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Senior Forest School by Mrs S Firth



Furze Down School News

Dear Parents and Carers

It has been a tricky half term and staff have worked tirelessly to try and ensure we can provide continuity against a backdrop of disruption.

I would like to thank you all for your continued understanding and support when we have had to, at short notice, move classes to remote learning. It is not our preferred option but absence rates due to Covid have at times made it unsafe for us to educate all pupils on site. Despite this disruption, pupils have continued to access high quality education and this newsletter showcases some of the work that has been taking place across the school.

Our priority this term has been 'Getting Back on Track' and we have had four main areas of focus:

- ◇ **Mental Health and Wellbeing** staff and pupils. The Leads for this work are myself, Elizabeth Winks (Clinical Nurse Specialist) and Linda Patterson (Business Lead)
- ◇ **Refining our Annual Review process and the quality of Education Health Care Plans.** We are involved in a pilot working with the Local Authority looking at better ways of working together. The lead for this work is Sarah Sherman (Acting Deputy Head) supported by Clare Bourne (Deputy Business Lead)
- ◇ **Monitoring and Moderating Pupil Progress- Assess, Plan, Do Review.** The Lead for this work is Laura Price (Acting Deputy Head)
- ◇ **Learning to Read and Reading to Learn.** We have been re-visiting the evidence in relation to what works best and reviewing our practice across the school. The Lead for this work is Caroline Bagshaw (Assistant Head) supported by Sarah Anthem, Gina Cotterill and Eleanor Attridge (Heads of Centres)

In this newsletter you will also see that we are looking for parents /carers to support us either as a Parent Governor or on our Parent Council. Both these roles are really important in helping us shape the work of the school. Please take a look at what each of the roles involve, and if you are interested or would like more information please email Linda Patterson, lpatterson@furzedownschool.org.uk

Finally I hope you all have a restful half term and I look forward to seeing everyone back in school on the 28th February.

Very Best wishes

Alison

Alison Rooney

Spring (1) 2022



Primary News

Birch class have been busy both indoors and outside this year. We have been learning to use equipment such as scissors, and learning to explore new toys and different sensations such as bubble wrap.



Cedar class have been working so hard over the past few weeks in all areas!

These pictures show some amazing moments during PE, Forest School and dance where the children have not only showed great physical skills but also some wonderful joint attention and joint working!



Primary News comes from Birch, Cedar, Oak, Willow and Hazel Classes



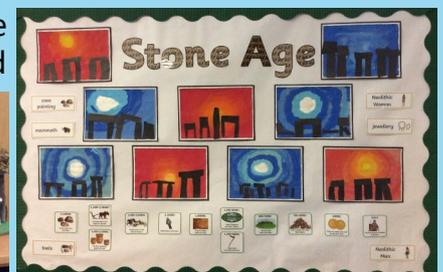
As part of our Up, Up and Away topic **Oak Class** have been learning about different sorts of flight. We made paper-mache hot air balloons and planes out of card.

We have also learnt about The Great Fire of London and created our own pictures of the fire.



In **Willow Class** this term we have been studying 'From Stone Age to Iron Age'. We painted some beautiful Stonehenge paintings and made Stone Age houses.

In English we have been studying 'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes and written some excellent descriptive writing!

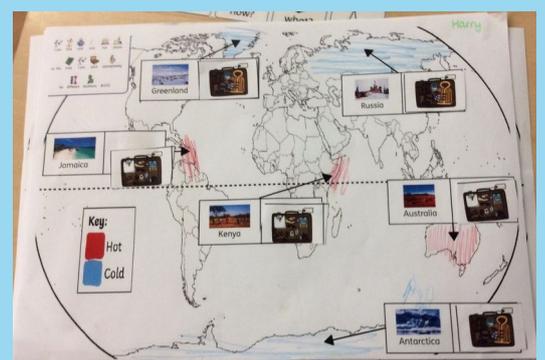


Our topic in **Hazel Class** is about The Weather.

We have been reading a variety of weather-themed stories, particularly The Wind Blew by Pat Hutchins, and even had a go at making our own stories based on The Wind Blew.

We've painted different seasons around a single tree to see how things change throughout the year and explored further by looking at different weather types found around the world.

By identifying which are the hottest and which might be the colder parts of the world, we can make sure that we would pack appropriately for the weather when travelling. To finish off this half term, the class are now learning the vocabulary for different weather types in French. Having a go at presenting a French weather forecast.



A flashback to the Buckingham Fayre October 2021

Following the Civic Opening of the Buckingham Charter Fair on Saturday 16th October, 2021, the Showmen (Nichols Amusements) again offered free rides for the first hour to all the pupils at Furze Down School.



Buckingham has enjoyed its Charter Fairs for over **450 years**. The Charter Fairs were granted by Royal Charter, in 1554, when Mary Tudor granted the free Borough of Buckingham.



We don't remember ever seeing as many pupils and their families from Furze Down School at the fair, and as you can see from just the small snapshot of the photographs that were taken, a lovely time was had by all in the warm autumn sunshine.

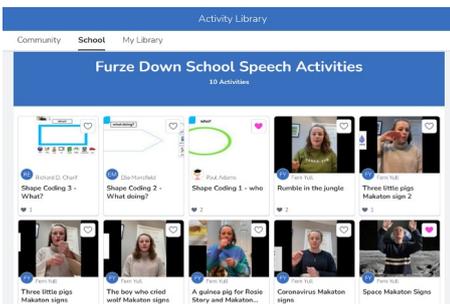


"It was a lovely opportunity to see pupils and their families outside of school!"
Sandra Firth, October 2021



Information

News from the classrooms, and centres, will continue to be shared by staff in a variety of ways, such as Tapestry, Seesaw and also on Google Classroom. Our website can provide links to these as well as other news. If you require any help with accessing these please contact your form tutor.



Shape Coding and Makaton Seesaw activities

With Shape Coding featuring on many of our students' EHCPs, it is worth having a look at the Seesaw Activity library for our school.

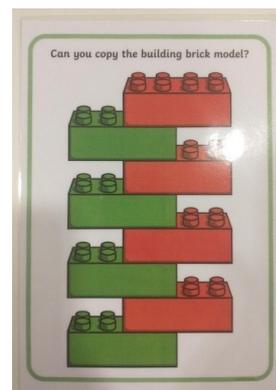
Once logged into Seesaw, click on the 'Activities' and then choose 'School'. Under 'Speech' we have Shape Coding and Makaton signing activities. We are keen to develop more!

Lego Therapy

Lego Therapy teaches attention, listening and social skills and is used as a 'barrier' game for pupils of all ages and abilities across the school.

The Therapy Team are requesting any spare Lego pieces, big or small, that you may have at home, and can donate to help make more Lego Therapy Packs for our pupils to work with. The Team would be grateful for any donations that can be made.

If sending any donations to school please place it in a clearly marked bag 'for the Therapy Team' so that it finds it's way to the Team. Thank you



A message from the Catering Team

School meals continue to be cooked to order and delivered to classrooms. Your child's meal should be booked via Parent Pay, where the 2 week menu is available to view.



For lunches in the week beginning **Monday 28th February** please place orders before **Sunday 20th February**. If you miss the cut off point, or your child does not require a hot school lunch, or does not like the choices available for a particular day, please ensure you send in a packed lunch from home.



A Request from our Reception Team

Please contact our Reception Team if there are any changes in circumstances, regarding your child or family. These changes can include new contact details, a change of address, or information about medicines. **Tel: 01296 711380** or email reception@furzedownschool.org.uk

Supporting Buckinghamshire Families over half term

The [Local Offer for SEND](#) is a free hub of services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Local providers and schools publish the support they offer to people aged 0 to 25.

The **SEND Local Offer** has two basic purposes:

- To provide clear, detailed, and accessible information about services and support available.
- To ensure that young people with SEND and their parents and carers are listened to when local services are developed and reviewed.

[Explore the Local Offer for SEND](#) from [Buckinghamshire County Family Information Service](#)

The **Helping Hand Service** provides support to Buckinghamshire families to ensure those in need are able to get food on the table and receive other essential support required.

In addition, they work with local Voluntary Community Social Enterprise organisations, including food banks, community fridges and hot meal initiatives, to ensure there is a breadth of services available.

Residents can also visit <https://directory.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/> to find out what is available in local areas.

It is encouraged that families seeking support in the county should contact the team on **01296 531151**.



Key Stage 3

English

Back in the Autumn Term KS3 enjoyed an English Unit on descriptive writing. We took inspiration for our own stories set in an imaginary world from C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Classes enjoyed a lesson all about using the senses to help them in their descriptions and we took a trip into the book by spending time in three different settings: A warm and welcoming 1930s living room, where we played board games and had tea and cake in front of a crackling fire; a train station where we spent time thinking about being an evacuee and finally, we went on a trip to Narnia itself, where it was always winter and never Christmas.

We could smell pine and tasted some Turkish delight and hot chocolate.



Class KH enjoyed a visit to Waddesdon Manor recently as they had been part of the Waddesdon Manor Christmas project. Each of the participating schools were designated a famous bridge in London and our light box was designed around the pineapple-decorated Lambeth Bridge. The class also designed lanterns based on the theme of 'A journey they would like to take' We all really enjoyed seeing the work on display and exploring the grounds of Waddesdon Manor with all the Christmas lights and decorations.



Art in KS3

This year each class in KS3 will have one term of Art. Class KH worked with Mrs Hamblin in the Autumn term and created Pop Art portraits inspired by the great Andy Warhol. They focused on using bright and clashing colours and really enjoyed printing them using the rollers and polystyrene tiles. The end result



was really effective.

Class BC are working with Mrs Hamblin this term, inspired by the Japanese artist Hokusai and our Geography topic on Volcanoes, Earthquakes and Tsunamis. The pupils are paying homage to the masterpiece *The Great Wave of Kanagawa* by creating their own version of the image in acrylic paint, using a variety of painting techniques such as adding

washes and splatters. Their images will all include a view of Mt Fuji in the background.

The class are only halfway through their painting but enjoying mixing their own shades of blue to recreate the sea.



Class JBS have enjoyed looking at various forms of 'Street Art' in our Art topic. They have enjoyed making their own 'tags', using colouring pencils and working with stencils.



We have covered a range of maths topics including time, lengths and measurements, capacity and money. The class particularly enjoyed setting up role play afternoons with the play food, taking turns to be shop keepers, and then selecting the appropriate coins for paying.

In English everyone enjoyed the story of *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, particularly the WOW day where we could explore each classroom decorated as settings from the book. We also were lucky enough to have visiting author Matt Goodfellow come in and hold an interactive session where we came up with our own class poem.



Preparation for Adulthood / Life Skills

In Preparation for Adulthood all pupils have been working to apply skills and understanding competently when planning, and then preparing to cook dishes safely. This included menus for a healthy, varied and balanced diet. They have and will use a range of food preparation skills with supervision, such as peeling, slicing, mixing, scooping, grating, and spreading.



In Key Stage 4 and 5 we have been thinking about how to change recipes and dishes to make them healthier and more appealing by altering ingredients, and/or by using different cooking methods. This has included using herbs instead of salt, using low fat yogurt, and grilling instead of frying. We have focused on Food Safety- Recognising the importance of preparing and cooking food safely and hygienically e.g. handwashing and clearing up regularly, keep work surfaces clean.

In domestic skills the older students have also explored 'handy' equipment to help with cooking, cleaning, D.I.Y and laundry.



They have begun to understand the safety symbols and instructions found on labels of both cleaning products and food. During the first part of Spring term this has included exploring how to make food stay fresher for longer and some of the methods we can use to store food.

Key Stage 4 News



Class GHC, Class SB and Class GK have all been studying Africa this half term. They have developed understanding of the culture, art, and history of different hunter and gatherer societies, such as the San people, and explored both the interesting geographical features of South Africa, as well as its turbulent history. The classes have focused on creating fact files about Africa and developed their descriptive writing, using different descriptive techniques to describe landscapes

Students in **Class GK** designed their own coat of arms and even had a go at creating some traditional San art.

Class GHC took the topic further and were inspired by the musical theatre version of the Lion King. Looking at

what is involved in musical theatre, in different job roles, and then had a go at working on movement in acting to help tell the story in script extracts with some fabulous acting in class.



Class SB have focused upon slap stick in Expressive Arts this term, studying the history and impact on our culture from old black and white movies to the more modern versions from the 1970's and 80's.

In maths the three classes have been looking at shapes and patterns while each have had very enjoyable, and productive lessons engaging in a range of practical science activities. They explored the properties of solids, liquids and gases, used a range of measuring equipment to explore and compare density of different liquids, as well as making marble runs, ping pong shooters and rockets. These were propelled by the production of gases in chemical reactions, or by elastic energy. While developing an understanding of energy the classes also measured the chemical energy in potatoes and lemons, using a voltmeter.



With Mr Haynes some of the KS4 classes, including **Class EB**, found out that music is very different as it depends upon which country in Africa you go to. Each has their own different music scene and different styles. As part of singing the music groups have been learning the children's song Thula Sana and Olele. These are Tribal songs from the Zulu in South Africa and the Lingala speaking tribes in the Congo



In Life skills **Class EB** were learning about the Chinese New Year during the first half term. We tried using chopsticks-they are tricky! We chopped unusual vegetables such as Pak Choi and made our own stir fry. While trying different foods we enjoyed a celebration together as a class.

In some of our other lessons the focus has been on developing our fine motor skills, through mark making and sewing. Our art this term has been on landscapes and included using digital cameras.



Post 16 and Enterprise

Class RK have enjoyed being Eco Warriors this half term. Starting with Olivia's idea to collect crisps packets to identifying a soft plastic recycling deposit place at Tesco's in Buckingham and the Coop in Winslow, we are now dropping off two large bags of soft plastic waste and crisp bags per week during Community Engagement sessions.

Furze Down Cycles are an Enterprise Class comprised of KS5 pupils and staff.

Our aim is to learn how to repair and maintain cycles for our own use. We are learning how to do this through the repair and restoration of donated cycles.

We also clean, check and repair bicycles at a cost of £5 (plus the cost of parts if necessary). We have a growing number of satisfied customers.

We would be happy to either service and return your bikes or take any bikes no longer used with a view to repairing and selling them on or using them for parts (before selling the frames for scrap).

If you have any bikes lurking unused and unloved in sheds and garages please consider donating them to Furze Down Cycles. They could be given a new lease of life and continue to support our learning. No bike will be refused

Repaired, restored and upgraded cycles are sold on.

We sell **adult bikes for £20 - £30.**

Children's bikes are cleaned and repaired then sold for **£10 -£15.**

The monies raised are used to buy tools to supplement those we have and a range of nuts, bolts and hardware often needed to fix bikes.



The **Furze Down Cycles** Enterprise group have produced a flyer for school Staff. Their impressive logo and recent reviews make for a professional sales pitch. We will be part of a pop up shop and selling bikes at Buckingham University in March.

Another group who are taking part in the pop up shop will be the **Lilac Minty Craft Shop**. This group of students worked hard to make a range of Christmas decorations before December, and have now moved onto key rings, pillow cases, hessian bags, and garlands made from pompoms.

The group looks forward to designing more items using wool, including repurposing old jumpers. Donations of both are welcome.

Class KG have worked as a team to develop a 'second hand uniform' project.

At present they have a good selection of items that might suit anyone in Primary who has need of a jumper or fleece to get them to the end of the year. Each item has been checked and washed, and can be delivered to class. All items are £1.



Class KG have also worked on many other skills this year, in particular they have focused upon road safety.



Sports Leaders from the PFA class have been working with pupils from Primary for the last few weeks, planning and supporting in PE lessons. We focused on team work and orienteering skills, and it has been great to see how much more confident the Leaders have become.

The Site Maintenance group have worked hard on developing their cleaning skills. They have been keeping the Science room and D.T room nice and clean for all of us. Cole also learnt how to make holes in a pot so that we could use it to put plants in, and so that the water drains.



Class SKi enjoyed being out in the fresh air walking for our PE lessons, exploring some new areas and revisiting familiar ones. The challenge was to get further or faster each lesson, with a goal of 5km. It was lovely exploring the countryside as a team, (and helped Mrs Kingham and Mrs Gilkes to meet their steps goals!) Class SKi have also been busy out on

Community Engagement, as part of our preparation for adulthood curriculum. We visited shops, made money transactions, used public transport, and worked in less familiar social groups whilst exploring new places. All are developing in confidence, thanks to the trips, and we look forward to more trips next Term.





Furze Down School

ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR 3 NEW PARENT GOVERNORS TO REPRESENT THE PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND POST 16 CENTRES

Our governors come from a range of different backgrounds, skills and experience but all share a common interest of wanting the best possible education for the children in our school.

We would be delighted to hear from anyone who:-

- ◆ Is interested in children's education and the performance of the school
- ◆ Is community spirited and would like to represent the community
- ◆ Has spare time and the energy for the role
- ◆ Is able to work well as part of a team
- ◆ Has an enquiring mind, and the confidence to ask questions and debate issues that affect the School

What is the role of the governing body?

- ◆ Help to set and review the school's strategic direction and agreeing targets for improvement
- ◆ Holding the headteacher and school leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- ◆ Overseeing the financial performance of the school and ensuring public money is well spent

What does the role offer?

- ◆ A chance to develop your own personal skills
- ◆ Access to a programme of free training in respect of education/governance matters
- ◆ A sense of achievement in helping make a difference
- ◆ The support and guidance from fellow governors

Applications

If you are interested in applying or would like more information please email

Linda Patterson, Business Leader,

lpatterson@furzedownschool.org.uk

In your email please state which centre you are interested in representing

Tel. 01296 711380





Furze Down School

PARENT COUNCIL

Pre-Covid we had in place a parent council. We would like to re-instate this, and are looking for a parent/carer representatives from each class.

The parent/Carer representative role will be to

- ◆ Work in partnership with the school to decide on the key priorities to take forward;
- ◆ Provide a voice for parents in schools and in their local authority on issues that are important to them;
- ◆ Improve the school's understanding of how to engage parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school;
- ◆ Support the school to develop strong home/school partnerships;
- ◆ Communicate regularly with the Parent Forum to both hear their views and keep them informed;
- ◆ Support improvement by discussing the school's strengths and areas for development from a parental perspective;
- ◆ Help make links with the wider community;
- ◆ Capture the unique and varied skills, interests, knowledge and experience that parents can offer.

Applications

If you are interested in applying or would like more information please email

Linda Patterson, Business Leader

lpatterson@furzedownschool.org.uk

In your email please state which class you are interested in representing



Spring Term 2022 reminders



Reminder of arrangements for the mornings and at the end of the day

To continue to encourage a low arousal start to the day, to keep everybody safe and the traffic flowing, we would ask that parents/carers keep to the arrangements you had regarding dropping off or picking up from school:- **Primary drop off 9.10am / pick up at 3pm. Rest of school 9am drop off / pick up at 3.40pm.**

The turning circle is reserved for the Local Authority provided transport before 9am each school day, and from 3.15pm –3.40pm in the afternoon but you are welcome to park there at other times. If you are a Parent/Carer dropping off and arrive whilst the taxis are still in the turning circle, please park in the laybys outside the school gates.

If in doubt, or you have any queries regarding days or dropping off, please email office@furzedownschool.org.uk



For all enquiries regarding transport please contact:

Passenger Transport Section, County Hall, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1YZ

Telephone Number **01296 387439** Or follow the link to their website:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-index/school-transport/>

Holiday Activities— The Bucks Activity Project coming soon



Bucks Activity Project is part of the Action for Children Countywide Integrated Short Breaks Service, commissioned by Buckinghamshire Council and provides community short breaks to children and young people aged 0-19 with disabilities and additional learning needs across Buckinghamshire. They currently have around 250 children registered with the service and have been running for over 20 years.

The project offers:-

0-5 years - Ofsted registered play sessions. Activities tailored to support children's interests and learning following the Early Years Foundation Stage. All services are currently awarded 'Good' by Ofsted.

4-8 years - For those attending full time school there are weekend and school holiday activities which include arts and crafts, cooking, music, outdoor play and sensory play.

8-19 years - Access to age-appropriate activities at weekends, evenings, and school holidays. Favourites include the youth clubs, movie nights, cooking, general life skills, quiz nights, swimming, bowling, cinema, go-carting, water sports, laser tag and climbing, ice skating, mini golf, play in the park, farm visits, scavenger hunts and woodland walks. The views of the children and young people are sought when planning the programme of activities.

Staff are trained to meet the needs of each individual child, supporting them to participate fully in the activity they are attending. They are highly skilled in communicating with children and young people who have limited, or pre-verbal communication enabling every child to have a voice.

All sessions are charged at £10 for half day (concessionary rate £5) but there may be small additional charge for some community activities.

Short Breaks believe that this offer provides positive benefits for both children and young people with disabilities and their parents and carers. They give children and young people time away from their family so they can develop independence, learn new skills, make friends, and reduce loneliness whilst giving parents and carers a break from their caring responsibilities and provides time to spend with other children in the family.

For more information, please contact the Project Team via email bucks.activity@actionforchildren.org.uk or by telephone **01296 438230**. The project website is currently being revised and a link, to register, will be shared shortly.

THE SCHOOL CALENDAR - Spring / Summer Term 2022

 Pupil Days
 Inset Days
 School holidays
 Bank holidays

February					
Mon		7	14	21	28
Tues	1	8	15	22	
Wed	2	9	16	23	
Thurs	3	10	17	24	
Fri	4	11	18	25	
Sat	5	12	19	26	
Sun	6	13	20	27	

March					
Mon		7	14	21	28
Tues	1	8	15	22	29
Wed	2	9	16	23	30
Thurs	3	10	17	24	31
Fri	4	11	18	25	
Sat	5	12	19	26	
Sun	6	13	20	27	

April					
Mon		4	11	18	25
Tues		5	12	19	26
Wed		6	13	20	27
Thurs		7	14	21	28
Fri	1	8	15	22	29
Sat	2	9	16	23	30
Sun	3	10	17	24	

