



DIARY DATES

December 2023

Mon 11th

09:15 YN Christmas Performance

FoSG Christmas Shop

Tues 12th

09:30 Open Morning for Reception 2024/25 Admissions

FoSG Christmas Shop

Wed 13th

Eco & School Council

14:00 iRock Assembly (by invitation only)

Thurs 14th

Wreath making with parent volunteer – YN

Fri 15th

Premier Drama & Dance Workshop

17:00 – 19:00 FoSG Christmas Party

Mon 18th

Special visitor to school – shhh don't tell the children!

Class Christmas parties

Tues 19th

Christmas Dinner Day

13:30 Christmas Carol Concert at St Peter's Church led by Y2 – all welcome

Little Deers last day

Wed 20th

Panto Day

Last day of term – Voles finish at 11:30 and early finish for main school at 13:30

For further dates visit [the school website](https://www.swinggate.herts.sch.uk).

8th December 2023

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! With fabulous performances to Year 2 practicing their songs to decorations around school.



The festive season feels very much upon us.

Christmas Carol Concert

We are looking forward to welcoming our families to the Christmas Carol Concert at St Peters Church on Tuesday 19th December at 13:30. Our Year 2 children have been practicing their songs and preparing to deliver the service.

As ever we need adult volunteers to join us. Please let your child's class teaching team know if you accompany us on the walk.

Open Mornings

We are proud to continue to be a 'Good' school following our Ofsted inspection in December 2022.

Our final Reception focussed Open Mornings are at 09:30 on:

- Tuesday 12th December
- Thursday 11th January.

We have also announced our Nursery Open Morning dates:

- Thursday 11th January (combined with Reception)
- Monday 22nd January
- Friday 9th February.

These take place ahead of the online application system opening on Monday 26th February. The

deadline to apply is Thursday 28th March. To reserve a place, [contact the office](#).

External After School Clubs

Next week, we will be sending information on how to book for the external after school clubs for spring term. In addition to the clubs that already run, we will be introducing an art club on Wednesday's from 15:15-16:15.

Attend and Achieve

The many bugs that took hold this term meant that our overall attendance for November fell to 92.5%. The winners of the cup for November are **Badgers Class**, once again, with an attendance of **94.7%**, Mrs Gallagher will be presenting them with the trophy on Monday. The other classes' attendance were:

- Rabbits with 94.3%
- Voles with 93.2%
- Hedgehogs with 92%
- Squirrels with 92%
- Owls with 91.2%
- Foxes with 90.6%.

The DfE target is over 95% and we hope that in spring we can bounce back to the fantastic attendance achieved at the start of this year. As we have mentioned before, good attendance is key for us in supporting children in their social and academic development.

Consultation on Dacorum Local Plan Revised Strategy for Growth

Some of you may be aware of the proposal to build a significant housing development on the field



Pause for thought

*"May you never be too grown up to
search the skies on Christmas Eve."*

Unknown

opposite Thomas Coram School. Berkhamsted Residents Action Group (BRAG) has asked us to share their latest report explaining how the plan will impact the local

Little Deers

A reminder that Little Deers last day of term, for both 30 hours and after school club, is Tuesday 19th December. On Wednesday 20th Voles will finish at 11:30 and YR, Y1 & Y2 at 13:30 (Thomas Coram finishes at 13:00 on this day).

Consultation on Dacorum Local Plan Revised Strategy for Growth

Some of you may be aware of the proposal to build a significant housing development on the field opposite Thomas Coram School. Berkhamsted Residents Action Group (BRAG) has asked us to share their latest report explaining how the plan will impact the local area, this is attached with the newsletter. We would encourage everyone to read the document and submit comments by 23:59 on Monday 11th December. You can also read more [here](#).

Travel Plan

Mrs Sutton our Sustainability lead and Ms DiG took George D from Badgers and Nicholas from Foxes to Ashlyns School this week to meet with representatives

from Ashlyns, Thomas Coram, Victoria and Herts County Council. The aim of the plan is to amend the speed limit to 20mph from Ashlyns to Swing Gate Lane amongst other traffic calming measures. Including designated crossing points.



Art in the hall

After the Nursery and Year 1 visits to the Berkhamsted Arts Exhibition, artist Kate Wynne-Eyton decided to loan one of her stunning paintings. We have it displayed in the hall. The children who had been to the exhibition were excited at the fact that the painting is now in our school. During assembly the children described the emotions the painting evoked in them including calm, relaxed, free, happy and playful.



We also received a wonderful thank you from the Art Exhibition organiser praising our children who visited.

Herts Neurodiversity Support Hub

Herts County Council (HCC) has launched The Hertfordshire Neurodiversity Support Hub that is open Monday - Friday from 09:00-13:00.

The Hub is staffed by experienced experts who can answer questions about Neurodiversity, however big or small, or just be a listening ear. No diagnosis is required for parents and carers to access the support. The Hub can be contacted by phone on 01727 833963, with an answerphone facility for out of hours or by email at supporthub@add-vance.org.

There is a short digital animation to view [Your guide to ADHD and Autism](#)

[support in Hertfordshire](#). A parent who accessed the hub commented 'I was stuck in a moment where I didn't know which way to turn. Your helpline saved me today and put me in the right direction, made me feel less alone and has given me hope. thank you, I feel stronger just by knowing what to do next.'





Change of lunch choice

On Monday 18th December, the kitchen has had to amend the roll choice to cheese roll.

School Learning

Father Stuart came to visit Voles. He and the children worked together to tell the story of the first Christmas.

Voles are Christmas ready having decorated their tree. This week, overnight, a few visitors



have
snuck
into
school



and been playing in the Voles classroom and hall. The children were delighted to watch the videos caught on camera of snowman, reindeers and even Santa himself!

In Owls the children have been looking at different ways to represent four. They have been looking at different parts within four. In Rafa's picture we can see that we can represent four with two and one and one. We have spotted other parts in our pictures, for example, two twos, four ones, and three and one. They have also been practising their subitising skills, using 'fast eyes' to see the number straight away. They found this is easier when it is a pattern that they already know, like a die pattern. Rafa's pattern was tricky to spot straight away!



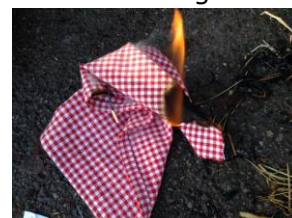
Reception and Year 1 put on fabulous Nativity performances this week. The children



were Christmas stars and we are very proud of them all. It has also been lovely to welcome back some Swing Gate alumni who came to watch their younger siblings in the shows



Following the Year 2 children learning about 'Fire Safety', there was much excitement today, investigating what materials were flammable. We had some interesting results which generated great discussion.



Reminder from Thomas Coram for Year 2 families

If you are applying for a Year 3 place at Thomas Coram for your child, you will need to complete their Supplementary Information Form (sent to all Year 2 families yesterday by email) and hand it to the school office. You can also complete the online form [here](#).

Curriculum Corner

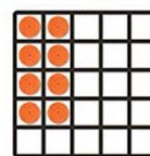
Maths mastery for all!

Arrays

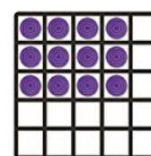
When learning mathematics at Swing Gate School, the children develop a conceptual understanding through the Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract (CPA)

approach where children handle physical resources, use pictorial representations and record using traditional abstract numbers and symbols. To help you understand this

Arrays



$$2+2+2+2=8$$
$$4 \times 2 = 8$$



$$4+4+4=12$$
$$3 \times 4 = 12$$





approach, we will explore some of the key pieces of equipment and representations that we use at school. This week, we are looking at arrays.

Arrays can be made physically or by drawing pictorial representations. In Key Stage One, children create arrays by arranging objects into rows and columns. This helps them to visualise multiplication as repeated addition. They are also an effective method of helping children to understand the link between multiplication and division.

At home, children could use a variety of objects to explore this concept. They could place toys or food in even rows and check how many they have in total. Children in Key Stage One could use a chess board and investigate how many different arrays they can make.

NHS Healthy Start Scheme

Did you know that you might qualify for a weekly payment towards fresh fruit, vegetables, and milk for your family through the NHS Healthy Start Scheme? Visit the Healthy Start website for more information to see if you are eligible to apply at www.healthystart.nhs.uk or call/email 0300 330 7010 / healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk.

Wellbeing in Action

Healthy Eating

Your little one will be delighted to learn how to make homemade bread with this [fun video](#). It's a cosy activity for a dark wintry day and the bread is a tasty accompaniment to soup.



Mindfulness

Have a go at this mindful breathing meditation for children "[Snowball Breaths](#)". It teaches them how to cope when waves of big emotions hit, by stretching and breathing as they throw their worry snowball far away. During this mindful meditation, they will inhale and form their snowball, before exhaling and throwing their worries away.



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 X @SwingGateSchool](#).

And finally...

It was such a delight for me to watch the Reception and Year 1 Nativities. The children have been gaining in confidence and were proud of themselves, as were we, their teachers.

I am looking forward to seeing the Voles Nativity and to the Year 2s at St Peter's Church.



Today, we had a visit from Gagan Mohindra MP who presented our three Christmas Card winners with a teddy bear each from the Houses of Parliament. Evie, Isla McG and Catherine were thrilled to receive their prizes.

Have a lovely weekend!

*Francesca Gallagher (Mrs)
Headteacher*