



Headteacher's End of Year Report

Dear Parents and Carers,

As another year closes its curtain, it is my privilege to write our End of Year report and take some time, amongst the busyness of the last few weeks, to reflect on all that has been achieved this year. Over the course of the last thirty-nine weeks of teaching and learning, I am astonished by how much your children have achieved, the progress they have made and how every child, parent and staff member has played their part in making our community a richer place. Whilst exhaustion levels amongst children and staff are reaching their peak, it is clear that this year has been carried by an overwhelming sense of love. Love for each other, love for learning and love for trying something new. Jesus spoke this to his disciples and followers in the gospel of John...

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:12 - 13

I am so grateful for the love that I see demonstrated in abundance across our school - a love that considers the needs of others first. Whilst I have many highlights of the year, I will never forget how the whole community demonstrated this sacrificial love when we danced all day for Abby's Heroes. Not only did the children raise an incredible amount of money for a local charity, witnessed an unrivalled staff dance but also learnt that when we come together with our hearts and minds aligned, we can achieve anything.

Of course, one of our core objectives as a school is to ensure all children make progress in their learning and I am delighted to once again share some outstanding results. In Reception, the percentage of children reaching the Good Level of Development (GLD) rose to 86% compared to a predicted national average of 69%. In the Year 1 phonics screening check, 100% of our children passed which is once again a tremendous achievement and highlights the strength of teaching in reading. And in our Year 4 Multiplication check, 90% of children scored above the unofficial pass mark of 20/25. In fact, with an average score of 23.8 and 71% of children scoring full marks (38% do this nationally) we are in the top 4% of schools for MTC results.

The academic success is not only reserved for our students with several staff completing studies of their own. Congratulations to Miss Annels who has now completed her Early Career Training and finishes the final phase of her Teacher Training. Miss Bolton has successfully completed her Level 6 training which qualifies her as an Early Years Teacher and will be taking these skills onto pastures new next year. And Miss Shergold who has successfully completed her Level 3 Forest School training and has already been putting her skills to use, developing our new Forest School space and delivering trial sessions to all classes at the end of the year.

Much of our teaching and learning at St James' happens within the four walls of the classroom, but it is often those moments outside the classroom that live on in the children's memories – this year has been no exception. We have taken children to Launceston Farm, the Ancient Technology Centre, Poole Lighthouse and Hooke Court.



However, it was our Year 1 - 4 trip to the Science Museum in Winchester which was my personal highlight. It was our first time taking almost the whole school on an outing of this kind and the interactive and engaging exhibition hopefully sparked into life some budding scientists. We will certainly be planning another whole school outing next year.

Many of our children also had learning opportunities outside the classroom in Sport with the introduction of the Priory Cup, The Priory Hub is made up of four DSAT schools (Us, Wimborne St Giles, Trinity Verwood and Cranborne First) and the cup is a new series of sporting events designed to give our Year 3 and 4 children the opportunity to wear the school badge with pride and compete for their school. Although we have come a close second in each event (and some children might say we were robbed), we will come back stronger next year to take part in the expanded event list and take home the silver wear!

In other sporting events, we sent a small team to the Cross-Country tournament at Castle Court school and were blown away by Bethany's victory in the girl's event and we celebrated another incredible Sports Day in early June. We have also been welcoming Sports Leaders from St Michael's school to lead sessions in Years 1 – 4, which culminated in an athletics festival against many of our local first schools.

Our school calendar, as with many other schools, is shaped by some key events and religious festivals. This year, we have gathered as a community to celebrate Harvest and gave generously to the Wimborne Food Bank; travelled to Holtwood Methodist and Hinton Martell Churches with our Nursery and Reception classes for Christmas Nativities; hosted our Easter Service in school and joined remotely for our DSAT epiphany service. I want to thank the Open the Book team, The Lantern Church and of course Reverend Nick who have supported our Wednesday morning Collective Worship. The most poignant moment of our collective gatherings this year was our Remembrance service where, all the children, staff and parents took a poppy they created and 'planted' it in our Remembrance gardens. Next year, we hope to invite our local community to many of these events as a way of connecting with those who live in our local villages.

One event that always bring a smile to our faces is World Book Day. This year, children from across the Nursery and School dressed up as their favourite book characters with some amazing and original outfits not seen before. As part of our day, Bob Hartman came and shared some of his stories and we joined in the afternoon to celebrate our collective love of reading. His book, The Rhyming Bible was performed later in the year by the Saltmine Theatre Company which brought the story of the Bible to life. We are excited that we will be welcoming Saltmine back next year for another theatrical performance.

To further support our learning opportunities outside the classroom, our newly developed Forest School provision will start to become part of our school curriculum. The initial development will be in our Reception and Nursery classes but we anticipate all children having the opportunity to learn in our Forest Classroom at various moments throughout the year. I want to thank Mrs Shergold for her time and effort, outside of her working hours, to develop such a lovely space for the children to enjoy.

It's not every year we get to celebrate a big anniversary, but 1975 marked a significant milestone for our St James' community. It was a joy to welcome former students, parents and staff to the Peace Garden and give thanks for the last fifty years of education. There were so many memories shared, and stories told and was a reminder to me that we all play a part in demonstrating our school value of love in our time. I am the 6th headteacher to take charge, but I am grateful that I build upon the firm foundation and traditions laid by Jean Sparrowhawk, Ian Donnelly, Audrey Kimber, Jacqui Booth and Philippa Hill. I hope and pray that the next 50 years are as successful as the last.

As we take stock and look ahead into next year, the landscape of education remains incredibly challenging with further unfunded pay rises and rising costs forcing all schools into what the Government call efficiency savings. I continue to bid for charitable funding and have secured £1200 from Talbot Village Trust and £4500 from the Local Alliance group. We are looking forward to seeing how much we receive from the Tesco Strong Start initiative later this month and have a number of bids pending for next year. Of course, our PFA also continue to heavily invest in the life of the school by creating and supporting all our events and raising vital funds to ensure we can provide the best possible outcomes for our children (but more on this later). We also look forward to another year of Parent Share events which have been a tremendous success and have allowed us to welcome parents and carers into the school to celebrate their children's learning.



As we close the doors this afternoon and say goodbye, we will also be saying farewell to several staff who have served in our Nursery for many years. I want to thank them for their time and commitment for not only this year, but for the many years they have helped to serve and grow our Nursery. We are excited to be welcoming Miss Jay and Mrs Peckham as our new Nursery leads and look forward to a greater level of school integration as the new year begins. Miss Jay has been an incredible Early Years Teaching Assistant and will work both across the Nursery and School. Mrs Peckham will take post for the Autumn term and will continue as the Priory SENDCO.

Once again, we are also delighted to see the school continuing to grow, not just in the quality of provision, but numerically. Reception is full, with 25 new children joining and several other mid-year admissions. This means our school community will grow to 116 children which is a wonderful reflection of the school's continuing strength and appeal. We are now full in all classes with a waiting list for each.

We already have many exciting plans for next year, but for now, everyone needs time to rest. Finally, I want to thank you for your love and support that I have greatly benefitted from. Leading a school is a constant challenge and this year is no exception. Whilst we won't always get everything right, to know that our decisions are supported by a loving community makes this role so much more enjoyable – so thank you. A huge well done to my whole team who have given sacrificially to make this year a success. Finally, I wish you a relaxing summer break and look forward to welcoming you back in September.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Lawford





ALICE THE MUSICAL

At St James', we are committed to providing extra-curricular activities for all children that help support their personal development, challenging them to be brave, try something new and step out of their comfort zone. Our end of year show is one of our favourite moments of the year and our production of 'Alice the Musical' did not fail to disappoint. We were once again welcomed by The Layard Theatre and jumped down the rabbit hole.

"Burning with curiosity, Alice ran across the field and after the rabbit. She was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole duck under the hedge. Alice crept down after it, never once considering how in the world she would get out again. The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel and dipped suddenly down."

We cannot be prouder of every one of our children. They have worked tirelessly to learn their lines, practice their songs and rehearse their dances. Behind the scenes, Vanessa and Miss Roberts have led the show and we are grateful for the many, many hours they have invested to make the show a success. Thank you also to those who helped create all the props, scenery and costumes who brought Alice's wonderland to life.





Attending the St James' Alice in Wonderland production at Canford School was a true end-of-term delight. The joy radiating from the children's performances was both palpable and infectious. It was clear that every moment of rehearsal had been filled with excitement and dedication, culminating in a show that the children were proud to share.

What stood out most was the confidence with which they spoke, acted, sang, and danced—facing a packed theatre brimming with love and admiration. Their courage and creativity were a testament not only to their hard work, but also to the support and encouragement they receive from their teachers and families.

I would like to extend my thanks to the children, staff, and parents of St James for inviting me to be part of your community's summer extravaganza. It was a joyful celebration of all that makes your school so special.

In every smile, every line delivered, and every note sung, the values of love, hope, and joy shone brightly. What a beautiful way to end the term.

Holly Doswell

DSAT Regional Director of Education





YEAR 4 LEAVERS

We are incredibly proud of our Year 4 children as their time at St James' comes to an end. What a credit they are to the school and we are so proud of their amazing achievements. A few weeks back, Year 4 were invited to Salisbury Cathedral to attend the DSAT Leavers' Service. The service was enjoyed by all and provided an opportunity for thoughtful reflections before a picnic on the green in the sunshine. In addition to this, our in-school Leavers' Service allowed the children to reflect on their wonderful journey and cherished memories over the last five years. We hope Year 4 will always look back fondly on their time at St James' and we wish them every success as they move onto their Middle School. Year 4 - remember to embrace all new opportunities and 'believe and achieve!'

Miss Roberts





SPORTS DAY SPECIAL

Sports Day is always a highlight of any school year and we had a wonderful time celebrating and competing at our annual Sports Day. Children were in mixed age teams and competed for their house colour throughout the day. The morning field events were a blend of throwing, jumping and multi-skills activities with all children earning points for their team.

In the afternoon, parents and carers joined us on the school field for our track events. We packed in almost 50 races, from the egg and spoon to mixed team relays. The children competed wonderfully throughout the day, demonstrating our value of hope for all as they cheered on their friends to achieve their best.

A huge thank you to those parents and governors who offered their time and support to set up, run the event and pack down after. We could not have done it without you.





*"I loved the mixed team run as we all worked together as a team."
"I am happy that my team won, and I enjoyed the mixed team run."
"I am proud that I took part in the middle-distance race."*



*"I really liked the relay because it was super fun to race with my friends."
"I did 600m running in total and it was very fun."*



*"I didn't mind that my team didn't win as I loved taking part and the opportunities we were given."
"I loved being Blue team leader with Eva."*



PFA ROUNDUP

Wow, what a year!! After a bumpy start, we've had a year of transition - we have been fortunate to recruit some very talented ladies this year and are still doing so both ladies and gentlemen for the year ahead on both committee and dedicated volunteers. Our PFA is nothing without our volunteers. With the help of my team we have managed to get 'all of our ducks in a row' with regard to our governance and paperwork – removing old trustees and committee members that historically have served and created a standard set of event paperwork to ensure smooth and safe running of the core events and all those in between.

Since last AGM in September, we have crammed this academic year with tons of events, fundraising and projects to make our little ones time at St James' as memorable as it possibly can be without disrupting their learning.

This academic year kicked off with a new event in the PFA Calendar, a refreshing idea of some good old-fashioned fun; our Autumn Festival in October - complete with apple pressing, pumpkin carving competition, Autumn crafts, welly wanging and apple bobbing - great fun at the end of term for all the family in what was beautiful autumn sunshine.

Movie Night in November. Well after a few soggy moments in the kitchen (less said about that the better), it was a great success and all the children were so well behaved, stuffing their faces with pizza, chips and popcorn.

The Annual Christmas Fair followed in December, we hope we managed to balance craft, games, external stalls, tombolas and the famous St James' raffle and Santa's grotto with letter replies and photos from the big man himself for the first time, all kindly sponsored by Ferndown Commercials.

From the shed, we've been delighted to offer hot chocolate bars throughout the chilly season and themed them accordingly for Autumn, Christmas, Valentines, Football Festival and our final spring event before we welcomed the balmy temperatures of summer and restarted the traditional Frozen Friday's - a lot of effort goes into the home-made baked treats for all to enjoy and we love creating a bit of cheer at the end of term. I've lost count of how many cupcakes I've baked this year but its hundreds!

Valentines Day also gave us the opportunity to 'Show some LOVE' to our community when we collected a boot full of food donations for the Wimborne Food Bank who gratefully received them the same day.

Another new event this year which was a tad impromptu and found me making nearly 200 pancakes to order was the Shrove Tuesday event, complete with pancake races. I don't know about you but we loved it!

The Annual PFA School Disco saw us return to Horton & Chalbury Hall with the most tickets sold for a disco in February, in the very capable hands of DJ Liam from Outer Limits Disco, we served up 'proper' sausage hot dogs and classic choc ices, the foam machine showered the kids in snow like flakes, all the kids got glitter tattoos or neon face paints expertly applied by our resident tattoo artists Maria and her able assistant Zoe.



Following requests at last years' AGM for some more adult social opportunities we arranged a professional yoga instructor to provide some gorgeous Monday morning classes in a local village hall followed by a light breakfast for those that attended, we advertised some other events but the take up simply wasn't enough to put them on – we listened and we did try.

The Barn Dance, a new event, what fun we had! Held at The Horton & Chalbury Village Hall, music and dances expertly called by Murphy's Lore Ceilidh Band, a fully licensed bar serving local Cranborne Chase Cider and the kitchen churned out meat and veg chilli, local businesses donated generously to the event raffle.

Each term every classroom including nursery have a budget they can spend through their Wishlist with the PFA - this is a way for the teaching staff to access the funds raised to buy resources for their classrooms the school budget just will not cover, for example last year we purchased a class set of iPads, paint drying racks etc. So far this year we have purchased more iPads for use in the classrooms, external blackboards, tough trays, musical instruments, classroom cooking utensils, educational weighing/balance scales, magnetic beads, 7 wonders of the world models, tabletop easels, wooden animals, books, modelling sand amongst many other things.

At the beginning of March the school celebrated World Book Day, having been donated lots of new and preloved books we decided to hold an impromptu PFA Book Sale which was a roaring success with 70 books sold, a tradition we will be continuing.

This year has had its trials, we planned an Easter Event and had to cancel due to unforeseen family circumstances and our Summer Social following the Sports Day was rained off of its original date – which came with its own trials but when it eventually arrived it was great fun with two adventure bouncy castles, traditional games, a new rainbow raffle concept and an expertly cooked BBQ; successful fundraising and happy children.

Hopefully this year we have started some new traditions like, hot chocolates to replace frozen Fridays in the Winter, PFA Christmas decorations made in Foxes that leave with the children in year 4, pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, providing the bar for the school production and many more. I believe the sense of community this year has grown – we've supported and are supporting families in their time of need and distress from supplying uniform to those who are struggling to arranging meal trains and gift hampers to brighten someone's day just a little. We hope we have demonstrated we too support the schools core values of Love, hope and truth!

During this year someone commented that the PFA has felt like a vehicle for them to gain confidence and grow in a safe space, allowing them to learn skills they can use in their private and business life from other members – for that I am proud.

We started the year with an aim to start fundraising for a 5th classroom and we have made a good start to our fundraising target, one which I hope next years' committee will continue to add to focusing on more passive income streams and sponsorships from local businesses and partnerships. I have also been encouraged by staff returning to support the PFA activities towards the end of this year where before they had been apprehensive. Our own Governors have recognised our successes and are keen to forge better relationships with us so we can work together to support our school.

For our official fundraising figures please look out for our official AGM Minutes from 21st July, these will also be posted on our Facebook and the school website page – but trust me, it's impressive.

All that remains for me to say is a massive thank you to all that have donated, supported and volunteered this academic year as it's simply just not possible without any of you - you have made chairing our lovely little PFA a dream! I must of course say a special thank you to my committee to Alice, Laura, Kathryn, Jade and Katie for their tireless support so far this year.

I wish next years' committee the best of luck!

Many thanks

Lia x

