

Fir Tree Newsletter



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October 2024 Issue 367

Dear Families,

All of a sudden we find ourselves at the end of an action-packed term 1! The children have worked hard and need some time to recharge their batteries ahead of the new half term which runs up until Christmas.

Miss Archer and I recently met with our committed group of PTA volunteers and we discussed plans for some exciting fundraising events in the coming months, as well as thinking about how we might deploy some of the funding their hard work helped to gather last year. In the coming weeks our PTA will be sharing some information on how and when you can make a contribution to the important work they do. We are all very appreciative of their efforts which will enable us, among other things, to purchase some new non-fiction texts and some new sports equipment.

One or two people have asked us about national testing and what that will look like this year. Pupils in Y4 will undertake the multiplication check during the summer term. Families can find out about this by clicking [here](#): Like the majority of pupils nationally, pupils in Y6 will take some tests, often referred to as SATs, in May 2025. Parents can find out more by clicking [here](#): Though this information relates to the process in 2024, the process will be identical next summer.

For parents of children currently in Y6, a reminder that the deadline for submitting an application for a place at secondary school is looming (Thursday 31st October). You can find out more about this process by clicking [here](#):

Our teachers are very much looking forward to sharing positive updates and next steps with families at the forthcoming Parent/Teacher meetings. These are scheduled for Tuesday 26th November and Thursday 28th November. We will be in touch shortly with information on how you can book an appointment.

Like very many schools, parking spaces at busy drop-off and pick-up times are very much at a premium here at Fir Tree. We therefore ask that you drive and park respectfully without blocking the driveways of local residents.

A reminder that there are staff training days planned for the start (Monday 4th November) and end (Friday 20th December) of the next half term. School will be closed for pupils on these dates. The spring term begins for pupils at the usual time on Monday 6th January 2025.

We hope you are able to find some time to relax over the half-term break. We look forward to seeing you all at the usual time on Tuesday 5th November.

We thank you for working in partnership with us.

With warm regards,

Mr Knight and the school team

Owen, Hugo and Ronan from year 3 recently played in a rugby tournament. The boys played brilliantly. They showed teamwork, perseverance and enjoyed each and every game - finishing off with receiving medals.

Well done boys!



 Thank you 



9 October 2024

Mr M Knight
Fir Tree Junior School,
Radnor Road,
Wallingford, OX10 0NY

Dear Mr Knight,

I write on behalf of the Wallingford food bank to thank your students, parents and staff for the donations received yesterday.

We were so grateful to receive your harvest gifts. It is very encouraging to find the community at Fir Tree school, still able to support us in this way.

We continue to experience high demand, so the food you have donated is very welcome.

Yours sincerely

Alice Penney
Manager



News from Maple – Year 4

Maple class have been learning 'The River' poem by Valerie Bloom. We have identified poetic devices and worked together to perform the poem. We thought about rhythm and pace, tone of voice, eye contact and thoughtful movement. The children enjoyed sharing some of their amazing homework projects. We had an array of posters, board games, map work and even some river stories!



News from Willow – Year 3

In Science, we've been thinking like geologists! We've been learning how to group rocks based on their properties and make careful observations. We looked closely at a selection of rocks and tested them for certain characteristics. The tests include durability, permeability, streak/colour, acid (vinegar) and magnetism. Through testing, we were able to recognise similar features of different rocks. We have learnt that there are three types of natural rock – igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic. Interestingly, igneous rocks are formed from cooled molten material and often appear to have crystals and are never in layers. Sedimentary rocks are formed from sediments or something that has been deposited by water. They have a layered appearance, feel gritty and break easily. Metamorphic rocks start off as either sedimentary or igneous rock and then are changed by intense pressure and heat to form metamorphic rock.

Here are some of our reflections:

"Chalk can break really easily so it's the least durable." Owen
 "It was interesting reading about sedimentary rocks, I didn't know that they are used for big cliffs." Emily M
 "You can't scratch the granite, it's very durable." Jovi
 "None of the rocks were attracted to the magnet so none of them had iron in." Bodhi
 "The most permeable rock is the chalk." Ethan
 "I think the sandstone is permeable, it will soak up the water quickly." Stanley

Rock	Testing for other properties			
	Does it make a colour/streak	Is the rock attracted by the magnet?	Acid Test	Does it reflect light? Is it smooth and shiny?
Granite	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marble	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sandstone	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chalk	✓	✓	✓	✓

Rock	Hardness/Durability Test			
	Finger nail	Paper clip	Nail	Sandpaper - number of rubs
Granite	✓	✓	✓	15
Slate	✓	✓	✓	15
Marble	✓	✓	✓	15
Sandstone	✓	✓	✓	15
Chalk	✓	✓	✓	15
Flint	✓	✓	✓	17

Rock	Does it absorb water? (Permeability)			
	Yes after 1 minute	Yes after 2 minutes	Yes after 5 minutes	No
Granite	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slate	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marble	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sandstone	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chalk	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flint	✓	✓	✓	✓

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 25 th October	End of term 1 – 3:15pm finish
Mon 28 th Oct – Fri 1 st Nov	Half term
Monday 4 th November	ODST INSET day
Tuesday 5 th November	Term 2 begins
Tuesday 5 th November	Cherry swimming
Wednesday 6 th November	Silver Birch swimming
Week commencing 11 th Nov	SEN Parent phone calls
Monday 11 th November	Remembrance Day
Tuesday 12 th November	Cherry swimming
Wednesday 13 th November	Silver Birch swimming
Thursday 14 th November	Y2 Parent Open Morning
Friday 15 th November	Children in Need
Tuesday 19 th November	Cherry swimming
Wednesday 20 th November	Silver Birch swimming
Tuesday 26 th November	Cherry swimming
Tuesday 26 th November	Parent meetings 4-6:30pm
Wednesday 27 th November	Silver Birch swimming
Thursday 28 th November	Cherry swimming
Friday 29 th November	PTA – non uniform day
Tuesday 3 rd November	Cherry swimming
Wednesday 4 th November	Silver Birch swimming
Friday 6 th November	PTA Christmas Craft Fayre 5-7pm

CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRE

Friday 6th December
5-7pm

PTA NON-UNIFORM DAY

Friday 29th November
Please bring in a raffle prize

HELP NEEDED

Volunteers urgently needed to help keep our PTA alive. If you are able to help or to find our more information please email:

firtreeschoolpta@gmail.com

PTA CAKE SALE

Thank you to everyone who donated and bought cakes. We raised an amazing £219 !



News from Silver Birch – Year 6

This week Silver Birch retold the story of Macbeth in the style of a rap. The enthusiasm and talent shown amongst all of the groups were amazing. They worked in pairs or small groups to write their rap and stepped into the role, learning their lines, adding actions and swagger, and performing in front of each other in a Rap Battle.

Here is a taster of one of the raps -

*This starts with Macbeth the best in the West
the man who sends knives through men's chests
But this was the season with treason for no reason
After the flood in the mud, some witches promised him riches, they were the snitches of the future stitches*

Hail the king x 3

*His wife received a letter that was trying to make her feel better
now she is the Grim Reaper trendsetter
Following the feast the king was deceased
a dagger with swagger and a knife to end a life*

Hail the King x 3



News from Cedar – Year 3

Clay pots

In the Neolithic (New) period of the Stone Age, clay pots were made. First, we watched and discussed a video clip in which an ancient pottery specialist demonstrated how people would have moulded, decorated and fired a grooved ware pot made from crushed raw clay, grog (old, crushed pots), quartz and water. The potter started with a base formed from a ball of clay and moulded a coil onto the base to build up the sides of a barrel-shaped pot. He then smoothed and neatened the surfaces with a bone scraper and worked patterns (grooves) into the wet clay with a pointed tool.

Children initially engaged in experimenting with 'clay play', reminding themselves of its possibilities as an art medium and exploring mark.

After making a pot shape that would stand and balance, they used tools to smooth the sides and to level out the top, then they scratched patterns onto their pots. Many wanted to recreate the patterns they had seen in the video, but others added different lines and shapes, such as dots, dashes and diamonds.

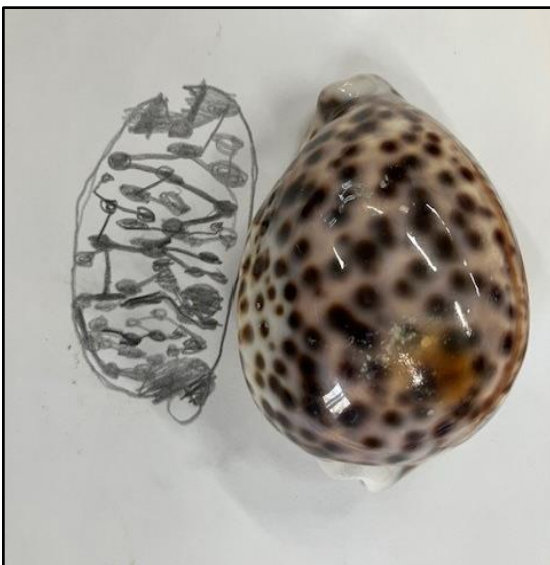
Continuous drawing

One of the keys to good drawing is having a good level of observation. Using a continuous line drawing technique teaches children to observe closely, noticing small detail, drawing with your pencil as your eyes travel around the object you are copying. Not allowing your pencil to lift off the page encourages focus and concentration. Lines can be revisited to create darker shades and depth. Mistakes do not get rubbed out, simply drawn over. This activity is a quick, time restricted task to 5 mins only which can be completed with any small items such as a bunch of keys, toy animals, toy vehicles, feathers etc. Why not have a go in the half term holiday and send the results into Mrs Giles?

French

Bonjour! Salut! Since the beginning of the academic year, we have been learning the French letters of the alphabet and several phonic sounds.

At the time of writing we have learnt these phonics; ch, oi, ou, on, i, ique, ille and in. We have looked at examples of words containing these phonemes such as; cinq (5), six (6), cheval (horse), oiseau (bird), famille (family), musique (music) and cochon (pig). French accents are coming on really well within the class.



Sporting news

We had our first partnership tournament of this academic year recently at Wallingford school and eight teams took part in the girls' football tournament. We took two teams to represent our school, and both demonstrated excellent skill and sportsmanship. Fir Tree A played four matches and overall came 3rd and Fir Tree B played three matches and overall came 5th. Well done to both teams! Apologies to Team B, Mrs Downs forgot to take your photo.

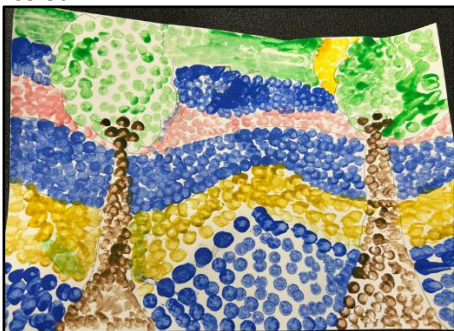


What a fantastic partnership netball tournament we recently played. There were 13 teams taking part altogether and our three teams were in two different pools. Our A Team played five matches and won five and drew one. A special mention to Elodie for her impressive goal shooting. This means that our A Team is through to the next round. Our B and C Team played six matches each and there were some excellent wins for both teams. It was great to see all teams gaining in confidence and their play improving as the tournament went on. We witnessed some excellent defence from Zeph, Logan and Tom and a beauty of a goal scored by Albie from long range! Thank you to the Fir Tree adults for supporting the teams at the tournament. We are only able to take more than one team thanks to the adults that volunteer their time to go along.



News from Ash – Year 4

In Ash Class, we have been learning about Pointillism and using cotton buds and paint to create a tree to practise the technique. It takes a lot of time and focus to create each individual dot but the hard work pays off when you are finished. Before beginning to paint, each group mixed their own colours using the primary colours. Then, inspired by our 'Rivers' project, everyone designed their own river scene and used the skill of Pointillism to add colour.



Parenting in the Digital Age Webinar:

What you need to know

Join us for an informative and insightful discussion about safe internet access and screen time for our children and teenagers.



What's New? Online Safety Advice for Parents

Based on the latest research and findings, our speakers will share up to date information as well as practical advice and ideas about how to keep our children and teenagers connected but safe in a digital world.

Our Speakers:

Dr Gemma Maynard - Former Local GP

Amanda Stephens - Bereaved Parent for Online Safety

Whether your child already owns a smartphone or it is something you are thinking about in the future, this talk is for you.

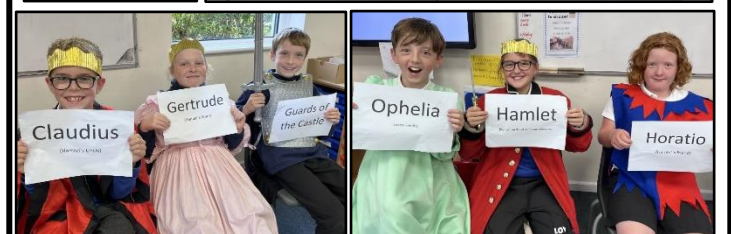
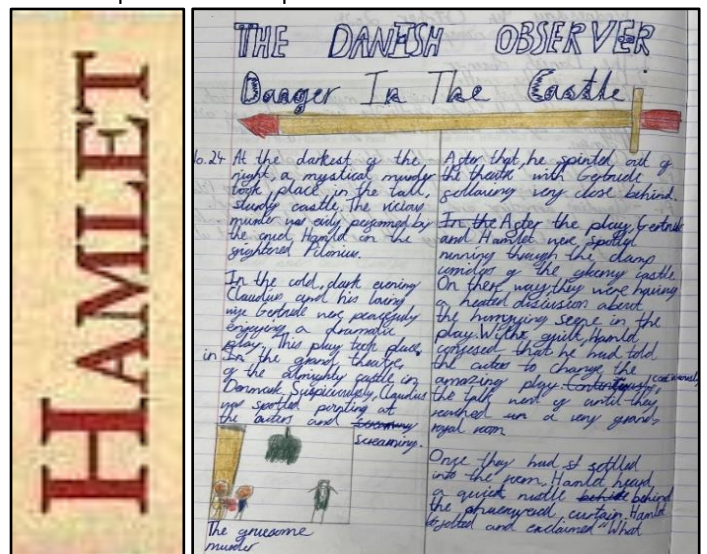
Tuesday 12th November
6-7.30pm

For more info & to receive joining instructions for this (FREE) webinar please scan the QR code or click to: [Register Here](#)



News from Sycamore – Year 5

Sycamore have written fantastic newspaper reports about the exciting events leading up to Hamlet's banishment to England. We have included a range of features including fronted adverbials, headlines, standfirsts, brackets and semi-colons. We also used 'hot seating' to get into the role of some of the play's characters. We used these sessions to write direct and indirect speech in our reports.



News from the garden

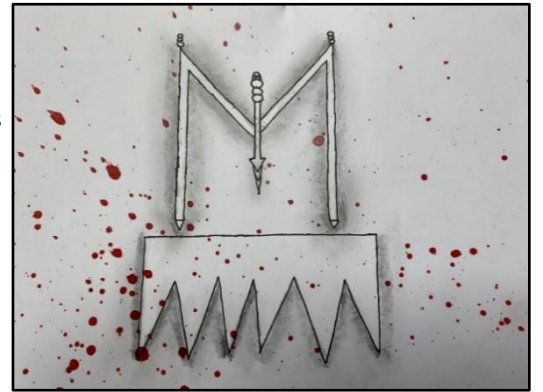
Mel and her volunteer Jenny has been busy harvesting our garden this term. Just look at some of the amazing fruit and vegetables that have been cooked fresh for the children's lunches.



We are also very grateful to everyone who recently voted for us in a competition run by Root One garden centre. We were runners up and were gifted daffodil bulbs and pots.

News from Cherry – Year 6

Our main project we have been focusing on this term is Macbeth; we have been analysing key characters and themes within the play, as well as getting a good understanding of the plot and key events. To help us better understand Macbeth's inner thoughts, Cherry class did a conscience alley and imagined what different thoughts Macbeth might be having about murdering King Duncan. We also stepped into the shoes of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and the guards through hot seating where we interviewed the characters about their involvement with King Duncan's death – there were some incredibly convincing performances! Cherry class then used this drama to inform their newspaper reports about King Duncan's death; they worked hard to create some witty headlines. Finally, we represented the key themes of death, evil and greed through our artwork. Everybody chose symbols and colours to show these themes and then used pencil, pen and drawing ink to bring these to life.



News from Chestnut – Year 5

During our 'Hamlet' project, we've enjoyed investigating the origins of the Tudor Rose and recreating our own roses through sketching and clay. We learned different sculpting techniques and how to attach two pieces of the flower using scoring. We had to work carefully and with great patience and resilience because making the tiny parts of the flower was really tricky to do!






Handel's Messiah

Performed by
Waterperry Opera Festival
in aid of Wallingford Emergency Food Bank

**Sunday
8 December**
7.00 pm to 9.30 pm
St Mary-le-More
Wallingford
OX10 0EG

Doors open 6.30 pm. Mulled wine and soft drinks available. Tickets: £22

Limited seating. Book now at wallingfordfoodbank.org.uk



An exquisite festive evening awaits on your doorstep!

Waterperry Opera Festival bring their ensemble of renowned singers and period instrumentalists to perform a candlelit Messiah concert. With a reduced orchestra and five soloists this intimate performance closely resembles how the piece would have been originally performed.

KIDS Circus fun

www.graceandgravity.studio/events/workshops



TRY Aerial Silks

Kids Aerial Silks with Sabine (9yrs - Teen)
Sunday 20th October 10.25 - 11.25 £15





TRY Mixed Circus

Includes aerial hoop, silks, trapeze plus acrobatics, partnering, juggling.
Kids Monthly Circus club with Sabine - 5 years plus
Sunday 20th October 11.35 - 12.35 £15





TRY Aerial Hoop

Kids Aerial Hoop with Luana (6 - 12 years)
Wednesday 30th October 14.00 - 16.00 £30





TRY Family Aerial

It's £30 per sling which can be used by up to two children and 1 adult.

Family Aerial Yoga & Circus with Esther
Sunday 17th November 10.00 - 11.00 £30

Family Aerial Yoga & Circus with Esther
Sunday 1st December 10.00 - 11.00 £30



Grace and Gravity Studio, Innovation Annexe, W-13, Howbery Business Park, Wallingford, OX10 8BA