

December 2023



All the staff at South Hills Nurseries would like to wish you a happy and restful Christmas and a healthy New Year. We hope you all have a truly magical time.

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And just like that, Christmas is upon us which creates another edition of the South Hills company magazine. Tinsel, sparkles, songs and games have filled our nurseries for weeks and it's safe to say that the children are ready for the big day! This publication gives you ideas of activities to make and create with your children at home and celebrates each of our settings hard work.



This year at the Salisbury Playhouse, they have chosen to perform 'Dick Whittington' - the tale of Dick and his trusted cat who venture to London in search of gold. Cbeebies have also got a rendition of this famous pantomime which you can view at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001gc2x/dick-whittington-and-his-cat-panto-2022?seriesId=m001gc2y>. It lasts 49 minutes and there is lots of dancing and singing to join in with....."Oh yes there is!"

Create a new tradition for Christmas with 'The Kindness Elf', an alternative to the popular Elf on the Shelf idea which places the focus on positive, character-building activities for our children. The Kindness Elves are adorable little figures to emphasise kindness and love and hopefully help the children to develop thoughtfulness and compassion for the world around them in a playful and fun way—a positive focus for building kind character habits for a lifetime. The Elves are magical friends who love nothing more than to sprinkle kindness and joy wherever they go! They love to visit your home and spread this happiness with children, encouraging them to do small acts of kindness in their daily lives.





Wrap the Christmas Tree—

Get ready for a wild and wacky game that the little kids will absolutely love! The idea is simple—select one family member to be the “Christmas tree” and see how quickly they can decorate themselves with garland. But here’s the fun part: use Christmas stickers as ornaments and top it off with a star. Supplies: Garland/tinsel, Ribbon, Christmas Stickers, Star



Festive Fun Games

Shake the Jingle Bells—This game is a fantastic way to add some excitement to the holiday season. To play, create two holes in the sides of a tissue box, allowing your belt or string to go around your waist. Then, fill the opening with jingle bells. Set a timer, and watch the family race to shake out all the bells in 60 seconds. Supplies needed: Large jingle bells, Tissue box, Strong string or thin belt (or something else to tie the box to the waist)



Snowman snowball cup game—This simple game is perfect for the whole family to show off their throwing skills. Decorate white cups with fun snowman faces and stack the cups in a triangle. Simply place three cups on the bottom, two in the middle, and one on top. Watch the kids throw the ball to knock them down. Supplies needed: White Cups, Styrofoam ball, Markers (to decorate with fun snowman faces)



Candy Cane Game —This game may sound easy, but it’s much more challenging than it looks and it’s an absolute blast! All you need are mini candy canes. Each person starts with one mini candy cane in their mouth, positioned opposite the curved side of the candy cane. Then, place a pile of candy canes on the table in front of them. Set a timer for 30 seconds and watch them try to pick up and move as many candy canes as possible to the side.



Try completing a scavenger hunt with your children, either around your home or out and about in the local community.

Christmas Garland Obstacle Course—This easy Christmas game will provide tons of indoor obstacle fun. Just tape the garland on the walls in a hallway. Create a challenge where you have to navigate through it without touching or knocking it down. You’ll be amazed at how much fun it is for the whole family – the perfect game with a Christmas twist!





Rudolph shortbread—Ingredients; 200g salted butter, softened, 2 tsp vanilla extract, 85g golden caster sugar 85g ground rice, 225g plain flour, plus extra for dusting, 3 tbspc icing sugar, 8 red sweets, 16 white sweets or white chocolate buttons, for the eyes, black writing icing tube. Method; Put the butter, vanilla and sugar in a big mixing bowl and stir together with a wooden spoon until really smooth. Stir in the ground rice first, then the flour. If it starts to get dry, you might need to use your hands to squish everything together to make a smooth dough. Put a piece of baking parchment on a baking sheet. Make the dough into a round ball in the middle of the parchment, using your hands to push it down. Get a rolling pin and dust it with flour so it doesn't stick to the dough. Use the rolling pin to roll the dough out to a big circle. Get your 22-23cm round cake tin and place on top of the dough when it's rolled big enough. Use a cutlery knife to trim round the edges to make a neat circle. Cover with cling film and put the tray in the fridge for 30 mins to get cold. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Cook the chilled shortbread for 25 mins until golden. Cool completely on the tray, then use a sharp knife to follow the lines you made with a fork and cut into 8 wedges.



Pesto cheese straw Christmas Tree—Ingredients; 2 x 320g sheets ready-rolled all butter puff pastry, 6 tbspc pesto, 100g mature cheddar, parmesan or gruyère, finely grated, 1 egg, beaten, dips of your choice, to serve (optional). Method; Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Unroll the two pastry sheets, keeping them on their baking parchment. Spread the pesto over one of the pastry sheets, then scatter over half of the grated cheese. Flip the second sheet of pastry on top and press to stick the two pastry sheets together. Remove the top layer of parchment. Cut out a Christmas tree shape – a large triangle with a little stump at the bottom. Cut a star shape out of the offcuts for the top of the tree. Lift the tree onto a large baking tray, brush with the beaten egg, then do the same with the star and press it on the tip. Scatter over the rest of the cheese and gently press to help it stick to the pastry. Cut vertical lines into the sides of the tree, about 1cm apart, leaving a 'trunk' of about 2cm up the middle. Twist the strips of pastry and stick them back down to the tray. Do this with all the pastry 'branches'. Bake the tree for 20-25 mins until golden brown, and the straws on the second tray for 12-15 mins. Serve warm with your favourite dips, if you like.

CHRISTMAS BAKES FOR EVERYONE TO BE INVOLVED WITH



At Stepping Stones we have been exploring the meaning of 'Advent' and been preparing for Christmas and Baby Jesus's birthday. Everyone has been very busy and amongst many

activities. Babies & Toddlers have been baking mince pies and wrapping up presents. Lower Nursery have been making decorations and Christmas angel cards. Upper Nursery have been decorating the Christmas tree and preparing for their Nativity Play.



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at Bemerton with a hint of a glitter explosion! The children have been doing lots of arts and craft activities and have been making Christmas tree decorations,



Gingerbread men, stockings, 2024 calendars, cards, table decorations and crowns for the parties. Owl class were very excited to go to Braemar Lodge residential home to perform a Christmas Concert and share a drink and biscuit with the residents. During these last 2 weeks of term we are looking forward to our stay and play/craft/concert sessions with our parents and our end of year parties, where we hope our invite for Father Christmas to attend has reached him at the North Pole.





The children took part in road safety week, we talked about how we keep ourselves safe when crossing the road. They learnt to stop, look and listen and that they need to hold hands when crossing. They went on several walks to see all the different road signs they could find. The heuristic play sessions have been a favourite with the Explorer and Adventure room. Having a range of natural



materials to explore without distraction has led to the children developing their imagination, creating their own narratives and being more creative in their thinking. Our children have been sparkling from all the glitter used for their Christmas crafts, making reindeers, cards, salt dough decorations, to name a few. The children used all of their gross and fine motor skills to help



decorate all three Christmas trees. Due to the festive fun the children have been widening their vocabulary with all the

Christmas words such as sparkly tinsel and shimmering baubles. We have been practicing our Christmas sing along songs and have been singing superstars, we can't wait for their live performance next week.



The children have been exploring the forest area where they acted as detectives, jumped in lots of muddy puddles and collected different coloured leaves, moss and other natural objects to bring back to show their friends. The children had the



opportunity to visit the farm to see and feed the animals, some of the children were even lucky to meet the new addition to the farm, Billy the goat. The children are continuing to learn and explore in the garden where we're seeing bugs slowly creeping in to use our bug hotel as it's getting colder. We had our very own pyjama day for Children In Need. The children took part in different Pudsey themed crafts and made yummy Pudsey biscuits to take home. We have new interests in puzzles looking at numbers, geometric shapes, colours as well as a life-size skeleton. The Montessori room is well established with the children independently choosing activities, readily taking on new challenges. All the children at the nursery are getting into the Christmas spirit, we are preparing for our Christmas concert and

have incorporated our songs into some of our crafts. We are planning a Christmas party to end what has been a wonderful year. We can't wait to continue to celebrate this festive season and welcome our lovely parents into the setting.



The Pre School children have really benefited from our morning 'move and groove' sessions where the children have learnt all about exercises and the affect it has on the body. Preschool have also been working on their pen control to write their names and letters. We watched a



story about Diwali and learnt how different cultures celebrate it and made lanterns and Rangoli patterns on our hands we here at City raised money for Children In Need by holding a bake sale. We raised an amazing £51.42. Thank you so much. Explorers have been busy settling new children who joined us this term. The children have been joining in with lots of craft activities such as fire work painting, printing with apples for Halloween and making poppies as we learnt about Remembrance Day. They have also been using their bodies by dancing to music, climbing over the soft play and using the bikes outside.



Explorers have also enjoyed exploring pasta and flour using spoons to fill different containers and emptying them. The Butterflies have been busy using their bodies on the soft play, we have been jumping, rolling and running over the different shapes, we have been completing some Christmas crafts for our families and decorating our room.



to the Food Bank just before Christmas. Our parents have generously donated lots of food items which has enabled us to be able to take part in the 'Reverse Advent Calendar'.



Alongside our usual Christmas Craft activities at Old School Nursery, we have decided to do something a little different this year. We are taking part in the 'Reverse Advent Calendar' which is all about giving instead of receiving, which is quite different to the traditional advent calendar. We have been in contact with the Devizes and District food bank who are in need of donations at this time of year, and so we thought that it would be a great idea to add a food item to a box each day during the advent period which we will then donate

to the Food Bank just before Christmas. Our parents have generously donated lots of food items which has enabled us to be able to take part in the 'Reverse Advent Calendar'. We have been talking to the children about how lucky we are as we have food in our lunch boxes and that not everyone has food to eat. We explained that the food that we are collecting is going to a family who doesn't have any food and how we are doing a good thing by donating to the Food Bank.



This term has been a busy one and filled with adventures, trips out in the minibus and fun. The Burcombe children love being outdoors and we are so lucky to have the woodlands and farm on our doorstep for the children and staff to get involved in. Collecting autumn natural resources was a huge hit and used back at nursery to make conker number lines and abacus, autumn leaf and stick crafts and learning about hibernation and animals who enjoy the colder weather. Visits to the local park has allowed the children to extend their gross motor skills by climbing, swinging and bouncing. And then, our room was transformed into a magical Christmas place filled with twinkling lights, trees and engaging smallworld trays that the children all helped to put together. Christmas songs are on a loop, the children are busying themselves with sparkly sequins and paper and the smell of gingerbread playdough fills the air, along with laughter and excitement as the big day draws nearer. Merry Christmas everyone!



As part of learning about celebrations and festivals the children at Trinity have made hand shaped tea light holders for Diwali using clay and sparkly paint. They have also been busy getting ready for Christmas, they have made decorations for the tree and covered the tree with lots of baubles. The children will be baking cakes to sell on our playground, we hope that's successful. We have our Christmas lunch coming up and all the

children are invited. Also they are having a craft afternoon which will involve a lot of glitter and they have invited their families in for the fun. Music Jean will be here to carry on the Christmas spirit with music extravaganza of Christmas songs which will surely be a great time.





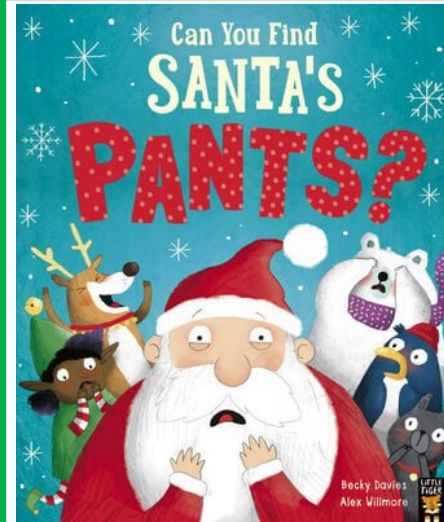
We have had a very busy term here at Wilton. The children in our dairy unit have enjoyed going on a visit to a pumpkin patch. Having a ride in the minibus was very exciting with lots of singing on the way. They chose a variety of



pumpkins to bring back to nursery, some very unusual shapes as well as colours were chosen. Baby unit have had some beautiful walks to the woods and puddle jumping fun. They have enjoyed a variety of autumn messy play activities, exploring their senses. We had a very successful harvest festival, with parents, grandparents and other family members enjoying the songs and actions that went with them. Many people contributed various foods which the barn children took for donation to the Trussell Trust. The nursery has been very busy preparing for Christmas, with paint, decorations & glitter appearing everywhere! The barn class are looking forward to a visit to Wilton place care home when they will end the term by singing some lovely Christmas songs. All parents were invited to a stay and play session on



Thursday and they helped the children make some Christmas decorations for the trees and Tuesday 12th December all parents are welcome to come and watch the children perform 'Born in a barn' Christmas nativity.



Can You Find Santa's Pants?

Author: Becky Davies, Alex Willmore

It's Christmas Eve, and Santa's putting on his snuggly red suit. But hang on...

Where are Santa's pants? He can't deliver Christmas with a bare bottom!

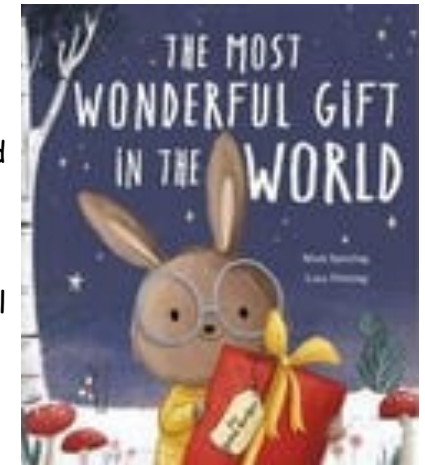
Search through mounds of mistletoe and piles of presents to find Santa's underwear and save Christmas!

The Most Wonderful Gift in the World

Author: Mark Sperring, Lucy Fleming

On Christmas morning, a magnificent, red-wrapped gift sits underneath the tree.

But it isn't for Esme. And it isn't for Bear. So they set out to find the rightful owner. Little do they know that it's the greatest gift in all the world.



The snowiest Christmas ever

Author: Jane Chapman

It's Christmas time and snowflakes swirl around the bears' cosy cabin. "Yippee!" cheer the bear cubs. "More snow!"

More snow!"

And sure enough, the snow gets deeper . . . and deeper. But soon it's right up to the windows! Will it EVER stop?





Gingerbread cloud dough—Ingredients; 8 cups flour, 1/2 cup cinnamon, 2 tblsp ginger, tblsp nutmeg, 1 tblsp allspice, 2 cups oil (you can use vegetable or baby oil). Method; Instructions; Measure out your flour into a large bin. Add enough cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice and ginger to make a strong, festive smell. Add in the oil and stir well. After stirring as much as you can, check the consistency with your hands and manually mix it up, as needed. You want a dry dough that clumps well when pressed together. First let the kids dig into the plain sensory bin and then add in the "add on" items after the initial enthusiasm starts to wane. This cloud dough lasts forever, but I personally throw ours out after about a month of play.

Ice painting—To make taste safe ice paint begin by filling small pots (for example little yoghurt pots) with water. Mix a tiny bit of food colouring into the pots of water. Put a craft stick into each pot and then put the pots into the freezer. The ice paints will take a couple of hours to freeze.. I would recommend painting on card or thick paper. Hand the ice paint sticks to your child and let them have fun exploring the different painty effects that they can create. As these paints are made from just water and colouring you don't have to worry about babies and toddlers putting them into their mouths (they do however slightly colour the skin). Older children could use these ice painting sticks to learn about colour mixing. Just make ice paint sticks in red, yellow and blue and see what secondary colours they can mix up.



Potato printing—Potato printing is a simple activity for children of ages, all you need is a potato cut in half, a bit of imagination and some paint to get started. How about using the potato prints to make patterns, pictures, Christmas cards, posters, Christmas trails or recyclable wrapping paper. You can even combine multiple prints to create pictures, scenes and patterns. Potatoes are a great



environmentally friendly material to use as stamps for printing. You can compost them after use or even grow them into potato plants.. Simply wash any paint off the potato halves and leave them to dry for a few days.

Snowman cards—These cards can be made from any off cuts of card, wrapping paper or material found at home. If you don't have any white card or paint, you could use cotton wool pads for the body. If age appropriate, let your child use scissors to cut the additions themselves—eyes, nose, hat, scarf and buttons. Add some arms or if you are near a garden or woods, maybe collect some real twigs for these. You could create a snowman family with everyone in your family being in the picture (including the dog or cat!) or make them into Christmas cards for relatives and encourage your child to make them look like Granny/Grandad etc.



There's A Little Elf Sitting On My Nose (Tune: "If Your Happy and You Know it")

There's a little elf sitting on my nose,
There's a little elf sitting on my nose,
He is sitting on my nose, then off away he goes,
There's a little elf sitting on my nose.
There's a little elf sitting on my knee,
There's a little elf sitting on my knee,
He is sitting on my knee, then off away he flees,
There's a little elf sitting on my knee.
There's a little elf sitting on my head,
There's a little elf sitting on my head,
He is sitting on my head, then off he goes to bed,
There's a little elf sitting on my head.

The Mitten in the Snow
(Tune: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Warm, warm, warm, and dry
Mittens feel so nice.
So grab a pair in the chilly air
Or in the snow and ice.



Five Little Gingerbread (Fingerplay)
Five little gingerbread lying on a tray,
One jumped up and ran away
Shouting "Catch me, catch me, catch me if you can,
I run really fast, I'm the gingerbread man!"
(Continue counting down until there are none left)
No more gingerbread lying on a tray.
They all jumped up and ran away!

Snowflakes (Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

(Begin in a standing position, with hands in the air.)
Snowflakes, snowflakes, dance around, (Dance and spin around in circles.)
Snowflakes, snowflakes, touch the ground. (Wiggle your fingers, then touch the floor.)
Snowflakes, snowflakes, in the air, (Standing position, with hands in the air.)
Snowflakes, snowflakes, Everywhere. (Wiggle fingers and move arms back and forth)
Snowflakes, snowflakes dance around, (Dance and spin around in circles.)
Snowflakes, snowflakes touch the ground. (Wiggle your fingers, then touch the floor.)

