

LAURA ROBERTS

Owls Teacher and
Deputy Headteacher



What a busy half-term it has been with different events, visitors and a trip!

This half term, we have enjoyed reading 'Lost on Gibbon Island' by Jess Butterworth. We have enjoyed reading about Lark's adventure in Cambodia. It was also wonderful to see the children's costumes on World Book Day and spending the day enjoying a range of book-related activities and an author workshop.

During our English lessons, Owls have written their own stories inspired by the Birthday Duck by Micheal Morpurgo. The children worked hard to include dialogue and interesting vocabulary.

Our maths lessons have seen learning focused on fractions and for Year 4 we have also started learning about decimals. The children have continued to impress us with their dedication to become fluent with their times table facts and they are showing great progress with this.

Across the wider curriculum, Owls became historians this half-term and developed their understanding of the Anglo-Saxons. The children were very proud of their outcomes to their cloth, thread and paint art unit. They also enjoyed their session with Maria Vinney a local artist which gave them the opportunity to experience felting based on signs of spring.

Another class highlight was performing our final samba concert where Owls showcased their learning from the Dorset Musicianship Programme. Over the last ten weeks, the children have developed their understanding of different samba instruments and independently created their own samba grooves. What fantastic teamwork was demonstrated!

There are so many exciting events and opportunities to look forward to next half-term with the Year 4 residential to PGL, Maypole dancing and Sports Day to name a few! I can't wait to see what Owls can achieve. Wishing everyone a wonderful Easter!



OWLS CLASS NEWS





HOLLY ANNELS

Squirrels Class Teacher



As we quickly approach the Easter holidays, I'd love to share with you our highlights this term. This half-term has been super busy with sporting events, visitors and heaps of hard work. The children have gone above and beyond in representing the school and amazing me with their perseverance and hard work! I was incredibly proud of all the Year 3's who had a go at auditioning for our end of year show. In our whole class reading sessions, we have been looking at Red Panda Rescue by Jess Butterworth. This is a book that took us on an adventure all the way to the Himalayas and the children have loved learning about red pandas! Within our English we have written a story using the Pandas who Promised as our focus, another Rachel Bright book which are firm class favourites. We focussed on creating strong descriptions, dramatic speech and using a wide range of vocabulary. The children impressed me by writing exciting stories all about Popo and Ketu's trip to the zoo.

In Maths, Year 2 have been developing their measuring skills focussing on length and height, plus mass, capacity and temperature, whilst Year 3 have been learning about fractions and mass and capacity. The children continue to be excellent mental mathematicians and develop their problem solving and reasoning. They have enjoyed many practical lessons measuring and weighing objects in and outside the classroom.

In Geography we have looked at the counties in the United Kingdom and have spent time comparing Hampshire and Dorset. We were all interested in researching the counties that border Dorset and learning more about why people would want to visit Dorset! In Art we have looked at sculptures and had a go at creating our own sculptures inspired by the work of Barbara Hepworth and Peter Randall-Page, before using charcoal to recreate these on A3 paper. It has been wonderful to see lots of teamwork; sharing and helping each other out. I have been blown away with the effort that they have put in both individually but also on their group pieces.

We are excited to be welcoming a local artist, Maria Vinney, in after half term who will be working with us to create some large-scale sculptures. The adventures will continue into the summer term with sporting events, the end of year production and our may pole dancing but for now, Mrs Patience and I wish you a wonderful, relaxing Easter spending time with friends and family.

SQUIRRELS CLASS NEWS



TRACY HOBBS

Hedgehogs Class Teacher



Wow what a quick half term that was! Once again it was action packed and the children have had so many wonderful experiences. We were incredibly lucky to have author Maudie Smith talk to us about inspiration for writing during World Book day. Then, just last week we got to work with a professional cricket player and artist Maria Vinney. The opportunity to work with such talented people is amazing and the children listening so carefully to everything that they said.

Working with artist Maria Vinney we continued with last term's theme of birds, as the children were so engaged in this topic. This time though the children got to be extremely creative, producing 3D birds with beautiful patterns and colourful feathers! We can't wait for you to see them once they are properly on display (an Easter project for Mrs Hobbs) next half term.

Our English work this half term has focused on fairy tales and in particular we have enjoyed learning about the villains from these books. At the start of the term a crime was committed in the three bears house and the children loved looking at each of the suspects - the Wolf, the Troll and Goldilocks to work out who had caused the mess! The class wrote character descriptions for the troll and a diary in character as baby bear.

The children have continued to work hard in their phonics lessons making good progress with their sounds and using this in their reading. Alongside this they have loved our reading comprehension lessons on the Smeds and the Smoos by Julia Donaldson. In these lessons children have looked at character's feelings, examining what changes in character's relationships during the book.

Baby bear was also central to our work in design technology this half term as we investigated structures. Our design brief was to make a new chair for baby bear, or in this case a teddy bear! The children used their knowledge of materials from science to test fabrics, paper and card, folding each material to increase the strength. They also looked at how the shape, cylinder, triangular prism or cuboid, impacts on the stability and strength of a tower.

In our History work this half term we have looked at the theme of explorers. So far, we have learnt about Christopher Columbus and his journey which led to him being the first European to find the Americas. Next half term we will continue with explorers to begin with as we look at the expeditions of Felicity Aston.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a fantastic Easter break, let's hope the sun continues to shine! When we return the children will be busy preparing for the May Fayre dancing, exploring the art work and printing of William Morris and learning more about the continents and oceans of the world!

**HEDGEHOGS CLASS NEWS**



FOXES CLASS NEWS

AMANDA WALKER

Foxes Class Teacher



Our theme this half term has been 'All Creatures Great and Small' which has included so many exciting learning opportunities. We were so excited about our class trip to Launceston Farm and this was definitely one of our highlights. We were lucky with the weather and had the perfect conditions to dig for worms and see how many each group could find. This activity helped us understand how worms help contribute to a healthy soil. We also had the opportunity to make our own bread rolls. We were shown some wheat and some of us had the opportunity to grind the wheat to make flour. Making our own bread rolls was very exciting and they smelt and tasted delicious after they were baked. The children had such a great time and we loved seeing them so engaged across the day and we were very proud of how respectful they all were on their very first class trip.

Our learning this half-term has been centred around animal lifecycles and the farm. This started with the children exploring the lifecycle of a frog. The children loved creating their own lifecycle pictures to show their understanding of this process. Later in the term we enjoyed learning about animals and their babies on the farm. We have enjoyed seeing the progress of chicks through pictures supplied by Mrs Hamer who is very kindly hatching them for us. We are hoping for some chick cuddles after Easter.

We enjoyed sharing our learning this half term with parents using glockenspiels. We loved singing and performing and worked hard to keep the beat when playing the glockenspiels.

Next half-term our theme is 'Once Upon a Time' and we will cover learning about plants and growth. We will be learning about what is needed to help plants grow and carry out some planting of our own. We will also have a big focus on Kings and Queens and learn about how and where they are crowned. We will learn about many London landmarks too and where these are in relation to each other using maps.

Thank you all for your continued support. We hope you all have a restful Easter holiday and look forward to seeing you all next half-term.



NEWS FROM THE NURSERY

It's been a very short half term but we've packed in a lot of fun, excitement and learning into these last 5 weeks. It's been lovely to hunt for all the signs of Spring, making the most of the beautiful grounds at St James' and enjoying lots of time in nature. This half term our focus has been Animals Big and Small, we started off with farm animals – learning the names of baby animals, what they eat, what noises they make, how they move. We painted, collaged, scooped corn for the animals, made welly boot prints and tractor prints and acted out a Farmer's Market in our outdoor role play area. We then moved on to safari animals; looking at habitats, building homes, using binoculars to hunt for tracks, more noises and matching and creating patterns.

We celebrated Mother's Day by planting flowers and talking about why our Mummies are so special to us, the children were incredibly thoughtful and really showed our value of Love.

Forest School has continued to be a much loved addition to our weekly routine and we can really see the children grow in independence and confidence. Each week the children are able to notice small changes in nature as we move from a soggy winter into a sunny spring. Another addition to our routine has been a shared reading time with children from Owls class, which happens twice a week. Both Owls and Nursery look forward to this time, it really promotes a love of reading and builds some lovely relationships between our youngest and eldest children.

Nursery joined the school for World Book Day, starting with an assembly where we had a chance to see everyone's fantastic costumes – both the children and teachers! We had scavenger hunts outside with the older children helping the younger ones to find clues, enjoyed hot chocolate and biscuits at a Book Café, and were treated to a visit from the author Maudie Smith.

We also welcomed a visit from PC Chris into Nursery, the children loved learning all about what a Police Officer wears and trying on all the different hats. The PFA came into Nursery to help all the children create some stunning Easter bonnets which they then proudly showcased in the Easter PFA Celebration.

Our final half term's topic will be Let's Get Growing, where we'll learn all about life cycles, mini beasts, lots of planting and thinking about where our fruit and vegetables come from! Wishing you all a lovely Easter.





GARDENING CLUB & SCHOOL COUNCIL

This term there has been a huge amount of work taking place behind the scenes to strengthen our school's commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. We are proud of the enthusiasm shown by both our Gardening Club and School Council, whose passion for protecting the environment has become a real focus across the school. Together, they have been helping to shape an ambitious action plan, with the aim of applying for the Green Flag Eco-Schools Award next term.

Our School Council have played a leading role in this work, carrying out an audit of how environmentally friendly our school currently is and developing thoughtful ideas to help us improve further. These include all classes now using food waste bins for morning fruit snacks, exploring ways to reduce energy use in school (such as switching off lights and minimising heat loss during playtimes), introducing a potential 'car share day', and writing to our local MP to share their views on environmental issues. It has been inspiring to see these ideas coming directly from the children, demonstrating their awareness, initiative and determination to make a positive difference.

Meanwhile, our Gardening Club have been wonderfully busy enhancing our school grounds, successfully planting over 40 trees to support local wildlife and contribute to a greener future for our school community. Staff have also been developing their own understanding, with Miss Jay attending a workshop led by Edd Moore, Climate Education Consultant, Teacher and Author, which provided valuable ideas for small but impactful changes we can make. Looking ahead, we are excited to be celebrating David Attenborough's 100th birthday in May with a range of eco-themed activities designed to inspire, teach and empower our children to make a difference to their school, community and wider world. Well done to everyone involved – you are helping to make a real difference!

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LITTER PICKING

We welcomed Mr Shergold from the 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!



WORLD BOOK DAY

An annual highlight of our academic year is always World Book Day. It is such a joy to see the whole school dressed up as their favourite book character and coming to school to celebrate. Reading is such an important skill and we not only want children to master it, but to also enjoy it. Our day consisted of a variety of fun activities from treasure hunts, book cafes and even a hot chocolate. Well done to those children who entered our 'Book in a Box' competition and well done to Toby who went away with the top prize.



AUTHOR VISIT

Each year, on World Book Day we invite a local author to come and share their stories and creative processes with the children. This year, we welcomed Maudie Smith who spent time with each class running story writing workshops and sharing some of the stories she has written.



CELEBRATING OUR CHRISTIAN DISTINCTIVENESS

As both a school and Trust we celebrate our Christian values and how they affect our attitudes and actions. Over the course of the Spring term, we have been able to explore these in some of the events across the school including our Year 3 and 4 Easter Experience visit.

EASTER EXPERIENCE

We had a wonderful time at Wimborne Minster to take part in the Easter Experience. Our children learnt about why the Easter story is important to Christians and through a series of guided reflections were challenged to think about how they can make a positive impact on our world. A huge thank you to our parents and governors who came and supported our trip.



EASTER CELEBRATIONS

Over the last week of term, we have all engaged in a variety of Easter celebrations. These events began with a Trust service, gathering over 5000 children online to consider the Christian message of Easter. On Tuesday morning, we joined as a school community for our Easter worship. We explored how Jesus brought light into the darkness. We left knowing that there is always someone to bring us light in dark moments and that we can be bringers of light to those around us. A thank you to Reverend Nick who led our interactive message and to the school choir who performed as we lit candles to symbolise the part we play in bringing light to others.

And on Friday, the PFA hosted our Bonnet procession and Easter craft activities as a way of bringing some light and colour to our end of term.

PARENT SHARE EVENTS

This half-term we have also continued our busy schedule of Parent Share events. These are such a wonderful moment where children share their work with their parents and carers, and we are able to collectively share their successes together. This term, Foxes performed on the glockenspiel, Hedgehog's shared their English learning and Owls showcased their Samba skills.



UPCOMING PARENT SHARE EVENTS



1st May (14.15 – 15.00) Whole School May Pole Dancing



14th May March (14.00 – 15.00) Foxes Royal Tea Party



13th May March (14.30 – 15.00) Squirrels Story Telling



PRIORY SPORTS FESTIVAL

We had a fantastic afternoon at Trinity CE First School competing in the second round of the Priory Cup against Wimborne St Giles and Cranborne First School. The children demonstrated such quality both on the pitch but also in the rich sense of sportsmanship and togetherness. Well done to all our children who represented our school, you should be incredibly proud of yourselves. Of course, a huge well done to Cranborne for a well-deserved and comprehensive victory, your players worked tirelessly and thoroughly deserved to lift the trophy.

SPORTS LEADER PROGRAM

Over the last term, we have welcomed in Sports Leaders from St Michael's Middle School who have been leading sessions across the school. This term, Year 2 enjoyed the Spring sun and took part in a variety of multi-skills activities. A huge thank you to those leaders who planned and delivered such fun activities for our children.

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.

safeguarding@stjames.dsat.org.uk



Daniel Lawford

Designated
Safeguarding Lead



Laura Roberts

Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead

PARENTING IN A DIGITAL AGE

As a parent of three children, it is undeniable that the landscape of technology for my children growing up is wildly different to anything you or I experienced. In my personal life as a parent and professional life as an educator, there is growing evidence about the impact this could be having on the development of our children.

We would therefore like to invite you to attend a special event on Tuesday 14th April (19.00 – 20.30), centred around the topic of 'Parenting Together in a Digital World'. This session will offer the latest insights into how smartphone use is affecting children's wellbeing, learning, and social development. You will hear directly from experts working on the front line, including professionals from education, healthcare, policing and technology. Together, we will look at the most up-to-date evidence and explore ways our community can unite to support healthier habits and safer digital environments for our children.

This will be an open, honest and non-judgemental conversation—an opportunity to ask questions, share experiences, and learn from others who are facing the same challenges. The evening will also highlight practical steps we can take as families and as a community to guide our children toward positive, balanced smartphone use.

If you know your household will be in the throes of bedtime (like mine), you are welcome to join us in school to watch the presentation together, where refreshments will be provided, or you may prefer to watch online from home. Whether you attend in person or virtually, it will be a chance to share experiences, ask questions, and discuss how we can all help our children navigate the digital world safely and confidently.

