



Headteacher's End of Year Report

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the summer holiday approaches, I know many of you will be taking the opportunity to visit friends and family that you have not seen for a long time. No doubt, when they meet your children, they will comment on how much they have grown over the last year, something that as parents we can so easily miss. It is however, only when we look back that we see how much they have grown. The same is true in school life. So much has changed over the last year that I find it important to pause, look back and be grateful for everything that the St James' community has achieved in the last year.

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

Psalm 9:1

The theme of this newsletter is thankfulness. It would be difficult for me to mention everyone by name but I am truly grateful to so many different groups of our community who have helped me in my first year of headship, supported the development of the school and ensured all our children and staff 'Believe and Achieve.' So over the course of this extended Headteacher's welcome, I hope to reflect upon all that I am grateful for and mention a few groups and individuals who have helped shape all we have done to help our school flourish.

Whilst growth should not be measured by academic progress alone, it would be remiss not to mention how incredibly proud the whole staff team are of the achievements of all the children across the school. Our revamped termly reports give a window into your child's individual progress but school statistics highlight our global success. In Reception, 80% of children achieved the required 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) in their foundation year (69% national average). In our statutory Year 1 phonics screening, 96% of students achieved the required score, providing a foundation for accelerated reading progress (75% national average). In Year 4, the multiplication check results were off the chart! The school average score of 24/25 is five points above last year's national average, with a 96% of students scoring above 20. I have seen first-hand how hard your child works and how tirelessly the team work to create a learning environment where all children can succeed. I want to thank my teachers for the time spent planning lessons, facilitating learning and marking. They have invested far more than their contracted hours to ensure our school is a place where children thrive in their studies.

This year has also seen our Christian distinctiveness validated by SIAMS with the School rated as Good in all areas during our May inspection. Our School vision of Believe and Achieve and our underpinning Christian values of Love, Hope and Truth have shaped not only our collective worship but also all aspects of school life. We have given deeper meaning to our theological roots and now give greater impetus to living out what we believe.

The distinctive Christian vision is fundamental to driving improvements. This enables the school to make rapid progress in being a Church school, enabling all to flourish.

SIAMS 2023



With our parish church closing during lockdown, we were able to forge a new partnership with Hinton Martell, which gave us a venue in which the whole school family could gather to enjoy our Christmas Nativity, which Mrs Walker so carefully orchestrated.

It was not only our Reception class being willing to embrace the performing arts on stage, the Year 4's learnt a variety of songs on the ukulele and hosted a concert for the whole school and the whole school delivered a wonderful end of year show, led so expertly by Snow Leopards and Miss Roberts. It is this journey from nativity to end of year show that makes St James' such a special place. We want to continue to invest and value the arts in the upcoming years and make the most of travelling theatres, author visits and opportunities to see live music.

Part of our vision for the school is to enable children to think outwardly about our values and how they not only have an impact on us, but also on our community and our wider world. This year we have engaged in a number of charitable and community activities which have helped the whole community to do so. At the outset of our year, we gave food to our local foodbank as part of our Harvest celebrations; we have sold cakes for Children in Need; given presents as part of Operation Christmas Child and sponsored toilets in countries less fortunate than us. With our links with South Sudan a feature of our courageous advocacy, we are actively looking to develop these further by collaborating with a school in South Sudan in the upcoming year.

The school site has also seen its share of improvements over the last year. Our single biggest project was of course the library, which was completely transformed over the Christmas holidays into a welcoming and friendly space that has been enjoyed by all. There have been a number of other improvements around the site. We have completely refreshed the playground markings and replaced the games shed to enhance our outside space; we have replaced the projector in the hall with a new 86" touch screen panel to allow the hall to be effectively used as a classroom; and improved the facilities in the meeting room for use by staff and small groups of students. Behind the scenes, we have completely replaced our network infrastructure, upgrading and future proofing of our wifi in preparation for the cloud migration of our servers this summer. We have also worked hard to maintain the tidiness of our site, removing a large quantity of accumulated excess that we no longer needed. As we move into next year, I want to focus on enhancing our teaching spaces by repainting the walls and replacing some of the tables and chairs.

Of course, many of the developments around the site and enrichments to our provision have been enabled by our fantastic PFA who have worked together to run events in our school and in the community to raise additional funds. This year's fundraising currently stands at about £5,500 and will be vital funds as we look to be the best we can. I am so grateful to the Committee for all they have done over many years for St James'. We will need to strengthen the PFA team next year and I encourage you to consider how you could help serve the School in the next year.

This year has also seen significant investment in securing our curriculum for the future. In collaboration with our Priory Hub we have accelerated the refinement of our curriculum and brought greater clarity to teaching and learning within a mixed age environment. I want to thank Miss Roberts and the curriculum leaders for the work they have done in enabling us to have both a coherent and exciting curriculum. I hope that as the children look back over the year they will remember some of our feature events that have all been a resounding success. I have fond memories of so many of these whether it is the Year 4 ukulele performance or the Christmas Nativity at Hinton Martell to name just a few. However, it is my first Sports Day at St James' that will always be a moment I remember. As I looked across the field, I was struck by the power of the whole community coming together for the benefit of the children. Thank you to all those who made these feature events so special, whether it is marshalling a car park or helping to load a coach ready for a school trip, we are so grateful to have done it by your side.



With my staff team so pivotal to all that we do, I want to thank them for the manner in which they have embraced change and allowed us all to flourish. They have all made sacrifices to ensure deadlines are met, curriculum is revised, school shows are resourced and many other responsibilities. Please join me in sharing your thanks with your teachers as they start a six week period of rest, which they wholeheartedly deserve. I must just give a quick mention to Miss Roberts and Mrs Walker for their support as members of the Senior Leadership Team, they have embraced new ideas and fresh initiatives, queried and challenged some of my decisions and generally gone above and beyond in all aspects of school life.

With the year drawing to a close, it will also be time to say a sad 'goodbye' to some much loved staff. Miss Ashby has been at St James' for 2 years and has successfully completed her statutory induction training. In her time, she has grown in confidence and become a valued member of the team who will be sorely missed by both staff and students. As a year 5 tutor at Allenbourne Middle, I know she will be a resounding success and we wish her all the best. Mrs Milward joined the team as a temporary supply teacher last year but quickly became part of the fulltime teaching team. She is looking forward to a new challenge working for BCP as part of the specialist provision for SEND children in the early years and will of course be missed. Our final goodbye is for Miss Bishop who joined us as a teaching assistant after I had a chance meeting with her at a sailing club. She has given over and above and, as she moves onto explore the possibility of teaching English overseas, we wish her every success.

In the New Year, we look forward to welcoming Mrs Peckham as SENDCo and Miss Annels as class teacher. Mrs Hobbs also takes on a new role of full time class teacher. We already have some exciting plans for next year, but for now, everyone needs time to rest. I wish you a relaxing summer break and look forward to welcoming you back in September.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Lawford





YEAR 4 LEAVERS

It was such a privilege to welcome the parents and carers of all our year 4 children who leave us today for the last time. Our leaver's service was a moment of reflection as we looked back on all the tremendous achievements of our students. They have given their heart and soul to St James' and leave here with determination to succeed and mental resilience to be successful at whatever they turn their hand to. So from all the Staff at St James'. Well done, well done, well done! You have finished well and will leave with your heads held high knowing you have achieved all that you can. I want you to know that you will all be missed and remembered in so many different ways.





Year 4 Pupils

"I loved every minute performing on stage and feel very lucky to have been selected to be Jasmine."

"I had an amazing time performing with my class and the rest of the school. I think it was the best production ever!"

"I really enjoyed acting and singing. It was wonderful to be able to perform at the Layard Theatre."



What an amazing energy in that theatre; totally embodying that special St James' feeling of family and community.

Year 4 Parent



What an achievement for a First School. I was highly impressed.

Drama Teacher





ALADDIN TROUBLE SPECIAL

Our penultimate week of school saw the whole school perform their production of 'Aladdin Trouble' at the Layard Theatre, Canford School. The children certainly rose to the challenge of the big stage and bright lights - we are incredibly proud of them all! The audience were dazzled by remarkable acting, incredible singing and spectacular choreographed dances. Laughter filled the theatre as Wantu and Widow Twankey took to the stage! Love conquered evil as Jasmine and Aladdin finally got married despite challenge from Abanazar. Everyone had a part to play and it was brilliant to see the whole school community come together to mark the end of an action-packed academic year. A particular highlight was the children's final song, 'A Panto like no other' which filled the theatre with energy and excitement from the whole cast. We would like to once again thank all the parents for providing costumes, props and supporting with practising lines. Roll on next year's production - a real highlight of the St James' school calendar!





SERVE IN SCHOOL

We have been so blessed to have a number of committed volunteers serving in school this year. We would love to grow this team as we move forward. We have parents hearing children read, helping around the classroom or sharing their expertise in practical lessons. There are opportunities to join us on school trips and support collective worship. It doesn't have to be hours every week, it can just be a short time. If you would like to get involved, please drop the office an e-mail.



JOIN THE PFA

The PFA have served our school for so many years and have allowed some of the key improvements to be made. It is a great way to serve and you give a little or you can give a lot. There is a need to strengthen the committee team as we begin the new year and I encourage you to put your name forward to volunteer.

VOLUNTEER AT ST JAMES'

Our school community has thrived for many years because we have had a team of volunteers that help to enrich our school. It was such a privilege to show our gratitude to this team as part of our Thank You Service. We are so grateful for all you do and how you make our school a better place.

As we set our vision and direction for the next year, it will be even more important for us to once again raise an army of volunteers to 'fill the gap'. There are many ways to serve in school and we would love you to be even more involved over the next year.



VOLUNTEER DAY 2023

In the last year, we have made some significant improvements to our school. There is more that we want to do but simply not the resources to do it! Next year, we are planning on hosting two volunteer days. These Saturday's will hopefully see an army of volunteers from ours, and the wider community, descending on St James' to paint, tidy, sort and repair. We will need skilled volunteers to help with some jobs but everyone's contribution is welcome.



BECOME A GOVERNOR

Our governors serve a crucial role in the life of the school, ensuring we maintain high standards in every area. Serving as a governor is a privilege and we are grateful for how the governors have served us this year. There is always a need to recruit more governors and if this is something that interests you, please drop myself or Mr Beard an e-mail and we can talk about the role further.

GOVERNOR REPORT

As the 2022-23 academic year draws to a close I am left with that usual paradox of “where did the year go,” while realising that at the business end, periods of that time seemed to last forever! It has been an amazing year at St James’ because we have seen dramatic improvement across the school that is giving the children, community, staff and leaders the success they all truly deserve. Our job as governors is to drive academic and pastoral improvement, but the pace of change from such dynamic leadership has been so rapid, we have often felt a pace or two behind, which I suppose is a nice problem to have!

In both governance and work through first, middle and secondary schools, I really do gain insight into how challenging small schools are for leaders and staff and the notion that it is an easier ride is simply incorrect. Leaders really do need to develop a sound working knowledge of everything and cannot rely upon layers of management to delegate or insulate from tasks or responsibilities. Relationships are key to success, allowing staff to flourish and grow with the school so everybody owns and is invested in the process of improvement. As governors we give huge thanks for how Mr Lawford and his team have driven such change; it has indeed been exhausting for everyone, but always balanced by a genuine love and care for the welfare of everybody involved, which makes it a sustainable and forward-looking strategy that is in-step with the ethos of the school. While Mr Lawford has overall responsibility, having two further leaders has proved to be an inspired decision that has extended the breadth of expertise across all areas, increased resilience and created professional opportunities for talented staff.

Strong leadership has blown through the school like a fresh breeze, revisiting everything from our root vision and values, our curriculum, teaching standards and modernising our IT and administration processes. Everyone has had to work extraordinarily hard to achieve so much in a year and it has also highlighted the strong support we get from the central team of the academy trust, plus the benefits of our collaboration with the three schools within our “Priory Hub.”

Governors at St James’ are truly passionate about the school and are thrilled to see it thriving again. We are an active body of people who wear many hats to cover all roles and responsibilities. I think we all agree that the highlight is experiencing day to day life in school by speaking to children and witnessing their curiosity and joy in learning, made possible by imaginative and engaging teaching. In the new academic year our intention is to have a planned, schedule of monitoring to target our specific areas of responsibility, such as safeguarding, teaching and learning and disadvantaged pupils. We will feed findings back to leaders, which will create agreed actions that we will follow-up to close each cycle. Foundation Governors will be hosting pupil discussions to find out what themes the children wish to develop into collective worship and courageous advocacy. This will give children a direct influence on our further growth as a church school.

It really is time to reflect and celebrate what has been achieved in the last year, but you can be assured that we will always strive to get better and challenge ourselves, because a school should never stop evolving. The fundamental changes have already occurred, so now the process will be more about evolution and refinement. We are seeking a trust governor and parent governor and I would be delighted to have an informal chat with anyone who might be interested in being part of our journey by considering these important roles.

I would like to wish everybody a wonderful summer holiday and offer my thanks to our community for supporting us on so many levels in the last year.

Yours sincerely, Clifton Beard (ASEC Chair)

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

The internet is full of harmful content, which is why web filtering is such an important tool for any family. When running properly it helps to protect your children from the bad things on the internet, regardless of whether they’re trying to access that type of content on purpose or it happens by accident. While parental controls are generally lumped together as one, there are three main ways of providing them: via your Internet Service Provider (ISP), via a router or via software that you install. Each has its own benefits and downsides, and the best solution is often to use a combination of techniques to catch everything and prevent a child from bypassing your protection.



[Parent Guide to Internet Safety](#)



Daniel Lawford

Designated
Safeguarding Lead



Laura Roberts

Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead