

## Headteacher Blog - Week Beginning 8 December 2025

There are certain weeks in the school year that feel as though Woodlands has stepped fully into role as a festive village - where every corridor hums with music, tinsel and glitter seem to appear spontaneously, and the children radiate that unmistakable December excitement. This week was one of them. The joy was tangible; the busyness was impressive; and the sense of community ran through every event, every rehearsal and every carefully crafted moment.

We continued to host our Chester and Wrexham student teachers, who have now well and truly experienced the beautiful chaos of a Woodlands December: no teacher training experience is complete without a Christmas build up. Their enthusiasm has been infectious, and it's been a pleasure watching them develop relationships with our children.

The week opened with Foxes' Christmas Stay-and-Play Singalongs, a gentle, joyful introduction to the season. Parents were rightly proud, and the children performed with the growing confidence that only comes when they feel utterly safe and loved. Soon after, Reception set off on their traditional walk to the post box to post their Christmas letters!!! There was something wonderfully nostalgic about watching tiny mittened hands clutch envelopes, taking such pride in the simple act of sending a letter. These small traditions are a powerful thread in the tapestry of childhood.

Behind the scenes, a number of meetings and reviews took place, including a significant session on our Social Media Strategy with one of our new governors - work that goes right to the heart of safeguarding and wellbeing and school celebration. It's not the sort of work that produces applause, but it is steady, thoughtful and vital. I continued with the strategy and completed it on Thursday - dragged kicking and screaming into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!

Across the week, we welcomed our new Hedgehogs and their parents for settling visits. Every session felt like a little preview of the school's future: wide, curious eyes taking in classrooms, noticing activities on the tables, and sometimes walking in as shy toddlers and leaving as confident soon-to-be Nursery pupils. Ladybirds, Butterflies, Acorns delighted their families with their own Christmas Sing & Sign surprises, which were genuinely moving and all parents who accompanied us were delighted. There is something uniquely powerful about children communicating through song and sign - expressive, inclusive, joyful.

Tuesday brought the first day of one of the highlights of our winter calendar: the Lower Key Stage 2 Christmas Concert at Hope Farm Church; far more than a performance, Year 4 kicked us off with two performances - a matinee and an evening show! This concert is always a beautiful expression of the school's work in SMSC - spirituality, moral development, social cohesion, and cultural richness. The children sang with genuine feeling, filling the church with warmth and meaning. They reflected on themes of generosity, community and the simple kindness that this season invites. Watching them, cheeks glowing, voices strong, eyes shining with pride, was profoundly moving. Later in the week, Year 3 took to the same church stage, offering their own concert that echoed and complemented the Year 4 performances. It is remarkable how two year groups, with different personalities and different strengths, can bring the same space to life in fresh ways. These concerts don't just celebrate Christmas, they do something special: they remind children that they belong to something bigger than themselves, a school, a community, a tradition. They create memories that last years, long after the final note has faded. We would also like to thank the PTA for their supply of the tea, coffee and biscuits and to also express a thank you to our Y3/4 parents for your kind generosity, raising £94.66 for Hope Farm Church, which, we have been told, will be used to support the community and to ensure the Church continues to be available to the local community.

On Tuesday morning, Reception also held their Nativity dress rehearsal, and even in rehearsal form it felt magical. There is a reason the nativity is a rite of passage in British primary schools: it represents storytelling, innocence, community celebration, and a timeless moment where every child has the opportunity to shine. Whether they are a shepherd, a sheep, an angel, or a narrator, the power of standing before an audience, often for the very first time, is enormous. It builds confidence, pride and joy. And for families, it is a moment they will never forget. Even the wobbly halos and slightly droopy tea-towel headpieces become cherished memories.

Just as meaningful, though perhaps less glittery, was our Full Governing Body meeting on Tuesday evening. Our governors play a crucial role in school life: they hold us to account, support us strategically, ensure safeguarding is robust, challenge us to aim high, and offer wisdom drawn from diverse professional backgrounds. They are volunteers who give countless hours because they believe in the children of this community. FGB meetings are where we collectively reflect on the school's direction - what we are doing well, where we need to go next, and how we can ensure the best possible outcomes for every child. It was a thoughtful, rigorous, forward-looking session, and we are very fortunate to have such dedicated governors walking alongside us.

Wednesday arrived with a double celebration: Mrs Liversey's birthday and our Whole School Festive Fun Run / Christmas Jumper Day!!! The playground looked like a moving parade of baubles, elves and tinsel, and the children's enthusiasm easily outpaced the temperature – I think it was something to do with Santa making an appearance. It was a day filled with laughter, which for us is the truest kind of December joy. Our fundraising has now exceeded £2,000 with cash, online donations and gift aid. We will share the final total next week once everyone that wants to has donated.

Throughout the week, we continued to welcome visiting professionals for SALT, ELSA and other support sessions. Wednesday brought the Early Navigator Team in to school for their parent Drop-in; whilst, unfortunately, no one attended this session, further sessions are planned to take place every second Thursday of the month 8.45-9.45am, with the next meeting being held on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026. This week also saw further stay-and-play sessions, and by today, the whole school was glowing with that unmistakable end-of-term mix of excitement and exhaustion. One week to go! That said, we are still ploughing on. Y5 and Y6 enjoyed their own-clothes day in exchange for chocolate donations, our Hedgehogs children charmed everyone with their final Christmas Sing & Play of the term and Year 3 finished with their weekly library visits, a moment of calm that felt perfectly timed.

It was a deeply rich week, musical, spiritual, joyful and busy, in the very best way. A celebration of what makes Woodlands special: our children, our families, our staff, and the shared sense of community that runs through everything we do.

Before I finish this week's blog, I do need to share some very serious reminders:

Road safety outside school. This morning we experienced a near miss involving a vehicle and contact with an umbrella that one of our children was holding. Thanks to the quick reactions of the parent, the child is absolutely fine, but it could have been a very different outcome, and understandably the family are extremely shaken. Incidents like this highlight, in the starkest way, why we **repeatedly** ask all families to follow the rules around drop-off and pick-up. Today the consultation ends on the ANP cameras which will fine people for contravening the rules on the road – this is something we, in school, cannot wait to see because no matter how many times we ask, we are ignored.

Parking on the zigzags is not allowed under **any** circumstances, and cars **must not use the staff car park entrances to turn around**. Taxis drop off our children and staff are often on hand to support this, but otherwise there should be no cars anywhere near school. Several vehicles did this again today, and it puts children at real risk. These rules are not suggestions - they are essential for keeping everyone safe. We have advised the family involved to report the incident to the police, and we will be following up directly with the driver concerned.

Please, for the safety of every child at Woodlands, follow the road markings and rules, use safe parking areas, and avoid the car park entrances entirely. Nothing is more important than preventing avoidable accidents, and we need every adult's cooperation to ensure this.

We have also become aware of incidents involving racist behaviour from adults during school drop off and pick up. This is unacceptable and does not reflect the values we stand for. We want to remind everyone that our school is a community built on respect, kindness, and inclusion. Every student, staff member, and visitor deserves to feel safe, valued, and treated with dignity—regardless of their race, background, or identity. Let's all take responsibility for our words and actions. Speak up when you see something wrong, support one another, and help make our school a place where everyone feels welcome.

Thank you.