



Furze Down School News

Dear Parents and Carers

Yet again Christmas has come around very quickly and the end of term is rapidly approaching. Last week was our Christmas Bazaar, Annual Carol Concert and Nativity. It was wonderful to welcome so many of you back into school for these events. Due to Covid and national lockdowns, it is the first time we have managed to hold these events since 2019 and they are always the highlight of my year.

Next year we would like to build on these events by reintroducing our Parents and Carers Council, Fundraising Group and Coffee mornings. Assistant Heads will also be re-introducing half termly events where you children can celebrate their successes with you.

I want to thank you as parents for the unwavering support that you have shown us since returning to school in September. Despite the Covid crisis being considered 'over' it has not been an easy term as we continue to manage increased staff absence due to illness on top of a National crisis in relation to recruitment. Our latest recruitment campaign appears to be paying dividends and we are hoping to be fully staffed by the end of January 2023.

In order to provide further support for all pupils in school, we would also like to reintroduce opportunities for parents and carers to volunteer. Volunteers can be deployed on an occasional basis or can assist specific classes or activities more regularly. In order that this does not impact on your child, volunteers are always placed in a different centre to the one your child is in. As part of the vetting process for volunteering, those who may have close or regular contact with pupils will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. For more information on volunteering or to register your interest, please contact the school office office@furzedownschool.org.uk

Please enjoy looking through the rest of the newsletter at some of the wonderful opportunities' pupils have enjoyed this term. Despite the challenges illness and recruitment have brought, colleagues have continued to work tirelessly. No matter what challenges have been put their way, or issues they have faced they have risen to them and worked exceptionally hard to ensure your children are kept safe and above all, that their education has continued even when at times this has had to be remotely. They have been truly remarkable and I am very lucky to lead a team of highly dedicated and professional staff.

We look forward to seeing all your children back in school on Thursday 5th January

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas and looking forward to all that 2023 brings.



News from Early Years and Primary

We have had a busy start to the year in Birch and Cedar classes! We have welcomed many new children to our wonderful school and have spent time building relationships, establishing routines and having plenty of fun in our learning and development. Both classes have enjoyed learning inside, outside and beyond the classroom, for example at Forest School, in sensory circuits and in PE. The children have worked their socks off this term, making some lovely progress, and they are definitely ready for a rest!

We wish you a happy, healthy and peaceful Christmas.



Willow

This half term in Willow class we have been busy producing our own version of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night'.



Nativity

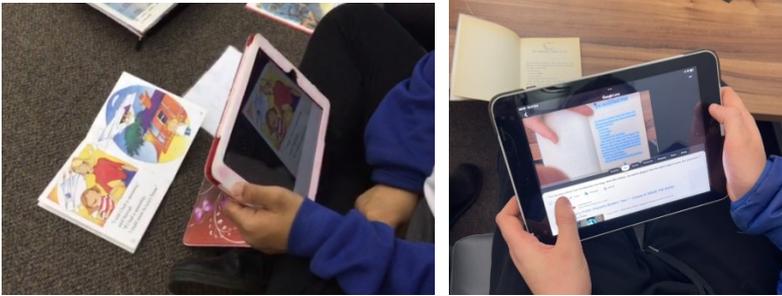
We couldn't be more proud of all the primary pupils, the staff supporting them, our digital leaders supporting the sound and light and our catering group in the most wonderful telling of the Christmas story. A sell out event with an audience of almost 100, but the actors, singers and dancers were unfazed and entertained their audience superbly



News from Key Stage 3

Enjoying reading books with a little help from Lens!

Students in school have been enjoying accessing books using the amazing Google Lens. Students simply point their device at the text that they would like to read, press the button, and then enjoy listening to the text read aloud! Students have been choosing their preferred voice, and then enjoying listening to stories and other texts that ordinarily would have been difficult to access.



This November, Class KHKH had the opportunity to visit Vue Cinema as part of the 'Into Film' festival. They had a great experience of being out in the community with their friends and watching Top Gun: Maverick. A thoroughly enjoyable day out was had by all.



Enjoying break time on the new climbing frames in KS3 and also KS4 and 5 playgrounds.

SB class enjoyed our trip into Winslow this half term. We looked at the wreaths that had been laid at the war memorial and posted the postcards we had written. We also discussed ways to keep ourselves safe as we walked around the town.

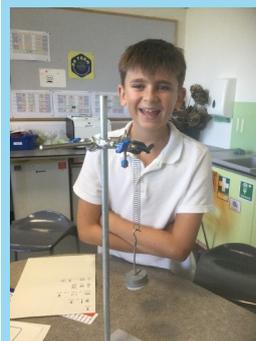


We are enthusiastic scientists, we have carried out a wide range of science experiments. These including making miniature rockets, learning to use a microscope to study cells and most recently exploring how the temperature affects the rate of respiration of yeast. We have particularly enjoyed carrying the practical investigations.

SB are keen mathematicians. This half term we have been reinforcing and extending our understanding of addition and subtraction, including application of these skills to solve problems, whilst developing our mathematical reasoning skills, alongside accurate use of mathematical language.



Jess and Fern have been running SuperFlex sessions in year 7 classes (EN/EB and VC/SK). During the sessions the children have been wearing their Superflex capes/masks and attending the 'Superflex superhero Training Academy' to think about and further develop their self-awareness, self-monitoring and social problem solving skills in fun and practical ways. The children have recently been using jelly to explore the concept of flexible thinking and have had a very fun and messy time in doing so.



Mugs, T-shirts and keyrings!

The PfA Enterprise Stem group have been making personalised mugs, t-shirts and keyrings. To create mugs and t-shirts, students have been using our sublimation printer and then either the mug or t-shirt press to complete the design. Key-rings have been made using our 3D printers. Find out more by visiting: 3d-laser.co



WE WILL MAKE THE MUG OF YOUR DREAMS!

Send over your image

We can use any image you send over as part of your mug design. Photos (digital or paper) of your loved ones, pets or favourite holiday retreats - we can make the mug!

Personalised

Let us know the text you require on the mug and we can sort it out. No more losing your mug amongst the crowded collection of the mug cupboard.

Friendly service

Let us know what you need and we will help!



CONTACT US

stemsales@fds.org.uk



News from Tara and the Catering Team

Our 3-week menu for the Spring Term is now available on Parent Pay. Week one is shown below. We have made a slight change and **moved our roast dinners from a Wednesday to a Thursday and added a cold lunch option.** All of our meals are freshly cooked to order and we cook between 75 and 100 meals a day.

If your child does not like the choices available for a particular day, please send in a packed lunch from home as we are unable to cater for each individual child preferences, unless it is noted that they have specific medical or dietary requirements (or if it is identified in their EHCP)

Lunch can be ordered or cancelled by Parents & Carers, 8 days in advance.

Please note, if your child is entitled to free school meals these still need to be booked through Parent Pay.

Lunch menu (Cycle - Week 1) Log on to Parent Pay to place your orders and to view Weeks 2 and 3

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Main				
Pork Meatballs in tomato sauce with whole wheat pasta	Homemade Beef & Vegetable Pie & mash potato	Homemade Mexican Style Chicken with wholegrain rice	Roast Chicken, Roast Potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, Stuffing & Gravy	Beef Burger in a Bun & Oven Chips
Vegan Tomato & Basil balls in tomato sauce with whole wheat pasta	Homemade Free from Meat & Vegetable pie with mash potato	Homemade Mexican Style Vegetables with wholegrain rice	Meat Free Roast Potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, Stuffing & Gravy	Vegetable Burger in a Bun & Oven Chips
Cheese Roll	Cheese Roll	Cheese Roll	Cheese Roll	Cheese Roll
Ham Roll	Ham Roll	Ham Roll	Ham Roll	Ham Roll
Tuna Mayo Roll	Tuna Mayo Roll	Tuna Mayo Roll	Tuna Mayo Roll	Tuna Mayo Roll
Side				
Green Beans	Mixed Vegetables	Sweetcorn	Peas & Carrots	Baked Beans
Mixed Salad - lettuce/ tomato/ cucumber	Mixed Salad - lettuce/ tomato/ cucumber	Mixed Salad - lettuce/ tomato/ cucumber	Mixed Salad - lettuce/ tomato/ cucumber	Mixed Salad - lettuce/ tomato/ cucumber
Dessert				
Yogurt	Yogurt	Yogurt	Yogurt	Yogurt
Homemade Cupcake	Homemade Fruit Muffin	Homemade Cupcake	Homemade Fruit Muffin	Homemade Cupcake
Sugar Free Jelly with Fruit	Sugar Free Jelly	Sugar Free Jelly with Fruit	Sugar Free Jelly	Sugar Free Jelly with Fruit
Apple	Apple	Apple	Apple	Apple
Banana	Banana	Banana	Banana	Banana
Orange/Satsuma	Orange/Satsuma	Orange/Satsuma	Orange/Satsuma	Orange/Satsuma



Please note that once a cut off date for ordering has been reached it will not be possible to amend your order.

This will now also include **absence**, as it will no longer be refunded, unless the School is closed for any reason. In such an event the school lunch will be automatically refunded to your Parent Pay lunch account.

If you miss the cut off point when ordering, or your child does not require a hot school lunch please ensure you send in a packed lunch, including a drink, from home.



News from Preparing For Adulthood

In 'Work Skills' we have been exploring how to follow verbal and written instructions, working together as a team to complete tasks and develop independence. These sessions use the method of a conveyor belt for students to create a production line and make items to sell, this term we have made 92 hot chocolate reindeer. The students have shown great independence and focus, particularly when having to complete tasks that are difficult for fine motor skills, and the product this term was delicious!

In PFA Site Maintenance students have been completing tasks around school provided by our site team. They have put up coat pegs, built sofas, dismantled tables and taken deliveries around school. They have also been completing regular cleaning jobs such as mopping floors and using the leaf blower. They have learnt how to use different tools and equipment and have been working independently. Our Hospitality and catering team have gone from strength to strength this term.

KS4 and 5 have been sending the tea trolley around the school on a daily basis, and have achieved a high level of customer service, and have learnt to use the card machine like pros!

Catering Rocks!

The Hospitality and catering vocational group have been busy making celebration cakes for purpose, and to date have made a birthday cake, a 21st birthday giant cookie and even a birthday pupcake for Mrs Weatherley's dog Ronnie.

Our Friday morning Tuck shop Furzies, has become very popular with students and staff. Our bacon rolls are flying out, and this week has been our busiest week yet, with the students taking over £60 in 30 mins!! We hope to carry on this success in 2023.





Community Engagement

We are delighted to have been collaborating with Waddesdon Manor Staff again this year for their special Christmas displays.

Our online software patterned design butterflies are on display in the house. Our lanterns are lining Miss Alice Drive and most importantly (and where you can help) our photo light box entry is on display.

If you are visiting Waddesdon Manor over the next few weeks please take a look at our entry and place your vote.

The vote works by counting the entry with the most coins. The school with the most votes wins the cash prize (the taking from the votes).

Thank you for your support. Please pass on the message to family and friends.



Drama Club

Key Stage 4 and 5 have joined together again for drama club. They have been working together preparing for a festive performance on Monday 19th December. The students have enjoyed reworking some of the dances and songs from previous performances that they were unable to show over the past couple of years. Everyone is looking forward to show night!



At the beginning of November we had a visit from the Mayor of Buckingham, Margaret Gateley, and her colleague at the Town Council, Nina Stockill. The students did a presentation to Margaret and Nina stating their reasons for why the council should give any bikes that are lost or abandoned in and around Buckingham to us. They did an absolutely brilliant job and I was very proud of them! As a result, we will be getting some bikes from the council for us to work on and sell back to the community, raising funds for the school.



Grounds Development Project Update

With the building and internal provision in place we are directing our fundraising campaigns to the development of the 8 acre site, focusing on:

- site accessibility,
- resources,
- Inclusion,
- and biodiversity.

Embarking upon this ambitious journey, we continue to work with a group of volunteers, holding a wealth of expertise from Buckinghamshire including: ecologists, lepidopterists, pond experts, ornithologists, and like-minded nature enthusiasts. This group meets regularly to feed into our plans and we are exceedingly grateful for their time, knowledge and enthusiasm.

Appreciating what we have on Site

Michael Gilmore has already identified over 80 different species on our 8-acre site. Where you can find these species has been mapped across the school. A next step is to have identification boards in place around the school

Volunteers – tidying and planting

Saturday 26th November Lucy Wakeman and a group of volunteers from Stowe National Trust worked tirelessly planting well in excess of 400 hornbeam saplings. Pupils planted more around the site during horticulture lessons.



Planters in our Primary Garden

On 12th November, 2022 Mary Hunt and Greener Winslow worked hard to plant up the 2 Primary Planters, which will be maintained by our Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) Group. A selection of colorful, Spring flowering bulbs will also be added.

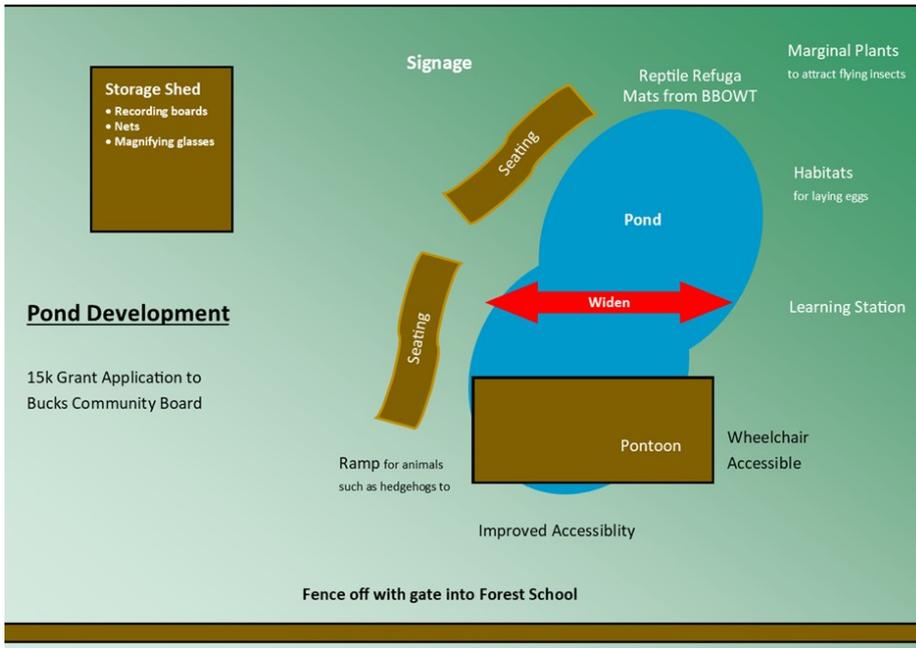


STORY TELLING CHAIRS FROM LINDENGATE

Purchased from Lindengate, one has now successfully been installed in the Primary Garden.

The 2nd chair is adjacent to the Playing Field, until we are able to improve the accessibility for the Senior Sensory Garden (design already supplied by Jane Rennie)





Improving our Building and Grounds Accessibility

Offer of design time from Tina James – Head of Garden Design (Preston Bissett Nurseries) .

Our school pond and swale area provide opportunities to attract wildlife and support activities such as pond dipping.

Each of these areas require design and planting improvements.

This is the current plan

Sowing a wildflower verge

We are looking forward to seeing what springs from our seeds and are hopeful that our newly sown verge of wildflowers will attract pollinators such as bees, flies, moths and flower beetles.



We would like to say a big thank you to all of our volunteers and supporters who have so freely given their time and expertise, in support of our ambitious plans.

Holiday Activities in Bucks

Visit the Buckinghamshire Council Family Information Service for information on a range of events, clubs and activities going on across the county during the Christmas Holiday.



<https://familyinfo.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/things-to-do/holiday-activities/>

There you will also find details and links to their 'Childcare in the holidays' page and a list of Ofsted registered camps and clubs.

<https://familyinfo.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/things-to-do/holiday-activities/keeping-school-holiday-costs-down/>

How you can help support our fundraising?

Co-op Community Fund

We would like to encourage everyone to sign up to this, through the co-op membership - for every £1 spent on selected Co-op products, 2p goes to your membership account and the Co-op will double this amount. Please tell friends and family, even if they don't live in the local areas but use the Co-op, they can select Furze Down as their cause. £71.00 has been raised in this way, in a just a small number of weeks of running the campaign. <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/73483>



Current campaigns/ fundraising platforms

What is AmazonSmile?



AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support a charity of your choice every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.co.uk on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping App for iOS and Android phones. When you shop with AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as amazon.co.uk, with the added bonus that AmazonSmile will donate a portion of the purchase price to your selected charity.

Current campaigns/ fundraising platforms—Go Fund Me



<https://www.gofundme.com/f/special-school-grounds-development-project>



Buckinghamshire Lottery

<https://www.buckinghamshirelottery.co.uk/>

How the lottery works

<p>£1 per ticket</p>  <p>That's right, unlike many other lotteries, our lottery tickets are only £1 per week.</p>	<p>60% to causes</p>  <p>50% to your chosen cause and 10% to other causes in the area of Buckinghamshire.</p>	<p>£25,000 grand prize</p>  <p>Match all 6 numbers and you win the JACKPOT!</p>
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Carol Service and Bazaar



The snowy icy conditions meant we changed our plans and held our Carol Service in School rather than risking the slippery walk to St Laurence Church. We were absolutely thrilled to share the service with so many parents/carers and friends, with the school performance hall filled to bursting.

After the last couple of years it is so lovely to be able to invite parents back into our school community. It just hasn't been the same without everyone. We are hoping to be able to invite parents and friends into school much more in 2023 and looking forward to resurrecting our parent council and parent fundraising groups.

The Bazaar followed the Carol Service, where pupils and parent helpers manned their stalls. We all enjoyed the delicious refreshments prepared by our Pupil Catering Group, and visiting the various stalls where some creative and reasonably priced gifts were available to buy. **Over £1100** was raised on the day, a wonderful amount!

Thank you to everyone who contributed with giving prizes, their time and supporting us on the day.

Furze Down School

PARENT COUNCIL AND PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Pre-Covid we had in place a parent council and an active parent fundraising group. There have of course been many changes over the past 3 years, with pupils leaving and new starters joining us. We would love to re-instate the groups, and are looking for parent/carer representatives from across the school to play an active part in steering the school, raising money and of course choosing how it is spent. There will be different ways in which you can be part of this. Maybe you would like to be part of an organising group or maybe you would like to offer an hour's help at the bazaar for example.

We will be holding a coffee morning on **19th January at 10am** for parents to come along and find out more about the various ways you can support Furze Down. We warmly welcome everyone to join us and enjoy the opportunity for parents to meet other parents informally for a cup of coffee and a chat. If you are unable to join us on this occasion, but would like to be involved please let us know.

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 3.35pm.**

The turning circle is reserved for the Local Authority provided transport before 9am each school day, and from 3.15pm –3.35pm 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/>

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 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 us. They could be given a new lease of life and help continue to support our learning. No bike will be refused. Contact the school office with Furze Down Cycles as the subject heading, if interested.

Repaired, restored and upgraded cycles are sold on.

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

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



Advert from one of our Enterprise Groups

In the case of inclement weather, please check the following for information on school closures.

<https://closures.buckscc.gov.uk>

Mix 96 radio station

Please remember that parents are responsible for collecting their child from school in the event that taxis are cancelled.

