



## HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Dear Parents and Carers,

As many of you will have already watched on our Facebook page, I got a little creative one evening and wrote a short poem about our Autumn term together. Rather than summarising my highlights in prose, I thought I'd share my poem here.

### The 2024 Christmas Poem

In the late summer sun, as term just begun,  
After holidays fade, full of laughter and fun.  
Our attention turned to a school year new,  
As the trees begin to fade, to a golden hue.

Young foxes you joined us on your first day,  
As emotional mothers waved you away.  
Love has brought you this far, so ready to learn,  
We'll give you our all now that it's our turn.

As routines were established for learning in class,  
Some things are learnt better, opportunities not passed.  
Owls and Squirrel's set out on adventure,  
And took their learning to the Ancient Technology Centre.

Reception were not the only students new,  
As Cottage became part our family too.  
The strengthening of bonds for the benefit of those,  
Is our hope and our wish as our friendships grow.

Hope was sewn and in every young smile,  
When at Harvest children, parents and friends filled aisle after aisle.  
You all gave generously, sharing hope and your love,  
To ensure those less fortunate feel warmth from above.

With rehearsals completed, year 4 travelled north,  
To join our DSAT family, to sing and henceforth.  
In truth and harmony, hope then took wing,  
As under the spire 600 children did sing.

### KEY DIARY DATES

- 06/01 INSET
- 07/01 First Day of Spring 1
- 07/01 Interim Reports Sent Home
- 09/01 DSAT Epiphany Service
- 13/01 All Clubs Start
- 14/01 PSHCE SCARF Workshops
- 16/01 Year 4 Priory Netball Competition
- 20/01 Parents Evening\*
- 29/01 Parents Evening\*
- 04/02 Wessex Water Workshops
- 08/02 Breakfast Church
- 14/02 Hedgehog's Parent Share
- 14/02 Last Day of Spring 1

\*Please note the change in days for from the previously published dates.

The 11<sup>th</sup> day marked, whilst standing together,  
Solemn, reflective, ensuring memories forgotten never,  
Poppies were planted in our garden of peace,  
A photo ensured this moment never to cease,

When term reached its midpoint, we had a great party,  
Carved pumpkins, flung wellies joy oh so hearty,  
Our Autumn festival was a great PFA success,  
My thanks and gratitude to all I express.

On our pitches outside parents cheered athletes on,  
As the Priory schools', football battles we wish won,  
Whilst victory alluded us by slender margin,  
All battled with courage, so much to have pride in.

A rare surprise greeted us one morning,  
As snow drifted by as day was just dawning,  
Excited young faces rushed out in the cold,  
Made snowmen and marvelled, none were too old.

Owl class gathered all and performed without fear,  
Bringing a wonderful smile and so much cheer,  
The ukulele's tuned and rung their true chord,  
New skills children gathered, their timely reward.

In Hedgehogs, hand puppets were designed, ready for display,  
With skill and much precision, the sewing was underway.  
They welcomed parents to the hall to show them all their care  
To demonstrate their puppets in the Hedgehog Parent Share.

Have a wonderful Christmas break and we look forward to being on an adventure again next term

Yours faithfully,



Mr Lawford

Throughout this long term, you have shown all your heart,  
You have given so generously so faith does not depart.  
Whether shoes boxes sent to those without much,  
Or cakes sold to demonstrate hopes gentle touch.

We are blessed to serve and guide your young souls,  
As we teach and encourage them to achieve their goals.  
A huge thank you I say all that were part,  
My teachers, my team have shown their true heart.

Now, as we journey towards Christmas light,  
The season grows cold, but our hearts are still bright.  
Children's eyes gleam with festive dreams,  
Of gifts and joys and twinkling gleams.

But deeper still, let's remember true,  
The hope that Jesus brings to me and to you.  
In love and in peace, in truth so dear,  
Christmas brings us all hope and cheer.

So, as we end this long Autumn term,  
With hearts full and warm, all lessons learned,  
Let's cherish each moment, every morning and song,  
For in love, hope, and truth, we all do belong.



St. James'  
CE First School



Diocese of Salisbury  
Academy Trust



**LAURA ROBERTS**

Owls Teacher and Assistant  
Headteacher



Well done to Owls for another amazing half-term. I continue to be extremely proud of the dedication and enthusiasm they have shown for their learning. One of our highlights of this half-term has been reading 'A Bear called Paddington' by Michael Bond. During our English lessons, we have written our own Paddington Christmas adventures and in typical Paddington style things do not go to plan! We have continued to also enjoy our daily 'Love to Read' sessions where we have shared many different picture books, poems and non-fiction texts linked to our school values.

In Mathematics, we have worked hard at developing our understanding of multiplication and division. Year 4 have continued to prepare for their Multiplication Tables Check in June and have improved their heatmaps on TTRS.

In Year 3 science, the children have developed their understanding of light and in Year 4, the children have completed learning linked to sound. The children have conducted many investigations and have developed their confidence setting up fair tests, making careful observations, taking accurate measurements and drawing conclusions.

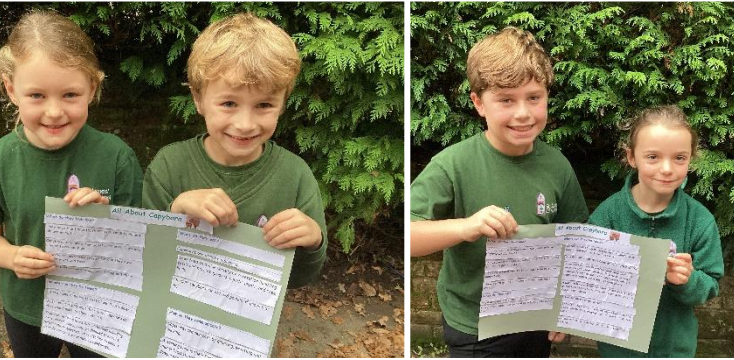
During our geography lessons, Owls have enjoyed learning about earthquakes and have learnt about why some areas of the world experience more earthquakes than others. In addition to this, Owls have demonstrated fantastic creativity during their design technology learning linked to textiles and making their own cushions. They worked hard to incorporate cross stitch and their own appliqué within their designs. It was wonderful to see how proud they were of their finished products. Another highlight of this half-term was our final ukulele performance where the children showcased their brilliant learning. It was wonderful to watch the children perform with such confidence and enthusiasm!

I can't wait to see what Owls can achieve next term – we have so many exciting opportunities to look forward to! Wishing the St James' community a wonderful Christmas and best wishes for 2025!



**OWLS CLASS NEWS**





## SQUIRRELS CLASS NEWS



HOLLY ANNELS

Squirrels Class Teacher



As we approach the festive season, I would like to thank all of Squirrels Class for a wonderful Autumn term. It has been an extremely busy half term with new topics, visitors and trips! Here's an insight into what we have been getting up to.

In class we have read *Kate on the Case* and *The Pugs of the Frozen North*. We have thoroughly enjoyed both these books with *Kate on the Case* causing the children to not want to stop at the end of a lesson as they were so hooked by the story. *The Pugs of the Frozen North* has had the children in fits of giggles and we have enjoyed discovering all about different types of snow and how yetis ran their own noodle bar! In English, the children have written their own stories inspired by *Percy the Park Keeper*. Their creativity and imagination never fails to surprise me and they have used the most wonderful vocabulary to describe the challenges that Percy has faced.

In DT we have been looking at creating a castle and I have been in awe watching the children's plans come to life with every child managing to create their own working drawbridge. The children have absolutely loved this. During PE, it's been lovely to see them all participating and joining in with football, the children have become rather competitive! Again, it's great to see the children supporting one another and working as a team with more confident players helping others. In science, year 2 have been looking at hygiene and the importance of washing our hands! We completed an experiment to see how mouldy our bread would go after touching it which they have been fascinated by.

Next half term, we have lots of things to look forward to including reading *Fantastic Mr Fox* when we return. Within our English learning we will be focusing on *Matilda* and I am excited to read the children's diary entries and descriptions of her school! Our new subjects will be Art and Geography.

I would like to thank you all for your support this half term, it's been a very busy term! I wish you all a very happy holidays and look forward to hearing all the children's stories when we are back in the new year.

TRACY HOBBS

Hedgehogs Class Teacher



Wow it seems unbelievable that Hedgehog Class have already spent their first term together. They have once again, risen to the challenges of the term with creativity and enthusiasm, and it is a pleasure to share all the wonderful things they have accomplished.

One of the highlights of this term has been the creation of hand puppets in our Design Technology lessons. The children poured their imagination and effort into crafting their characters, which they proudly displayed during our Parent Share event. It was lovely to see the joy on their faces as they presented their handiwork and performed with their puppets, showcasing their skills.

In our geography work the children have loved using google earth and maps of the school ground to explore the local area. They have enjoyed exploring compasses and learning directions. The children have really got to grips with human and physical features of geography.

In English, the Hedgehogs class have made remarkable progress. They have been diligently working on their reading and writing skills, engaging with a variety of texts, and producing fantastic pieces of work, including instructional text and list poems. The growth in their confidence and ability to express themselves through writing and speaking is very impressive.

Mathematics has also been an area of significant achievement. The children in year 1 have been exploring the concepts of place value, addition, and subtraction up to 10. Through engaging activities and practical exercises, they have developed a strong foundational understanding of these essential mathematical skills. Whilst year 2 children have moved on and started to work on more problem solving skills.

As we look back on this term, I am immensely proud of the Hedgehogs class and all they have achieved. We thank the parents for their continued support and encouragement, which have played a vital role in their children's success. We look forward to many more exciting and enriching experiences next term, when we will be digging for fossils as we go off exploring with Mary Anning



**HEDGEHOGS CLASS NEWS**





## FOXES CLASS NEWS



AMANDA WALKER

Foxes Class Teacher



Congratulations to all of the Foxes! What a wonderful end to their very first term in school. The children have worked so hard this half term and they have really grown in confidence. The Nativity performance was amazing. To perform in church in front of so many parents and children took great courage, and we are so proud of each and every one of them.

This half-term has been a busy one. Our theme has been 'Into the Woods' and as part of this, we have learnt about Nocturnal animals, the difference between night and day, animal habitats and we have also grouped animals according to their characteristics. We have loved learning the story of Owl Babies and retelling this in our play, then changing the story to make it our own to become 'Fox Babies' during our Talk for Writing sessions. As part of our learning about night and day we have talked a lot about Space. We know the names of some planets, we know the names of some famous astronauts (Mae Jemison and Tim Peake in particular) and we also know that the shapes the stars make in the sky are constellations. We were also fascinated to hear about Galileo and how he was the first person to invent a telescope to gaze up at the stars. The children have become more confident recognising their sounds and are now beginning to use this knowledge to write simple CVC words and some children are even attempting short captions!

Next half term our theme is 'A Long Time Ago' and will cover learning about dinosaurs, polar landscapes and artefacts from the past. We will also explore the Lunar New Year celebration and learn about how this is celebrated around the world. We will continue to use our inside and outside learning space and make use of our wider grounds for a 'Winter Walk'.

We look forward to seeing all of the children's smiley faces in the new year and cannot wait to hear their holiday news!

Have a wonderful Christmas everyone.



## NEWS FROM THE NURSERY – LET'S GO ON A HUNT

As we approach the end of the autumn term, we wanted to take a moment to share some of the wonderful learning and experiences the children have had over the past few months. Our main theme this term has been "Let's Go on a Hunt!", with a special focus on the beloved children's story *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. This classic tale has sparked a lot of imaginative play and storytelling, and the children have loved joining in with the actions as we went "on our own bear hunts" throughout the term.

**Seasonal Changes & Woodland Wonders:** Our theme has allowed us to explore the world around us, particularly the changes that autumn brings. We've been talking about hibernation and learning about woodland animals, from squirrels to hedgehogs, and how they prepare for the colder months. The children have been particularly fascinated by the idea of animals going into hibernation, and we've had some lovely discussions about what happens to the animals we see in our gardens and parks.

We also took time to celebrate the beautiful autumn colours and the changes in the environment around us. The children have been collecting fallen leaves, acorns, and conkers during outdoor play, and using these to make nature-inspired artwork.

**Festivals and Celebrations:** This term, we've embraced several exciting festivals and celebrations. We've learned about Bonfire Night, with its bright colours and exciting fireworks, and the children have loved making their sparkly firework pictures. We also explored Diwali, the Festival of Lights, where the children decorated lanterns and talked about the importance of light in bringing joy and hope.

Our discussions continued as we remembered and honoured Remembrance Day, where we took part in a minute's silence and created our own poppies to help the children understand the significance of the day.

And of course, we've started preparing for Christmas – the excitement is already building! We've been busy practising for our Christmas Nativity performance, and we're sure you'll love what the children have been working on. They've been learning songs, and showing us some great dance moves – it's going to be a very special event, and we can't wait to share it with you!

**Creative Exploration with Andy Goldsworthy:** In our creative station, the children have been inspired by the work of British artist Andy Goldsworthy, who uses natural materials such as leaves, twigs, and stones to create stunning artworks in the natural world. We've had lots of fun recreating our pieces using autumn leaves, pinecones, and other found objects. The children have been encouraged to experiment with textures, colours, and patterns, allowing them to express their creativity in a way that connects them to the natural world.

**Looking Ahead:** As we move into the winter months, we will continue to explore the changes in nature and the changing seasons. Our focus books will consist of some fairy-tale classics!

Thank you for your continued support and for helping your children enjoy all the exciting learning we've had this term.





## CHRISTMAS NATIVITY SPECIAL REPORT



The Christmas Nativity is always a highlight of my Autumn Term. Foxes class have settled so well into life at St James' but it takes a tremendous amount of courage to stand up in front of the whole school and so many parents and perform. This year's rendition of 'Busy Busy Bethlehem' was a huge success with brave solos, wonderful collective singing and memorable moments. Hinton Martell is a beautiful venue and we hope that you enjoyed the performance. A special thank you to the parishioners of Hinton Martell who made us feel so welcome and to all the parents, carers and wider family who came out to support us.

*Mrs Walker*



# VOLUNTEER DAY 2025

Two years ago, we hosted our first volunteer day. On this day a team of willing and able volunteers came and decorated a classroom! This was a huge blessing for the school and allowed us to maintain our wonderful premises. We continue to thrive on the skills and generosity of the community.

In 2025, we will once again host a volunteer day where we will look to decorate another space in the school. So, here's your save the date, bacon and snacks provided.



Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025



# CHRISTMAS FAIR

A huge well done to everyone involved in our Christmas Fair hosted by the St James' PFA. On a very blustery afternoon, it was wonderful to see so many of you braving the stormy conditions to come and support your children, school and wider community. The afternoon was action packed with performances from the choir and ukulele orchestra as well as games and activities for the child. A massive thank you to all the craft stall holders and to our sponsors Ferndown Commercial and Cranborne Chase Cider for giving generously to support the school. In total, we raised over £2200 which is a fantastic total! A special thanks to the St James' PFA who gave so generously of their time to make the event a success.

# THE WINDOWS OF DSAT

Each of our academies is represented by a window they have designed. Our windows remind us of our heritage, and encourage us to look out beyond the horizon to all the possibilities that are out there. We know these windows are at their best when the light shines through them, as the light of Jesus can shine through us.

the WINDOWS of the

Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust  
*'Beyond expectations for all of God's children'*

Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust

“ Our windows remind us of our heritage and encourage us to look out beyond the horizon to all the possibilities that are out there. We know these windows are at their best when the light shines through them, as the Jesus' light can shine through us. ”

## PARENT SHARE EVENTS

Last year, Mrs Hobbs pioneered Parent Share events at St James'. These simple events are an opportunity to welcome you, the parents and carers, into school to share in your children's learning and celebrate their successes. For some of our Parent Share events, your involvement is so important as it helps support the children's evaluation of a product in design or art. But deeper still is the pride and achievement they have when they share their learning with a loved one. This term, we have had three Parent Share events.



## UPCOMING PARENT SHARE EVENTS



14<sup>th</sup> February (14.30 – 15.00) Hedgehogs Van Gogh Gallery



27<sup>th</sup> March (14.30 – 15.00) Foxes Musical Extravaganza



26<sup>th</sup> March (14.30 – 15.00) Squirrels Storytime



2<sup>nd</sup> April (14.30 – 15.00) Owls Pneumatic Toys



## PRIORY SPORTS FESTIVAL

It was a huge privilege to welcome Trinity, Wimborne St Giles and Cranborne First to compete in the first ever Priory Cup Competition. Year 3 children from the four local Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust schools competed in a mini league before a tense and hard-fought final. Whilst the competition was fierce, there was overriding spirit of togetherness and encouragement.

A huge well done to all Year 3 footballers who took part and to the team from Trinity CE First School who are the first Priory Cup Winners. Thank you to the St James' PFA who provided refreshments and to the parents from across our Hub who came to cheer their children on.

## ST JAMES' REMEMBERS

On the 11<sup>th</sup> November, the children of St James' First School and Nursery, alongside the wider community joined together to remember those we have lost and all those who have served our country as part of the armed forces. During our Remembrance Service, everyone was invited to plant a poppy in our Peace Garden which the children had all had a chance to make over the last week.

Thank you to all the children who took part in the service, read poems or led our prayers of reflection. Thank you to the parent team who came together to help paint and construct this beautiful display.

## KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Our number one priority is to keep your child safe. Our safeguarding team work closely with the wider school team to ensure that there are robust and clear procedures in place and that staff receive regular training. If you have a concern, please speak to a member of the safeguarding team.



Daniel Lawford

Designated  
Safeguarding Lead



Laura Roberts

Deputy Designated  
Safeguarding Lead



Claire Bishoff

Deputy Designated  
Safeguarding Lead



## TIPS FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, travelling and family gatherings to managing digital activities during the school breaks. This simple guide offers practical tips to help families maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.



[Download the Parent Guide](#)

