

PRESTLEY POST

Autumn Term - 20.12.2024



HORIZONS
EDUCATION TRUST



EDUCATE EMPOWER ENRICH ENJOY

And just like that it's Christmas break and we are looking back at our first term at Prestley Wood!

Festive Fun

It is always delightful to experience a school at Christmas time but it has felt particularly wonderful in this first term at our new school. Whilst ensuring learning and structure were as normal as possible for some of our students our community has come together to celebrate the special time of the year. Making decorations for enterprise, visiting our Santa's grotto, enjoying Christmas dinner together in an array of incredible festive jumpers and of course our lovely Christmas performance. It has really solidified that sense of community between pupils and staff, developed social skills and creativity, and given us many meaningful memories.

Next term

As we look forward to January we are excited to continue building on the strong foundation we have established. There are many exciting projects and initiatives planned, and we are eager to see our students continue to thrive and succeed. Our focus is on challenges in teaching and learning and most especially phonics and reading in the Spring term. We are working hard to establish ourselves in our local community and arrange experiences to work towards independent participation and work related learning. Our school council will be collaborating with our local primary school. The local community association have invited us to work on a garden project in a public space. We have met with local businesses on the estate to set up work setting experiences and our horse riding sessions will begin. We have been visiting Hinchingsbrooke Park to have sessions on adapted bicycles but the lovely community forum is attempting to raise funds to start our own fleet of bicycles on site to work toward travel training and bike maintenance sessions. We also hope to begin visits from our reading dog Scout for individual students who would benefit from interacting with her.

Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable holiday season with your loved ones. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in the new year on 7th January, ready for another term of learning, growth, and discovery.

Caroline



Scout as a puppy



We are thrilled to introduce the newest member of the Prestley Wood family, Scout! Scout is a delightful 3-year-old Labrador who will be joining us once a week.

Scout is a member of the Dog's Trust which means she has public liability insurance and is up to date with all her vaccinations, treatments, and health checks. So is able to come to school. A full risk assessment has been completed for our furry friend. To ensure we are looking after her when she is on site we adhere to the Kennel Club Educational Trust '**Bark and Read standards**' of practice for providers of animal-assisted interventions in schools.

- **Her own special Space:** Scout will be based in a senior leader's office where she can relax, nap, and rest between her sessions with students.
- **Supervised Interactions:** Scout will spend supervised time with individual students or small groups who have parental permission to interact with her. These interactions will take place in a designated space separate from the classrooms.
- **Calm and Friendly:** Scout lives with children and is very calm and used to being around young people. She will always be on a lead and harness and accompanied by an adult when moving around the school.
- **Animal assisted interventions:** Spending time with an animal can support pupils in areas such as socialisation, emotional regulation, reading and life skills such as compassion, empathy and patience. She is also a lot of fun!

We believe that Scout will bring a lot of joy and benefits to our school community. Over time, we hope that all children will become comfortable with her presence. For those who are fearful of dogs, with parental permission, we can work toward gaining confidence in managing their anxiety over a period of time.

We are excited about the positive impact Scout will have on our students and look forward to seeing the many ways she will enrich our school community.

Scout loves naps



Scout loves the outdoors



Our Prestley Family



Prestley Parent and Carer voice

Parent/Carer survey

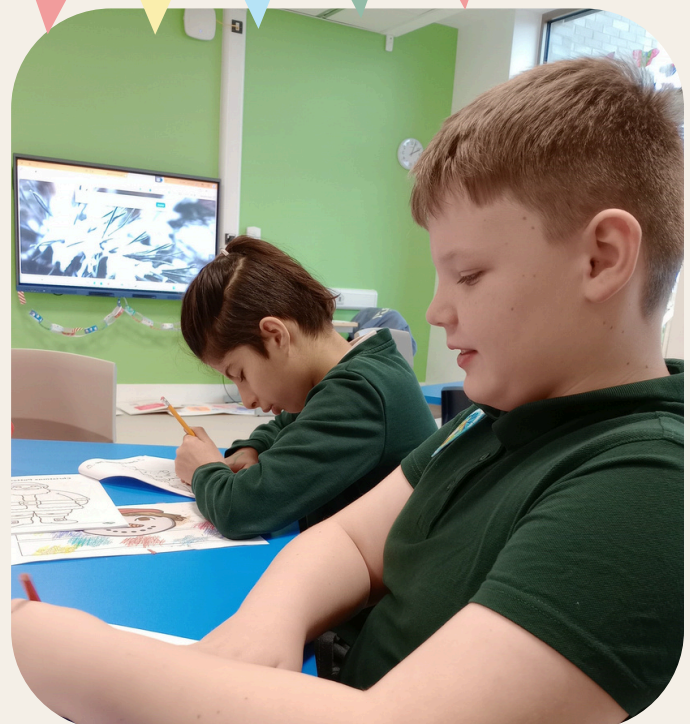
We have collated responses from our first Parent/Carer survey, the results of which are displayed on our website. We were gladdened to see that 100% of you would recommend our school and staff were incredibly pleased to read some of the generous and thoughtful comments you were kind enough to write.

would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to you, our parents and guardians, for your unwavering support and partnership. Your involvement and feedback have been invaluable in helping us begin to shape a school that truly meets the needs of our community.



We are committed to maintaining open lines of communication and working closely with you to ensure the best outcomes for your children. This term's Makaton workshop, Parent/Carer evening, yay day event, parent coffee morning and speech and language drop ins were very popular, please see term dates for Spring term enclosed for next term's opportunities to visit the school.

Caroline



Prestley Wood AAG



Our Academy Advisory Group

Prestley Wood Academy is part of the Horizons Education Trust. The Trust has a Trustee's board who oversees the Multi-Academy Trust. Our Academy also has a Local Governing Board known as the Academy Advisory Group (AAG).

It's overall aim is to have a deep understanding of the school's strengths, area development and to support the Head Teacher to ensure an ambitious vision is achieved.

Meet the Team

Natalie Leigh-Brown

Community Development Lead at Alconbury Weald for Urban & Civic, overseeing the transformation of the former airfield outside Huntingdon of RAF Alconbury into Alconbury Weald—a vibrant development featuring 6,500 homes and an Enterprise Zone expected to generate over 8,000 jobs.

Since 2022, Natalie has been actively supporting PWA during the build and opening, bringing her expertise in community development to the trust. In addition to her personal skills and experience, she offers access to the extensive resources, support, and knowledge of Urban & Civic, along with their contractors and consultant team.



Amy Dabo

I joined the AAG during my maternity leave thinking it would be a good way to stay engaged in education and continue my professional development. As I learned more about Prestley Wood I knew there was a reason I had found this opportunity, and I decided to apply for one of the teacher vacancies. I was thrilled to be offered the job and join this fantastic community of likeminded professionals who strive for the best outcomes for the children here.

I look forward to continuing to see the school grow and develop and we expand and feel privileged to be a part of that process both in the classroom and as part of the AAG.



Ali Priddle

Alconbury Weald has been home to me and my two young children for the past three years. I'm honoured to be a governor for Prestley Wood Academy, as a member of the Alconbury Weald community. I love hearing how the children are all settling in and what amazing things they are doing at school! I look forward to seeing and hearing how the children, the staff and the school develop in its first year.



Early Years & KS1

Autumn Term - 20.12.2024

There have been lots of focused learning in the classrooms this term, with the pupils developing their key skills inside and outside the classrooms. They have engaged with sensory playmaking, making use of all of the five senses: Hearing, Touch, Sight, Taste and Smell.



In Forest School, the children have been improving on their life skills, fine motor skills and gross motor skills, along with learning how to keep themselves and each other safe in the outdoor areas.



For English; early writing, the children have been developing their writing skills and improving their pencil control. They have also been focusing on the communication boards (both personalised and general boards), using them daily allows the children to express and share their needs and wants, to the adults and their peers.



In Math, they have been combining their Math learning with their IT skills. In PE, the children have had the opportunity to work on their social skills as well as their gross and fine motor skills.

The children work daily on improving their focus and engagement with Attention Autism.

A fantastic first term at Prestley Wood

As we come to the end of our very first term as a new special school, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the incredible successes we've achieved together so far. I am particularly grateful to our amazing staff for their dedication and hard work in helping our new students settle into routines and establish a sense of belonging in our school community.

Key Stage 2 Highlights

It was delightful to observe a musical Attention Autism session in a Key Stage 2 class. This session skilfully engaged students in exploring sounds and rhythms through a multisensory approach. In another class, it was heartwarming to witness the strong friendships blossoming among peers. Additionally, students were given plenty of opportunities to enhance their reading skills, fostering both confidence and literacy.

Key Stage 3 Achievements

In Key Stage 3, it has been incredibly rewarding to see the two classes collaborating across various curriculum activities and working together on the Christmas stall. Their hard work and creativity paid off, as the stall successfully raised an impressive £130! This accomplishment reflects the students' dedication and teamwork, making it a pleasure to celebrate their success.

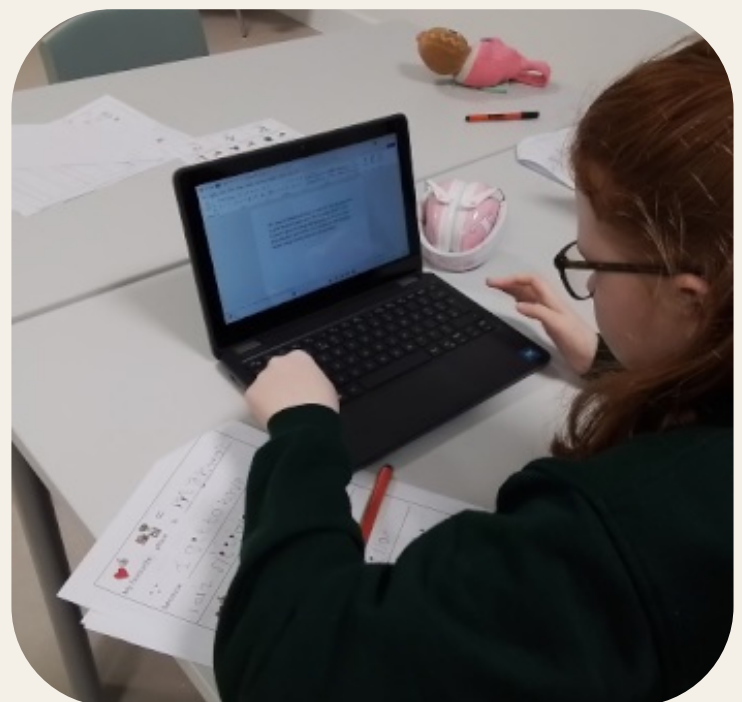
Christmas Performance- a reflection of our established school community

One of the standout moments of the term was undoubtedly our recent Christmas performance. This wonderful event showcased not only the confidence and courage of our students as they took to the stage but also the outstanding efforts of our staff in nurturing their growth and building trust. It was truly heartwarming to see what we can achieve as a school community.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support. Wishing you all a restful holiday and a very Happy New Year! We look forward to building on this term's successes in the year ahead.

Warm regards,

Tom



Protecting Your Child from Cyberbullying: Tips for Parents



Dear Parents and Carers,

In today's digital age, technology plays an important role in education, communication, and recreation. However, it also comes with risks, including cyberbullying. At our school, we are committed to ensuring your child's safety, both online and offline. Here are some key tips and resources to help you protect your child from cyberbullying.

1. Open Communication is Key

- Encourage your child to talk openly about their online experiences.
- Make sure they feel safe telling you if they encounter negative behaviour online.
- Let them know it's never their fault if they experience bullying.

2. Supervise Online Activities

- Monitor your child's screen time and the platforms they use.
- Use parental controls on devices to manage their access to certain apps, websites, or content.
- Familiarize yourself with social media platforms and games your child engages with, ensuring you understand how they work.

3. Teach Safe Online Practices

- Encourage your child to keep their personal information private.
- Remind them to only connect with people they know and trust in real life.
- Teach them to block and report users who make them uncomfortable.

4. Recognize the Signs of Cyberbullying

Be aware of behavioural changes, such as:

- Avoiding devices or social media altogether.
- Appearing anxious or upset after using their phone or computer.
- Changes in sleep, appetite, or mood that could indicate distress.

5. Act Immediately

If your child is a victim of cyberbullying:

- Save screenshots or evidence of the bullying.
- Report the incident to the relevant platform or website.
- Inform the school—we're here to support you and your child.
- In severe cases, you may also need to involve the police.

6. Promote Positive Online Interactions

Encourage your child to use the internet as a place for learning, creativity, and positive connections. Reinforce the importance of kindness and respect in all online communications.

7. Resources for Families

We recommend the following organisations and websites for further support and guidance:

- Childline: Offers free, 24/7 advice for children and parents. Visit www.childline.org.uk or call 0800 1111.
- Internet Matters: Provides tips on setting up parental controls and promoting digital safety. Visit www.internetmatters.org.
- NSPCC Online Safety Hub: Resources on online safety and recognizing the signs of cyberbullying. Visit www.nspcc.org.uk.

Let's Work Together

Your child's well-being is our top priority, and by working together, we can help them navigate the online world safely and confidently. If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to contact the school for advice or support.

Tom

Cherry Class

This half term has seen lots of positive steps for Cherry class as the children continue to settle into the school routines. They have enjoyed our Attention Autism sessions, eagerly anticipating the arrival of the bucket as we find out what exciting objects are inside each day. We are learning to try and look, not touch, but it's so exciting sometimes we have to get out of our seats for a closer look! The children have also engaged in lots of sensory and creative activities, exploring a whole range of new materials and sensations. They were engrossed by the 'Reindeer food' sensory tray, where they were able to explore capacity and measure, using hand eye co-ordination skills to fill and empty many different shaped and sized containers with cereal - there was even some sorting going on and taste testing to make sure the reindeers got only the best cereal!

We have observed some friendships that are beginning to blossom in Cherry class, as the children interact with each other and as they develop their social skills.

The children have begun to engage with communication resources such as communication boards and photo visuals. It is a great satisfaction to see how pleased they are when they are able to convey their wants and needs to staff and peers.

The staff in Cherry class want to thank you for your support this term we hope you enjoy the winter break and we look forward to welcoming the children back in January.

Amy



Apple Class



Apple Class has based their learning around their topic of the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears this term. We have really engaged in the sensory story and using it as a base to explore across all our learning areas. For example in my reasoning (math), we have been counting out each of the objects from the story and comparing and sorting items by size.

A highlight of the term was our Christmas performance and all the preparation in the run up to the festive season. In the last two weeks we have been taking part in lots of Christmas crafts, using a variety of media and tools, messy play, and enjoying festive stories and songs.

Have a wonderful Christmas everyone



Danielle



Pear Class



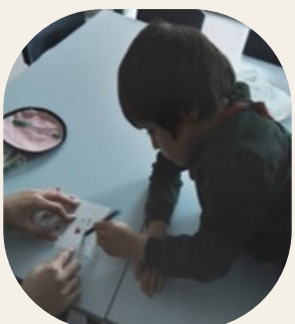
What a great first half term Pear class have had, the time really has flown by!

This half term our main topic thoroughly enjoyed by all in Pear class was 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. The children were absorbed by the sensory story for literacy, listening and watching all the mischievous things that Goldilocks had been up to. We used our imaginative skills, role playing the story in the sequenced order as the three bears' had their adventures. We even made our very own porridge in messy play, some of us like Goldilocks found it very tasty indeed!

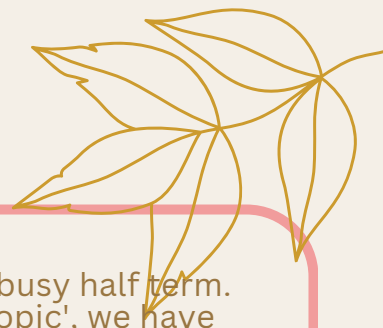
We have been super busy getting in the Christmas spirit using our creative skills to craft salt dough tree decorations. Taking it in turns, everyone was able to pour the ingredients into the bowl and mix it to make the salt dough. Practising their fine motor skills, the children used a variety of festive shaped cutters to cut out the shapes and then patiently waited for them to set before painting and used their hands and feet to make some fantastic Christmas cards and calendars for their adult/s - with some of the children finding the paint on our feet very tickly!

In between all of that, we were of course rehearsing our singing and signing of 'When Santa Got Stuck up the Chimney' and 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas' for the Christmas Performance.

Shirelle



Ash Class



Ash class have had another busy half term. As part of the 'Our World Topic', we have been learning about the different types of houses; this has included matching photos of houses and labelling them. We went for a walk in the local community, which gave the children the opportunity to view the different types and styles of houses and they even managed to see the various stages of them being built.

The introduction of phonics groups has been really successful, all groups are either working on recognising environmental sounds, individual sounds or blending sounds to read words. Finally, we have been taking part in weekly music sessions, which have kept the whole class engaged for around 10 - 25 minutes. The sessions encourage extended focus, allowing the children to explore a range of instruments and follow a variety of rhythms.

Have a fantastic Christmas break!

Sinead



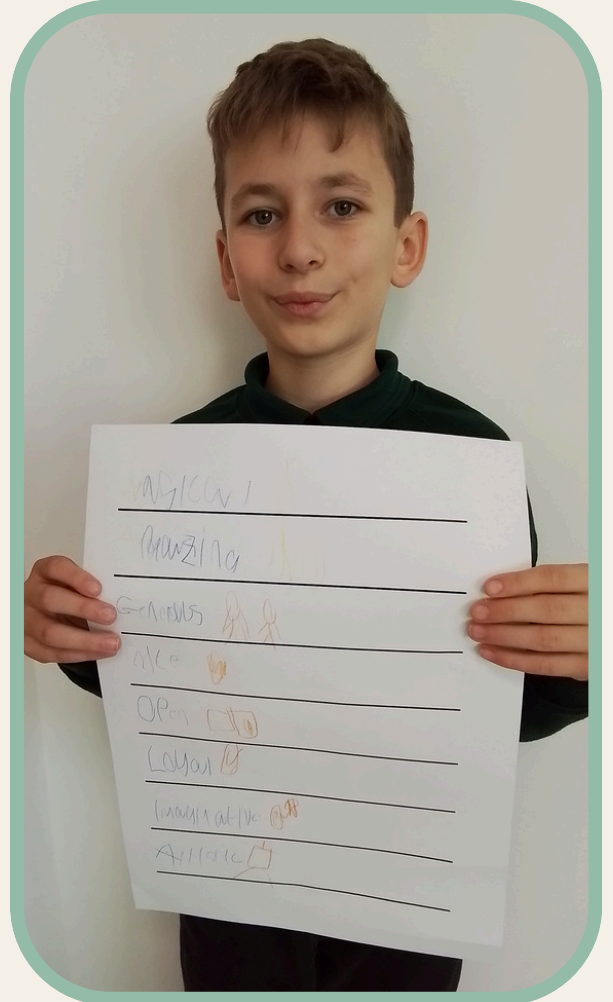
Magnolia Class



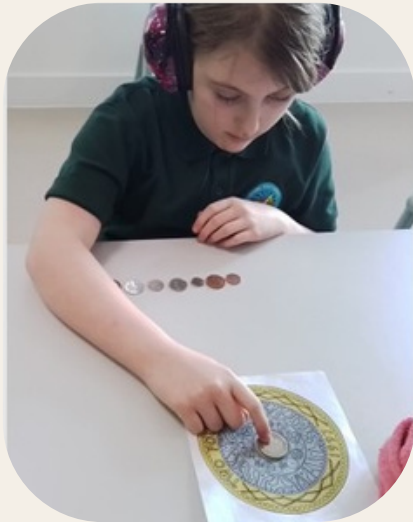
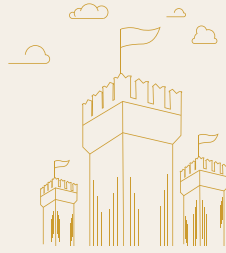
Magnolia class have enjoyed another incredible half term full of learning opportunities, new experiences and building friendships. This half term we have loved working on our reading, mark making and writing skills, and have already made huge progress with these. We used symbols to build acrostic poems to describe our class and ourselves. We have developed a love of reading and had a fantastic time exploring our text 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. Some of us have written character descriptions to describe our favourite characters. Well done to Magnolia class for a wonderful first term - I look forward to seeing you all in January!



Katie

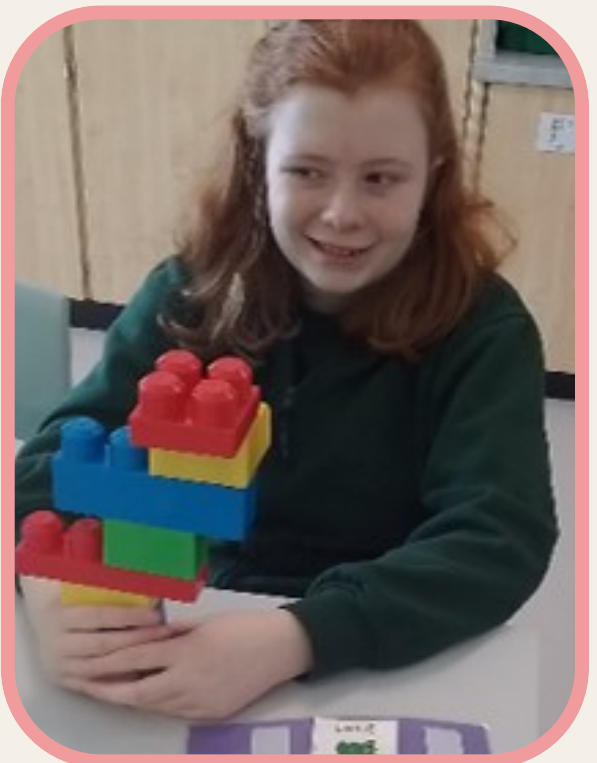


Chestnut Class



This half term, Chestnut Class have been continuing their topic of Knights and Castles. We have explored different types of castles, what rooms you might find in a castle, their defences and have made our own shields. We have also been working on positional language, pattern and money. We enjoyed looking at the birds during a visit from the Raptor Centre and some of us even stroked the birds of prey. The past few weeks we have been busy preparing for the Christmas performance by making decorations and cards to sell as well as rehearsing and, although some of us were a little nervous, we enjoyed sharing our song with you. Seasons greetings and best wishes for 2025!

Rae

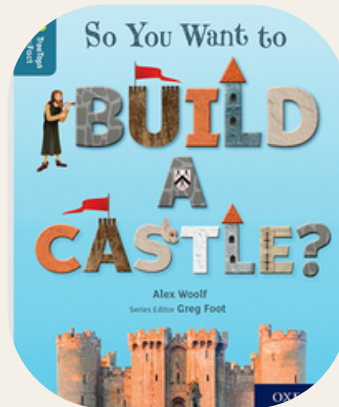


Silver Birch Class



Silver Birch has had another fantastic term. Everyone has settled in, and we have observed some firm friendships form. This half term we have continued to work on our theme Knights and Castles. In English, we have been continuing our topic by reading 'Arthur and the Sword in the Stone', exploring and understanding what it takes to become a knight. They have also been investigating Castles and how to build them.

As part of the festive season, we have been helping to prepare and organise a number of different events, taking a trip to Spring Common Academy to assist with their Christmas fayre, supporting the stalls, and developing life and social skills.



Mili





The school council have been busy again this half term and they have achieved several tasks. One of the suggestions from the school council was to install post boxes to enable their peers to post their Christmas cards around the school. The children have constructed and painted the post boxes and they have been placed in upper and lower school as well as in the school's main reception.

Another great suggestion was to organise a silent disco, this was booked and arranged for the last day of the term. It was funded by the raffle at the school performance on the 16th December 2024.



We have recently been in discussions with Ermine Street Academy and their School Council. They have been invited to visit Prestley Wood Academy in the New Year 2025 and will be focusing on the differences and similarities between the schools.

Mandy

Meet Our School Councilors



Forest School



In Forest School, we have been spending time in the outdoors to experience all the delights that winter offers us in the great outdoors.

Though all the different classes have different topics this term all the students were working on their fire and safety module in our curriculum. Our younger students enjoyed this activity with lots of support while some learners in our older classes were able to learn independent skills such as preparing the kindling, using flint and steel to make a spark, safe distanced from the fire, using sharp tools such as skewers safely and understanding and communicating fire safety procedures. All students had a chance to develop the skill of judging the perfect time to stop toasting the marshmallows (a very tricky skill I have yet to master!)



Beth



Toasting Marshmallows



A trip to Dyers of Warboys

As part of the festive season, we received a special invite to visit Dyers of Warboys. They kindly donated a wonderful 7ft Nordmann fir tree to the school, which we managed to squeeze into the minibus along with the children!

A big thank you to Dyers for the exciting trip out and for making it extra special.



The Raptor Foundation

For science week this year, we arranged for a very exciting visit from The Raptor Foundation who are based in Woodhurst, they are a rescue service that cares for and rehabilitates injured raptors. They arrived with four fabulous raptors, Gamble the Harris Hawk, Mini the Barn Owl, Owlbert the White Faced Owl and Nova the Lanner Falcon. The pupils were given the opportunity, to see, touch and hear the raptors up close. Our visitor was very knowledgeable and shared many interesting facts and from this, the children asked great questions.



Christmas Performance



Thank you to all the parents who were able to attend the school Christmas performance. Your presence made the event truly special!

We also want to extend our heartfelt thanks for your generous donations of trees and decorations, raffle prizes, and homemade mince pies. Your support and contributions are greatly appreciated and helped make the event a success.

All at Prestley Wood



Merry Christmas

<https://www.prestleywood.org.uk/>



Term Dates 2024 – 2025

*Autumn Term 2024 (3 September to 20 December)

Staff training day: Tuesday 3 September
Staff training day: Wednesday 4 September
Autumn term opens: Thursday 5 September
Half term: 28 October – 1 November
Staff training day: Monday 4 November
Autumn term closes: Friday 20 December

Spring Term 2025 (6 January to 4 April)

Spring term opens: Monday 6 January
Half term: 17 - 21 February
Staff training day: Monday 24 February
Spring term closes: Friday 4 April

Summer Term 2025 (22 April to 23 July)

Summer term opens: Tuesday 22 April
Early May Bank Holiday: 5th May
May Half term: 26 May – 30 May
Staff training day: Friday 11 July
Summer term closes: Wednesday 23 July

