



DECEMBER

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

2025

**As we reach the end of what is traditionally the longest term in the academic year, I want to take a moment to express my deepest and most sincere gratitude for the extraordinary effort and dedication that surrounds our college community every single day.**

As you will read in the following pages, so much has taken place both inside and outside of the classroom over these past few months to develop the academic and personal skills and abilities of the young people we work with.

Our character education focus on Virtues of the Fortnight continues to grow from strength to strength, and I sincerely hope that all pupils have already signed up for next term's exciting offerings.

To the entire team at Foundry College—our teachers and home tutors, behaviour support assistants, administrative team, outreach team and of course drivers—thank you.

The commitment you show to enhancing the lives of every pupil who walks through our doors is not only appreciated but is the bedrock of Foundry College's success. Your tireless hard work, often behind the scenes, ensures that our pupils receive the individualised support, innovative teaching, and nurturing environment they need to thrive. I would also like to give special thanks to our Outreach Team, both in primary and secondary, who are working tirelessly throughout the local authority. They support schools with pupils facing challenges, ensuring our nurturing and inspiring ethos is enhancing their achievements across the region.



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Education is a journey best travelled in partnership, and I also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our parents and guardians. Your commitment to working alongside Foundry College is invaluable. Your active involvement, support for our policies, and open communication ensure that we can provide the highest quality of provision for your child.

When home and college work together, we create a seamless environment of support and understanding. Thank you for entrusting your children to us and for being such crucial partners in their development and success.

Foundry College is more than a school; it is a community driven by a shared mission to empower our pupils, the collective effort and collaborative spirit demonstrated by our staff and parents make this possible.

Please have a wonderful winter break, and I look forward to working with you all in 2026!

With best wishes,

Iain Thomas  
Headteacher  
Foundry College



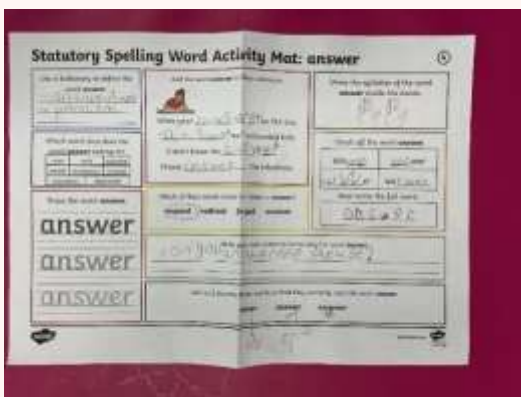
This term we have been preparing one of our Primary pupils to transition into his new school. We are so proud of the way this pupil coped and we are pleased to say that he has settled in well. To reflect the needs of our pupils, the focus this term has been on engagement and allowing them time to adjust to changes in their provision timetables. Throughout the term, our primary pupils have engaged in therapeutic activities such as: theraplay, touch talk and sensory circuits. We are very grateful to other service providers in Wokingham who have worked with us to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all pupils.

This year we have introduced a Character Education Curriculum. Character Education is based on solid evidence and aims to help children develop positive character virtues. We want our pupils to be good citizens, to flourish and to fulfil their potential. We aim to develop confidence and compassion and cultivate an understanding of what is genuinely good and true. Therefore, we have been focusing our learning on specific character virtues including the following throughout the term:

Service foci – acting in a kind manor (to ourselves and others) and thinking about the people who help us in our life and how what we do has an impact (parents, friends, the police, nurses, vets etc)

Critical Thinking – using logic and problem solving in their activities, i.e. relating these skills to areas of learning in maths, science and PSHE.

Reflection and Celebration – thinking back, recognising our accomplishments and experiencing the tradition of Christmas by going to a Pantomime.



### THREE DISCOVERY – STOP MOTION

We were delighted to welcome back Three Discovery for a special Lego Stop Motion Animation workshop. The aim of Three Discovery is to spark creativity, and it certainly worked!

The classroom was transformed into a buzzing film set where pupils got hands-on with technical equipment and software. Using colourful Lego, they had to be incredibly patient and focused—meticulously building scenes, adjusting characters, and snapping hundreds of photos to make their stories move.

This fun, memorable project allowed them to develop strong digital and technical skills while unleashing their imaginations. The final short film they produced is a testament to their hard work and a brilliant piece of digital storytelling. A huge congratulations to our budding animators!

We are looking forward to seeing out this half term with lots of Christmas craft and cooking and we hope you all enjoy your Christmas break when it arrives.



Our Primary pupils have been able to join in with some off-site and onsite Character Curriculum activities.

### HORSESHOE LAKE

Two of our pupils visited Horseshoe Lake for a team building activity day which included a number of challenges in their kayaks – they kayaked the perimeter of the lake and avoided the deadly crocodiles! Our pupils showed great resilience and interacted well with unfamiliar adults. It has been particularly nice to see our pupils work alongside our Secondary pupils collaboratively.



### TVAP

This term, we have seen the return of our weekly visits to Thames Valley Adventure Playground (TVAP). For some of our pupils, external visits can be anxiety-provoking and therefore it has been a slow and steady transition to fully accessing what they have to offer. We are very proud of the pupils for their resilience – and we look forward to spending more time there as we move through the academic year.



### Theatre Trip – A Christmas Carol

In the true spirit of Christmas, and as part of our Character Curriculum programme, one of our Primary pupils attended A Christmas Carol Pantomime at the Reading Rep Theatre.

In KS4, pupils have started the year working hard on their individual GCSE pathways. For some this has seen them working towards completing coursework where we have had emotive tales inspired by the Scottish Highlands; terrifying ghostly happenings during the Great War, through to alien encounters. For others it has seen them begin to work on the skills they will need for their final GCSE exams, in particular their reading comprehension skills to identify explicit and implied meanings in texts.

For those pupils studying Literature, the focus has been on tackling the words of The Bard, William Shakespeare, uncovering the plot which led to "A pair of star-cross'd lovers' taking their own lives in Romeo & Juliet. Meanwhile, in poetry focused lessons, pupils have also been exploring if 'an onion' is an appropriate gift for Valentine's Day through the study of poems in the Relationship Anthology.

And as we entered into Winter, the focus moved on to the seasonal favourite of 'A Christmas Carol', exploring the themes of social injustice, poverty, family and redemption.



In KS3, pupils begun the year improving their persuasive abilities – always a vital skill to have in the run up to Christmas! As part of this, pupils also worked on their letter writing techniques choosing to either write to a parent, persuading them to welcome an additional furry, four-legged friend to the family or to a perspective employer, persuading them that they were the best candidate for a new job opportunity. After the half term, our older KS3 pupils also explored Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol and, in following Scrooge's journey to redemption, have discovered Dickens' message: that a happy Christmas does not require money but love and family.

Outside of the classroom, some of our pupils participated in a rap workshop, strengthening their communication skills and confidence in public speaking whilst secretly learning about vocabulary choices, rhythm and rhyme schemes. The session was warm and collaborative with pupils working together to produce the best rap. Finally, as we approached the end of term, many of our pupils have celebrated the holiday season with a Christmas tradition and a trip to the pantomime. The words of Charles Dickens were brought to life by the wonderful actors at Reading Rep Theatre in their version of A Christmas Carol.



'Tempus fugit' goes the motto. It means 'Time flies'. Here we are at the end of our longest term and it only seems like yesterday that we were basking in sunshine and looking forward to a long break. History helps us to get things into perspective. This term we have been emphasising the concepts of change and continuity, or what's different and what's stayed the same. This helps us to measure how far we have come and to consider the things that we really value and don't want to change. Do you remember when chips were just pieces of wood or things you ate with fish; when mice were furry creatures you didn't want loose in the house? Now we have a whole new language to learn.

Some of our pupils now know what an anarchist is and why police officers are called 'Bobbies'. They have learned about Jewish and Irish immigrants and the problems and benefits that came in their wake....strange how the voices of the past whisper their knowledge to us.

Others have begun to get a sense of place, not only in time but in the physical sense. It's interesting that we find young people who can point to California on a map, but can't find Birmingham or Liverpool and even their own locality is a bit of a mystery. So, these too have been learning a new language, the language of maps and location. Six figure grid references stop being a mathematical mystery and we can even use 'what3words' to pinpoint where we are. On Thursdays we have gone out and learned how to use a train to travel, a real novelty for some and cause of great anxiety for others, but faced and overcome. The world gradually opens up for Foundry pupils...

Now we have travelled to the 'Season of the year'. It's a time for family get-togethers, we travel great distances in some cases, to visit and we remember all that we have enjoyed and perhaps all that we have lost. History teaches us that Christmas is a remembrance, that we are not abandoned and alone; at its heart is the message that God stepped into our world to share and redeem our humanity and to open for us a brighter path than we could ever imagine.

May you have a restful and blessed Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

George  
Humanities at Foundry.

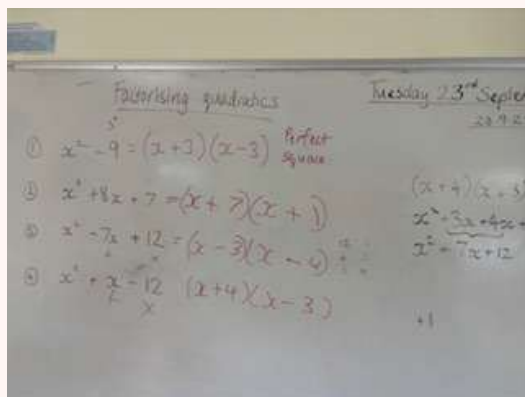




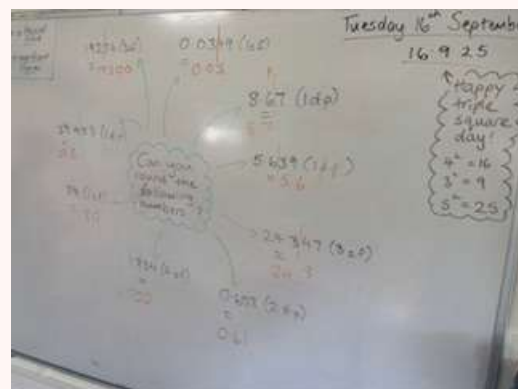
Well done to our KS4 students who sat their IGCSE exams this November. All of those that attended gave both papers a really good go and demonstrated great effort and resilience. This has hopefully helped our students to sit a real-life exam and get used to the set-up, timings and helped to identify strategies which helped and also those that didn't. This will hopefully mean there will be fewer anxieties when sitting their GCSE exams in the summer.

This term year 9-11 have been learning about the following topics:

- Basic number and algebra facts
- Pythagoras' Theorem
- Symmetry and Transformations
- Similarity and Congruence
- Venn Diagrams
- Quadratic equations



A plenary where year 11 students tackled factorising quadratics



A starter on rounding which some of our KS3 pupils participated in



KS3 pupils enjoyed some strategy and problem-solving games at the end of maths lessons on Fridays



We have started introducing Lego-based activities into our maths lessons with our year 7 and 8 pupils to help embed learning on symmetry, transformations and problem-solving skills.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas break from the Maths department.





# Occupational Studies

As we approach Christmas, I'm pleased to say that all the Year 10 and 11 pupils are making good progress towards achieving their chosen qualification at either Level 1 or Level 2. Two pupils have opted to complete the Level 2 Electrical Installation unit, which was introduced last year and are progressing very well so far despite some of the difficult content. Another pupil is completing the Level 1 Digital Graphics unit which will also tie in very well to the interests they have in Art and Craft. As ever the Hand Carpentry, Plumbing and Brickwork operations units are proving popular and are giving our secondary pupils of all ages the opportunity to learn and develop some new vocational skills that are very much in demand in the modern workplace and in tune with the changes taking place in government educational policy. It's nice to be ahead of the curve!



We have a growing cohort of younger pupils and for many of them the emphasis is very much on the practical elements of the Occupational Studies units. Most are positively engaged in making objects that they have, at least in part designed themselves and are learning how to enjoy their education once again. Design projects underway are quite diverse and include the making of wooden reindeer, designing and building of Bluetooth speakers, making trivets or pan stands for the kitchen or creating elaborately decorated jewellery boxes using pyrography techniques. Growing numbers of pupils across the college are showing an interest in some of these practical projects so we are planning to offer a lunchtime club to limited numbers of pupils who are keen to get involved but not necessarily study Occupational Studies as part of their regular timetable. Other older KS3 pupils are beginning to complete some of the more formal work needed to complete the OS units.



For the third year running some pupils are also working towards the Level 1 AQA Unit Awards Health and Safety in Construction (Part 1) in order to supplement their Occupational Studies units. This unit is one of many small, independent units of study which offer pupils a way of gaining some formal recognition for participating in learning projects that interest them and several may be of interest to some of the younger pupils who may be remaining with us for a short time.





## Cooking Up a Storm This Term!

What a fantastic term it's been in the Food and Cookery classroom! Our pupils have truly risen to the challenge, showing off their creativity, resilience, and culinary flair. For our NCFE Level 1 and Level 2 students, it's been a whirlwind of activity. They've worked incredibly hard towards Units 1 and 2 of their coursework, producing some mouth-watering dishes along the way. From learning how to prep healthy lunches for the week to mastering the art of puff pastry from scratch, their skills have gone from strength to strength! Alongside the practical work, pupils have excelled in theory too. Covering everything from personal and kitchen hygiene, cooking methods, understanding recipes and the purpose of ingredients to exploring the wonders of seasonal produce. They've also delved into the benefits of healthy eating, learning how nutrients keep our bodies happy and healthy.

Meanwhile, Key Stage 3 pupils have been globe-trotting without leaving the kitchen! They've taken on the challenge of cooking dishes from around the world: fragrant curries, homemade pizza and pasta from scratch, and even Japanese pancakes (which require plenty of patience and perseverance!). The results have been nothing short of amazing.!





And the adventures didn't stop in the kitchen! A group of pupils headed to Gray's Farm for a hands-on challenge. Picking fresh seasonal vegetables straight from the fields. For some, it was a brave moment getting their hands dirty; for others, pure shock at discovering broccoli and cauliflowers bigger than their heads! After a day of muddy fun, we returned to school armed with our harvest and cooked up multiple mouth-watering roast dinners. Many even mastered the art of carving a whole chicken for the first time.

And the excitement doesn't stop there! As we head towards the festive season, pupils are busy designing and decorating gingerbread houses from scratch. We're also gearing up for our much-loved annual Christmas dinner, where pupils will help prepare a feast fit for 60 hungry mouths in the last week of term. It's going to be a delicious finale to an incredible term!

A huge well done to all our hardworking budding chefs! Your dedication to completing coursework and your adventurous spirit in creating new dishes have been truly inspiring and this is just the beginning of an exciting year ahead!



This term, pupils are diving into LIFE a subject designed to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need for life beyond the classroom. We are fortunate to have many teachers leading the way, students have explored topics that truly matter: building healthy relationships, understanding the wider world, and developing strategies for health and wellbeing. These lessons aren't just academic—they're about preparing young people to thrive, make informed choices, and feel confident in the challenges and opportunities ahead.

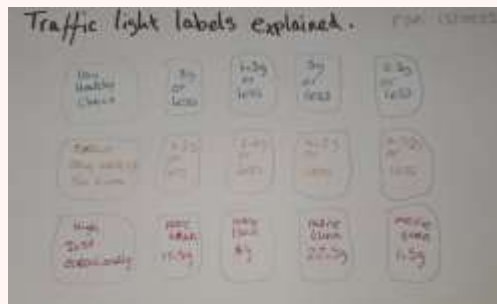
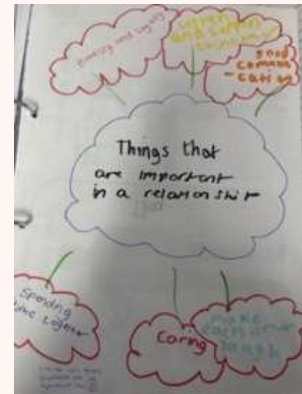
Pupils attended a First Aid workshop run by a Red Cross guest speaker, alongside this they learnt and had a go at basic CPR and recovery positions. Some pupils were fortunate to attend an excellent and highly engaging 'Dangers of Vaping' workshop this was a fabulous afternoon performance to highlight the negative impact vaping and nicotine use can have on their health and wellbeing.



KS3 - Our year 9 pupils have been learning about relationships in the media and were quite surprised when we analysed how much time they spent on different social media apps. They have also engaged really well in reflective discussion about gender stereotypes and equality.

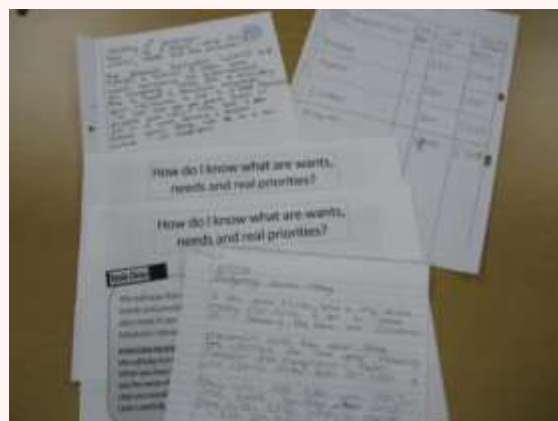
KS4 – Some pupils have been learning about healthy eating and why balanced nutrition matters, the vital role of sleep in maintaining health, and practical strategies for understanding and managing anxiety. Meanwhile others have been exploring Internet safety, AI and Deepfakes, chatbots and the dangers of algorithms leading to extremist content. In addition pupils have a clearer awareness of the dangers of controlling or coercive relationships, helping them to recognise unhealthy behaviours and make informed choices.





And finally "Money makes the World go round" sang Liza Minelli in 'Cabaret'. Our pupils have been learning how this works. An early comment from one pupil was "Money is the root of all evil". That's an unfortunate mis-quote. It should be "The love of money is a root of all evil". Money itself is not the problem, rather, our approach to it is the issue. Pupils tried to imagine a world without money. It was an interesting and amusing exercise. We learned that money is just a way of exchanging work and goods without having to carry everything in a cart. Budgeting is very important to our long-term prosperity, so we looked at ways of drawing up a budget to spend money over a year and have some left over. Of course, we seem to be moving to a cashless society so we need to understand basic banking, we looked at bank accounts and ATM's as well as the benefits and risks in using credit cards.

Associated with this, some of us have been preparing for working life, looking at what comes next and what working life holds for us. This brings us full circle to Topol, "If I were a rich man, Ya ba dibba dibba dibba dibba dibba dum"





Our Celebration themed Character Curriculum Thursday was a huge success, and a Christmas printing workshop is planned in December. We focused on the multi-cultural religious and non-religious festivals of Diwali and Kwanzaa, with the students making impasto tile coasters, clay diyas and mixed medium mandalas, exploring texture, shape and colour combinations.

Whilst working on their pieces they were also inspired by maths lessons, nail art and Halloween. The Christmas picture quiz was also a great opportunity for staff and students to team up together for some healthy competitiveness too.



## Halloween Competition

So many winners! For the second year running we had a fantastic response to our Halloween Competition, in which two unbiased members of staff (judges) were treated to a bloody restaurant scene in the college hall, with a total of eight (slime free) foam pumpkin art entries to look at.

Choosing winners was extremely difficult due to the incredible variety and amount of effort that the students had put into their pieces. I was blown away by the exceptional skills and imagination shown by the students, the competition not only gave them a great opportunity to create their pieces in any lesson, but also made it more accessible to those working within college and receiving offsite provision.



## Wokingham Christmas Tree Decoration and the Foundry Spaceship

Ding dong merrily on high, the SS Foundry is spinning...  
...from Wokingham town, off on its galactic mission to Mars.

The theme as last year is Sustainability, and we have been looking at maintaining the human race for future generations by exploring the potential to move to planets like Mars, whilst having meaningful discussions about being an environmentally-friendly person/traveller on this planet.

We were inspired by the plasticine characters of Aardman Animations, the makers of Wallace and Gromit and Shaun the Sheep, adding our astronaut Shayah and her dog. So don't forget to look up when venturing into Wokingham Town!



Watch this space...

For our next South Hill Park workshop we will soon have the privilege of working with artist Russell Turner who will facilitate the sculpture session in March.

As we reach the end of the year, attention now turns to the creation of pieces for our forthcoming Easter art exhibition. The running theme of Fresh has inspired our students to create mythical beings, fruit observations and abstract art.





This term has been a busy and exciting one across the Science Department.

At Key Stage 3, students have been exploring Food Science through hands-on investigations that introduced them to the scientific method. They tested how different types of sugar affect the taste and texture of cakes, compared pizza doughs made with flours containing different amounts of gluten and investigated how various fats ("shortening") influence the crispiness of shortbread biscuits. These practical experiments have helped students develop curiosity, confidence, and core investigative skills.

At Key Stage 4, students have been working through the AQA Combined Science course with a wide range of engaging practical and theoretical work.

In Biology, we have studied cells, diffusion and the human digestive and transport systems. Students investigated the effect of surface area to volume ratio on the rate of diffusion using agar cubes soaked in indicator solution. They explored osmosis by measuring the mass changes of potato pieces in different sucrose concentrations and observed plasmolysis occurring in real time under the microscope. Some students chose to carry out a heart dissection to examine the structure and function of this vital organ up close.

In Chemistry, learners have explored structure and bonding, building marshmallow-and-cocktail-stick models of giant covalent structures such as diamond and graphite. Our creative Year 11s also collaborated to build a periodic table from LEGO.

In Physics, our focus has included radioactivity and the particle theory of matter. Students calculated the specific heat capacity of different metals and used their understanding of pressure to implode drinks cans with only heat and water. They experimented with a Van de Graaff generator to make their hair stand on end, paper levitate and create sparks - bringing a little bit of lightning (and magic!) into the classroom.





This half term the pupils have been focusing on trying to outwit their opponent on the badminton court using specific game tactics and skills. The pupils now have a good understanding of shots and rules and are putting them into competitive situations against each other. This has presented pupils with quite the challenge playing against both their peers and staff. The pupils have certainly been testing the aging knees and backs of the staff with their drop shots just over the net!

Pupils who have been using the gym on site have been documenting their success and making sure they have recorded the results for their theory-based learning. Pupils have been covering a range of different units from strength and conditioning, reasons for participation and sports nutrition. A small number of pupils have been attending a local provision called Foxes Den where the head trainer, Pete happily puts them through an ever-increasing set of challenges in both strength and conditioning style exercises but also boxing skill circuits and workouts. The pupils often leave very tired but full of a sense of accomplishment.



# Character Curriculum

This year we have introduced our Character Curriculum Thursday which is designed to provide learning and personal development opportunities around different character virtues. We hope pupils attending these different activities will gain lots from them and eventually leave Foundry College as Flourishing Individuals, which is the defining point of the Character Curriculum.

This first term has seen a wide range of different provisions on offer and pupils have chosen how and where they would like to engage on a Thursday, meaning there has been lots of activity and excitement every other week around who is doing what and going where (this is not to say it's not exciting any other time here!).

Pupils have embraced the different challenges across the term and in particular our year 10 and 11 pupils who have consistently attend the various colleges to gain further knowledge and understanding of what is outside the four walls of Foundry College. I know the pupils have appreciated all of Vix's hard work in making the trips possible too. Emily took a large number of pupils to a local pick your own produce farm where judging by the smiles and the amount of food they returned with, they had a fantastic time. The virtue of curiosity was in full effect with many pupils astounded by the shapes and sizes of vegetables compared to what they find in the local shops! Pupils have challenged themselves to leave their comfort zones and showed great resilience on numerous occasions such as taking part in mountain biking in Swinley Forest, learning self defence techniques with our resident Taekwondo champion Stewart and paddle boarding at Horseshoe lake.

There have been lots of successful provisions where creativity and imagination have been paramount such as the Brickies and woodwork creative projects. At Brickies pupils made their own stop motion animations which they have then been happy to show in front of the entire school. The ongoing woodwork and creative projects have been steadily working towards their end goals of festive themed things, (sorry, no spoilers here).

For a first term of this huge change to pupils timetables, they have all shown excellent attitudes and attendance throughout the term to Character Thursday's and all the smiles and excitement on these day would not be possible without them. So a massive thanks from us to the pupils who have attended all the various provisions this term and also the parents who have continually supported pupils to make sure this a success.

We look forward to the spring term for this to continue.



# The Christmas Spirit at Foundry

Dickens describes the holidays as "a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time" and this term we have really embraced the charitable element of this message.

At the start of November, pupils learnt about the great work that Alexander Devine Children's Hospice do in supporting over 200 children and their families. Pupils then took part in a toy sorting activity and helped sort and tag hundreds of cuddly toys ready for the charity's Christmas raffle.



At the end of the month, staff also got involved in fundraising efforts by running, jogging or walking 5km around the sights of Windsor as part of the charity's annual Santa dash. In total we raised £459.



We then launched into December with our Christmas Jumper and Hats Day Christmas jumper day with a request that everyone taking part donated a small item to be parcelled up for our local food bank. We had hundreds of items donated and were able to create 63 gift parcels which were donated to SHARE based at Norreys Church.

