



DIARY DATES

December 2022

Mon 12th

FoSG Elfridges
Christmas Shop

Trip to watch Thomas
Coram Year 3 Nativity
– Y2

Wed 14th

Julia Donaldson Virtual
Event – Y1

Butterfly & insects talk
by Mr Wilson – Y1

14:30 iRock Parent
Assembly (by
invitation only)

Thurs 15th

09:00 Nativity
Performance – YN

Fri 16th

Special visitor (shhh
don't tell the children)

Mon 19th

13:30 Christmas Carol
Concert at St Peter's
Church (YR, Y1 & Y2)
– families welcome to
join us at the church

Tues 20th

Christmas Dinner Day

Little Deers 30 hours &
after-school club last
day

Wed 21st

11:30 Nursery end of
term

13:30 Early finish and
last day of term

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

Our [school calendar on the website](#) has all of the important dates.

9th December 2022



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas from the fantastic FoSG Christmas Fair last Saturday, the panto, performances and Christmas Jumper Day the air is crisp with festive spirit!

Flood Update

The good news is that we have ordered the flooring and we are delighted that it is being fitted on Wednesday and Thursday next week. A parent mail has been sent asking for help, on Tuesday afternoon and Friday morning, to relocate furniture and resources and we have already had some kind offers.

We hope to have both Voles and Rabbits back in their classrooms ready for the last week of term. Once again, thank you for your patience with this matter. The children have been very adaptable and many have enjoyed their adventures.

Admissions

Our next Open Morning takes place on Thursday 12th January 2023 at 09:30 for Reception & Nursery 2023/24 admissions.

If you would or someone you know would like to reserve a place, [contact the office](#) to book. More information can be found on the [admissions pages](#) of our website. A reminder that the deadline for

applications is **Sunday 15th January 2023**. You will need to complete the online process by the closing date [here](#).

Staff News

We are wishing Mrs Stone well as she begins her maternity leave this week. She had a lovely send off in assembly with the whole school and a baby shower with staff.

Miss McGeever has been appointed as maternity cover. She has been in school this week getting to know the Squirrels children and speaking with Reception staff.

We will of course be updating you when we hear the news about baby Stone.

Attend and Achieve

The Attend and Achieve assembly was held this week. The proud winners of the cup for November were **Badgers and Foxes Classes** with an attendance of **96.2%**, they were both delighted to receive the trophy. The other classes' attendance levels are:

- Voles with 94%
- Rabbits with 93.5%
- Owls with 90.6%
- Hedgehogs with 90.4%
- Squirrels with 86.3%.

The overall attendance for the whole school is 92.3% and the DfE target is over 95%. The school is working tirelessly to bridge the gaps in the children's learning, especially as there has been major disruption to their education in the last few years due to COVID 19



Pause for thought

*"Reading gives us somewhere to go,
when we have to stay where we are."*

Mason Cooley

Reminders

Seatbelts

We are saddened that we have seen some of our children in moving cars, not wearing their seatbelts. Wearing seatbelts is so important; this was brought home to us, when staff helped the unfortunate victim of a car crash last week. His head injuries were caused by not wearing his seat belt. We urge you to ensure that your child is strapped in safely.

Water bottles

We have had to replace four new books due to water bottles being placed in book bags. Please can you make sure water bottles are never put in your child's book bag.

School Learning

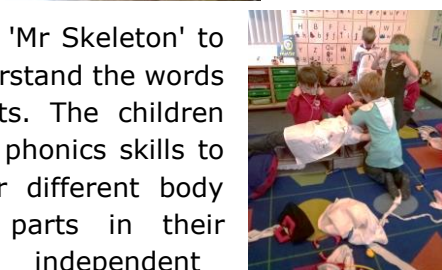
Owls have been doing seasonal activities, making paper chains and doing jigsaws dressed as kings!



Here they are watching the panto too.



Owls have enjoyed having 'Mr Skeleton' to help them understand the words whole and parts. The children also used their phonics skills to write labels for different body parts in their independent play.



They have also enjoyed playing teachers in child initiated play. The children have enjoyed role playing

doctors and nurses in Owls. They were busy and engaged finding ways to look after their patients and 'get rid of the germs'.



Year 1's week has been all about the performance! The children did an amazing job learning their lines, knowing when to say their lines, knowing where they need to be to say their lines and weaving in all their singing and dancing. It was such a joy seeing them in their costumes and all shining on the stage. We are so proud of them for growing in confidence since their first rehearsal and for many this was their first time on a stage. A very big well done from the Year 1 team.

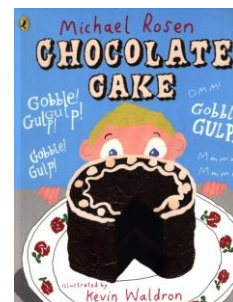
As we near the end of this term, Year 2 have been engaged in some really exciting activities.



From making silhouette paintings of London landmarks in art, where they used a splatter technique to achieve the silhouette, to predicting which materials were flammable in their science lesson. Whilst preparing for our end of term performance for everyone to enjoy. We were certainly ready to relax earlier this week in their Christmas jumpers!

Swing Gate book recommendation

In Badgers, we love listening to Chocolate Cake, by Michael Rosen. Michael Rosen is an award-winning writer. He was Children's Laureate from 2007 to 2009 and he has written numerous children's books





such as 'Quick, Let's get Out of Here', 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' and 'Chocolate Cake'. This book is written from the perspective of Michael (the author). It tells the story of a time, when he was a little boy, when his mum made his favourite treat, chocolate cake. Michael cannot resist the delicious cake... This book is great fun to read aloud and always makes us laugh.

Maths mastery for all!

Dienes

When learning mathematics at Swing Gate School, the children develop a conceptual understanding

tens	ones
3	7

through the Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract (CPA) approach where children handle physical resources, use pictorial representations and record using traditional abstract numbers and symbols. To help you understand this approach, we will explore some of the key pieces of equipment and representations that we use at school. This week, we are looking at Dienes.

In Key Stage One, a child might be given some tens and ones blocks (Dienes) and asked to make a number such as 37. They would need to select three tens rods and seven ones blocks. This helps them to visualise and compare numbers. It supports the understanding of place value.

Children can then use these representations to calculate by adding more blocks or taking some away. This can be done physically or by making informal pictorial representations.

At home, you can create your own Dienes by using different material around the house and garden. Sticks and stones work well as tens and ones. Children may also enjoy making their own Dienes from play dough or clay.

Milk at snack time

After a child turns five, they no longer receive free milk at snack time. If your child would still like to drink milk you will need to register them with our provider, Cool Milk. Simply visit their [website](#). Once completed your child can benefit from a nutritious drink of milk to keep them hydrated until lunch. A leaflet with more information is attached.

Friends of Swing Gate

From next week the FoSG bi-weekly roundup will be sent on Friday's. Look out for the first 'FoSG on Friday' email.

Next week, Elfridges is throwing open its doors to our mini shoppers. Please make sure your child has a named carrier bag to bring home their purchased presents on Monday.

We also wanted to say huge thanks to all the FoSG team Sara, Charlie, Sarah, Gill, Kirsty and Lauren we really do appreciate all the hours they give organising so many wonderful events plus the money raised too! Also thank you to everyone who has volunteered at, or come along to, the many fantastic fund raising events so far this year. Here are the band of merry elves that accompanied Santa on the Swing Gate Lane evening for the Rotary fundraiser – we look forward to hearing how much was raised.



Mental Health Support for Herts Children and Young People

If your child or teenager is feeling low, anxious, or generally struggling, there are lots of services available to





help them all year round. Please always encourage them to talk and ask for help if they need it.

The services listed on Just Talk's webpage are all free and don't need a professional referral, so they can be contacted directly by young people and/or their parents/carers. Services listed include Hertfordshire's new With YOUTH Digital Wellbeing Service for ages 5-18, parents and carers and many more, so please take a look [here](#).

'Warm Space' at Open Door

Open Door Community Space and Café is delighted to have been designated an official 'warm space' within Hertfordshire, which further extends and confirms their ambition to be a safe, welcoming, vibrant place for the people of Berkhamsted.

Due to increases in the cost of living, we are all facing unprecedented pressures, and heating our homes is more expensive than ever. A designated 'warm space' is somewhere people can use to stay warm this winter, and where you'll always get a warm welcome.

Open Door is open Mon - Fri 10:30-15:30 and Saturday 10:30-13:00. Read more about the café [here](#). There is free wifi and usually an exhibition of local art as well, as well as lots of activities around the building.

Wellbeing in Action

Healthy Eating

Gingerbread Pancakes

Ingredients

- 1 cup self-raising flour, sifted
- 3 tbsp sugar
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 3/4 milk
- 1 tbsp cinnamon
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- half a nutmeg, freshly grated
- 50g butter, melted for frying



- whipped cream, for serving
- gingernut biscuits, crushed for serving

Method

1. In a bowl, whisk flour, sugar, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg.
2. In a jug, beat the egg and add the milk. Add to the flour a little at a time until batter is smooth and lump-free.
3. In a hot pan or flat grill over medium heat, brush butter over cooking surface and pour 1/4 cup measure for each pancake.
4. When large bubbles form on the surface, flip the pancake over and cook until lightly golden on the other side.
5. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream and crushed ginger biscuits.

Mindfulness

2 cups of plain flour
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
½ cup of salt
2 tablespoons of cream of tartar
Up to 1 ½ cups of boiling water
Food colouring (optional)

Mix the dry ingredients and oil in a large mixing bowl, add the colouring to the boiling water (if using). Gradually add the water until it comes together. Once the mixture is cool get your child to knead the dough until the stickiness has gone.

The playdough should last for up to 6 months if stored in an air tight container.



Playdough Recipe

Dacorum Climate Action Network Volunteers needed this Saturday

A message from them...

"In partnership with the Butterfly Conservation and the Friends of Halsey Field, we have started work on building a butterfly bank in Spring Fields, Warners End to help improve local biodiversity.



The chalk bank aims to encourage a local rare butterfly the Dingy Skipper and other species of butterflies, moths, birds, bats and small mammals.

So far the turf and a layer of top soil have been stripped off and 300 tonnes of chalk have been spread on the area. Help is now needed from some local volunteers to help with the next stage of sowing wildflower seeds.

Volunteering information, your questions answered...

When should I arrive?

The session will run 9:30 – 12:00, Saturday 10 December (*volunteers do not need to attend the whole session*).

Where should I go?

Meet at the new chalk bank on Spring Fields, off of Galley Hill in Warners End, Hemel Hempstead.

What will I need to bring?

Volunteers will be need to walk directly on the sticky chalk and so please wear old clothes and boots, preferably wellingtons. If you are able to bring a rake, this would be useful.

If you can't take part this time?

As one of the key aims of the Dacorum Climate Action Network is to encourage people to 'think global and act local', we have created an [Environmental Volunteering Map](#) to help connect people to local organisations and groups that have volunteering opportunities. There are a range of different activities to suit

different skillsets and interests. All volunteering opportunities are related to activities that either reduce emissions or help to improve biodiversity."

Social media

Swing Gate School is on Facebook and Twitter, if you have an account why not follow us to keep up to date with our news. You can find us [on Facebook @swinggateschool](#) and [on Twitter @SwingGateSchool](#)

And finally...

I have loved hearing the children practise for their performances and seeing their wonderful enthusiasm on stage. I am nine performances in, with the last one, on Thursday next week, I can't wait to see Voles perform the play that they have written.



The children spread that little bit of magic at this time of year.

I hope that you have a good weekend with family and friends.

*Francesca Gallagher (Mrs)
Headteacher*