

Newsletter

Issue 8, Dec 2024



UPDATE FROM THE HEAD

So, the end of the winter term is finally here and officially the Christmas holidays can begin. We have had an action-packed term with visits to SkillZone, our fete, PSCO visitors, visits from Rev Steve Saville and lots of Christmas fun.

As always, I am amazed by the progress of the pupils. They make me so proud everyday whether it is joining in with group time, signing more, being alongside friends, recognising some phonics sounds for the first time. I can simply say, the children are outstanding every day.

The last week of term has been lots of fun. We loved welcoming so many of you into the classes for our Christmas celebrations. We also had a fantastic Christmas Dinner cooked by the wonderful Carly and Reverend Steve Saville visited us to share Christmas stories. He also donated an advent calendar to each of the classes, which all classes have really enjoyed.

Lastly, how could we forget our special visitor! The children loved meeting 'the-man-in-red'. It has been great to celebrate with the children, having lots of Christmas fun and looking back on the successes of the term.

Katy Hanna

REMINDERS FOR NEXT TERM



Change of Menu for Terms 3 and 4
starting Tuesday 7 January 2025 (see school dojo for menu).

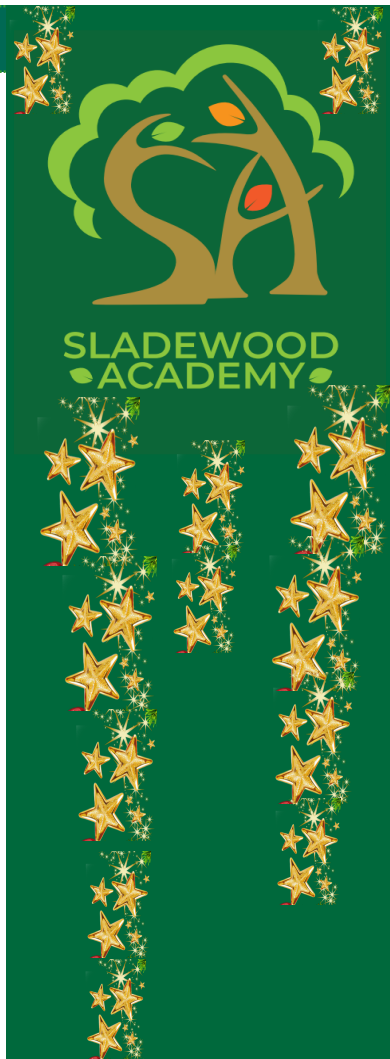
7 January 2025 (Tuesday) first day back for the children (staff only inset on 6 Jan).

9 January 2025—Owl and Badger class trip to the Pantomime: Aladdin at The Everyman, Cheltenham.

22 January 2025—Next Coffee Morning.
More info via Dojo to follow in the New Year.

28 March 2025 our next Rags2Riches collection.
Save any unwanted /outgrown clothes, shoes, belts and handbags to bring to school in March.

Sladewood's Easyfundraising our total is starting to grow, £119 @20 Dec. Please sign up if you haven't already, it won't cost you any extra.
<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/sladewood-academy>



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STAFFING UPDATE

We have been busily working on our staffing and have some changes to report for the New Year. We had to say a fond farewell to the wonderful Rachael Dickenson who will be replaced by Nicki Pink. Nicki is an experienced Early years SEND Practitioner. Also, Katy Brennan will be joining Carly in the school kitchen to help with catering. We very much look forward to welcoming both to the team. We have also welcomed Anishma, based in Hedgehogs, and Hannah, based in Badgers, to our LP team.

We would like to congratulate Eve who has been successful in a promotion in the learning partner team and is now working in Rabbits, and Danielle has made the move to Hedgehogs.

In January we will also be welcoming Laura Reddy to our team who will be the school's Occupational Therapist. We are very excited by this news. Laura will be working with the class teams on classroom environments and then will begin to look at individualised assessments. I know she will be keen to work with you all.



Anishma Wilson



Hannah Rudman

I am also very pleased to announce that Jasmine will now be staying with us permanently and will be based with the Owls. We are so pleased that Jasmine is staying at Sladewood and she has made a great impact already to school.

Finally, we have been able to successfully recruit for Molly's teaching replacement. Lucie Watts will be joining us in



Jasmine Lawrence

January. Lucie is an experienced SEN teacher and has relocated from London. Lucie has been in to meet the children and will be working alongside Molly to ensure a smooth transition for the pupils.



Lucie Watts

FUNDRAISING

We were thrilled to see so many of you on a wet and windy December day for our Christmas Fete. Thanks to the generosity of you and our community we raised an amazing £1,325.

All of this money will go towards our ongoing playground project. Currently the total raised for our playground is £25,743. We will be busily fundraising again in the new year.

I hope to be able to work with the parents next term who volunteered to be part of our Parent Staff Association (PSA). If you would be interested in joining this group please get in touch.

COFFEE MORNING

We are really proud of our parent coffee morning sessions with Flossy. Feedback suggests these are a great success! Our next parent event is being held on Weds 22 January, and will focus on Total Communication and Makaton with Amy our SALT. More info to follow via Dojo in the New Year.

ATTENDANCE

This has been the term when winter bugs are creeping in. We are really proud of our school attendance which is at 92.35% this is above national average for special schools but we are very ambitious that we can continue to raise this school figure. In term 1 we were at 94% and I am sure we can continue to improve on our attendance during the school year. Well done to Rabbits, Owls and Mice who are above 94% whole class attendance.

LAB (Local Area Board)

We had our first meeting with our new recruits this term and we are so pleased to be welcoming so many new members and their skill sets. I would like to welcome Stuart, Shoshanna, Graham, Craig & Jacky to our team. We are really looking forward to working with you.

PSA (Parent Staff Association)

We hope to work with parents next term, thank you to those who have already volunteered. Do get in touch if you are interested in joining this group.

SKILLSZONE TRIP

Owl class had a wonderful trip to SkillZone in Gloucester. They travelled by coach and spent the morning learning how to keep themselves safe out and about and in the home. They crossed pretend roads, got on and off pretend trains and buses, went to the shops, visited the beach and identified potential hazards in the kitchen. A really fun and useful morning.



SENSORY DANCE FESTIVAL



Milestone School hosted a Sensory Dance Festival. We had such a brilliant time, listening and dancing to some great songs. It was lovely to meet other children from SEN schools and celebrate their dancing as well!

We are so very proud of all 6 pupils who took part and are very excited for our next event coming up in a few months time.

We are so very proud of all 6 pupils who took part in the Sensory Dance Festival

SWIMMING

The Badgers have been having lots of fun at their swimming lessons. Developing confidence and completing tasks such as pouring water over their faces and kicking their legs whilst using the floats. We are all so proud of how well the children have done with their swimming.



MICE

Mice class have had a great term learning all about traditional stories - Jack and the Beanstalk and The Three Little Pigs. We listened to the stories and engaged in art activities, making a beanstalk and castle, and pig faces with the three houses too.



In maths we matched pictures and objects, asking for 'more' and learning about daytime and night time. We love watching our weekly counting songs on the screen too. Our PSHE lessons have involved learning about our feet, experiencing different textures and warm/cold feet too with ice! We also watched songs about helping our friends and families, practicing the sign for 'help'.

We have been engaging in group time sessions and in one to one Curiosity Program activities, building relationships with staff and developing attention skills - the foundations of learning. We are learning to communicate using talking tins and we have seen some Makaton signing too - the total communication approach is really helping us! We have started thinking about Christmas too, with Christmas messy play/sensory activities, festive songs and toys too.

HEDGEHOGS

What a brilliant term we have had in Hedgehogs class! We have seen such a huge increase in communication and engagement from all children and this has been so lovely to see.

This term we've been looking at Little Red Riding Hood in English. We have loved dressing up as the characters whilst looking at 'who?' and 'what doing?' to help us build sentences. Our topic has been my 5 senses so we have been exploring taste, sight and hearing through different books, songs and sensory play. We have been looking at different celebrations in Expressive Arts and have been dancing to music linked to the celebration - the Christmas songs have definitely been a favourite!



In Food Tech, we have been practising scooping with a spoon and have practised mixing and scooping to decorate our Pudsey biscuits and make some Christmas treats. Our PSHE focus has been about keeping ourselves safe so we have been looking at who keeps us safe in school and in the community, who to trust and how to look

after ourselves. We have loved dressing up as different people who help us - we have some great actors in Hedgehogs class! A real highlight has been our Yoga and Sensory Massage sessions - we are really developing our movements and using this to help us calm at the end of a busy day.



As well as all of this amazing work, we have been lucky enough to have special guests in like our PCSOs, Steve Saville, Craig for Forest School and Cooking with Carly!

All of the Hedgehogs team wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

SQUIRRELS

This term we have been learning about animals from a hot country. We have explored where and different types of animals, alongside learning about how to look after animals in our own care! In English, we have looked at a range of animal books 'Dear Zoo' and 'Giraffe's Can't Dance' the children love to re-enact the stories and have been great at signing alongside. Within Maths, we have been looking at all things Shape. The children have done so well at identifying 2D and 3D shapes - making pictures and learning their properties. To finish, we of course had to celebrate Christmas! We have made Reindeer food, Gingerbread Men and learnt about the Nativity Story. Squirrels class hope you have a lovely Christmas and fantastic New Year!



RABBITS

This term in Rabbits class we have had lots of fun looking at different stories exploring arctic animals to create our who, where and what sentences. This topic has also carried over into our expressive arts where we have explored a variety of materials to create winter scenes and snowflakes.

We have been developing our skills in identifying hot or cold things to touch and taste, the children especially loved making our frozen fruit yoghurt bites. Rabbits class continue to develop and grow their relationships with their peers and staff through a variety of play and turn taking activities. We recently enjoyed a visit from the PCSO's who helped us learn about people who help us in the world daily when we need it.

Finally, Rabbits class continue to make the most of our outdoor learning lessons in Nature camp climbing trees, making muddy hot chocolates, finding sticks to go on a bear hunt and really getting in tune with nature.



BADGERS

This term in Badgers we have had lots of fun learning about castles and knights. We have looked at two books - 'The Castle the King Built' and 'The Knight Who Said No'. We explored the roles of the different people who worked in the castles during the medieval ages and the children particularly loved our lesson on the knights jousting! The Badgers have also been learning about shape in Maths and have learnt a lot about the properties of 2D shapes. At the end of term they solved the shape clues to find the hidden 2D shapes around class. We must mention the fantastic time we had swimming this term as well and we are all so proud of how well the children have done with the transitions. It has been great to see their confidence grow in the water! The Badgers team hope you all have a very merry Christmas!



OWLS

I have had such a wonderful half term in Owl class getting to know all the wonderful children. We have had so much fun already! We went on a fantastic trip to SkillZone and the children made us all so proud by representing Sladewood so well whilst out in the community.

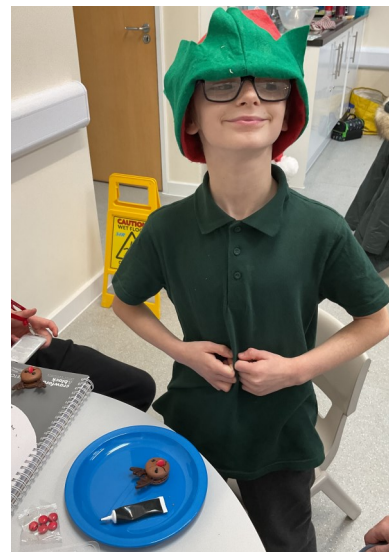
We have spent the half term learning all about Castles and Knights. We have designed and made incredible castle structures, we have learnt about how things have changed from past to present and we have written fantastic fact files about different medieval roles such as stonemasons, knights and kings.

We have worked really hard to recognise what skills a good team needs and we are working really hard to use those during play time. We have also learnt all about where food comes from. So much learning!!! I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and we will be ready to welcome all the children back in the new year!



CHRISTMAS CRAFT-A-NOON

Great that so many of you could join us for the Christmas craft-a-noon. All the children had a great time and were so happy to show their families, their school and the activities in their classes.



CHRISTMAS STORIES

Rev Steve Saville joined us for a Christmas story session. The children really enjoyed the stories, sitting and listening really well. Thank you Rev Steve.



FATHER CHRISTMAS' VISIT

Thank you Father Christmas for taking the time to visit us. We loved seeing you and loved our Christmas story books.



SLADEWOOD'S CHRISTMAS DINNER

Thank you to Carly, you've worked so hard preparing a superb Christmas Dinner for everyone—staff and children.



CHRISTMAS FETE



It was wonderful to see so many of our community join us for the Christmas Fete. We did not let the weather put us off and we had a great time celebrating with Santa, playing games, decorating biscuits and decorations and entering the raffle and tombola. Thanks to the generosity of you and our community we raised an



amazing **£1,325** including donations. All of this money will go to our ongoing playground project (accessible ramp and play equipment).



Finally, it just leaves me to say thank you for all your help and support and the Sladewood Team and I wish you a very Merry Christmas and we hope the new year brings you lots of joy and happiness. We really look forward to welcoming you all back on **Tuesday 7th January 2025**.



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