



Whiteshill Weekly News

Dec 2023

We are curious, we are unique, we are together, we are Whiteshill!

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Christmas at Whiteshill



Well how can I possibly describe what has been such a wonderful Christmas week in school! I don't think we have ever crammed so many magical events in to one week and all the children have worked so hard to bring so much joy all over Whiteshill!

We started on Monday with our wonderful Willow and Elm class nativity. The children performed fantastically and we were so proud of them. They sang their hearts out and told the story beautifully. They had learnt Makaton signs to all of the songs and it was just brilliant to see them signing and singing so well. It was also lovely to have such a big crowd of people in the audience, with wider family attending for the first time. Thank you to everyone who came to support the children. Well done to Alex Needham as well who designed the front cover of the programme which you can see below.

Next up, on Tuesday so many of you joined us for our annual Christmas forest school. We have never had so many parents in attendance and I'm so pleased so many of you were able to share it with us. Mr Pritchard worked incredibly hard all day to shop for all of the refreshments and then set up and take down the site which takes a huge amount of work. He does this every year without complaint all because he wants to give the children a special moment and we can't thank him enough. Thank you to those parents who were able to help out with setting up and serving the refreshments too – it would be impossible without you and is very much appreciated. The children all sang carols, accompanied this year by Mrs Edmonds on the violin, Ian Cormack-Hicks (our guitar and drum teacher) on the guitar and Mr Coysh on the drum – what a treat!

On Wednesday, the children had Christmas lunch together in the hall and it was lovely to see them all in their festive outfits. Thank you to the wonderful lunch staff who do a wonderful job everyday serving our meals, but particularly on Christmas where they have so many children to feed in a short space of time!

On Thursday, we went out in to the local community to share the joy of our children singing. Mrs Edmonds took Maple class down to the weekly coffee session at the school rooms and they sang Christmas songs for the villagers who were gathered there. We are hoping to now make this an annual event at the village Christmas lunch – thank you to Victoria Ashcroft for asking us to attend – it was so lovely and brought a lot of joy to our children and staff.

Thursday evening was the Festival of Light and Colour at the church. It was the first time we have attended as a school so we weren't sure what to expect but goodness me, what a special night. I can honestly say it was one of my proudest moments as a Headteacher. To have so many children come along and support a village event in the evening and to stand up on the stage in the dark in an unfamiliar place jam-packed with people was just phenomenal. They were not fazed at all and sang with such confidence and pure joy. It filled everybody's heart and we had lots of emails this morning from villagers saying how much they enjoyed it and how impressed they were. Thank you to each and every child who was able to make it on the night and for showing the village what superstars you all are! All of the staff will remember that one for a long time! Again, we hope to make this an annual event going forwards so if you weren't able to make it this year, don't worry there will hopefully be chance again.

Finally, we were joined by Santa and the little donkey at the end of school today!! What a brilliant surprise – thank you to Martin and Nicky – what a fantastic community we are part of in Whiteshill!

All of the photos from our Christmas events will be put on the school website over the holiday period – I will let you know when they are on there so you can take a look but here is a sneak preview.



Oak Class Brass Concert

As you may know, each term we work with Gloucestershire music to give all the children school from year 1 to year 6, 10 weeks of whole class music tuition with a specialist music teacher. Each child is provided with an instrument so they get chance to really learn how to play and perform. This term Oak class had brass tuition. They finished the term with a performance in the hall to parents which showcased the skills they had learnt. Next term Elm class will all be learning the ukulele! Photos can be seen on the school website [here](#).

Helpers' Tea Party

This week we have sent out invitations to our very first Helpers' Tea Party in February. As a school we are so lucky that so many people in the school community are able and willing to give their time to support us. The school simply could not run without the support of volunteers and we wanted to take the chance to say thank you each year. We are going to be holding a Helpers' tea party annually so that everyone who has helped out has chance to come in and be served afternoon tea by the year 6 children so that we can say a proper thank you in person. We have tried very hard to keep track of everyone who has helped out since September with trips, forest school etc. but if you have not received an invitation and you know you have helped out on a trip since September, please do get in touch as we don't want to miss anyone!

Parental Communication Strategy

We have been thinking hard at school about how we can change our communication strategy to make sure you have all the information that you need. Now that we have SchoolPing in place, a regular newsletter is not as necessary and so going forward we will communicate with you in the following ways:

All communication about events and daily happenings will be sent out when needed via SchoolPing – please download the app and turn on notifications as the accident book and head bumps will continue to be communicated to you in this way.

The SchoolPing calendar will be updated so that you can check this to see when events are taking place – we will not send reminders out once something is on the calendar.

Half-termly newsletters will showcase all the exciting things we have been up to over the term and allow me to talk to you directly about the school.

From January, Elm, Maple and Oak class teachers will be writing a class blog each week on the school website so that you can see what the children have been up to in class each week – more information to follow. Willow class weekly photographs will still be shared through Tapestry.

The school Facebook page will continue to share community events and photographs of the children.

Parents' Evening and MyPlan Review Meetings

You should have received a SchoolPing to sign up for a parents' evening slot in January. If your child is on the SEN register, you will have also received a Ping to sign up for MyPlan review meetings with Mrs Beard, our SEN co-ordinator. Please talk to Mrs Angove if you have any problems at all.

Friends of Whiteshill News

Over this term, the Friends of Whiteshill have been busy raising important funds for the school. The scarecrow trail at half term was a resounding success as always and it was wonderful to see so many people out in the fresh air and walking around the village. Thank you to everyone who put in such an effort to make some brilliant scarecrows! Thanks must also go to the community shop who stayed open all week to sell maps on our behalf, making the event possible. Thanks as well to CR signs for making signs for the event, Nick Parkin and Truhouse Windows and Doors for donating the prizes. The trail was a huge success, bringing in an incredible £1600 for the school!!

The friends also of course held the Christmas Fayre as part of the Three Village Festival again this year, it was wonderful to be part of a village event in this way. Thank you to everyone who was part of putting this event on which raised vital funds for the children whilst also giving us a chance to be together at Christmas.

As well as this, the Friends managed to secure a grant from the Parish Council which has covered the cost of the Young Voices entry and coach to the venue, totalling £810 – meaning it is a free event for all the children who wanted to attend.

We are currently planning to use the funds which the Friends have raised to improve and revamp the outside area to the side of the classrooms at school so that we have a more effective area for gardening and to use at lunchtime, as well as a more useable outdoor area for Elm class to use in their learning every day. Thank you to everyone on the Friends committee and who helps at and supports these events – it makes a massive difference to our school.



We are active...

At Whiteshill we want as many children as possible to know that being active and looking after their physical wellbeing is for everyone. We work with specialist coaches every term so that the children can experience different types of sports and activity. To see our long-term PE plan, please visit the school website [here](#) to find out what your child will experience throughout their time at

Whiteshill. So far this year, Oak class have worked with Jez from Cotswold Coaching on their archery skills and continue to extend their indoor rowing skills with Mr Pritchard in preparation for the Stroud area event in the spring term. Elm class had weekly skateboarding and scootering sessions with Team Rubicon and new age kurling with Mr Pritchard. Maple class have been busy swimming at Stratford Park, which they do each autumn term. In the spring term, Maple class will have yoga sessions with Jay from the Yoga Glow and Oak class will be working with Mrs Court on their martial arts – Mrs Court runs our weekly club in school.

As well as this, last term the children took part in a huge range of sporting competitions and events organised by Atlas Sports. This gives the children opportunity to compete against other schools and learn new skills. We try to make sure that every child in Key Stage 2 has opportunity each year to take part in these events, often once they have taken the step to go to one, it opens up a whole new experience for them. It is lovely to see them grown in confidence each year as they move through the school. So far this term we have been to year 5/6 netball, kurling and boccia, Key Stage 1 endball, football festival, Key Stage 2 sportshall athletics, girls football and key stage 1 football. We are looking forward to even more events in the spring term – we are particularly looking forward to the tag rugby festival, which Mr Nurse has been training the children for at his after-school club from which we brought home the silver medal last year! Thank you to Miss Middleton, our PE lead who organises all of these events to ensure the children can attend.

Photographs of these events can be found on our school website sports page [here](#).



We are curious...

This term, the children in Elm, Maple and Oak have been busy becoming artists and designers. They started the term with a we are artists... project based around drawing. Elm class found out about the work of Paul Klee and how line can be used to create art. Maple class learnt about Leonardo DaVinci and created their own self-portraits inspired by the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper. Oak class learnt about still life, in particular the artist Georgio Morandi. They created some incredible final pieces, using shadow to create a 3D effect. A huge thank you to Martin Turner who sourced sketch books for the children this year. It really added an extra layer of professionalism to their work and was funded by the recent Halloween disco which the Turner family organised.

Next, the children became designers. Design and Technology is all about having an audience and creating something to meet their need. Each of our We are designers... projects in school has an audience and a purpose so the children can get real-life experience of this skill. They have to think carefully about what their audience wants and needs. Elm class made a Christmas buffet lunch which the staff enjoyed at lunchtime this week! Maple class made nightlights for the Willow class children. They used Microbits to code the nightlights so that they would turn on and off with a switch in an electrical circuit, applying their knowledge from science and computing. Thank you so much to Rob Wilson, a local STEM ambassador and friend to the school, who came in to help with these sessions. Oak class learnt about structures, creating a prototype of a bird hide for children to use at forest school. They finished the project by making the bird hides for real using cane and tarpaulin and ensuring the structures were stable enough based on what they had learnt.

To find out more about art and design and technology at Whiteshill please visit the website [here](#) to see our long-term plans.



We are unique...

This term, Harriet in Oak class has absolutely personified our we are unique value! She has been learning the violin for a long time and is an extremely accomplished musician. Earlier in the term, she asked if she would be able to accompany our Happy Birthday song each week in celebration assembly. This is something previous pupils have done so we were very happy to have her take up the role. However, Harriet was even more ambitious, recently asking if she could accompany the children as they walk in to assembly too. So, in recent weeks, she has been playing Christmas songs as the children come in to the hall. On top of that she recently shared in celebration assembly that she now has her own recipe column in the Whiteshill warbler magazine. We love to see our pupils exploring their talents and it really inspirational to the other children to see how Harriet forges a path for herself with confidence and dedication. Thank you, Harriet for bringing our school value to life.



We are together...

This Christmas, we have been bringing to our life our We are together... value. As well as singing out in the Whiteshill community, Maple and Oak class created some beautiful decorations for the St Lawrence Christmas Tree Festival in Stroud. The theme was inclusivity, kindness and goodwill to all and each decoration had a message on the back in line with this theme from the children. Thank you to Mrs Cripps who led this project and went to the church to put up and take down the tree.

Next, thanks to you all, we were able to donate two large bags of coats, hats, gloves and toys to the Stroud Town Council collection.

Finally, this week, the children each made Christmas cards for the residents and staff of Moreton Hill Care Home. I dropped these off at the home last night and they were so pleased to receive them. The residents will each have a card from a child delivered to them on Christmas day by the staff. A lovely way for our children to connect with the older generation.



Thank you

Thank you to Craig Roberts who very kindly and quickly put together Mrs Angove's favourite ever Christmas present – signs for the front gate!! Those of you who have experienced her shouting 'pull' and 'push' down the intercom daily will understand why they very much made her smile yesterday when she unwrapped them!



Looking forward to next term...

We are looking forward to seeing the children back in school on 8th January. Key Stage 1 and 2 will start the term with a science week where they will answer the following questions:

Elm class – Can you grow a plant anywhere?

Maple class – Can plants grow in the desert?

Oak class – Can I turn my toast back to bread?

After this, the children will launch in to their we are historians enquiries:

Elm class - How and why have houses changed throughout history?

Maple class - Who were more impressive invaders – the Anglo Saxons or the Vikings?

Oak class - What impact did the Roman Empire have on Britain?

Willow class will continue on their journey forward through the EYFS curriculum led by the children's interests. The Big Garden Birdwatch, Chinese New Year and Valentines Day will enhance their learning during the spring term and the key texts of 'Whatever Next' by Jill Murphy and 'The Paperbag Princess' by Robert Munsch providing inspiration for their developing writing skills. They will also be visiting Ruscombe woods for their forest school sessions for the first time this half term too, meaning they can take their physical development and understanding of the world even further!

We of course have the Young Voices trip to Birmingham NEC on January 11th, a first for Whiteshill and one which we cannot wait for!

We look forward to another exciting term with all the children.