

Headteacher Blog – Week Beginning 1 December 2025

The first week of December is always a glorious mix of glitter, cold weather, illness amongst pupils and staff, Christmas excitement, and an unshakeable sense among staff that each day is actually four days long – not to mention it's my birthday week! Woodlands has been alive with festive spirit, training, visitors and the children practising Christmas songs loudly enough to be heard from the car park.

The school festivities were kicked off in true Woodlands style on Saturday with our ever-popular PTA Christmas Fair. We are always amazed by the incredible time and effort this dedicated group of parents puts into organising such wonderful events, and this year's fair was no exception.

There were plenty of happy children enjoying face painting, prizes and sweets, and just as many delighted parents proudly carrying home their winnings from the bottle tombola and raffle. We are truly grateful to our fantastic PTA for everything they do for our school.

They are always delighted to welcome new members, so please do get in touch if you are able to offer your support.

A Festive Start to the Week

Monday kicked off with our Festive Fun Run Assemblies, led by Samantha Eastwood - one for Infants, one for Juniors. The children listened beautifully and left buzzing with excitement, which is exactly what you want at 9am on a Monday... unless you are the adult trying to contain 30 enthusiastic children who have immediately decided they are all future marathon runners!

We welcomed lots of potential new Squirrels, who visited our school for the first time - a highlight of the week. Then, to complete the day, our Acorns families joined us for a Christmas Stay and Play, which saw parents and children elbow-deep in craft materials and producing everything from sparkly reindeer to slightly abstract interpretations of snowmen.

A Birthday, a Director's Visit, and a Very Busy Tuesday

Tuesday was my birthday, which the children somehow sensed without being told - one child whispered loudly, 'She looks exactly the same age as yesterday,' which I've decided is a compliment, and one brought me a personalised card with a Labrador on it – too cute.

It was also a day full of visitors and key meetings. Our Y2 children enjoyed Christmas Crafts Stay and Play in the Infant Hall, proudly parading their creations around school as if they were priceless artefacts. Butterflies also welcomed families to their own Stay and Play session. We hosted our Director of Education, Sal Thirlway, for a visit – a real chance to celebrate the many strengths of our school and show off our fantastic children. He has left under no illusion that the quality of care and provision here is excellent and, as a result, will begin to form a plan for the possibility of a new RP here in September 2026 very soon in the new year. To those of you asking us about it, we know nothing more than this. We will update you when we know anything further.

Our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) also carried out a register inspection with Mrs Liversey and Mrs Brown and this went **very** well. After-school clubs filled the afternoon, while Mrs Brown, glutton for punishment, attended the virtual EWS network meeting

Midweek Magic

Wednesday continued the festive theme with Y1 Christmas Crafts Stay and Play, another round of new-to-Squirrels visits, and bumper activity across school. SALT visits, ELSA supervision, GLP training, and a social care meeting all took place before lunch — the kind of day where staff don't sit down until at least 3pm and only realise at 5pm that their toast from breakfast is still in the staffroom toaster.

The afternoon saw SLT busy with end of term jobs, football club, and a staff meeting on attendance training - glamorous? Not especially. Important? Absolutely, 100%.

Singalongs, Training, and Thursday Things

Thursday was full of sparkle and song with the Foxes Christmas Stay and Play Singalong in the morning and again in the afternoon — two rounds of singing, bells, festive props and proud families. It was absolutely lovely to see

parents joining in and the children performing with such confidence (and volume). This just about cheered our spirits given the downpour we had all day and the poor children were trapped inside for the majority of it – a real change from the day before, which was a glorious early winter sunny day.

Staff were also out at ELSA training, we had First4Maths subject leadership training, and a Regional Training Event. Clubs continued, guitar lessons filled the air with enthusiastic chords, and the corridors smelled faintly of pine, PVA glue, and the faint early tremor of Christmas excitement.

★ A Wholesome Friday Finish

Today saw our Y2 children head out to Hope Farm Church to 'Meet the Nativity Characters,' which they adored. The retelling of the story on the way back into school was a fascinating mix of biblical accuracy and creative interpretation. We also welcomed Grace the physio, saw swimming continue for Group B, and finished with Year 3's weekly library visits — still one of my favourite moments of the week, as children are chattering on the way past the office about wandering between shelves and making weighty life decisions about which book deserves to come home!

⚡ Academic Clubs Continue

All week, our wide range of academic clubs continued in full festive force - times tables, writing, reading, comprehension, phonics, arithmetic and more. The dedication of staff to run these sessions, and the enthusiasm of children to attend them after a full day of school, says so much about our culture of ambition and support at Woodlands.

👉 And Finally...

December has begun in the way only Woodlands can manage: joyfully chaotic, ridiculously busy, deeply purposeful and absolutely full of heart. I am endlessly proud of how our staff balance teaching, training, festivities and the everyday needs of our pupils with such skill and humour. They have been badly affected by the Flu virus and we have struggled to ensure ratios – had we not had so many children also off with the Flu and sickness I have no idea what we would have done as local supply agencies are also under huge pressure at this time of year. If your child is unwell, do please keep them home and ensure that they are hydrated and their temperature is controlled – youngsters can become very ill very quickly and a hospital visit is the last thing you would want.

Next week promises even more sparkle, a whole school Festive Fun Run (don't forget to get your child's sponsorship in to school or online on our justgiving page) and possibly more glitter in the carpets than the cleaners ever asked for, and with only 2 weeks left, everyone will no doubt be tired but we have lots left to do and enjoy so there is no switching off (yet).

Wishing you a warm, restful weekend,
Dr Carr