



HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have at last come to the end of the shortest half-term of the year and yet, somehow, we have produced the longest newsletter so far! It is therefore no surprise that my team and I are all ready for a well-earned break. This half-term, amongst the myriad of events we have traditionally observed (May Pole, Sports Day, Residentials, Sporting Fixtures) it is the events that celebrate the creative arts that have really stood out for me.

In recent months we have continued to add to the regular pattern of music, dance and arts across the school. Some days are now so busy that to allow individual music lessons to happen, I am evicted from my office. We have guitar and piano lessons happening during the school day and ukulele, dance and drama happening after school. It is our firm belief that our curriculum should remain broad and balanced and include all forms of the arts, in fact compromising the curriculum for more English and Maths doesn't necessarily lead to improved outcomes.

Alongside our usual art lessons, and with the support of the PFA fundraising, we have been able to invite local artist Maria Vinney in to work with each class. This day of dedicated art was a fantastic opportunity. Last week, we gathered all the wonderful pieces and hosted our first exhibition which was a wonderful demonstration of what makes our school a great place to be. Not every child will go on to be an artist or a musician or a performer, but every child should have rich experiences of the arts. This simple verse written by Peter to the early church came to mind as I reflected on this event.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.

Our gifts are broad and many, and I hope that we have hoped to cultivate and grow them this term so that we can go on to bless others through them. Have a wonderful and restful break.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Lawford



St. James'
CE First School



Diocese of Salisbury
Academy Trust



KEY DIARY DATES

- 01/06** First Day of Summer Two
- 01/06** Y4 MTC Assessment Window Opens
- 08/06** Y1 Phonics Assessment Window Opens
- 11/06** Y4 Leavers Service at Salisbury Cathedral
- 13/06** Breakfast Church
- 18/06** Year 3&4 Priory Cup Athletics Festival
- 19/06** St Michael's Class Visit
- 22/06** Y4 Bikeability
- 23/06** Y4 Bikeability
- 26/06** Transfer Day
- 02/07** Creature Teachers School Visit
- 03/07** New YR Transition Session
- 10/07** New YR Transition Session
- 10/07** End of Year Reports Sent Home
- 15/07** Jungle Book Rehearsal and Matinee
- 16/07** Jungle Book Evening Performance
- 21/07** Y4 Leavers Service
- 22/07** Thank You Breakfast and Service

LAURA ROBERTS

**Owls Class Teacher and Deputy
Headteacher**



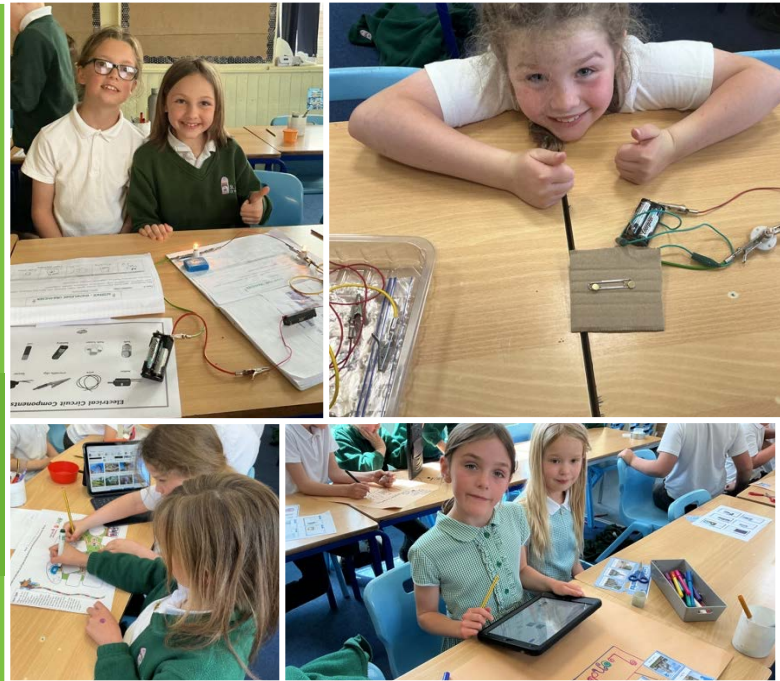
What a busy half-term we have had! Some of our favourite highlights of this half-term have included performing our traditional Maypole dances at the May Fayre. I was incredibly proud of the children for showing such determination, resilience and excellent collaboration. Another highlight was the Year 4 residential to PGL in Osmington Bay. The children enjoyed an action-packed three-day trip full of rewarding opportunities and challenges. It was also a pleasure to see our felting work displayed at our art exhibition and to celebrate the impressive felting outcomes from our art day with Maria Vinney. We were very proud of the children from Owls who represented the school at the Priory Hub Rounders Tournament and achieved first place.

In reading, we've been thoroughly enjoying *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell and have loved becoming absorbed in the story together. We're excited to finish the book after half-term and find out whether the children make it to Manaus. In English, we transformed into travel agents and had great fun writing eye-catching, persuasive adverts encouraging people to visit London.

With the Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check just around the corner, Year 4 have been putting in lots of effort to sharpen their times table recall, making good use of the Try Out area along the way. We have also completed learning linked to fractions, decimals and money. In science, Year 4 have deepened their understanding of electricity and especially loved building and testing their own circuits.

Our geography lessons have taken us on an exciting journey to Madrid, where we've enjoyed discovering more about Spain's capital city and comparing it with London. In design technology, we've been busy designing and making our own self-powered slingshot cars.

Our final half-term promises to be just as action-packed with Year 4 Leavers' celebrations and our whole-school production of *The Jungle Book* still to come. Wishing the St James' community a fantastic half-term!

**OWLS CLASS NEWS**



PGL SPECIAL REPORT

This half-term, Year 4 children went on an unforgettable three-day residential visit to PGL in Osmington Bay. The trip was packed full of adventure, teamwork and fun. The trip began with great excitement on day one, as the children took on the thrilling zipwire, showing real courage as they soared through the air. The evening brought everyone together for a campfire where we enjoyed singing songs and toasting marshmallows.

Day two was just as action-packed. In the morning, the children worked in teams to complete orienteering challenges around the PGL site, followed by creative den building, which encouraged problem-solving and cooperation. In the afternoon, we travelled to Portland for an exciting raft-building activity. The children showed great teamwork as they built and tested their creations on the water.

On the final day, the children tried their hand at archery and tackled the climbing wall, once again demonstrating determination and bravery as they challenged themselves to reach new heights.

Throughout the trip, the children showed brilliant teamwork and resilience. It was a fantastic experience that hopefully has created lasting memories and helped develop independence and friendships. Well done, Year 4!





"My favourite part of the trip was the amazing rock climbing."

"I really enjoyed the zipwire because it was great fun."



"I loved the breakfast and the zipwire was amazing."

"I am proud that I went on the zipwire."



"I enjoyed travelling to Portland for the rafting."

"I loved all the delicious food and sharing a room with my friends."





HOLLY ANNELS

Squirrels Class Teacher



Squirrels class have had a fantastic half term filled with excellent learning, teamwork and exciting opportunities. As always, the children have thrived with their learning and flourished in embedding love, hope and truth in every school day.

During our English lessons, we have focussed on writing a non – chronological report all about wolves, inspired by our book, The Way Home for Wolf. They have excelled in drawing on previous knowledge and skills to craft an informative piece of writing. Their creativity and independence always blows me away and I can see the effort that year 2 have been putting in to apply our newly learnt joined up handwriting!

In our reading sessions, we have enjoyed Planet Omar together which has had us all giggling and keen to find out more, this book has linked well to our RE as we have looked at the beliefs of Muslims and their places of worship. In maths, both year 2 and 3 have been learning about fractions, statistics and time with year 3 also completing some learning on money. They have shown a solid understanding in fractions through positive engagement and accurate problem solving, every child has given it a go and not been afraid to make mistakes.

They will all continue to develop their time skills as we head into the next term but so far Squirrels class are showing lots of resilience and determination with their learning. As we reflect on our fabulous opportunities this half term, we are very grateful for the day we spent creating art with Maria Vinney. Every child created their own 3D fish which was then displayed at our art exhibition. The may dancing was fabulous with Squirrels all working together to create a performance that they were truly proud of, the routine was tricky and required lots of concentration but everyone showed great teamwork skills and even completed all the dancing without any prompts on the moves!

We created our own tasty but healthy picnic spread to enjoy at our most recent parent share – thank you to all who came to support with this, the children loved sharing their learning! I was so proud of all of Squirrels class for their teamwork and perseverance on sports day. They were wonderful role models to the rest of the school. Wishing you all a lovely week's holiday, and look forward to hearing all about it!

SQUIRRELS CLASS NEWS



TRACY HOBBS**Hedgehogs Class Teacher**

This has been another high energy half term in which we showcased our dancing and sporting skills. The children worked so hard to learn all the steps for our dance at the May Fayre and loved using the bells to keep time with their routine. Throughout the half term we practiced for our sports day with Coach Elliot; running, jumping and throwing with great success.

Nature has been the theme for our learning this half term with the year 1 children exploring spring time in science and year 2 learning all about plants. In our art we have looked at the work of artist and designer William Morris. We examined his designs for wall paper and how he tried to bring nature indoors with his wonderful patterns of leaves, flowers and birds. We have had a go at observational drawings of spring flowers and leaves, creating our own wallpaper design and finally creating a printing tile. We used our tile to create a printed pattern on to paper, using repeating colours.

In our English lessons we have been moving from printing in our handwriting to joining our letters using the two Read Write Inc joins of 'arm' and 'washing line', once we are secure in this we will start joining our words. Our non-fiction work has been linked to our history work on Antarctic explorer Felicity Aston and our geography 'Where in the world' topic, we researched and wrote fantastic reports on the continent of Antarctica. In our narrative work we all loved the story of 'Beegu' and the children created their own alien characters. We then wrote our own stories using these characters based on the story of 'Beegu'

Our geography lessons this half term focused on the seven continents and five oceans of the world. We have looked at atlases and maps of the world and the different physical and human features of geography across the countries. Once again, their understanding of the vocabulary and key concepts has blown me away.

All of the children in Hedgehog class have once again worked incredibly hard this half term and I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for their continued support and encouragement. Next half term is probably the busiest of the school year! A reminder to all year one parents that the phonics screening test takes place between the 8th and 12th June. Please can I ask that the children continue to practice their phonics using their little yellow sound books over the half term holiday. Our final parent share for the year will be the Wacky Races on Wednesday 24th June 2:30pm in the hall.

HEDGEHOGS CLASS NEWS





FOXES CLASS NEWS



AMANDA WALKER

Foxes Class Teacher



We've had a fantastic half-term in Foxes Class, full of exciting learning and memorable experiences!

Our theme, "Once Upon a Time," began with a magical "book" inspired by Jack and the Beanstalk. The children were thrilled to discover magic beans, along with a cow, a boy, and even a giant! This sparked great enthusiasm as we learned and retold the story during our Talk for Writing sessions. The children especially enjoyed performing it in our stage area and sharing their storytelling during our recent Parent Share.

This half-term, we have loved exploring the topic of plants. The children learned what plants need to grow and carried out an experiment to investigate the best conditions for beans. We tested different combinations of sunlight, water, and darkness, and the children were fascinated to observe the results. We also planted herbs, sunflowers and cress.

Our cress came in particularly handy during English, where the children wrote instructions on how to make a cress sandwich. This linked beautifully with our Royal Tea Party during Parent Share. Thank you to all who joined us—your support made the experience even more special! While the cress sandwiches received mixed reviews, we were very proud of how many children were willing to give them a try.

We have also been learning about castles, exploring their features and using key vocabulary while building our own using Lego, Duplo, and large construction blocks. This naturally led to discussions about who lives in castles and introduced the children to the idea of the monarchy.

Our learning also took us to the city of London, which the children thoroughly enjoyed exploring. Using Beebot robots, they created simple maps and navigated around famous landmarks. They can now name several key sights, have painted wonderful pictures of Big Ben, described the Houses of Parliament, and developed an understanding of the history of the Tower of London.

Next half-term, we are excited to begin a new topic: "Let's Explore Our Wonderful World." The children will be learning about different continents, animals, and exploring a range of arts and crafts from around the globe.

We wish you all a restful and enjoyable half-term break and look forward to welcoming the children back for more adventures in learning.



NEWS FROM THE NURSERY

We've had a fantastic half term in Nursery and it has been wonderful to enjoy the warmer weather together.

Our topic has been 'Let's Get Growing', with a focus on the stories The Hungry Caterpillar, Superworm and One Little Butterfly. One of the highlights has been welcoming a pot of tiny caterpillars into the nursery. The children have loved watching them grow and develop over the weeks. They are now hanging in their chrysalides, and we are eagerly checking each day for them to hatch into butterflies! The children have been incredibly engaged and gentle when handling the caterpillars, bringing their understanding of life cycles to life.

This half term, the Nursery has had an upgrade of new furniture, as well as new water trays, large weighing scales and a pirate ship, all of which the children have thoroughly enjoyed exploring. These additions have inspired lots of child-led learning, including investigations into capacity and weight, transferring, floating and sinking, as well as imaginative play such as drawing treasure island maps and making "pirate soup" in the mud kitchen!

During Forest School sessions, the children have shown lots of interest in discovering insects hiding under logs. It has been lovely to see them handling these creatures with such care and curiosity, showing a real fascination with the natural world. They have also demonstrated creativity and imagination by building dinosaur homes using leaves, twigs and daisies.

We have done lots of planting and growing this half term, including a variety of flower seeds and peas. The children have shown independence and responsibility in remembering to water and care for them.

Alongside all this exciting learning, we have enjoyed some special events. We held an Open Morning, welcoming families in for a stay-and-play session and an informal opportunity to talk about their child's progress. For the first time, Nursery also took part in the May Fayre, performing a dance beautifully and with the biggest smiles. Finally, we celebrated Sports Day, where the children participated in a range of activities, cheered one another on and had lots of fun.

Next half term, our topic will be 'Under the Sea', and we will also be exploring holidays, journeys and vehicles.

Wishing all our families a lovely May half term.





SPORTS DAY SPECIAL

What a fantastic Sports Day! Well done to everyone who represented their team with pride; throwing the furthest, jumping the longest and running the fastest! It really was a great day and I know every child demonstrated our school values in abundance. A huge thank you to all those who volunteered to help set up, park cars, take photos and officiated the results. Thank you for coming out and enjoying the family fun and supporting our community.

Of course, a special well done to Yellow Team who came away victorious! (Again)

Our Sports Day was followed by a fantastic Summer Social, hosted by the St James' PFA which was once again a resounding success and was a fabulous way to end Sports Day. There was a rich sense of community as parents, carers and the wider school family enjoyed an afternoon of food and fun in the sun. The final count is in progress but we expect the afternoon to have raised more than £1300 profit!





"I liked all the activities in the morning, watching the races and being a team captain."

"I liked being in the sprint, middle distances and relay races."



"I loved being on yellow team and lifting the trophy." Alice



"My favourite activity was javelin."





St James' Celebrate with an Art Exhibition

Over the last few months, we have been able to welcome Maria Vinney to St James' to lead a variety of art projects. We were so impressed with the work they produced we decided to host our first art exhibition. A huge thank you to Maria for working alongside us to help celebrate the arts and the PFA for partially funding this opportunity.

The Rhyming Bible

As term began, we once again welcomed the Saltmine Theatre company to St James' for a performance of the 'Rhyming Bible'. The children enjoyed a tour with the angels as they explored the big story of the Bible and how they are both loved and chosen. It is such a privilege to watch live theatre each year and is the perfect inspiration with our end of year show.



NEWS FROM ACROSS THE SCHOOL



May Pole Dancing

We had a wonderful afternoon celebrating some rich traditions at St James'. Children from all classes, joined by parents, carers and wider family, performed a number of country dances culminating with Owls dancing around the maypole. A huge well done to all the children who, despite the heat, danced their hearts out.

Our afternoon wasn't over and it was wonderful to come together as a community for cream teas, cake and ice cream (and a huge amount more). Well done and thank you to St James' PFA for all your hard work – you are a blessing to the school.

Year 4 and 4 Rounders Tournament

This term, Year 3 and 4 children travelled to Cranborne Middle School to compete in the third round of the Priory Cup. Throughout the year, 4 schools compete in different sports in each of our schools. In the early spring sun our team put in a tremendous show and came home victorious.



PARENTING TOGETHER IN A DIGITAL AGE

Firstly, thank you for those who attended the online session, Parenting in a Digital Age. The session was so thought provoking both as a professional but perhaps more importantly in my role as a father of three. If you missed the session, the recording is [now available](#) and is well worth a watch.

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the wellbeing and development of our pupils, all DSAT schools in the Priory Hub area are working together on a new initiative under the Digital Excellence Strategy. This collaborative project aims to support both children and families in navigating the challenges and opportunities of digital (screen) use, and in particular smartphones.

Over the coming weeks, schools will be reviewing their own practices and screen requirements, while also engaging with parents, pupils, and external specialists. Our goal is to ensure that we are sharing the most up-to-date and relevant research on screen use, and that we are working together to promote healthy digital habits both in and out of school. This is a shared effort and not a blame game. We recognise that screen use and smartphones are a complex and evolving issue that extends beyond any one school. It is a wider social and cultural challenge that affects all of us, and we believe that by working together, we can make a meaningful difference.

To help shape this work, we invite you to share your views through a Parent Smartphone Survey (all DSAT schools in Priory Hub will be sharing the same survey). Your insights will be invaluable in helping us understand the experiences and needs of families across our community.

Parenting together in a digital world

Welcome & Introductions



Dorset
Council



Scan to watch the webinar

"Smartphones weren't designed with kids in mind – but they've reshaped childhood almost overnight. In the UK, 89% of 12-year-olds now own one, and so do a quarter of children aged 5 to 7. On average, kids get their first smartphone aged nine."

Scan to take our survey



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