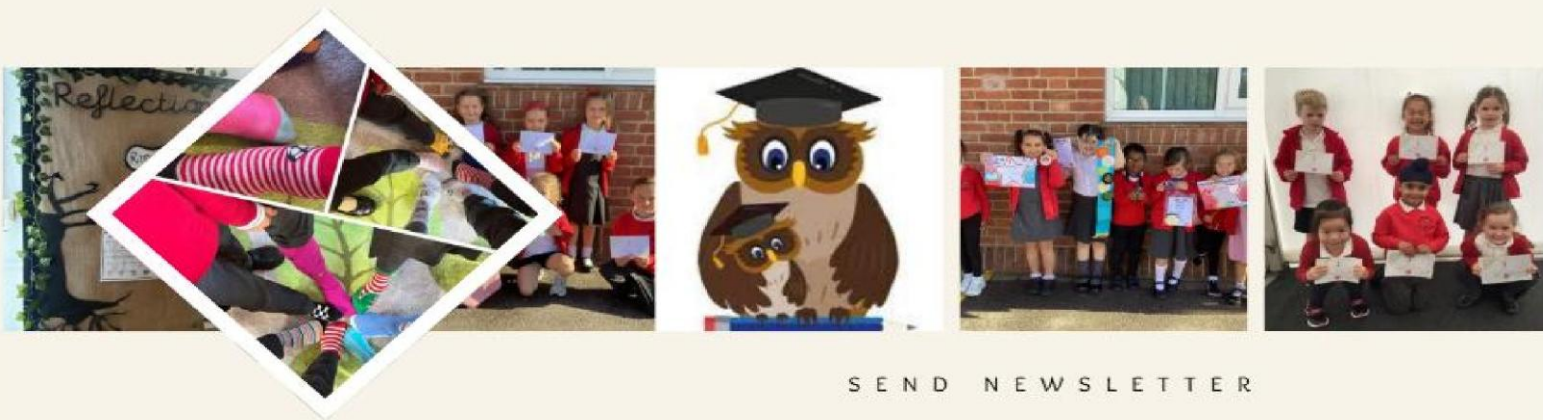




Welcome to our SEND newsletter

As we move through the Christmas period, I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge that this time of year can feel tricky for some children. Alongside the excitement and magic, there are changes to routine, busy days and lots of different expectations, which can feel unsettling.

If things feel a little wobblier at home, please know this is very common and completely understandable. Many children experience Christmas in their own way, and that often reflects just how thoughtful, sensitive and aware they are of the world around them.

Our children are all wonderfully individual. The things that make them unique are also the things that make them special, and there is no single way they should experience or enjoy Christmas. If your child's Christmas looks a little different to others, that is absolutely okay because they are doing what works for them.

Thank you, as always, for the care, patience and understanding you show your children, and for the continued support you offer to school. Working together makes such a difference, and it is very clear how valued and supported the children are.

Wishing you a calm and joyful Christmas.

Mrs Owen
SENDCo





Spotlight on Autism

Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental difference that affects how a person experiences the world. It is described as a spectrum, which means that autism looks different for every child. There is no single set of characteristics, and no two autistic children are the same.

For some children, autism may involve finding social communication tricky, needing clear routines, or experiencing the world very strongly through their senses (such as noise, light, touch or smell). Others may have intense interests, think deeply about particular topics, or approach learning and friendships in their own unique way. Some children's differences are very noticeable, while others may appear to cope well in school but find things more difficult at home. All of these experiences are valid.

Autistic children often have many strengths such as honesty, creativity, strong focus, problem-solving skills and a unique way of seeing the world. Understanding autism helps us recognise both the challenges children may face *and* the wonderful qualities they bring.

If you are wondering whether your child may be autistic:

It is very common for parents to have questions or concerns. Many families find it helpful to begin by talking things through this might be with other parents, school staff, or with me as SENDCo. These conversations can help make sense of what you are noticing and explore what support might be helpful.

You may also choose to speak to your GP or health visitor, who can listen to your concerns and talk with you about next steps. Both school and your child's GP can complete a neurodevelopmental referral form. This form gathers information from parents and professionals to build a picture of a child's strengths, needs and development. Completing a referral form does not mean a diagnosis will automatically follow. It is simply a way of asking for further advice and assessment where appropriate.

School can support this process by sharing observations and contributing to the referral where needed. Please remember that support does not depend on a diagnosis, and children can be supported in school based on their individual needs.

Support available in Warwickshire:

There is a range of support available locally for families at different stages of their journey:

- **Warwickshire SEND Local Offer**
Information about services, advice, support and activities for children and young people with additional needs:
<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send>
- **Community Autism Support Service (CASS)**
Support, guidance and information for autistic children, young people and their families, including those awaiting assessment:
<https://casspartnership.org.uk>
- **SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service)**
Free, confidential and impartial advice for parents and carers:
<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/sendias>
- **National Autistic Society**
Clear, trusted information about autism and support for families:
<https://www.autism.org.uk>

If you would like to talk through any concerns, ask questions, or find out more about support in school or referral pathways, please do get in touch. I am always happy to work alongside families to support each child as the individual they are.

Upcoming dates for diary:

SEND coffee afternoon-	20 th January- 2:30pm until the end of the school day
Mental Health in School Team coming in as guest speaker.	

Last half term's highlights:

Christmas performances:

Our Christmas performances were a celebration of inclusion and confidence, and I could not be prouder of everyone involved. Some children chose to perform by taking on speaking parts and roles

I was especially impressed with Year 2, who performed two of their Christmas songs using Makaton signs, showing great inclusivity!

All children across school and nursery enjoyed a special visit from Santa, creating a wonderful sense of excitement and festive cheer throughout. In addition, we organised for Santa to visit some children in a low-demand, sensory-friendly environment, allowing them to experience the magic of the occasion in a calm and supportive way. This approach was extremely well received by the children involved and ensured the experience was inclusive and enjoyable for everyone. Thank you to Santa & his helper Mrs George for joining us!



That's a wrap!



For questions and clarifications, you may reach out to me directly on-
hannah.owen@dunchurch.covmat.org or via class dojo.

