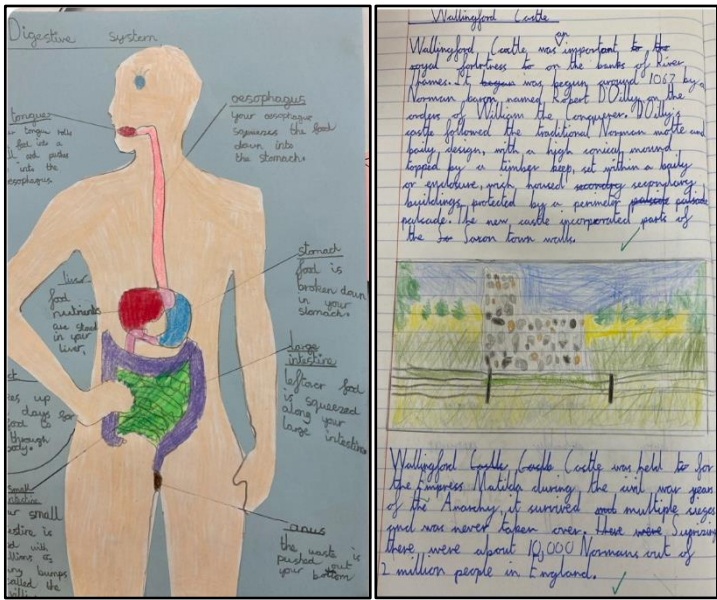
A special mention to all the parents helps this week for their vegetable preparation and serving on the day and of course to Siva and Sanusha for another fantastic festive meal.

### News from Maple – Year 4

Maple class have produced wonderful homework projects based on Wallingford Castle and the digestive system. We have had models, diagrams and fantastic presentations. The presentations even included exciting quizzes! One child created a 'castles' wordsearch for the whole class to tackle! The children have thoroughly enjoyed these projects this term. Great imaginary games were also created about teeth and the digestive system!

In addition to this, children have taken part in a fantastic carol concert which was well attended. Maple class worked hard to learn actions and words to 'Jingle Bell Rock'.

PE sessions with Mr Mule have given children the skills to learn and play tag rugby and hockey. Great team spirit has been demonstrated amongst the class.



## News from Sycamore – Year 5

Sycamore had a fantastic visit by Dr Sarah Burge from Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust who delivered an exciting workshop about Victorian medicine. During the visit, the children were introduced to four pioneers of medicine (including Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole, Dr John Snow and Dr Wilhelm Rontgen) who have helped shaped the landscape for today's treatments and procedures. Our first activity involved solving the problem of where cholera was coming from in a Victorian town (just like Dr Snow) using some interesting samples! Following this, we explored the use of X-rays and why they are helpful. Finally, we explored the importance of washing our hands via the use of UV paint. This was concluded with many intriguing questions about the lives of the Victorians and what it's like to be a radiographer today.



We were invited to a hockey tournament at Wallingford School. Fir Tree A team managed to secure one win, two draws and one loss to a very good Benson side, finishing in 4th place out of 8 teams. Fir Tree B also played some fantastic hockey and won two out of their four matches and drawing their final two. Our B team secured 2nd place, finishing just behind a strong Benson team. A massive well done to all of our hockey players!



Once again our PTA were spreading Christmas cheer collecting with the Wallingford 1155

**Ho Ho Ho**



**St Mary's and St Leonards Wallingford**

**Crib Service**

for families and children

Tuesday 24 December  
3pm and 4.30pm,  
St Mary's

For The Star  
CAL-1000



## News from Chestnut – Year 5

To help us understand even more about Victorian life, we spent the day in role as Victorian children. When we arrived, the classroom was set out in rows and girls and boys were seated on different sides of the classroom. During the morning, we followed a typical Victorian timetable of reading, writing and arithmetic. We learned how to use a copper plate script, chanted our times-tables out by rote and we put our addition skills to the test with some tricky column addition sums. Following Victorian school rules was tricky - we didn't like that everyone was forced to write with their right hand, we had to stand up every time an adult entered the room and had to refer to all adults as 'Sir' or 'Miss'. Victorian PE was very different - we enjoyed taking part in 'drills' to develop our coordination and listening skills which involved lots of arm exercises, marching and stretches. After lunch, it was domestic lessons (this would have only been for the girls) where we learned how to wash clothes using real Victorian washing equipment. It was hard work! Our other lesson was technical drawing - we all had a go at drawing 3D shapes with perspective but in the Victorian time it would have only been boys who would have learned how to draw using lines and angles.



## News from Silver Birch - Year 6

Silver Birch have been busy learning all about Hanukkah - the Jewish festival of light. They learnt the story behind the festival and created story boards to enable themselves to orally retell the story. They did this confidently, remembering key facts and understanding why Hanukkah is celebrated today. They then used this knowledge to rewrite the story in their own words.

