



Dear Families,

All of a sudden we find ourselves at the end of the academic year!

Despite the extreme weather, lots has been accomplished during the summer term. Our Y6 production of Oliver! Was a huge success and enabled our pupils to showcase their talents and hard work. Thank you to the staff who went above and beyond in their work preparing props and backdrops. Our Y4 pupils recently achieved great success in the national Y4 multiplication check, achieving the school's best ever results. We welcomed Mrs Grant to our school at the start of the summer term and she and her colleagues have worked hard to ensure that everything is in place for the school's first ever Reception cohort who are excited to be joining Fir Tree in September. The repurposed building and associated grounds are very nearly complete – we are hoping to be able to move furniture in during the course of this week. Transition day, on which children spent time with their new teacher(s) went well and pupils are well placed to make an encouraging start to the new school year in September. It is exciting to be welcoming new cohorts of Y2 and Y3 children into the Fir Tree family.

Mr Watt, who is going to be the school's Interim Executive Headteacher from September, has been into school on several occasions for handover conversations with me as well as meeting colleagues and some children. He is very excited for what September and beyond will bring. A reminder that he will be in school Wednesday-Friday each week. Mr Wilcox will be covering leadership responsibilities Monday-Tuesday.

The Fir Tree community will be saying goodbye to Mrs Somarakis at the end of term. Many of you will know that she has been working as a Teaching Assistant for a number of years. This year, however, Fir Tree has supported her through teacher training and I am pleased to say she secured her first teaching post at a local school. Their gain is Fir Tree's loss – I know everyone will miss her positivity, commitment and sense of humour. Similarly, Jean, who has been a valued member of the team for a number of years, is taking well-earned retirement. Everyone will miss her sense of fun, her hard work and the chats they have with her! We wish these colleagues all best wishes for the future.

As you will know, this is my last term at Fir Tree having joined the team 3 years ago. I want to thank people across the community for the support and warm wishes I have received over that time. Fir Tree is a wonderful school community and it has been a privilege to lead the school for this period. I wish everyone well for the future!

Our Y6 pupils will be moving on from Fir Tree, too. It goes without saying they go with our best wishes – we have loved getting to know them!

Finally, a reminder that the new term starts for pupils on Monday 7th September.

Have a relaxing and peaceful summer.

Mr Knight

Good luck Mr Knight

The time has come for us to say goodbye to Mr Knight, whose time as part of our amazing Fir Tree community has come to an end after three years as Headteacher.



If you've ever arrived at Fir Tree in the morning, you'll know that Mr Knight is always there to say good morning, greeting everyone with a smile and helping to ensure a positive start to the day. Throughout his time here, he has encouraged us all to be the very best versions of ourselves, inspiring our whole school community to truly flourish.



Whether it's sharing his passion for running, celebrating the successes of our pupils, or making a memorable appearance in the Teachers vs Year 6 end-of-year football match (wearing his Oxford United merch, of course!), Mr Knight has created many lasting memories during his time at Fir Tree.



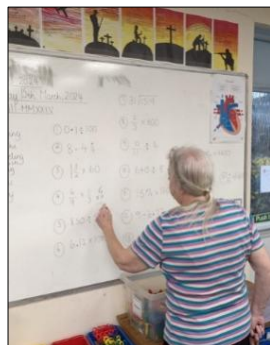
Thank you, Mr Knight, for your dedication, leadership and commitment over the past three years. We wish you every success and happiness as you begin your next chapter.



Other staff changes

We are sadly saying goodbye to two beloved staff members of staff this year.

Mrs Somarakis, who has been with us since 2021, has become a qualified teacher this year and we are extremely proud of her and what she has achieved. She will be leaving us to pursue her teaching career and everyone at Fir Tree will miss her dearly. We would like to thank her for all her contributions to school life; her positivity and enthusiasm have truly shone through and she deserves the very best. Good luck Mrs Somarakis!



Mrs Teles having a go at some maths

We are also losing our longest-serving staff member; Mrs Teles. Mrs Teles has been part of the Fir Tree community for the last forty years. She first joined the team as a lunchtime supervisor and soon became part of the cleaning team too. She has worked in the Kitchen Assistant role and still helps us out in the kitchen at busy times. Her children and grandchildren attended Fir Tree and she has been a huge part of our Fir Tree family. She is finally retiring after reaching her 75th birthday and whilst we are extremely sad to say goodbye, we wish her a very well-deserved rest.

Jean, thank you for your service – you will always hold a special place in the history of our school.



We are delighted to announce that Miss Hutchings will be getting married over the summer. When we return in the Autumn, she will be Mrs Warren. Congratulations and good luck!



News from Chestnut Class

Chestnut Class were very lucky to welcome back our nature expert, Pim Young, for a follow-up nature workshop this term. During her previous visit to us in the Spring, we visited our woodland area and learned how to identify different birds in our local environment. Since then, many of us have become avid users of the Merlin app and can recognise lots of birds just from listening to their calls.

This time, we turned our attention to the insects lower down the food chain and explored the fascinating world living all around us. We learned how many insects use camouflage to blend into their surroundings, although some of us became experts at spotting grasshoppers hidden amongst the grass! We also discussed the importance of caring for even the smallest creatures, as every living thing plays a vital role in the wider food chains within our environment; we learned that keeping long grass and plants for pollinators was essential in helping other species, such as birds, to flourish and thrive.



Pim was blown away by the children's thoughtful questions, sharp observation skills, and the respect they showed towards the plants and insects we encountered.

Among the many species we spotted were white-tailed bumblebees, ashy mining bees, marmalade hoverflies, gatekeeper butterflies, meadow browns, small coppers, dock bugs, grasshoppers, and even a European beewolf — a fascinating type of digger wasp!

Join the Summer Cricket Fun with Oxfordshire Cricket at Berinsfield!

ALL STARS Cricket
ALL STARS - Children aged 5-8years
Session Times: 10am-11am

Dynamos Cricket
Dynamos - Children aged 8-11years
Session Times: 11:15am-12:15pm

Every Thursday from 23rd July - 27th August
LOCATION: Berinsfield Recreation Ground, Berinsfield, OX10 7PS
Get ready to play, bat, bowl, and have a blast this summer!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 16 th July	End of term 6 – School finishes at 2:15pm
Friday 17 th & Monday 20 th July	INSET Days
ENJOY THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS	✳
Tuesday 1 st – Thursday 3 rd September	INSET Days
Friday 4 th September	ODST INSET Day
Monday 7 th September	Autumn term begins
WELCOME TO FIR TREE	PRIMARY SCHOOL

News from Ash Class

This term in RE, we have been learning about how poetry and art is used within different religious world views. Here children are designing their own stain glass window which tells a story of importance to themselves. We decided to utilise the castle and rocks area outside our classroom to sit in the shade to complete our work.



News from Cedar Class

A museum experience brought into school

On the hottest morning that I can ever remember in a school, we had a visit from an expert at The Oxfordshire Museum to deliver a workshop all about the 1960's to support our history learning.

Artefacts, stories and newspaper article evidence were all scrutinised with great curiosity and wonder. Then fashionable items of clothing were tried on whilst we reflected on similarities and differences between then and now. Pupils scratched their heads whilst examining artefacts, working out what they were, how they were used and marvelling at how technology has progressed in a matter of 60 years.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable hands on session (despite the heat) and a valuable and memorable learning opportunity. Topical fun fact: In 1966 there were only 16 teams participating in the FIFA World Cup, compared to 48 teams sixty years later. Can you name those 16 teams?

Paper towers challenge

In groups, the class were challenged to build the tallest paper tower.

The rules...

- Only using newspaper and tape only
- Tower must be free standing
- Tower must be able to stand for 10 seconds

There were different stages to this task; planning, making, and continuous evaluation and reflection. Miss Hall and I were very impressed with the level of cooperation and communication. Group members were heard complimenting each other on their work and ideas, dividing up tasks so that everyone had a role, and making further suggestions calmly when they encountered problem. All of these positives earned their teams extra points!

Congratulations to 'Noodle' team who won overall with a tower that measured 80cm tall. That was impressive in the time that they had for this challenge. In the summer holidays, beat the boredom and why not see if you can beat this height following the same rules above? Do let Mrs Giles know what height you reached!



News from Maple Class

This term, Maple Class has been exploring the fascinating world of the Amazon Rainforest. The children have discovered where the rainforest is located, the incredible variety of plants and animals that live there, and why it is one of the most biodiverse places on Earth.



As part of our learning, we have investigated important environmental issues such as deforestation, climate change and pollution, considering the impact these have on the rainforest and the species that depend upon it. In Science, we linked this learning to food chains, exploring what can happen when one species disappears and how this can affect an entire ecosystem.

The children have shown great curiosity throughout the topic, asking some incredibly thoughtful questions and taking part in engaging debates about how we can all play a part in protecting our planet. It has been wonderful to see them thinking critically about real-world issues and developing such a strong awareness of the environment.

News from Willow Class

Year 3 had a fantastic session learning all about the Swinging Sixties with Sonja from the Oxfordshire Museum. Through a range of exciting hands-on activities, we explored what life was like during this memorable decade.

Examining real artefacts, trying on costumes, reading newspaper articles from the time, playing with vintage toys, using old telephones and exploring a box camera brought history to life and gave everyone a real insight into the past.

Some of the interesting events and inventions discovered included:

- 1961 – The first man travelled into space, and Coco Pops were introduced.
- 1963 – The first woman in space, Russian cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, made history, the Cindy doll was launched, and President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.
- 1964 – Mr Potato Head became a hugely popular toy.
- 1966 – Action Man was introduced.

The session also explored how the 1960s transformed everyday life. We discovered the rise of affordable package holidays, the invention of the Polaroid camera, and significant changes in fashion and popular culture.

Learning about the Dagenham women's strike highlighted the campaign for equal pay, while Mary Quant's iconic mini skirt and Andy Warhol's famous *32 Campbell's Soup Cans* artwork demonstrated the creativity and bold ideas that defined the decade.



News from Oak Class

We were delighted to welcome next year's Oak Class children for transition events - a teddy bears picnic and an independent stay and play session. During our independent stay and play session, we worked as a team to explore the school site using a treasure map. We found lots of exciting places that we are looking forward to re-visiting in the Autumn!



News from Sycamore Class

This term, our class has enjoyed exploring the fascinating world of the Ancient Greeks by learning about life in Sparta and Athens. We investigated how people lived in each city-state, discovering the similarities and differences between them. We learned that Sparta valued discipline, strength, and military training, while Athens was known for democracy, education, and the arts.

Using our research, we compared life in both city-states and created persuasive arguments for and against living in Sparta or Athens. We then took part in an exciting class debate, sharing our opinions and supporting them with evidence from our learning.

Throughout this topic, we developed a range of important skills, including critical thinking, speaking confidently, listening respectfully, and using evidence to justify our ideas. The debate also helped us build our communication, teamwork, and reasoning skills while deepening our understanding of Ancient Greek life.



Volunteers needed – Parent Play Champion

We'll soon be launching the new [Outdoor Play and Learning \(OPAL\)](#) programme at Fir tree and we'd love your help.

We are looking for parent play champions to support the OPAL programme which aims to improve opportunities for physical activity, socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play.



As a Parent Play Champion you'll:

- ✓ Observe and assess playtime within the school (at least once a year)
- ✓ Sit on the OPAL working party and attend development meetings (one meeting each term, during school time)
- ✓ Help other parents to understand the school's approach to play
- ✓ Champion OPAL's approach and the importance of children's play within our school community
- ✓ Share contributions and ideas from parents and the wider community
- ✓ Help with the ongoing resourcing of loose parts from parents and the local community

No experience is needed, just enthusiasm for play and a willingness to get involved. If you'd like to find out more or sign up, please contact Miss Lloyd or Mrs Grant (OPAL Curriculum Leads) or Nina Harman (OPAL Governor).

Please note, volunteers will need to undergo safeguarding checks

Sheldonian Theatre Concert

On Friday 3rd July, a group of 30 children were lucky enough to experience the music of the Oxfordshire Youth County Orchestra at the very stunning Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford.

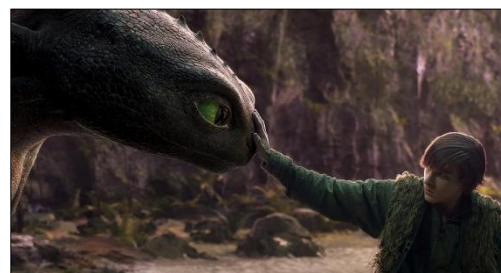
We had superb close up seating overlooking the orchestra, close enough to see the woodwind players taking a breath before playing, close enough to see the quick fingers of the violinists on the neck and fingerboard of their instrument, and close enough to witness the blurred quick movements of the timpanist as they created a drum roll with the beaters. To add to the occasion, many of the orchestra were dressed up to reflect a piece that was being performed! Hats off to the entire brass section who had each made a papier mache planet hat to wear for their showcase piece, 'The Planets' by Holst. The orchestra performed a varied programme which highlighted different sections of the orchestra and different periods of music history.

The concert started with an energetic piece, 'Symphonic Dances from West Side Story', which tells the story of rivalry between two New York Street gangs. This is the modern-day equivalent to Romeo and Juliette and was a blend of classical, jazz and Latin styles with full accented, syncopated rhythms and sharp contrasts. It made a stunning impact as their concert opener! A quick few rounds of 'Frere Jaques' introduced the audience to all the different instruments of the orchestra so they could hear their distinctive timbres and learn their names. More pieces followed by Tchaikovsky, Schstakovich and Marquez.

'How to Train Your Dragon' was their big finisher - a very popular piece amongst the audience. We were played out by the woodwind section performing 'Defying Gravity', again, another well recognised piece.

On the coach journey home, I asked many of the children what their favourite section of the orchestra was. Unanimously the answer was the percussion section! It must be the lure of the large bass drum or the 4 timpani, the vibrations of which we could feel around the hall. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience full of awe and wonder at the expertise of these young players. We wish them all the best as they embark on their annual summer tour abroad.

Feeling inspired? It is never too late to learn an instrument! At Fir Tree, we have several private music tutors in addition to Oxfordshire County Music staff who come in to teach children to play in either groups, pairs on an individual basis. Please contact Mrs Giles for more information.





It's been a busy and exciting term for Year 6. Our production of *Oliver* was a huge success, with incredible costumes, outstanding acting and singing, and impressive props and technology that brought the story to life. Since then, we've been hard at work preparing for our leavers' assembly, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. Year 6 then made their way to a fun-filled day of bowling and a celebratory meal at the Oxy Restaurant.



Mr Wilcox and Mr Shallis decided to try out their culinary design skills. Which one looks better and can you guess whose is whose?



Dear Year 6, whether you have been with us for the last four years or just part of it, we are so incredibly proud of everything you have achieved. We wish you all the very best in the next phase of your education.

Ryan in Year 5 was recently awarded with Player of the season for the Cholsey under 11's cricket team. He was presented with this award for his great batting, bowling and fielding, but also his positive encouragement to the other players. Ryan has been playing cricket for many years now and he joined Cholsey Under 11's cricket team a few years ago and he has progressed so much. We are very proud of him.



HOME SHOULD BE A HAPPY PLACE

Need to talk?
Call Childline on 0800 1111



childline

ONLINE, BY THE PHONE, ANYTIME
childline.org.uk/kids | 0800 1111

Summer

digit<all>

Coding Clubs



THURSDAY 6th AUGUST

10am - 10.40am & 11am - 11.40am

Wigod Way Wallingford Family Centre
96a Wilding Road OX10 8AJ

Grow it! 🌱 Code it! 🌱 Water it!

Join us this Summer with **DigitALL** to build your own smart plant watering system using a micro.

Children will pot their own plant, learn how coding can solve real-world problems & create a system that automatically waters their plant when it needs it most!



[Summercodingclubs.eventbrite.co.uk](https://summercodingclubs.eventbrite.co.uk)

VISIT THE LINK OR SCAN THE QR CODE FOR FULL DETAILS & TO BOOK A FREE SPACE (DONATIONS WELCOME)

Stay safe in the sun

SCHOLASTIC



Nursery
education trust

www.scholastic.co.uk/nurseryedplus

Summer Family Groups



YOU MOVE

MONDAY
27th JULY
10am - 11.30am



MONDAY
3rd AUGUST
10am - 11.30am

Wigod Way Wallingford Family Centre
96a Wilding Road OX10 8AJ

This Summer we are excited to bring you two Summer Family Groups, come along and enjoy fun outdoor activities from **You Move** as well as indoor activities and crafts for all the family to enjoy!



Summerfamilygroups2026.eventbrite.co.uk

VISIT THE LINK OR SCAN THE QR CODE FOR FULL DETAILS & TO BOOK A FREE SPACE (DONATIONS WELCOME)

Active Communities Summer of Fun

22 JULY - 28 AUGUST

Free activities across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse including:

- New Age Kurling
- Pickleball
- Boccia
- Family Dance Parties
- Cricket
- Crafts

and more.



SCAN ME



For more information and to book, visit southandvale.gov.uk/holidayactivities or scan the QR code

[/ActiveCommunitiesSouthandVale](https://www.facebook.com/ActiveCommunitiesSouthandVale)



YOU MOVE

DYNAMOS CRICKET



Power your play

dynamoscricicket.co.uk

Join us at:
Didcot Cricket Club, Boundary Park, Greenwood Way, Didcot, OX11 6EP

Session dates:
Wed, 22 Jul - Wed, 26 Aug 2026

Session timings:
10.45-11.45 - Age 8-11

Contact:
£50 per child or free bursaries available for families receiving benefits related free school meals, young carers, refugees, YouMove families, ethnic minorities and girls. Youmove@southandvale.gov.uk

SONNING COMMON FUN MORNING

Thursday 6, 13 & 20 August

9.30AM-MIDDAY

Each week will have different activities including fun games, family dance party, New Age Kurling, craft and more.

Memorial Park, Reade's Ln, Sonning Common, RG4 9SH

For more information and to book, visit southandvale.gov.uk/holidayactivities or scan the QR code

SCAN ME



[/SouthandValeActiveCommunities](https://www.facebook.com/SouthandValeActiveCommunities)

YOU MOVE