



Dear Parents & Carers,

Key Stage 1 and Early Years had a fabulous end to the school term with their Christmas performances. EYFS worked well together to perform their nativity; Year 1 delighted us with some Christmas songs, which included some Makaton signing and Year 2 produced a very polished performance of the Christmas story, complete with knock-knock jokes and more wonderful singing. Not only did these drama opportunities leave me feeling very 'Christmassy', they made me immensely proud of our children and staff.

The teaching and support staff have worked incredibly hard this term. We have introduced new elements to our curriculum- a new handwriting scheme, *Kinetic Letters*, a new writing scheme which is linked to some wonderful texts and a new format for guided reading. These are already beginning to have an impact on the quality of work that our children are producing.

Pilgrims' Cross is on an upward journey of improvement. I hope that you are beginning to see the impact of these changes in the atmosphere around school, the enthusiasm of your children for their learned curriculum, the behaviour of our pupils and the standard of what pupils are producing. Thank you for writing in your children's Home Learning Journals, every time they complete learning at home too- our children are excited to see which class ends up with a treat of Domino's Pizza at the end of the year for the class with the highest total of points.

All that is left for me to do is to wish you a very merry Christmas. Although full of fun, food, presents and family, Christmas can be a hard time for many too. The routine and structure of school is actually a comforting and regular feature for children and often the long periods of unstructured time in the holidays, coupled with late bedtimes and lack of routine, can be unsettling. Do try and spend some time doing some structured activities, such as reading books together, writing 'thank you' letters to family, playing board games/cards- and refreshing those times tables and number facts. We want to hit the ground running in January!

Wishing you every blessing this Christmas,

Jim Cascarini – Headteacher headteacher@pilgrimscross.co.uk

Vision Awards

Congratulations to all our children who received a Vision Award this week...	Love	Courage	Trust
Oak	Adie D		
Willow			Isla-Rose Walsh
Sycamore	Willow Mae K		
Maple		Sophie S	
Hazel		Ava T	
Lime		Frankie H	
Elm			Arthur B
Ash		Amiyah B	
Beech		Liv H	
Pine			Ellianna T
Hawthorn	Freya H		
Aspen		Ted S	
Juniper	Kensi H		

What we have been learning this week...

Willow & Oak

On Monday the children performed our wonderful nativity again. All of the teaching staff are so proud of the children because they were absolutely brilliant! The festive times have continued back in class, where we have continued to explore different traditions from countries all around the world that are connected to Christmas and how they may be different from ours. We have also enjoyed making Christmas lists, Christmas cards and baking gingerbread. All of this was topped off with a Christmas celebration and film on the Friday. It has been a wonderful first term, one in which the children have laid great foundations for them to base their learning journey from. Enjoy the holidays and have a very, very Merry Christmas!

Mrs CK, Mr Edgington and Mrs Treasure

Sycamore & Maple

What a wonderfully festive week we have had in Year One!

The children absolutely shone in our Christmas performances, and we were so proud of the courage and enthusiasm they showed in each show! We hope you enjoyed the shows too. Well done Year One! In Computing the children have been exploring commands and listening to, following, creating and fixing instructions.

Sycamore Class enjoyed their Compass Treat in their pyjamas and both classes have enjoyed a Christmas movie and lots of fun festive activities.

In PSHE the children have talked about who in the community is available to help us e.g. doctors, dentists, opticians, nurses, police officers, fire fighters etc. Perhaps you can spot some of these people around and about Andover during the holidays?

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the new year!

Mrs Edgington, Mrs Wakefield & Miss Miners

Lime & Hazel

This week we have continued our maths unit on shape. We have been counting the properties of 3D shapes and have begun learning how to sort them into groups. We are now able to name lots of 2D and 3D shapes so please feel free to talk to your children about this. In DT we have been investigating the strength of materials by doing an experiment building bridges! The children then designed and made their very own chair for baby bear! After what seemed like months of practise, we have now finished all our Nativities. It was wonderful to see all the hard work the children have put in come out on stage and our performance to the whole school was a prime example of this! A huge thank you to all of you who showed up to support your children and the costumes were fantastic! Have a fantastic Christmas and happy 2026!

Miss Samuel and Miss Dewsbury

Elm & Ash

This week in Year 3 has been 'snow joke' – it's been packed full of festive fun and fabulous learning! We started our week off by being completely star-struck, watching the wonderful Nativity performance by Year 2, which really helped us get into the Christmas spirit. We have been roaring with pride as year 3 have published their big writes, showing off all their hard work and creativity. In maths, we've been multiplying the merriment and dividing up the cheer, while in science we found ourselves truly attracted to learning all about magnets. RE gave us time to reflect on important morals and messages, and in history we travelled back in time to explore trading in the Stone Age and Iron Age. To top it all off, we finished the week with a 'tree-mendous' Christmas party full of laughter, smiles and festive sparkle! We hope everyone enjoys the Christmas break and we look forward to seeing everyone in the new year.

Mr Dookheran & Mrs Bryan

Beech & Pine

This week we have finished our information reports about Polar Bears and spent time presenting these in a more creative way. We had the pleasure of seeing the KS1 nativity which was a real treat and we enjoyed listening to all of the songs they were singing. Towards the end of the week, we have had more of a focus on Christmas and, within our RE learning, we had a look into why Christmas is important for Christians, focusing on the deeper meaning. On Friday, we enjoyed Christmas festivities including card making and games. We hope you all have a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year, and we look forward to seeing you all again in January

Mrs Howick, Mrs Featherstone and Mr Osmond

Aspen, Hawthorn & Juniper

We've reached the end of term! It has been filled with plenty of hard work, lots of effort and, of course, some fun included in-between. We have finished our final piece of writing of the year, concluding our reports to Dr Mortimer as Watson in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The children wrote in a formal tone- being careful to not use contractions and substituting certain words for higher level vocabulary- and recounted the scene in the story brilliantly. We have also started short division and are looking forward to having a crack at long division after Christmas! We also designed our own county in Geography, focusing on elements such as sustainability, space and safety for the people living there. We analysed the effect that overpopulation has on areas and ensured that this translated into our planning. The children have all worked extremely hard this term and the three of us have all been so impressed with the resilience, adaptability and courage the children have been demonstrating week after week. Enjoy the Christmas break, relax and come back refreshed for the Spring term. We hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Mr Childs, Mr Hambidge and Mrs McNee

Home Learning Challenge points update...

Here are the first half term's scores. The winning class at the end of the year will receive Domin's pizza for a well-earned treat! Remember, each piece of home learning that is acknowledged by a parent/carer writing in your child's Learning Journal.

Pine Class are winning so far, but everything could change over the next couple of terms..!

Extra Spicy

Pine- 706

Mild

Sycamore- 332

Oak- 305

Aspen- 275

Willow- 250

Medium

Lime- 542

Juniper- 486

Hawthorn- 400

Beech- 375

Spicy

Maple- 598

Ash- 575

Hazel- 571

Elm- 569

Compass badges!

Congratulations to the first set of children who have won the coveted bronze Compass Badge, for consistently demonstrating our values and showing exemplary behaviour ALL TERM!

This half term's winners were...

- Oak: Amara P
- Willow: Elsie T
- Maple: Kleo D
- Sycamore: Poppy M
- Hazel: Isla M
- Lime: Olivia K
- Elm: Myla D
- Ash: Penny P
- Beech: Ada McD
- Pine: Dottie K
- Hawthorn: Leo H
- Aspen: Layla L
- Juniper: Kyron F



Hot Choc Friday!

Here are this week's exemplary pupils who enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate with Mr. Cascarini..!



Medication

I am pleased to let you know that, as of January, if your child feels a bit "under the weather" at school, we will be able to give a dose of paracetamol- e.g. "Calpol" (after having phoned you and got your permission) so that they can continue the day. This will not only allow the child to complete their school day if nothing major is wrong but also allow parents/carers not to have to come in from work to collect their child mid-day!

Clubs

Please see below the clubs running after Christmas. Some are after school and some are at lunchtimes. The clubs will run from 6th January until the 13th February. Most are free, except if there is a cost for materials. These are in addition to our regular clubs provided by Integr8 and Stow Sports...

Sign-up will be via Arbor, from 10am Saturday morning. **Please be considerate and only book one club per child**, so that as many children as possible can take advantage of this opportunity. If you book more than one, your child's name will be removed from the lists. Once a club is full, Arbor will not display this as a club to book on your child's Arbor account. Thank you!

Teacher	Club	Day	Time	Max number
Mrs Edgington	Singing for Fun Years 1, 2, 3 & 4 No Cost	Wednesday	12.30	30
Mr Edgington	Board Games Year 1 & 2 No Cost	Thursday	12.30	16
Mr Edgington	Girls Football Club Year 5 & 6 No Cost	Friday	3-4pm	20
Mr Edgington	Boys Football Club Year 5 & 6 No cost	Monday	3-4pm	20
MS Dewsbury	Netball Club Year 4,5 & 6 No cost	Monday	3-4pm	28
Mrs Bryan	Dance Club Years 3,4,5 &6 No Cost	Tuesday	3-4pm	20

Thank you so much to all who have signed up to take part in the Rocksteady Band lessons that will be happening in the Spring Term! If you're trying to figure out those last-minute Christmas presents, we still have space for singers ranging from EYFS to Year 6 as well as a drummer from Years 2-4. Please sign up via the contact details previously sent out or alternatively email in and we can provide another letter. We're looking forward to hearing all the bands in their first gig next term!

Clubs

A Big Thank you & Merry Christmas from the FOPS team



As we reach the end of a busy and joyful term, we want to extend a heartfelt *thank you* to all our wonderful parents, carers and teachers. Your support – whether through volunteering, attending events, donating, or simply cheering us on – makes an enormous difference to our school community.

Because of you, we have been able to create memorable experiences for the children and also much needed funds that go straight back into enriching their school life. We are truly grateful for the time, energy, and kindness you have shared with us this year.

From all of us on the FOPS team, we wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful, happy New Year. Enjoy the break, make magical memories and we look forward to seeing you all in January.

With warmest wishes
Your FOPS team

friendspilgrimscross@gmail.com



Book Fair

We took an amazing £711.15 at the recent Scholastic Book Fair! This means that we have around £300 in commission to spend on new books for the children. Thank you for purchasing so many good books for your children- we hope they have a book-filled Christmas!

A special thanks to Mrs Hopgood, who worked very hard to coordinate this event.

“Little Troopers”- Christmas party!

We were delighted to host our Service Children’s Christmas Party, kindly organised and hosted by Mrs Scowen. The event brought together service children and their families from across the school, providing a warm and welcoming space to mix, share stories, and talk about what they will be getting up to over the Christmas period.

It was particularly heartening to see children of different ages engaging so positively with one another—supporting, chatting, and enjoying time together. This strongly reflected our school values of Love, Courage and Trust: love through inclusion and kindness, courage in building friendships across year groups, and trust in the safe, supportive community we work hard to create. These values sit naturally alongside the military ethos, recognising the unique experiences of service families and the importance of mutual support.



For many of us, the highlight of the afternoon—and I suspect for 99% of the children—was Mrs Scowen’s Millionaire Shortbread, which proved extremely popular and disappeared very quickly. A sincere thank you to Mrs Scowen and everyone who helped make the afternoon such a success. Events like this are an important part of ensuring our service children and their families feel valued, connected, and supported within our school community.

David Rawlins- Chair of Governors

Attendance

Our current whole school attendance this year so far stands at **95.4%** which has taken a hit, due to recent illnesses which have been circulating.

We will continue to monitor our children’s attendance during our weekly reviews so **please do not be alarmed if we communicate when we have noticed attendance decreasing**. We understand that illnesses can often not be avoided and will always look to work *together* to help wherever we can.

Have a lovely Christmas, Mrs Hathaway Familysupport@pilgrimscross.co.uk

Meet the Governors...

Each week, we will introduce you to a school Governor. Our Governors do a wonderful job, monitoring and holding the school to account in terms of progress and achievement. We feel that they deserve to be highlighted- as a lot of their hard work is behind the scenes!

This week, it's another of our Foundation Governors, Neil Maxfield...



Neil Maxfield
Foundation Governor

I am a retail "veteran" of something like 30 years on and off, starting as a produce assistant at Morrisons during my GCSEs, and finishing (so far....) in my current role, a part of the National Leadership Team for EE Retail, the mobile division of British Telecom.

I am an active member of the local community, and our family generally worship at St Paul's on Smannell Road, where Emma and I are part of the welcoming and refreshments team. I am also a Governor at Queen Mary's College (QMC), where my daughter Olivia is a student.

In terms of other interests...well, I have now hung up my rugby boots, but most recently represented the Southampton Veterans Rugby League team, where I played at stand-off or centre. I am a keen supporter and follower of various sports and sports teams, notably (and passionately) Everton FC, in addition to Bath Rugby, Leeds Rhinos and Williams F1. I am also a graduate of History with a scholarly specialism in WW1; an interest which led me to join The Western Front Association, of which I remain a keen and active member.

I am very proud to support and represent our school.

Ofsted information

Ofsted has produced some helpful. There is some written information- [click this link](#), and a helpful video on understanding the new 'Report Card' format and gradings. They are different from the old style inspection and it's important to note that the one-word judgement has been replaced by gradings in different areas of school life, Please check out the link and [video](#) for more information.



Key dates

- Monday 5th January 2026- INSET day 4
- Friday 9th January- **Water House** dress-down day- congratulations!
- 20th January- parent workshop, 8.30am, school hall
- Monday 2nd February – Friday 6th February – Year 6 Residential
- Wednesday 4th February- parent workshop, 8.30am, school hall
- Monday 16th March – Wednesday 18th March – Year 6 *Bikeability*
- Friday 19th June 2026- INSET day 5
- Friday 26th June 2026 – Year 6 Leavers' Service at Winchester Cathedral

Please check out our website calendar for all relevant dates:

<https://www.pilgrimscross.co.uk/calendar/?calid=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8&pid=8&viewid=1>