

Fir Tree Newsletter



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December 2025 Christmas Issue 379

Dear Families,

I hope this newsletter, the final one of 2025, finds you well. A few updates from school before we finish for the Christmas break this Friday, 19th December, at 2.15pm:

Last week we were treated to delicious Christmas served up by our wonderful catering team and parent volunteers. As a man who has sampled many a Christmas dinner down the years, I take every opportunity to remind the children of the wonderful standard of cooking at Fir Tree!

It was lovely to see so many family members at Monday's concerts in school. What wonderful occasions they were!

Thank you to our PTA for their tireless work leading up to and during the recent Christmas Fayre. At a time of squeezed school budgets, their work is very much appreciated by us all.

Last Thursday, 11th December, we held an event in school about our work on the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign. It was great to see lots of families there. This is very much a long term programme so there will be further events for you to look out for. You will have seen a recent letter from Miss Lloyd outlining some very important information around this. Please let us know if you have any questions. You can find out more about SFC by clicking [here](#).


In the coming months, we will be introducing a new approach to play in our school. We are very much at the early stage, but you can find out more about this way of working by clicking [here](#).

End of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) results, often referred to as SATs, were recently published for all schools in England. These results relate to the tests which took place in May of this year. Though these outcomes are only part of the school's work, I am pleased to say that Fir Tree pupils achieved outcomes above national averages in reading, writing, maths and SPAG (spelling, grammar and punctuation). These achievements are testament to our hardworking pupils and committed members of staff. You can make a comparison of outcomes across local schools by clicking [here](#).

As many of you will know, work is underway to convert existing space into an Early Years unit here at Fir Tree. This is in readiness for Fir Tree welcoming Reception age children into our community for the first time, from September 2026! Perhaps you, or someone you know, is looking to secure a Reception place for their child for September 2026? We are running a tour for prospective parents on Thursday 8th January from 9.30. We ask that all those interested contact the school office to let us know they plan on attending. A reminder that the application window closes on Thursday 15th January. You can find out more about this process by clicking [here](#).

We look forward to welcoming pupils back to school for the new term which starts at the usual time on Tuesday 6th January 2026. In the meantime, though, I thank all of our staff for their hard work and commitment while at the same time wishing you all a relaxing and peaceful Christmas break.

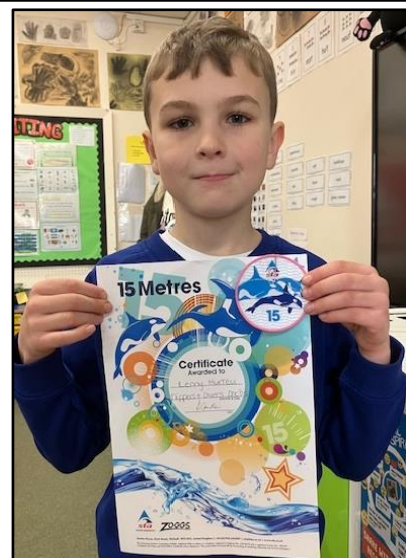
Warm regards
Mr Knight

Merry  *Christmas!*

**A huge well done to Lenny in Year 3.
A fantastic achievement!**



We love hearing about your extra-curricular activities. If you'd like to appear in the newsletter, please email the school office.



Emily, Juliette and Cora have been training hard in the gym and reaped the benefits of their hard work and progress in a recent gymnastics competition at their club. We are so proud of them!



Sienna has been honing her dancing skills over a number of months and her fantastic progress was recently recognised with a 'most progress' award from her dance school. Brilliant work, Sienna!



Visit from MP

During UK Parliament week, on Friday 28th November we had a visit from our local MP Oly Glover.

The school council had a meeting with him and asked some fantastic and thoughtful questions about the local area, including questions on setting up new youth groups, setting up more cycle paths and a very key question from all our groups was the improvement of the local park - the Bullcroft. He hopes that improvements will come soon!

Year 5 also had an insightful question time with Mr Glover about Climate change and he shared more about his role and how he became an MP.

Oly said that the students enthusiasm, curiosity and confidence were truly impressive!



Date	Event
Monday 5 th January	INSET Day
Tuesday 6 th January	Term 3 begins
Thursday 8 th January	Year 6 Ashmoleon visit
Thursday 29 th January	Woodlands Parent Information Session – 3:30pm
Friday 13 th February	End of term 3 – School finishes at 3:15
16 th – 20 th January	Half term
Monday 23 rd January	Term 4 begins

PTA Christmas Craft Fayre

Once again our fabulous PTA organised another very successful craft fayre raising approximately £2250! Other amounts raised this term were £561 from the online toy auction and £117 for the virtual balloon race. A very impressive start to the academic year and another step closer to getting new play equipment. Thank you to all concerned.

Here are some photos of the children's class makes. If you haven't collected your child's yet, you can do it this week for £1 – please see your class teacher.



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/>

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.



News from Willow – Year 3

In Science we have been exploring Light. We started by discussing the question, “Have you ever been somewhere where you couldn’t see anything when you woke up in the night?” The children enjoyed sharing their experiences and thinking about why darkness makes it difficult for us to see.

We then explored a concept cartoon showing different characters with different ideas about whether you can see inside a dark cave. This led to some excellent discussion about where light comes from and why it is essential for vision. Here are some their responses:

“I agree with C. Our eyes will eventually adjust to the dark because if we stay in the dark for a while, our eyes get used to it.” Matilda

“Because there’s no light, you can’t see. I agree with B.” Gioia

“You can see if you only go in the entrance of the cave as the light will come in. The deeper you go into the cave, the darker it will be and you won’t be able to see. I agree with C.” Lucas

“I agree with A. Inside a cave is dark, so it would be a good idea to bring a torch.” Nakasero

“I agree with B because there’s no light. That means your eyes cannot adjust.” Lola

“I agree with C because I know that if you are in a dark space for a long time, or halfway into a cave, your eyes will adjust.” Beth

The children showed fantastic curiosity and reasoning— an excellent start to our learning about light! We discovered that in a completely dark cave, our eyes simply cannot see at all because there is no light. Eye adjustment only works gradually if there is at least some light. Therefore, the safest way to explore a dark cave is to always bring a torch. This clearly demonstrates how important light is for seeing and why we rely on it in our everyday lives. We are excited to continue our investigations over the coming weeks, exploring light sources, shadows, and reflections.



Sporting News

On Thursday 27th November, Fir Tree took two hockey squads from Year 5 and 6 to Wallingford School for a hockey tournament. Fir Tree battled it out against two sides from both Benson and Crowmarsh showing some incredible feats of teamwork and skill from beginning to end.

Our Fir Tree A side played against some tricky opponents but their ability and determination taken from practice was there for all to see. The hard-fought fearlessness from all Fir Tree players was fantastic to see and great for the parents watching to witness just how hard they worked. Unfortunately they fell just short of advancing to the final, however they should all be very pleased with their individual and team effort.

Our Fir Tree B team made light-work of their opposition, storming to a duo of wins without conceding a single goal. The pure dominance on display was fantastic. Benson and Crowmarsh barely made it out of their defensive halves, adding to their frustration of being outclassed. Our B side comfortably qualified for the final, where they would face a familiar side in Benson’s A Team. However, Benson had no answer for the superior quality of Fir Tree and we sealed a satisfying 2-1 win over them. The only goal Fir Tree conceded of the entire tournament.

Both teams played with an incredible amount of determination and will to finally bring a trophy back to Fir Tree after some narrow defeats in previous tournaments. A huge thank you is due to Mr Wilcox who trained our young hockey stars up in his lunch breaks, just to give these superstars the best possible chance of success.

Well done Fir Tree! Onto the next...

Written by Year 6 Team



Year 4 Recorder Performance

On Wednesday 3rd December, the children who have continued their recorder learning from Year 3 with Ms Atkins, gave a spectacular concert to our current Year 3's. They played four pieces; Indian Warrior, Elephants, Skateboard Ride and Chicka Manika. Ms Atkins shared some great top tips on making a 't' sound with the tongue and pressing fingers hard over the holes to stop air from escaping resulting in 'squeaky' sounds. She also challenged the Year 3's to identify how many beats in a bar there were.



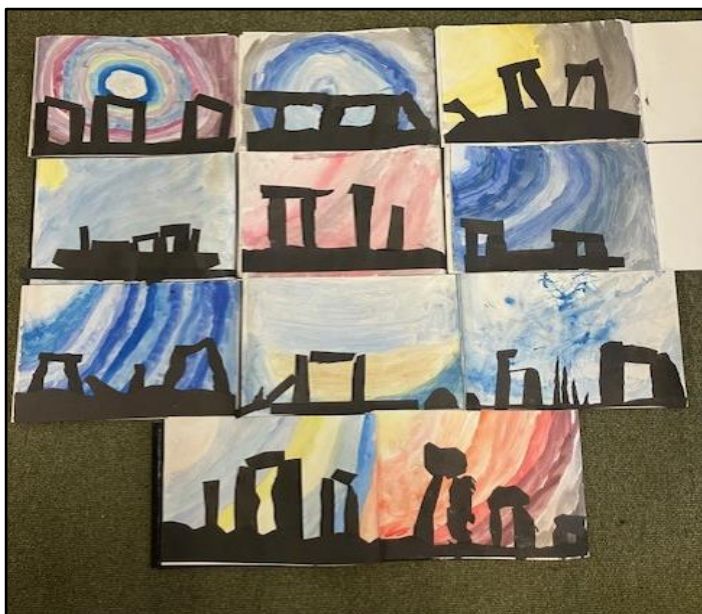
Christmas Lunches

On Tuesday and Wednesday this week the children enjoyed their Christmas dinners. The lunch tables were decorated with the beautiful table decorations made by the children for the competition and their lunches were served by staff. Huge thanks to all the parent helpers 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 Cedar – Year 3

We have been learning about Stonehenge and the mysteries surrounding these gigantic stones. Stonehenge, a prehistoric monument on England's Salisbury Plain, was built around 5000 years ago and is made up of massive sarsen and bluestones. It is a place of sheer wonder for many people today and the 1.4 million visitors who visit there each year. But how were the stones transported there? What was it used for in the Neolithic Age? What were the beliefs about it then and how does that compare to now? So many questions! We put our recent practise of making darker and lighter watercolour shades to the test when making these morning and night time scenes with the silhouettes of the stones in the foreground.



News from Ash – Year 4

In Art, Ash Class have been learning about pop art and graffiti style art. We have been inspired by artists such as Andy Warhol and Banksy.



Join us for a morning of free fun!

WINTER ACTIVITY MORNING



**Monday 22 December
10- 11.30am**

Cholsey Pavillion
Sunnyside, Benson,
Oxon OX10 6LZ

- Fully accessible venue
- Baby changing facilities
- Toilets including disabled available.

FREE

COME AND TRY XPLORER WITH OUR CHRISTMAS THEMED MARKERS AROUND THE PARK AND JOIN IN WITH CRAFT, MUSIC, GAMES AND MORE.

BOOKING REQUIRED SCAN QR CODE OR VISIT SOUTHANDVALE.GOV.UK/HOLIDAYACTIVITIES



Smartphone Free Childhood

There is a wealth of further information available on the Smartphone Free Childhood website, and the slides from our Fir Tree talk have been uploaded to the Computing Curriculum page of our school website. These can be found [here](#), then scrolling down to "Smartphone Free Childhood Parent Talk 2025 Slides".

We really value your support and encourage families to talk to us if you would like further guidance or discussion. If you would like to connect with like-minded parents within the Fir Tree community, we recommend joining our Facebook group, which is a supportive space to share advice and experiences. If you would like to join the Fir Tree Smartphone Free Childhood WhatsApp group, the link can be found here:



WhatsApp



Facebook

Bull Croft Playground consultation

The Bull Croft Working Group are pleased to invite you to take part in a public consultation on the updated designs for the new junior and toddler playgrounds at the Bull Croft in Wallingford. These designs have been revised following feedback from the previous consultation and noise concerns from neighbours.

The Town Council has approved the location of the new playground and appointed a contractor. As planning permission is not required, once this consultation is complete and any final adjustments have been made, the Council will be ready to move forward with getting consent from Historic England and installing the playground.

You can find details on the designs and background to the project at the link below.

Consultation ends Friday 16th January 2026

<https://forms.gle/QfLZF6xGurDdXSoVA>

A PRESENT FOR JACK

THE STORY MUSEUM

A festive family musical celebrating tales from the beanstalk and beyond!

20 - 30 December*

Little Seeds Music presents 'A Present for Jack' packed with festive sparkle, magical storytelling, traditional tales and joyful original songs

Tickets £14pp Suits ages 5+

01865 807600

www.storymuseum.org.uk

The Story Museum
Pembroke Street
Oxford OX1 1BP

*no shows 25-26 December

Funded by Arts Council England and UK Government