



LOVE | HOPE | TRUTH

HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Dear Parents and Carers,

As I prepared this newsletter and reflected on what I wanted to share at the half-way stage of the year, I found myself re-reading newsletters from my first year as headteacher. In the early days, I could talk about large sweeping changes and improvements we were making to ensure St James' continued to grow into the wonderful school it is now. Many of these changes are now embedded and are just part of our DNA, so I found myself still pondering. I was reminded of the philosophy of aggregated marginal gains made famous by Sir David Brailsford. His core success was in cycling. He wrote this, "If you broke down everything you could think of that goes into riding a bike, and then improve it by 1 percent, you will get a significant increase when you put them all together."

I think the same can be said of the small incremental improvements we continue to make across the school. Whether it is greater accuracy and deployment of foundational number and writing skills or continual curriculum revision, we are in the process of finding the one percent's in the knowledge that when we bring them together, we will see the fruits of our labour.

All that said, one area that continues to make more than the one percent improvements is the work the team are doing to establish Forest School across the school. It was such a joy to take a new parent on a tour and find the shelter set up and the campfire on ready to receive our reception children for the afternoon. Forest School is becoming an integral part of both our Nursery and Reception curriculums and gives a space for children to explore and be creative outside of their traditional settings.

As we move into the second half of the year, with the days beginning to lengthen and the rain hopefully receding – we do have a lot to look forward to. Whether its World Book Day, Art Days, Sports Tournaments or School Trips, next term promises to be one of the busiest.

Have a fantastic half-term and I look forward to welcoming you back next term.

Yours faithfully

Mr Lawford



St. James'
CE First School



Diocese of Salisbury
Academy Trust

KEY DIARY DATES

- 23/02 INSET
- 24/02 First Day of Spring Two
- 28/02 Breakfast Church
- 03/03 Saltmine Theatre Company Visit
- 05/03 World Book Day and Author Visit
- 16/03 Owls Art Day with Maria Vinney
- 17/03 Foxes Farm Visit
- 17/03 Truth be Told at the Nursery
- 17/03 Show Auditions
- 19/03 Year 3 and 4 Easter Experience at Wimborne Minster
- 20/03 Hedgehogs Art Day with Maria Vinney
- 23/03 DSAT Online Easter Service
- 23/03 Owls Samba Parent Share
- 24/03 Easter Service
- 24/03 Year 3 and 4 Priory Cup Netball Tournament
- 24/03 Hedgehogs Parent Share
- 24/03 Y1 Parent Phonics Information Evening
- 26/03 Foxes Parent Share
- 27/03 PFA Easter Celebration

LAURA ROBERTS

**Owls Teacher and
Deputy Headteacher**



Well done to Owls for another brilliant half-term.

This half-term, we have enjoyed reading 'The BFG' by Roald Dahl and exploring how the relationship between Sophie and the BFG evolves throughout the book. During our English lessons, we have written our own explanation texts about volcanoes and we have also developed our understanding of punctuating speech. The children have shown great accuracy writing their own dialogue between Sophie and the BFG.

During our maths lessons, Year 4 have been focusing on developing their knowledge of length and perimeter. Both Year 3 and Year 4 have also looked at developing their written methods for multiplication and division. We have continued to use our 'Number Sense' fluency sessions to help with our rapid recall of times table facts.

Our geography learning this half-term has focused on developing our understanding of biomes. We have explored the varied biomes across both North and South America. The children particularly enjoyed learning about the Amazon Rainforest and exploring how sadly this biome is under threat.

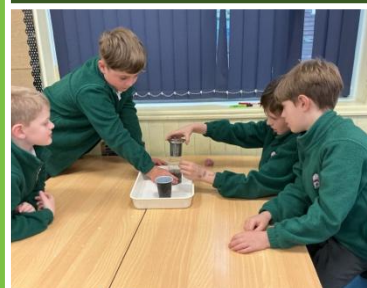
The children have impressed us with their design technology learning linked to cooking and nutrition. Owls have developed their understanding of seasonal foods and the advantages and disadvantages of importing food. They carefully considered the design request and their design brief when creating their own seasonal tarts.

As part of the Dorset Musicianship Programme, Owls have completed their first six samba lessons with Pete and are looking forward to continuing to develop their skills next half-term. I am looking forward to their final performance on Monday 23rd March. In addition to this, Owls have shown brilliant teamwork during our PE lessons whereby they have created their own carnival dances using formations, canon and unison.

I can't wait to see what Owls can achieve next term, we have so many exciting opportunities planned! Wishing the whole school community, a lovely half-term.



OWLS CLASS NEWS





SQUIRRELS CLASS NEWS



HOLLY ANNELS

Squirrels Class Teacher



This half term has been super busy and exciting in squirrels' class. We have had several outside visitors in, created our own experiments in science and learnt how to play netball.

We have read a really exciting whole class text; Charlie changes into a chicken (the first in a series that the class are keen to continue with). The story has had the children in fits of giggles and have inspired their creativity and imagination. We have discussed the possibilities of actually turning into strange animals and the children have not wanted to put the book down! During our English lessons we have been looking at George's Marvellous Medicine. We have all written a diary entry based on George creating his medicine and year 3 have moved on to learning how to punctuate direct speech correctly to build a conversation between two characters, while year 2 have been looking at describing George. The children have amazed me with their determination and willingness to give new things a go.

In maths, Year 2's have explored money and multiplication and Year 3's have learnt multiplication and division. As all Squirrels' have recently started multiplication, they have shown great resilience and determination to work independently and express their reasoning, using mathematical talk. The children have shown great passion in their DT lessons, creating hand sewn pouches that they have designed themselves. This has challenged their composition, design and sewing skills. However, they have all focussed and worked really hard to create their beautiful pouches which they should be really proud of. In PE, the children have shown great teamwork skills by collaborating and encouraging one another to 'give it a go'. They have learnt gymnastics and have started to put together short sequences of moves using their rolls, jumps and balances. Finally, in History we have learnt all about Ancient Egypt and what our lives would have been like if we had lived back then! The children have worked really hard to understand the time frame of Ancient Egypt and what was happening in England at the same time. We started the year with our PSHE SCARF session, which was all about our feelings and being kind, the children were really engaged and enjoyed our visit from Harold the giraffe. We are looking forward to ending the half term with an exciting visit from the Mayor of Wimborne and are keen to find out what a day in his life is like. We are so excited about all the exciting things coming up next half term from more sporting competitions to learning all about the Easter story. Wishing you an enjoyable and relaxing half term break.

TRACY HOBBS

Hedgehogs Class Teacher



This half term has literally flown by in a whirl of watching, identifying, drawing and creating birds! We have had a fantastic time making bird feeders out of huge pine cones to encourage birds into the area outside our window. We have loved spotting the different species and recording them for the RSPB Big Bird Watch! We also drew lots of the birds in our art sketch books along with lots of different bird feathers. We turned our sketches into 3D sculptures using foamboard, pipe cleaners and paper to create model birds. The children skilfully cut, folded and curled paper to make beautiful wings and tails.

In our English lessons we have been working hard improving our handwriting and using our phonics knowledge to spell words. We all enjoyed the story of The Tiger Who Came to Tea and the children wrote their own versions of the story with their own animal character! In our non-fiction work we asked questions and researched tigers and wrote amazing non-chronological reports.

Our geography lessons this half term focused on the countries of the United Kingdom. We have been looking at the different physical and human features of geography across the countries. The children have been able to use a super range of vocabulary to describe the landscape.

Despite the terrible weather Mrs Shergold was able to do some forest school work with us. She supported us in our science learning by teaching us about evergreen plants as the children created their own evergreen gardens. We also now have a beautiful display in the classroom of the leaf and flower pressing the children created in another of their forest school sessions.

We were lucky to have some wonderful visitors this half term. Katie and Harold the giraffe came into class to talk to us about how our bodies work and our feelings and emotions. We all enjoyed dancing with Harold at his special party. Dancing was also the theme of our work with our second visitors from Creative Dance. This time we went on a space adventure, dancing in our rocket, visiting hot and cold planets.

All of the children in Hedgehog class have once again worked incredibly hard this half term and have definitely earned a well-deserved week off! I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for their continued support and encouragement. Next half term we will be going into the woods with fairy tale characters and across the seas exploring the discoveries of Christopher Columbus. I look forward to seeing you all again at the Hedgehogs parent share on the 24th March at 2:30 in the school hall.



HEDGEHOGS NEWS





FOXES CLASS NEWS



AMANDA WALKER

Foxes Class Teacher



We can't believe we are at the end of this half-term already – it has flown by!

The children have grown in confidence and have all made such lovely progress since the start of term.

Our theme this half-term titled 'A Long Time Ago' has had a strong focus on events and objects from the past – we have looked at dinosaurs, fossils, artefacts including telephones, communication tools and how we listened to music over the years. We loved seeing how a record player worked and dancing to the record of 'The Jungle Book' in class. Our key text has been 'Lost and Found' and the children have loved using our outside area to perform this story using props and fantastic story language to support a story telling focus. In the story of 'Lost and Found' the characters travel to Antarctica, so as a class we have found out where this continent is, in relation to where we live and have discussed what we would see there. As part of our Natural World learning we have discussed the effects Global Warming is having on the world as a whole; in particular the polar regions and the ice melting. We have also looked at the Arctic polar region and the animals and people/cultures we may find there. We have loved making igloos using construction blocks and weaving techniques in Forest School and have an understanding why these are used by many of the Inuit people. The children have loved learning the names of the 5 oceans using the Ocean song to help. They are very quick with their recall of these.

Next half-term our theme is 'All Creatures Great and Small' and we will cover learning about lifecycles including frogs and chickens. We will be looking at farming in the past and compare it to farming now and finding out where our food comes from. We are very much looking forward to our farm visit to Launceston Farm, this will really help embed our classroom learning.

Thank you for all your support this half term. We hope you all have a super break and look forward to seeing you back in Spring 2.



NEWS FROM THE NURSERY

What a soggy half term we've had, however our Nursery children have fully embraced the puddles and mud in all their waterproofs and wellies! We welcomed Mrs Lawrence as Nursery Lead alongside Miss Jay and the children very quickly formed a lovely relationship with her. We introduced a weekly Forest School session this half term and the children have shown so much imagination, creativity and love for the natural world around them, we're so excited to continue this next half term.

Our topic has been Traditional Stories and we've focussed on Jack and The Beanstalk and The Three Little Pigs. We've explored these stories through building houses with various resources, collaging pig faces, making tall beanstalks, cutting and sticking leaves, planting beans in soil and making dinner for the Three Little Pigs. We've really enjoyed re-enacting these stories in the playground and hall using the apparatus and props. The children in particular have been so engaged talking about castles, their knowledge and language is fantastic!

We've explored the season of Winter, smashing ice, frosty walks on the field to find the sparkly leaves and crunching in the grass. In Maths our topics have been focussing on counting to three using actions and exploring position and space – lots of opportunities for learning maths through movement!

We've had some brilliant events this half term. We enjoyed a visit from Katie who ran a SCARF workshop, teaching us all about our bodies and how to keep them healthy. Nursery children were invited to take part in a Day of Dance which was so much fun and the children were so engaged. We also had our second visit from Truth Be Told, where we welcomed families in to share an interactive Christian story. We were then lucky enough to go to a 'Chinese Restaurant' in the hall with Foxes class for Lunar New Year, Mrs Ryan taught us all how to make spring rolls and we tried some delicious food before performing a dragon dance with masks and scarves!

Next half term our topics will be Animals Big and Small and our focus books will be Farmyard Hullabaloo and Dear Zoo.



PARENT SHARE EVENTS

We only had one parent share event this half-term with most of this term's events happening after the half-term break but here is the news from Squirrels class.

Squirrels class were excited to welcome adults to their Parent Share this afternoon. Our DT learning this half term started with an exciting visit from a year 4 parent who we were incredibly grateful for sharing her knowledge and even clothes and items she had made herself. Squirrels class led the afternoon, all standing up and reading short sections to describe our learning journey. Parents joined in with finishing off the sewing on the children's final product and were impressed by the wonderful sewing skills. They were proud to present all they had done and celebrate their success - well done Squirrels class.



UPCOMING PARENT SHARE EVENTS



17th March (14.00 – 15.00) Truth be Told at the Nursery



23rd March (14.00 – 15.00) Owls Samba Performance



24th March (14.30 – 15.00) Hedgehogs Story Telling



26th March (14.30 – 15.00) Foxes Musical Extravaganza



DAY OF DANCE

We had a wonderful day with Dorset Creative Dance who came to run dance classes for the whole of St James' from our youngest to our oldest. The adventures varied from class to class but they all had a fantastic time! We are looking forward to welcoming Dorset Creative Dance back in Spring 2 to run an after-school club every Tuesday.



Y4 WESSEX WATER VISIT

Year 4 enjoyed their visit from Mr Stevens who works for Wessex Water. During the afternoon, they explored on average how much water we use each day and discussed water efficiency. Working in small groups, they were challenged to see which group could turn the dirty water into clean water through creating their own filters. Lots of great teamwork was shown and the children listened brilliantly.





YEAR 3 & 4 TAG FESTIVAL

Year 3 and 4 proudly represented our school at the Ellis Edwards Foundation and Rippa Rugby Festival at Chapel Gate. They joined schools from across all of BCP, competing alongside 360 other children in this wonderful event. Both our teams completed a training session then took part in five competitive games throughout the day. It was wonderful to watch them grow in confidence and learn the skills needed to work as a team.

SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWS

On Wednesday, we welcomed Mr Shergold from The 2 Minute Foundation to come lead a session with our School Council. The charity envisions a litter-free world where nature thrives and we want to join them on the mission. Mr Shergold came and trialed a 'litter-picking station' he's created. It's constructed of predominantly upcycled materials and the children were excited to try and guess where he'd sourced them from! It was a fantastic opportunity to trial his creation, and it was a unanimous hit!

This year's School Council members have let me know that they are particularly keen on having an eco-focus. It's great to see them taking the lead with their passions and a very worthy one that all staff are happy to support. Alongside gardening club, they've already completed an audit to gauge how well we're doing as a school at present and to help us set up an action plan for the whole school to participate in. We are hoping to apply for our green flag eco schools award in the summer.



CELEBRATING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR

A huge thank you to Mrs Ryan who taught Nursery, Foxes and Hedgehogs how to make spring rolls for Chinese New Year. Our two youngest year groups gathered in the hall to try rice, noodles and prawn crackers. The afternoon of celebration ended with a performance of a dragon dance with scarves and masks.

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



USING AND REVIEWING PARENTAL CONTROLS

Phones and computers are, and to some degree, will always be an essential part of our children's lives growing up. However, unfiltered and unmonitored access to the internet is one of the greatest risks our children face. While not foolproof, parental controls can help with this, filtering out inappropriate content, limiting the ability to spend real money, capping screen time and generally making devices safer for young people.

So, this Easter break, why not take 10 minutes to read this super helpful [parent guide](#) and double check your parental control setting.

PFA NEWS

The PFA continued their tremendous fundraising efforts and events this term included a whole school disco, a valentine's day hot chocolate and food bank donation and a pancake party. Their work continues to support not only the ongoing work on the school but also saving towards future capital investments that fall outside the scope of the school's normal budget.

For more information about upcoming PFA events, why not check out their Facebook page.

