



# Hillside Specialist School & College

Providing exceptional education for all students

## DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2025

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Friday 19th December  
LAST DAY OF TERM 3.10pm finish
- Monday 5th January  
SCHOOL REOPENS
- Thursday 12th February  
LAST DAY OF TERM 3.10pm finish
- Friday 13th February  
INSET
- 16th - 20th February HALF TERM
- Monday 23rd February  
SCHOOL RE-OPENS



# Arbor

Please make sure you download the Arbor app as this is where we send important messages and you can see pupil information



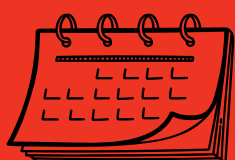
### STAFF NEWS

We are pleased to welcome to the team:

Omotoyosi Ishola - School Business Manager  
Katie Hunt - Teacher  
Rebecca Dexter - TA2  
Shafina Patel - TA1

Goodbye & Good Luck to:  
Kerry Short  
Chloe Robinson  
Claire Iddon after an amazing  
19 years!

MERRY  
CHRISTMAS  
HAPPY &  
NEW YEAR



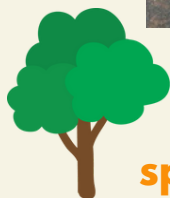
## REMINDER:

# SCHOOL REOPENS ON MONDAY 5th JANUARY 2026





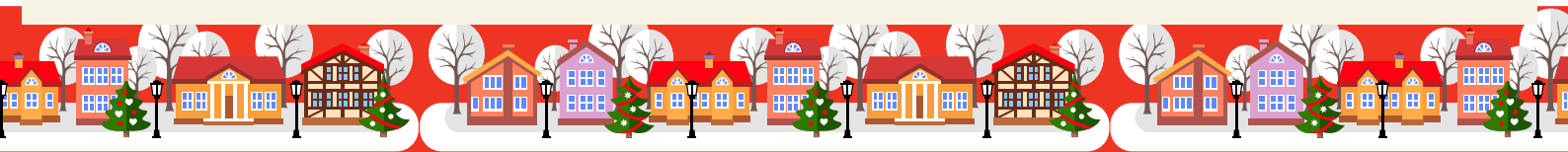
## Tree Planting Community Event



On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November we came together for a very special community event — planting our brand-new orchard, made possible thanks to the King's Coronation Grant! It was wonderful to see so many staff, families and friends join in to help. Your energy and enthusiasm made the day truly memorable.



A huge thank you to the PSFA for keeping everyone fuelled with delicious butties, hot drinks and cakes  
Here's to a future filled with growth, community and plenty of apples!





# SCHOOL NEWS



# Thank you!



A big thank you to Dunelm and all your wonderful customers for your generosity and for spreading Christmas cheer to our pupils at Hillside Specialist School and College. We are overwhelmed by your kindness 🌲👶👶

A special mention to the PSFA for collecting all the gifts from Dunelm, we really appreciate all the trips you've made!



Thank you to Bako for kindly donating mince pies for the Christmas Disco's & the PSFA for the pupil chocolates



'The key ingredient to the food industry' ®





## Christmas Concert

🎸 A Rocking Festive Finale! 🔔

Our halls were ringing with more than just silver bells this week! We are incredibly proud of all the students who took part in our annual Christmas Concert, we had 38 students attending! It was a spectacular showcase of talent, ranging from classical Christmas songs and carols to high-energy rock!

The afternoon was a true journey through different musical styles. Our audience was treated to solo performances on the glockenspiel and hand bells, solo singing performances and a group performance in the rock band! We would like to especially thank Tim and the Lancashire music service for providing the tuition and musical instruments so that the students were able to perform as part of a rock band.

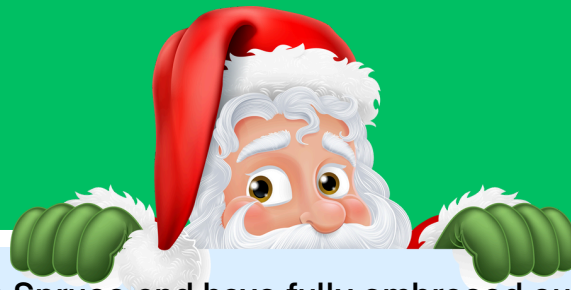
While the music was fantastic, the real highlight was seeing the confidence of our performers. Whether it was their first time on stage or they are seasoned veterans, their sense of fun and pride shone through in every note. It is a testament to their hard work and dedication throughout the term.

A massive thank you to all the parents, guardians and family members who attended. Your cheers, applause and ongoing support make these performances possible. We hope the show left you feeling festive and proud!





# CLASS NEWS



We have had a fantastic half-term in Spruce and have fully embraced our Traditional Tale topic. The children have been captivated by our Cinderella sensory story and absolutely loved retelling 'The Three Little Pigs' using props and role play. They have been developing brilliant speaking and listening skills while stepping into the roles of different characters. Later in the term, we enjoyed getting festive with Christmas stories such as 'Stick Man' and 'The Snowman'. The children particularly enjoyed comparing the settings and discussing how the characters were feeling.

In Maths, we have been very busy developing our addition skills. We have been recognising and forming numbers correctly, representing quantities with objects and pictures, exploring doubles and using number lines and hundred squares to support our learning. The children are growing in confidence when adding numbers up to 20 and are becoming more independent in choosing the resources they need to help them.

In PSHE, we have been learning about the way we grow and change — from a tiny baby through to adulthood and later life. We had great fun with our baby photo quiz! The children were so excited to guess which baby was who, and the drum-roll reveals created lots of smiles and laughter.

In History, our focus has been on buildings and the different types of homes we live in. The children enjoyed exploring photographs of their own houses and comparing them to buildings in the past. We also talked about the materials used to build homes and which ones are the most suitable.

The children have also thoroughly enjoyed outdoor learning, making the most of our school grounds. They have been exploring nature, developing teamwork skills and using the environment to support learning in all subjects — especially during our traditional tale adventures outside!

We are incredibly proud of all the hard work and enthusiasm the children have shown this term.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a very happy New Year,

From all the staff in Spruce Class 🎄 ✨





# CLASS NEWS



Walnut have had a great term. We have done some exciting things which the pupils have really enjoyed. We have been on the bus, learning how to pay for tickets and keep our tickets safe. We have been in a variety of cafes and shops. In Maths we have been learning about measure, finding out who was the tallest and shortest in the class and in English our story has been 'The Grinch' and how he tried to steal Christmas. We have also taken part in employability skills that have included planting trees, washing cars and picking up leaves.





This half term, our topic in Birch Class has been “I Can Make.”

In our English and Communication lessons, we have been learning all about parties—building up to planning and hosting our very own Christmas celebration. Pupils have been developing their communication and listening skills through activities such as making party invitations, hats, decorations and cakes. We have also enjoyed sharing the story ‘Peppa Pig’s Party Bus’ and answering “W” questions (who, what, where, what doing), using colourful semantics to support sentence building.

We have continued with our weekly Attention Autism sessions and sensory exploration activities, with a strong focus on phonics, reading and writing skills. Our weekly communication sessions have linked to “I Can Make Friends”. The children have loved engaging with one another through music, movement and shared activities, and we have seen fantastic progress from everyone.

In maths, we explored time, including daily routines, days of the week and months of the year, before moving on to number work.

In RE, we created bonfire crafts and remembrance artwork. We then learned about Hanukkah, making our own clay dreidels, menorahs and even potato latkes.

In Geography, we have been discovering how different items are made around the world.

The pupils have tried making hobby horses, pizzas, lava lamps and Kokeshi dolls.

In PSHE, our focus has been healthy eating. Everyone has done brilliantly during our food desensitisation sessions and we have explored a wide variety of healthy foods together.

In PE, we have enjoyed playing the Colour Stations game and developing turn-taking skills through curling.

In Music, we have been busy making music and exploring a range of instruments - experimenting with different ways to play them and reacting to changes in tempo during dance massage activities.

Finally, in Science, we have been learning all about recycling, taking part in lots of hands-on, practical activities.



# CLASS NEWS



We've had a super busy half term in Alder! Our topic "I Can Make" let us build towers, make fruit salad, paint pictures and play instruments. In phonics, our hungry Phonics Monster gobbled up items beginning with our sound of the week! Our Christmas sensory story was full of magic - snow patterns, drawing fairy lights and festive role play. In maths, we explored prepositions like on, under, and next to, and went on a fun Elf Hunt to spot numbers.

In PSHE, we learned about good and bad touch, body parts and using STOP to stay safe.

We celebrated Hanukkah, planted trees outdoors and made nature art.

In swimming, we grew more confident through games and in science, we discovered recycling by making bowls, drums and decorations.

Finally, in music, we explored quiet and loud and followed visual cues like pros! We finished the term with a trip to the cinema and lots of festive fun!

Have a magical and restful Christmas break!

Jo, Hamnah, Adele, Keisha and Harriet (Alder team)





# CLASS NEWS



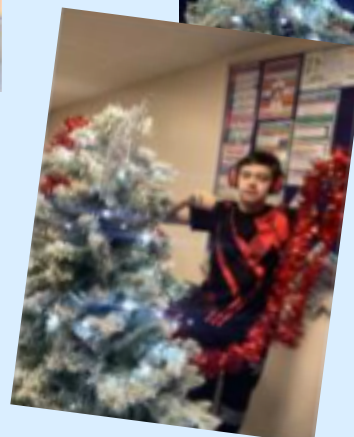
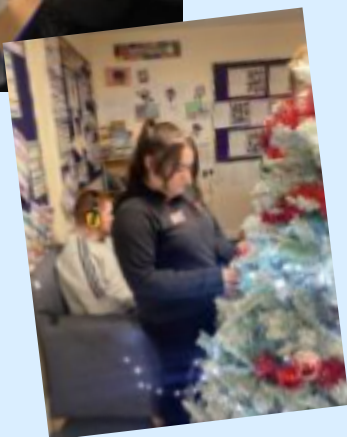
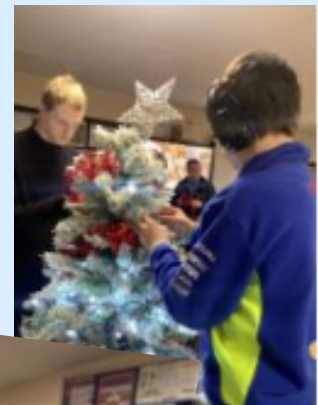
Another busy half term for Oak Class – particularly in the run up to Christmas! Everyone has been working incredibly hard with our Christmas enterprise project. We've been making: reindeer Christmas tree ornaments, Christmas gonks, snowmen baubles, sweet cones and reindeer gift bags. One of our pupils held a stall in Coppull on a Saturday with our enterprise crafts and made over £50! We're hoping to sell more at our upcoming Christmas performances. All pupils will be either attending or performing in our Christmas performance at St Paul's Church.

All pupils have been working well towards their different accreditations, including Functional Skills, PDP Gold/Bronze, Personal Progress and the Kings Trust PDE program. We've been completing various modules to help us achieve these, such as shopping, raising money for a charity/cause and exploring sports. In science and Forest Schools, we managed to build a hedgehog hut using a variety of tools safely just in time for the hibernation period.

Unfortunately, we've had no visitors as of yet, but we keep checking.

We also had Lee from the department of work and pensions visit Hillside for a series of lessons, teaching us all about careers, job opportunities and CV writing skills. It was great to explore our different strengths and interests and link these to potential jobs/futures. Everyone is very excited for our Christmas lunch in the last week, as we've planned out every little detail and prepared for the day. Fingers crossed it's as delicious as we've planned it to be!

After such a busy half term, I wish everyone a restful Christmas break and a happy new year.  
James and the Oak Class team.





# CLASS NEWS

Wow – what a busy and brilliant half term Willow Class has had! We've been travelling all the way to Spain, exploring its culture, food, art and stories – and we've had so much fun along the way.

We've dived into a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, including 'The Story of Ferdinand', 'The Cazuela that the Farm Maiden Stirred', and even a Spanish Christmas story. The children have been amazing at exploring new ideas, practising their reading skills and sharing their thoughts about Spanish life and traditions.

Our Spanish learning didn't stop at stories! In Art and DT, the children have been busy creating, designing and tasting. They explored Spanish cuisines, planning, preparing and evaluating their own dishes. We also delved into the colourful world of Antoni Gaudí, learning about his love for natural materials, curved lines and the mosaic technique called trencadís. The children's creations were simply fantastic and we now have a beautiful Spanish display celebrating their hard work!

This term, we've been ticking along with time, learning to read analogue and digital clocks, understand routines and compare differences between days. We've also been sharpening our addition and subtraction skills, practising simple calculations with growing confidence. In Science, our focus has been on everyday materials and their uses. The children have been exploring different materials, discovering their properties and taking part in exciting material hunts around the school and classroom.

PE has been full of movement and music! We've explored dance, enjoyed Spanish freeze dances, experimented with different body actions and created our own dance routines, linking movements and adapting them to music. It's been energetic and fun.

Finally, a huge thank you to everyone who came to the Christmas disco – the children had a fantastic time and it was lovely to see you all enjoying the festivities.

We hope you all have a wonderful half term break. Can't wait to see you back for more fun and learning in the New Year!

Kelly and the Willow Class Team





# CLASS NEWS



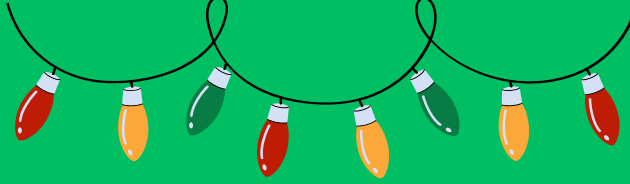
Cherry Class have all had a fun and festive half term, full of lovely achievements. Our highlights being our Super Ball Paul sessions, Forest School with Julie and our many trips out into the community, including Aldi shopping; going to the cinema to see 'Zootropolis 2'; and our Hillside choir and Music Club performing at St. Paul's Church. Another big thank you to Laura S for organising this event; it was truly wonderful and we were so proud of all the students.

This last week has been full of festive baking, Christmas crafting (we hope you all enjoy your gifts) and our class Christmas party. We wish all our families a wonderful Christmas 2025 and looking forward to seeing everyone again in 2026!

Best wishes, Christy, Sean and all the Cherry Team 🎄😊



# CLASS NEWS

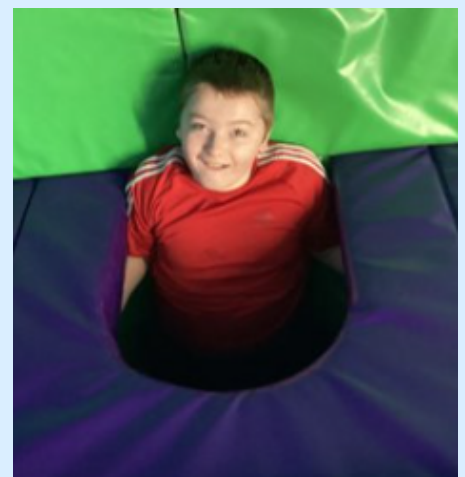


Pine Class have had a wonderful Autumn 2 half-term. As part of our Healthy Eating topic in Science, pupils have enjoyed trying new foods and making sandwiches, smoothies, fruit salads and more. These sessions also gave everyone the opportunity to practise their food-preparation skills and learn how to tidy up afterwards!

While working towards their 'My Relationships' module for their ASDAN qualification, pupils took part in a range of group activities. They particularly enjoyed creating a papier-mâché volcano, joining group sessions in the sensory room and playing turn-taking games together. In Geography, we have been learning about recycling. Pupils took part in hands-on activities, including sorting different types of recyclable materials and using litter pickers around the school grounds to help collect recycling.

All pupils have worked incredibly hard towards their individual targets over the past few weeks. As a class, we have shared many fun, playful and interactive learning experiences and we are very proud of everything they have achieved this half-term.

We hope everybody has a lovely Christmas 😊





# CLASS NEWS



This half term Cedar class have enjoyed a story about a lemonade stand and as part of DT we have enjoyed making and tasting our own lemonade, fruit salad and protein snacks. We also had a sensory Christmas story and enjoyed tasting Christmas snacks and playing with cinnamon and ginger playdough.

In maths our topic has been measures. We have learnt about capacity, temperature and weight. Our PE has been dancing with scarves and practising short dance sequences to music.

In science we have learnt about baby animals and that different animals eat different things.

We have covered many different topics as part of our different ASDAN awards such as hygiene and crafts.

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas holiday!



# CLASS NEWS



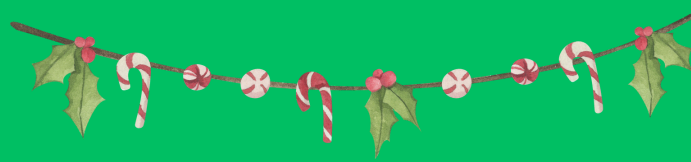
Chestnut class have had another wonderful half term filled with lots of fun and learning. The children have loved learning more about number using lots of different multi-sensory activities to build their understanding of counting, adding and subtracting. They have also had so much fun learning about in, on, under and next to through songs and activities. In English the children have really enjoyed role playing with different toys and props from our stories "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and "The Gingerbread Man". They have also been busy making and trying things to eat from the story including breakfast porridge (just like Goldilocks) with fruit toppings and of course yummy Gingerbread biscuits. In PSHE we have enjoyed learning about how we grow and change from babies to children and adults. The children have loved looking after our baby dolls and learning about how we grow by drawing around ourselves to see how tall we are. RE this term has been all about Christianity and we have explored different objects and symbols related to our topic. In the run up to Christmas we have enjoyed watching the story of Christmas and making Christmas decorations. Finally over the whole term, the children have been engaging in reading for pleasure activities and have had lots of fun playing with props from different stories to help bring them to life. If your child has a particular story they love to listen to please do let us know so we can incorporate this into our reading sessions in the future. It has been another fantastic half term and we are very proud of all the children and how hard they have been working.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and we hope you enjoy a restful break.  
Fiona and the Chestnut Class team





# CLASS NEWS



We have had a super half-term in Saplings. The children have really enjoyed learning about 'Pirates' for the first part of the term and 'Christmas' for the last few weeks.

During our pirate's topic, the children listened to lots of Pirate themed action songs including 'Yo- Ho, I'm a Pirate, Over the Deep Blue Sea and Here we go around the Pirate Ship'. They even created their own pirate ship, flag and boat in our role-play area which they played in each day. As part of this topic, the children created a range of pirate themed artwork including hats, eye patches, pirate swords and their own junk model pirate ships. It was lots of fun!

The children have really enjoyed learning about Christmas and have listened to a range of stories including 'Roodey's Windy Christmas, Father Christmas loves Aliens and Yikes, Party Claws!' They have been busy creating Christmas themed repeating patterns and creating some lovely Christmas artwork including Christmas decorations for the tree, elves and reindeer.



# CLASS NEWS



What a fantastic term it has been in Bay Class! We are so proud of how well the children have done and all the wonderful experiences we've shared together.

We have absolutely loved our Forest School and outdoor learning sessions, getting outside and exploring through a variety of activities that have helped build important life skills. From teamwork to problem-solving, the children have embraced every challenge with enthusiasm and big smiles!

We were very lucky to have Superball Paul visit us, where the children had great fun developing their fundamental movement skills. There was lots of energy, movement and laughter – a real highlight of the term!

In class, we have been busy exploring new phonics topics, with the children showing great curiosity and growing confidence. Our Good Morning sessions have also been a lovely part of our day. We've really enjoyed looking at the pictures sent in from home and hearing all about what everyone gets up to with their families – it's been wonderful to share these moments together.

We've also taken a trip around the world, exploring different countries and have particularly enjoyed learning all about Christmas festivities in Spain. The children were fascinated by how Christmas is celebrated in different ways across the world.

As we come to the end of a brilliant term, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope you enjoy a lovely, relaxing break filled with special moments. We can't wait to hear all about your Christmas adventures when everyone returns!

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Warm wishes,

Bella, Sophie, Helen and Aimee





# CLASS NEWS



It has been an incredibly busy and productive half term in Maple Class! We are so proud of the dedication our students have shown across all their projects.

The classroom has been a hub of activity as the students have hand made all of the Christmas items to sell as part of our enterprise project. From designing to creating and finally selling their enterprise items, the children have learned so much and it was a great experience for them to sell the products they have made. We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported us - your purchases and encouragement meant the world to the class!

Our students truly shone during the preparations for the Christmas concert. It was wonderful to see their confidence grow as they mastered solo performances on the glockenspiel and hand bells, enthusiastically rehearsed singing performances, and an amazing performance with the Rock Band, which the students thoroughly enjoyed being a part of.

In the classroom, we have been focusing on our literacy skills through festive storytelling. The students have been working hard writing Christmas stories, but the learning didn't stop there. After finishing their tales, they practiced answering comprehension questions and then took on the role of the teacher—asking their friends questions about their stories to test their understanding.

The class staff are all extremely proud of the hard work and progress every student has made this term. They have earned a well-deserved rest!  
We wish all of our students and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you all refreshed and ready for a new term in January.







## Governors Update

We would like to welcome Jack Thackway as a Co-opted Governor and Kerry Pollard as a Parent Governor. James Brown will continue as Staff Governor.



I would like to thank our staff for their hard work this year in supporting pupils to access such a range of activities both in and outside of school. It's great to see the progress the pupils have made.

I would also like to thank parents and guardians for their support in our fundraising events this year. It was great to see so many of you at the Christmas Fair on Saturday.

I hope you all enjoy the festive period and we look forward to the return of pupils on the 5<sup>th</sup> January.

Paul Leaper  
Headteacher





# FUNDRAISING NEWS



## THANK YOU SO MUCH!

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for our annual bingo event. We were overwhelmed again by how many people joined us to support the school.

**The PSFA raised an amazing £1930!**

Thank you to Bingo Ben our fantastic caller, all the parents & relatives who donated raffle prizes for non-uniform day and all the businesses that kindly gave us donations or bingo prizes. We couldn't have achieved this success without you all!



**support our school  
join our lottery!**  
Sign up today at [www.YourSchoolLottery.co.uk/play](http://www.YourSchoolLottery.co.uk/play)

For every ticket sold 76% goes towards school and prizes.  
If you would like to take part please go to  
<https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/> to join.  
£1 per ticket!

*Thank you to our PSFA for all your efforts raising funds for school!*

# FUNDRAISING NEWS



The PSFA held their first ever Christmas Fair and it truly felt like something special. Seeing so many pupils, families and members of the community come together to enjoy the day was absolutely wonderful

**We're thrilled to share that we raised an incredible £1175!**

A huge THANK YOU to all the staff, families and friends who volunteered on the day to make the event happen — we couldn't have done it without you!

Here's to next year... even bigger, even brighter, even more festive!



*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all - We look forward to welcoming the pupils back in January!*