



Dear Parents, Carers and Readers,

As we come to the end of the Autumn term, I want to take a moment to reflect on what has been a really positive first term for me as the Headteacher of Shortenills and to thank you for the support you have shown our school community.

This term has seen some exciting developments. We have begun delivering our Confident Adulthood Curriculum, giving our students more opportunities to build independence, life skills and confidence for the future. Alongside this, we have introduced more focused and targeted intervention time, ensuring students receive the right support at the right moment to help them thrive both academically and emotionally.

We are also incredibly proud to have established our Post-16 provision, creating clear pathways for our older learners as they move towards adulthood. Another real highlight has been becoming an approved Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) provider, opening up valuable, practical learning opportunities and recognised accreditation for our young people. More wonderful outdoor experiences have taken place, with Shortenills running its very first Duke of Edinburgh expedition. A huge thank you to all staff involved in making this happen.

Looking ahead to the new term, our focus will be on continuing to develop and embed the Confident Adulthood Curriculum, alongside a renewed push on attendance, as being in school regularly makes such a difference to learning, wellbeing and progress.

Thank you again for your continued trust and partnership. On behalf of everyone at Shortenills, I would like to wish you and your families a very happy, restful and peaceful Christmas.

We know that the festive period is not the best time for everyone, so in the words of the Mole '*Being kind to yourself is one of the greatest kindnesses*'.

Best

Jake

"*Being kind to  
yourself is one of  
the greatest  
kindnesses.*"  
said the mole.





# Shortenills Forest

It has been another busy term at Shortenills Forest. We have welcomed in new students and families to our school community and have enjoyed getting to know them better. Thank you to everyone who attended our Family and Friend's Day. It was a pleasure to see so many of you here for this to share the success the students have achieved this term.

We have loved having Post-16 learners on the site for the first time. Whilst there have been some challenges, the young people have shown resilience and commitment and overcome these. Chiltern Rangers have been working with the group fortnightly, giving them the opportunity to learn about woodland management. The dead hedge is really taking shape and soon they will hang the gate, separating their space from the main school field.

We continue to prioritise personal development, by giving the students a wide variety of extra-curricular trips and visits. We have had students out on river boat trips along the Thames, shopping trips to local supermarkets, college visits and a Duke of Edinburgh expedition where the students canoeed and camped for 2 nights in Kent. Students have more recently had an ice-skating trip and a visit to Waddesdon Manor and we hope to have many more over the course of the school year. We are also excited to end the term with a visiting author, completing a winter themed writing workshop with the students.

There will be a minor staffing change in January. Mrs Rowlinson who had been teaching Willow class on a Monday, is now working with Aspire's Outreach team. Mr Castle has kindly stepped in to support them and will continue to do so after Christmas. We also have 2 new teaching assistants, Miss Helbig who is working with Maple class and Mrs Nettleton who is working in Oak.

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a joyful festive season and look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Best wishes

**Liz Wolfenden**  
**Head of School**  
**Shortenills Forest**



# Learning and Adventure

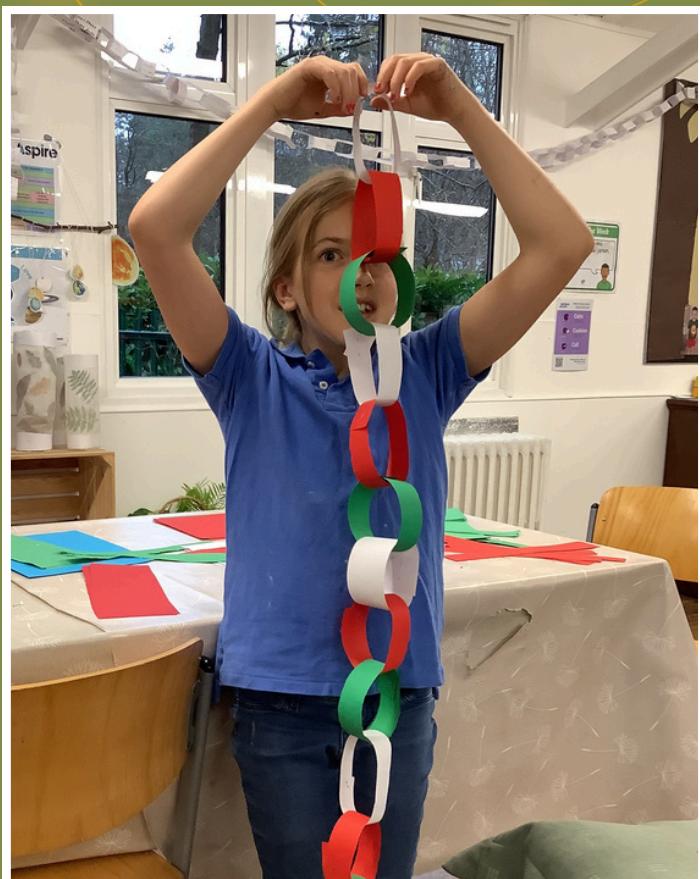


Beech Class have settled beautifully into life at Shortenills Forest, embracing every opportunity with enthusiasm and curiosity. This term has been packed with exciting learning experiences and creative projects. In Science, students explored the fascinating relationships between living organisms and their environments, discovering food chains, habitats and biodiversity. Art lessons were equally inspiring, as students created imaginative pieces influenced by insects and animals, experimenting with painting, collage and mixed media. English concluded on a lively note with pantomime; students acted out scripts and even invented their own characters, showcasing creativity and confidence. Bushcraft sessions brought teamwork and outdoor skills to life as students built dens, crafted rope bridges and roasted marshmallows over the fire.

to celebrate a fantastic term, we have enjoyed a magical visit to Waddesden Manor, exploring its stunning festive lights, followed by an exciting ice-skating trip to Chiltern View Garden Centre. These experiences enriched learning beyond the classroom and helped students connect with the wider community.

Our recent Bake Sale during Family and Friends Day was another highlight, bringing families, carers and staff together to share delicious treats and crafts, strengthening the bonds that make our school community so special.

As we look ahead to the new term, we are excited for more hands-on activities and inspiring lessons that will continue to nurture both academic achievement and personal growth. Wishing you all a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year!



# Laughter and Lasting Memories

It has been an absolute pleasure working with Oak Class this term and watching them make fantastic progress across all areas of learning. In English, students explored Blood Brothers, diving into its key themes and characters. Year 10 have made a strong start on their Science and PSHE qualifications, while Year 11 have been working hard to complete their final units. We were so impressed with how everyone prepared for their November English and Maths exams, showing focus, determination and a real commitment to improvement.

Cooking has been a weekly highlight! From pavlova and pizza to lasagna, chicken katsu curry and beef burritos, the range of dishes has been incredible. Recently, students completed a mock cooking assessment, planning and preparing a two-course meal including a trip to Tesco to source their ingredients.



Art lessons have been equally inspiring. Year 10 have begun developing their GCSE portfolios with printing, photography and artist studies, while Year 11 worked hard to complete a mock exam at the end of this busy term.

Beyond the classroom, Oak Class enjoyed three fantastic trips. In October, we set sail on a boat trip with The Rivertime Boat Trust in Henley-on-Thames. More recently, we embraced the festive spirit with ice skating and a visit to Waddesdon Manor. For some students, these experiences pushed them out of their comfort zone, and they should be incredibly proud of themselves.

It has been wonderful getting to know all the students and seeing them grow in confidence and ability. We wish all our students and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Enjoy the festive break - you've earned it!



# Discovery and Unforgettable Moments!

This term has been absolutely jam-packed for Maple Class as they begin their final year at Shortenills Forest.

Our students have shown incredible focus and maturity as they tackled Functional Skills and Entry Level exams in English and Maths a fantastic preparation for the realities of exam season. They should be immensely proud of their achievements. In addition, they planned and completed their mock exam for the Home Cooking qualification with impressive independence and professionalism.

One of the standout moments was our simulated crime scene for Science. Students collaborated to plan and take part in the investigation, then went above and beyond by using scientific techniques and even a staff line-up to solve the mystery! It was not only great fun but also an important part of their coursework.

Several Maple students also shone during their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award journey, demonstrating resilience and determination throughout their preparation and expedition. We have begun visiting local colleges too, helping students explore their next steps. These visits were both informative and inspiring, and our students represented their school brilliantly.

To round off the term, we enjoyed a magical ice-skating trip to Chiltern View Garden Centre a first for many and an experience they'll never forget.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are excited for new challenges and opportunities as our amazing students take their next steps toward life beyond Shortenills Forest.

Have a lovely Christmas!



# Trips, Triumphs and Festive Fun!



What an absolutely fantastic autumn term we've had in Willow Class! From the very first week, the energy, curiosity and joy the students bring each day have made this term truly special.

One of our biggest highlights has been the incredible trips we have enjoyed together. First, we set sail on a wonderful boat trip along the Thames, where the students were captivated by the sights and thrilled to see the world from a whole new perspective. Soon after, we laced up our boots for an ice-skating adventure, filled with determination, laughter and a few wobbly glides! We rounded off the term with a festive visit to Waddesdon Manor, soaking up sparkling lights, stunning decorations and the magic of the season.

We are also delighted with how beautifully our new students have settled in. They have brought their own unique strengths and personalities, becoming a joyful part of our classroom community.

Academically, the progress has been amazing! Our weekly maths quizzes have been a real highlight, with students showing growing confidence, resilience and a willingness to challenge themselves. Watching their achievements unfold has been an absolute pleasure.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Wishing every family a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, joyful New Year. We can't wait to see what exciting learning adventures await us in the spring term!



Thank you to all our parents and carers for your continued support, encouragement and partnership throughout the year. We truly appreciate the role you play in our school community.

As the year draws to a close, we wish you and your families a happy, safe and relaxing holiday season. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in the new year.



With love from everyone at Shortenills Forest



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