

Fir Tree Newsletter



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Dear Families,

I hope you are well as we reach the midpoint of this first half term of the year. A special Fir Tree welcome to those families who are new to our school community – you are very welcome!

In recent assemblies we have been talking about values – principles that guide our thinking and behaviour. At present, our values are respect, friendship, tolerance, courage, perseverance and responsibility. We tend to focus on a specific value each half term, which does not mean we do not encourage children and adults to model values which are not the current 'theme'. We try and unpick what values 'look like' in practical situations. There are some values which though are not an 'official' Fir Tree values we try and encourage and model. For example, James in Y4 recently demonstrated the value of honesty when during a game of football he knew that his team had scored a goal unfairly so spoke out. Despite knowing this would cost his team the game, he showed honesty and courage to do the right thing. This half term there has been lots of change (new teachers etc.) so we have been thinking about the value of courage, which is often portrayed in terms of battles or competitions. We discussed how we sometimes have to demonstrate the value of courage when trying something new. During the course of this year, there will be the opportunity for you to contribute to a review of our vision and values.

A warm Fir Tree welcome to some new colleagues who have joined our team. Mrs Baker is teaching a Y4 class and is our Interim Assistant Headteacher. Mrs Tremlett is teaching alongside Mrs Ash in Y5, while Mrs Joy and Mrs Macdonald have joined us as Teaching Assistants. A familiar face, that of Mr Mule, is now 'officially' part of the Fir Tree team. We hope these new colleagues will be very happy with us. You will recall that Mrs Stockley took up the role of Home School Link Worker during the summer term. Like me, you will see her around during morning drop-off so please pop over for a chat if you need to. Mrs Ash has taken up her role as SENDCo and we wish her well for this.

As mentioned in previous communications from the school, your first port of call when needing to discuss any aspect of your child's education must be their teacher as they are the professional who spends the most time with them. Following this, you may want to talk to a school leader such as Mrs Baker or me. We thank you in advance for following this important protocol.

Last year we were thrilled to receive updates from families on achievements from outside of school – it is wonderful to see children thriving in different contexts. Please send any information through to the office and we will include details in forthcoming newsletters.

You will have seen in recent updates that there are some changes around unauthorised absence which could result in a financial penalty for parents/carers. We are obviously very keen to work with you to avoid this, so please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Stockley or I to discuss.

A reminder that term one ends for pupils at 3.15 on Friday 25th October. Alongside this, term two starts for pupils on Tuesday 5th November. Monday 4th November is a training day for staff in all ODST schools. We thank you for working in partnership with us.

Warm regards

Mr Knight

A big well done to Rory in Year 3 who showed great community spirit by asking his parents if he could go litter picking. He did a great job cleaning up after others in the Bullcroft. Thank you Rory for helping to keep our town litter free.



Your PTA needs you!



The PTA committee would like to welcome everyone to the new school year. We are looking for more parents to join our committee to help us continue to raise funds to enhance our children's curriculum and provide fun and exciting events for all to enjoy. Please email firtreeschoolpta@gmail.com if you'd like to know more



**SEVERE
ALLERGIES
ALERT**



Please be reminded that due to severe allergies in school we are strictly a nut and seed free zone. Thank you

News from Chestnut – Year 5

Chestnut Class have settled brilliantly into Year 5 and Mrs Ash and Mrs Tremlett have been impressed with their creativity, perseverance and teamwork as they've explored new topics, books and experiences.

The class thoroughly enjoyed their first guitar session and were able to retrieve and apply their super musical skills and knowledge which they have gained from their prior Y3 recorder lessons and Y4 brass lessons. In the first session, they learned the names of the guitar strings, the different parts of the guitar and even learnt their first chord.

The class have enjoyed exploring the origins of the Willow Pattern plate through a beautiful picture book by Allan Drummond. We unpicked the vocabulary of the story, summarised and sequenced the events and used this knowledge to help us create our own comic strips of the tale.

In Art, we learned a range of different coiling and plaiting techniques with tissue paper to create the branches of our own willow tree and developed our sketching skills to design our own willow pattern plates using key images from the story.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 1 st October	Cherry swimming
Wednesday 2 nd October	Silver Birch swimming
Tuesday 8 th October	Cherry swimming
Wednesday 9 th October	Silver Birch swimming
Friday 11 th October	Whole School Immunisation Programme
Tuesday 15 th October	Cherry swimming
Wednesday 16 th October	Silver Birch swimming
Thursday 17 th October	BPI Individual Photographs
Friday 18 th October	PTA Cake Sale
Tuesday 22 nd October	Cherry swimming
Wednesday 23 rd October	Silver Birch swimming
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



Friday 6th December
5-7pm

Music Opportunities at Fir Tree

We've had two visitors at school entertaining the children, demonstrating and promoting the learning of various musical instruments. Lucy Carr, from Oxfordshire County Music Service demonstrated recorder and flute, whilst Judith Atkins, a local private teacher, is offering recorder, clarinet and saxophone lessons. Lessons are available during the school day.

We have children learning keyboard/piano with Judith Ward also from Oxfordshire County Music Service. and guitar lessons with Alex from the Oxfordshire County Music Service. Create Music also offer guitar lessons in groups of 6.

Lessons can be offered individually, in pairs or small groups in most cases. Sometimes there is a waiting list with the Oxfordshire County Music Service if you opt for group lessons, as they prefer to wait for a group of 4 starters.

To sign up for lessons with the Oxfordshire County Music Service, please visit their website:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/music-service>

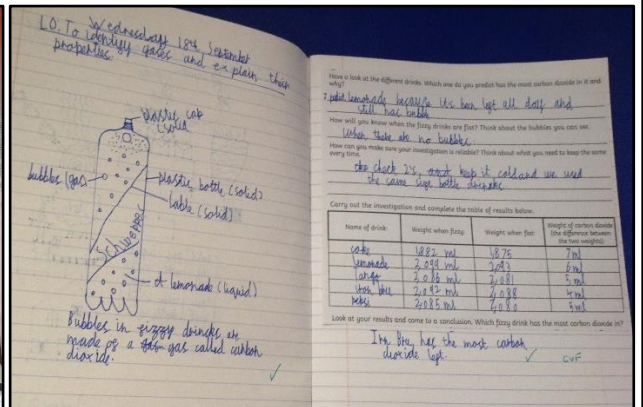
If your child is entitled to free school meals, lessons may be partly subsidised. For more information see the 'Help with payments' section of the website.

Anyone wishing to continue brass learning from last year with Mr Browne should contact the Music Service.

There is also a singing club available after school on a Monday run by Mrs Giles. We have some exciting opportunities lined up in the future and it would be lovely to have more members join us. We will be doing a variety of songs from different genres as well as singing games. Please do speak to Mrs Giles in Cedar Class for more information on any tuition.

News from Maple – Year 4

Maple class have settled into year 4 really well. The children are thoroughly enjoying our rivers project and in the process of writing a non-chronological report. Many facts have been researched about the river's journey. In science the children are learning about solids, liquids and gases. Last week we discovered something very interesting about fizzy drinks after carrying out an investigation. We have lots more to find out in science this term with many other exciting investigations planned!



News from Sycamore – Year 5

Sycamore have started the term by exploring Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'. Sycamore have used their debating skills to argue whether Hamlet should seek revenge and avenge the death of his father by capturing Claudius. We have compared and contrasted ideas and used appropriate phrasing when adding to points of view. Our debates have produced some very enthusiastic responses! In addition, we have used our understanding of types of conjunctions and applied these to our own discussion texts. Within our discussions, Sycamore have explored whether they should or should not seek their own revenge. We have included emotive language and used our writing in role skills to give our discussions a unique feel.



News from Cherry – Year 6

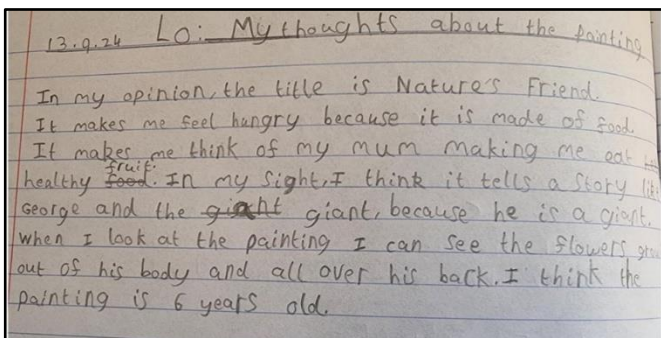
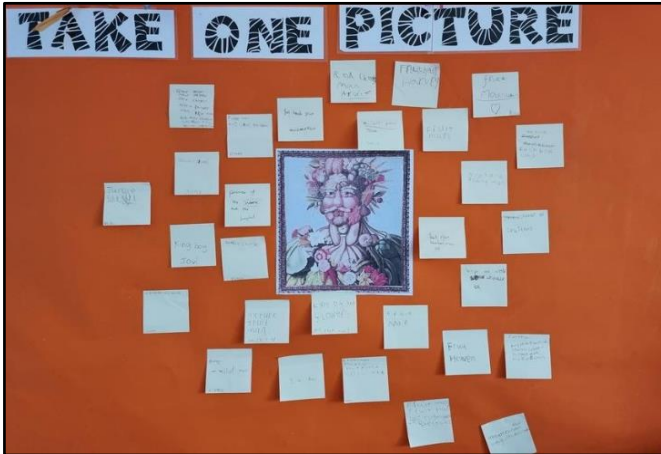
In science this term, Year 6 have been exploring the evolution of life, looking at where species come from and how they adapt and evolve over time. For our first science lesson of the term, Cherry class did a hands-on experiment to extract the DNA from a strawberry. With careful precision, they mashed the strawberries in a zip-lock sandwich bag to break them down. Adding a solution of washing up liquid, salt, and water, the class watched in as the cell membranes released the DNA into the mixture. The coffee filters acted as a sieve, separating the pulp from the genetic material which filtered down into a beaker below.

Finally, as the students slowly poured alcohol solution into the mixture, delicate white strands of DNA began to form at the interface of the two liquids. Cherry class had successfully extracted the genetic blueprint of a strawberry!



News from Willow – Year 3

Willow class have had a fantastic start to their first term at Fir Tree as Year 3. We've started our first project, Take One Picture where we have explored the painting 'Vertumnus' by Italian artist, Giuseppe Arcimboldo. First, we generated questions about the painting using the 5ws (who, what, why, when and where). Then, we came up our own titles for the painting. Willow class had some amazing ideas! After, we discussed how the painting makes us feel and whether it reminds us of anything. We ended the project by investigating the historical background of the artist and creating a fact file. Here is some of our wonderful work.



After a few weeks at Fir Tree, here are some of the children's thoughts about their new school:

- "I've enjoyed everything!" Emily C*
- "I love playtimes, Fir Tree is so big!" JJ*
- "I have enjoyed maths lessons!" Pippa*
- "I love PE! It's a lot of fun Callum*

News from Silver Birch – Year 6

In Silver Birch, our term started with 'Take One Picture,' and we studied several paintings by the artist David Hockney. Hockney was inspired to paint swimming pools after moving to California. He loved the patterns he could see in the water and the different colours and shades of blue. We created stunning batik prints, inspired by his work.



Who killed King Duncan? We had four visitors to Silver Birch recently: Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, a guard and a servant. We had to think of open questions to determine who committed such a heinous crime. We hot-seated our guests and they really had to step into their character's shoes and think on their feet. The majority of us were convinced that Macbeth committed regicide - will Macbeth be found guilty of such a horrific crime?



We are super proud of Amy in Silver Birch for being so self-smart. Amy is busy making scrunchies to sell with half of the profits donated to our school. If you would like to place an order, please speak to Amy and choose your design from the colourful array of fabric that she has. All scrunchies cost £1.50 and every 75p from the sale will be donated to Fir Tree. Well done Amy for being so creative, we're sure we'll see you on Dragon's Den.



News from Cedar – Year 3

Cedar Class are settling in nicely to a new school and new routines. All the staff are really enjoying getting to know everyone and discovering their many interests, skills, knowledge and talents. We learnt about Stonehenge which is the world's most famous stone circle. The land there is flat. Early British people settled there. Some people believed the stones had special powers. The bluestones at Stonehenge come from Wales and are not actually blue, they are grey! Some of the sandstones used are 4-7 metres high and weigh as much as eight female elephants. Some of the stones have fallen. Some are missing. Others have been damaged by the weather. Many tourists travel to England to see the stones.

PC Haynes came to visit Year 3 to talk about 'differences' between people, bullying and what to do and where to turn for help. The activities that she led showed that although people are different, they often have many things in common with each other. Children who had been in different classes at St Nicholas found out a lot about each other. She promoted celebrating those differences, showing respect and tolerance.

