



Dear Parents and Carers,

Over the last half-term, we have explored our core value of hope and how this can drive us to be aspirational in our learning and always seeking to do our best. We have also thought about how hope should affect the way we treat those around us, both in our local community and the surrounding areas and the world we live in. How we should always have hope and be driven to action because of it. A huge thank you to all of you this term who have given your time and support not only to our school but also the charity and community work we have been involved in.

The Christmas story is one of hope. Whilst I know my children will be *hoping* they get everything on their Christmas list, the familiar nativity is not just about a baby born in Bethlehem but about the message he brought to the world. And I'm sure you'll agree with me that things can sometimes feel dark, whether it has been extreme political divisions dominating our news, the uncertainty of the war in Ukraine or the economic climate and the cost-of-living crisis. Jesus said these words to those following him.

"I am the light of the world, whoever follows
me will not walk in darkness"

Whatever you believe, Christmas can be a message of hope to all of us. It's a time where we all come together and coalesce round a single moment of hope and we should use this to love and serve our community, to be the light of the world.

There have been so many highlights this term but our PFA Christmas Fair and our Christmas Nativity at Holtwood demonstrate the strength we have in community together. Our children fill me with hope! Hope that they can achieve their best but also hope that they will be the inspirational world changers we need them to be.

Have a restful Christmas and New Year.

Mr Lawford



Diocese of Salisbury
Academy Trust



St. James'
CE First School

KEY DIARY DATES

- 05/01** INSET Training Day
- 06/01** First Day of Spring One
- 07/01** Interim Reports Sent Home
- 09/01** Owls Class Begin Samba Lesson
- 12/01** All Clubs Start
- 13/01** SCARF PSHCE Workshops
- 22/01** Year 3 and 4 Priory Netball Tournament
- 23/01** PFA School Disco
- 02/02** Year 1 Phonics Mocks
- 03/02** Parents Evening
- 06/02** St James' Day of Dance with Dorset Creative Dance
- 11/02** Parents Evening
- 12/02** Year 3 and 4 TAG Rugby Festival at Slades Farm
- 12/02** Squirrels Parent Share
- 13/02** PFA Valentines and Shrove Tuesday Event
- 13/02** Last Day of Spring One



LAURA ROBERTS

Owls Teacher and Deputy Headteacher



Well done to Owls for a great half-term of learning. This half-term we have read 'The Boy at the Back of the Class' by Onjali Q. Raúf. This book highlights the importance of friendship, kindness and perseverance. I have been impressed with the compassion Owls have shown developing their understanding of refugees. 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.

During our English lessons, the children have written their own Mrs Pepperpot inspired narratives. They included the key features of our writing toolkit including expanded noun phrases, fronted adverbials and conjunctions. They also produced some brilliant non-chronological reports about sloths where they organised their writing using sub-heading and paragraphs.

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. Well done to those children who have achieved their 'Gone Green' certificate in our celebration worship.

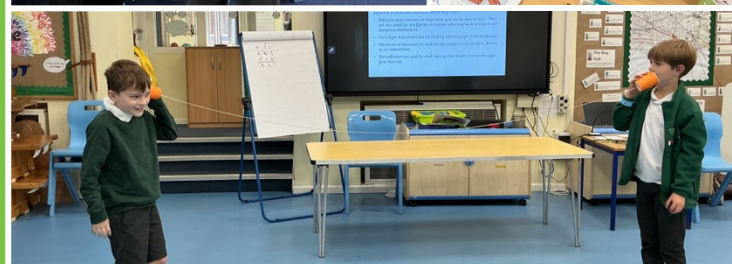
In Science, the children have conducted many investigations and have developed their confidence setting up fair tests, making careful observations, taking accurate measurements and drawing conclusions. Year 3 children have developed their understanding of light and in Year 4 the children have completed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

Across the wider curriculum, Owls demonstrated fantastic teamwork when making their own model volcanoes as part of our geography learning. In addition to this, Owls have enjoyed developing their hockey skills and have learnt how to develop decision making in attack and developed their understanding of the role of a defender. In art, the children have enjoyed creating their own still-life collages in the style of Paul Cézanne. This half-term has also seen Owls complete two parent share events where the children shared their design technology learning and their musical talents sharing a number of Christmas songs.

Wishing the whole St James' community a lovely Christmas and best wishes for 2026.



OWLS CLASS NEWS





SQUIRRELS CLASS NEWS



HOLLY ANNELS

Squirrels Class Teacher



As we approach the festive season, I just wanted to thank all of Squirrels Class for a wonderful Autumn term. It has been an extremely busy half term with new topics, sports competitions and trips to church! Here's an insight into the adventures of Squirrels Class!

In class we have read Rabbit and Bear; A Bite in the Night, Georges Marvellous Medicine and are currently reading The Nothing to See Here Hotel. We have thoroughly enjoyed reading all our books, Squirrels class have shown a real love of reading, however Rabbit and Bear has had the children in fits of giggles and we are looking forward to reading the next book in the series in love to read after Christmas.

In English, the children have written their own stories all about Claude. Their creativity and imagination never fails to surprise me and they have used the most wonderful vocabulary to describe Claude and his friends trip to the ice rink! In Art we have been looking at Stone Age art and creating our own cave drawings. The children have absolutely loved this. During PE, it's been lovely to see them all participating and joining in with handball and hockey, the children have become rather competitive! Again, it's great to see the children supporting one another and working as a team. Everyone has been busy in maths with year 2 looking at 2D and 3D shapes and year 3 completing increasingly difficult multiplication and division questions. 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. Our new subjects will be DT, Computing and Geography. I would like to thank you all for your support this half term, it's been a busy term and now it's time to celebrate and spend time with our families.

I wish you all very happy holidays!

TRACY HOBBS

Hedgehogs Class Teacher



It doesn't seem possible that it has been a whole term since I first welcomed Hedgehog children through the door for their first day of the new term. They have all worked incredibly hard settling wonderfully to the new challenges of year 1 or year 2.

It was a pleasure to share with you their fantastic learning in history at our parent share last week - their knowledge and understanding is truly amazing! They have reflected on the work of Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale recognising the contribution they made both during the Crimean war and to developments in nursing and society.

Children loved exploring colour mixing in our colour works art topic. They enjoyed learning about the abstract art work of Sonia Delaunay and had great fun drawing and painting their own Sonia Delaunay inspired artwork. Hedgehogs also produced art work on the iPads in our computing lessons, learning how to use paint app tools to make wonderful creations.

In English all of the children have made excellent progress with not only their phonics and sight reading but also in reading comprehension. They have discussed at length the Bog Baby by Jeanne Willis, making predictions about the text and considering why things happened. In writing they recounted their experience of the Remembrance Service and described a winter scene from the story The Storm Whale in Winter by Benji Davis

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. I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for their continued support and encouragement. We look forward to many more enriching experiences next term, when we will take off with the flight of the birds and explore the countries of the United Kingdom.



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, the children did such a fantastic job. We are so proud of each and every one of them.

Our theme this half term 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 also grouped animals according to their characteristics. We have loved learning the story of Owl Babies and retelling this in our play. We have also enjoyed our new reading sessions, where we have a big focus on comprehension and enjoy quality texts. As part of our learning about night and day we have talked a lot about Space. We know the names of some planets, some famous astronauts (Mae Jemison and Tim Peake in particular) and we also know that the shapes the stars make in the sky are called constellations. We were also fascinated to learn about Galileo and how he adapted the telescope to understand more about space and the planets. 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! We have been very lucky to have had Forest School every week with Mrs Shergold. The children have loved using natural materials outside to enhance their learning in class.

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

As we reach the end of our first full term in Nursery it's a lovely opportunity to look at all the amazing learning we've done so far. Our theme this half term has been Let's Go On A Hunt, linking to all things Autumn! We've hunted for woodland animals, used binoculars to spot footprints, learnt all about hibernation and animal homes, and created some beautiful artwork with natural resources inspired by the artist Andy Goldsworthy. We've really enjoyed acting out The Gruffalo with puppets and in our Small World area, it's fantastic to hear so much expression in the children's voices as they retell the story!

We've learnt all about bonfire night and used our bodies to make some big firework shapes in Healthy Movers, but the favourite activity was definitely making edible sparklers with breadsticks, chocolate and sprinkles! As the weather has turned colder we've loved exploring the ice in our water tray, and of course experimenting with the best ways to break and smash it. The mud kitchen has provided lots of inspiration this term, making Reindeer Soup, Christmas cakes and hot chocolates.

Our half term has also been busy with events. In November our Nursery children joined the school for the Remembrance Service, planting beautiful poppies and standing so respectfully for the two minute silence. We welcomed parents and carers in for our first session with Truth Be Told, it was great to have our families come together to share this and we're looking forward to the next session. The big highlight was joining Foxes for their Nativity. The Nursery children sang and danced beautifully, they really enjoyed their chance to shine and made us all so proud.

Next term our topic will be Traditional Stories, our focus books will be The Three Little Pigs and Jack and The Beanstalk so we'll be learning all about homes and castles and there will be lots of building (and knocking down!) involved.

Wishing all our families a really lovely Christmas and restful time off, we look forward to welcoming you all back in 2026.

We wish you all a peaceful and joyful Christmas break. See you in the new year!

Warm wishes,

The St James' Nursery Team





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 'The Little Fir Tree' was a huge success with brave solos, wonderful collective singing and memorable moments. Holtwood Methodist is a beautiful venue and we hope that you enjoyed the performance. A special thank you to the parishioners of Holtwood Methodist who made us feel so welcome and to all the parents, carers and wider family who came out to support us.

Mrs Walker



CHOIR PERFORM AT OLIVER BRANCH

A huge well done to the St James' Choir who performed for the Mayor of Wimborne Minster Town Council at his charity brunch at The Olive Branch. They did an amazing job starting what was a packed line of school and community choirs and musical performances.



CHILDREN IN NEED BAKE SALE

Each year, the children of St James' come together to celebrate and support the BBC Children in Need initiative. Children were wearing dots and stripes for the day but then gave generously to support the School Council's Bake Sale. In blustery (and very wet) conditions, the school council took some huge cake sales and raised over £300. A big thank you to everyone who baked cakes and to the PFA who supported the bake sale.

OWLS CLASS SING IN THE COMMUNITY

We are super proud of Owls class for singing out in the community this morning. We started our tour at Stewarts Garden Centres in Broomhill where we were joined by parents and visitors off for some Christmas shopping. Our second stop was at Verwood House Care Home where the children sang a collection of 8 songs for the residents as well as giving them Christmas cards they had made. It brought us all joy to see the residents singing along to their favourite Christmas tunes and no doubt kindling some wonderful memories.



PFA AUTUMN TERM ROUND UP

What a start we have made to our 2025/2026 year's fundraising, we really enjoyed our very successful 'Back to School BBQ' which was a first for us and it was lovely to welcome some of our new faces to St James' despite the dodgy weather – it really was a 'terribly British BBQ!' we swiftly followed with the Autumn Festival which we all love – it had everything from sweet treats, tractors, crafts, apple bobbing and pressing and of course the welly wanging. The Pumpkin Carving Competition was very well participated this year with a record number of entries (think perhaps the adults enjoy this one as much as the kids) but we had great fun organising your entries and displaying them at the Festival.

The Garfield Movie Night – how many pizzas did we cook!? The children were so well behaved throughout and looked very cute in their best PJs, onesies and slippers, all snuggled up with their chums in the school hall enjoying their popcorn.

The beginning of the festive season saw the return of the Christmas Fair, we made a whopping £2,600 profit this year and we are so very proud of how it all came together, the school looked magical didn't it – with new games such as the Candy Cane Pull, the Money Tree and the return of the very popular Christmas in a Box Hamper. A huge thanks for Ferndown Commercials for their generous sponsorship, my Committee and a special mention to the North Pole wrapping Elves, Cranborne Chase Cider Mannington Heath Christmas Tree Farm and Kat Valenti of The Greenman for going over and above for this event, you gave up so much time and effort to help make this event the success it was.

For those that have signed up to our [Easyfundraising](#) scheme, we have now received a couple of hundred pounds in passive income which is totally free to you, the retailers just donate cash to us when you shop online with them, it doesn't cost you anything extra just a little bit of time to set up – so please consider signing up over Christmas in time for your January sale shopping! Details on Facebook or your class WhatsApp groups.

Thank you as ever for supporting our events, for volunteering to help, donating prizes and buying tickets without you the PFA would not exist, and we are so pleased to be able to support the school fundraising for Wish List items for members of staff but also to raise money for our 5th classroom.

All that remains for me to say is a Very Merry Christmas to my Team and to you all and we hope we've added some cheer to the year so far at St James', we look forward to bringing you more 'organised chaos' in 2026!

Follow our [Facebook](#) page for updates.

Best wishes,

Lia x



PARENT SHARE EVENTS

Our parent share events continued this year. Hedgehogs have showcased their Design and Technology work as part of their Smoothie Café as well as their incredible artwork based on the work of Sonia Delaunay. Squirrels class focused on their learning from Stone Age Britain following their trip to Hooke Court. In November, Owls shared their pavilion structures they had made as part of Design and Technology and more recently sang several songs they had been learning as part of music. Our parent share for the Autumn term culminated with the Nativity at Holtwood Methodist.



UPCOMING PARENT SHARE EVENTS



12th February (14.30 – 15.00) Squirrels Sewing Showcase



26th March (14.30 – 15.00) Foxes Musical Extravaganza



24th March (14.30 – 15.00) Hedgehogs Goldilocks Storytime



PRIORY SPORTS FESTIVAL

It was a huge privilege to welcome Trinity, Wimborne St Giles and Cranborne First to compete in the first Priory Cup Competition of the calendar year. Year 3 and 4 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 our footballers who took part and to the team from Trinity CE First School who are this terms 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 11th 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 previous 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



FESTIVE TIPS FOR A SCREEN FREE CHRISTMAS

This Christmas, why not unplug and rediscover the simple joys of spending time together? Here are some festive, scree-free ideas to help families laugh, create, and connect in the old-fashioned way.



[Download the Parent Guide](#)

MERRY
CHRISTMAS