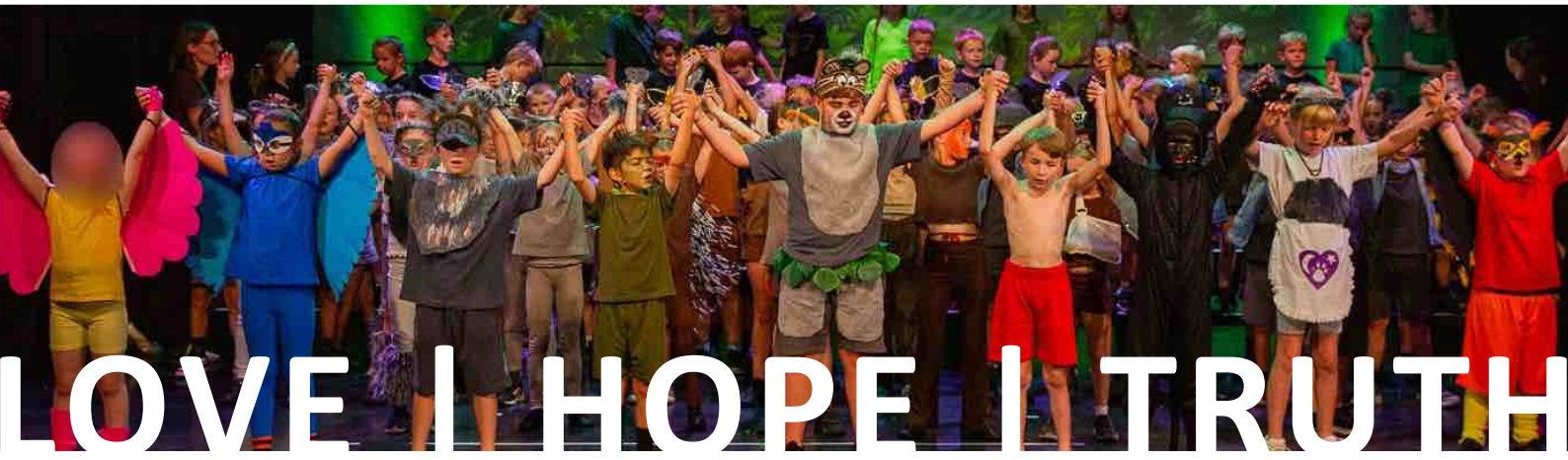




Headteacher's End of Year Report

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the Summer sun continues unabated and the school field slowly turns a golden hue, our term finally draws to a close and I want to take this moment to share how incredibly proud I am of all our children, for all they have achieved this year and the community they have helped to build. Over the last few weeks, with the temperatures in the lunch hall reaching peak uncomfortable, we have taken to having our lunch as a picnic in the Peace Garden under the shade of the tree. It has been a joy to watch the children enjoy their lunch together and without the structure of the formal dining tables, build community beyond their immediate friendship group.

As I have reflected on the successes of this year over the last few weeks, I have found myself drawn constantly back to this idea of belonging and the rich power it has to bring us all together. The behaviour and attitudes of others can have a huge influence on our own. When many people within a group (like a class or school) adopt a similar behaviour this 'social norm' effect becomes so powerful that it can often override more formal policies and rules. It's the reason my youngest daughter won't put her socks on for me, yet her teacher can get her, and 25 other children, to do way more complex stuff for hours on end. However, the strength of their influence rests heavily on how much we feel accepted and belong. In short, behaviour and learning are a product of 'belonging'. And, as the whole school stood hand in hand on stage at the Layard Theatre on Thursday evening, (and I held back the tears) it was clear that we knew we all belonged, from the youngest to the oldest, from volunteer to staff member. That our 'norm' was something special and unique, something beautiful, because of our togetherness.

When Paul wrote to the early church in Galatia, he emphasised the difference of the believers but how in Christ they could all find their belonging.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

Paul's message was one of unity and belonging. He knew that in this togetherness and belonging we find the strength we need to try our best, to demonstrate optimism and hope amid the darkness and to always be compassionate and loving to ourselves and our community. So, as I reflect on some key moments in our year, thank you for building our belonging, thank you for encouraging one another and thank you for setting an example for our children to follow.

For our Year 4's, whose time is coming to a close, there have been moments throughout the year where they have demonstrated their belonging in abundance. In October, they joined with our 27 other DSAT schools to perform a pop concert at Salisbury Cathedral. At Christmas, they became a class choir and travelled the community to spread some Christmas cheer to some of the most vulnerable in our community. And then in May, they travelled to Osmington Bay for our annual PGL residential. Myself, along with the whole staff team, will miss our Year 4's but know they have been equipped with all the knowledge, skills and personal qualities to be a success on their next adventure.



Along with our Year 4's, we also say goodbye to Miss Gudger. Starting as a midday supervisor over ten years ago, she has become a foundational member of our teaching assistant and pastoral team. As well as her essential role supporting classroom learning, she has led our pastoral team and delivered ELSA for over six years. As she begins her retirement, I want to thank her for all her years of service, her friendship and her unwavering commitment to encouraging those in need.

Our year has also found its belonging in our community events. These have taken place in a variety of different forms from Parent Share Events, Remembrance Service, World Book Day, Easter Celebrations or Nativities – there is always so much joy to be found in our collective celebrations. The newest of these events was our first ever Art Exhibition which was a wonderful celebration of the creative arts. Over four days, each class worked with local artist Maria Vinney to celebrate Spring and its many colours. As the work was displayed, it was a joy to watch the children and parents not only celebrate their own work but also stop, pause and enjoy the work of their friends. We look forward to making our Art Exhibition a feature of our regular St James calendar.

The celebration of the arts didn't stop there, Owls class learnt to play Samba, Foxes learnt the glockenspiel and the whole school (including Nursery for the first time) performed traditional English dances as part of our May Pole celebrations. Our year of arts culminated in our End of Year show which was a resounding success and in the words of the Wimborne Mayor, 'School theatre at its very best!'

Of course, one of our core objectives as a school is to ensure all children make progress in their academic 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 88% 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, 100% of children scored above the unofficial pass mark of 20/25. In fact, with an average score of 24.0 and 60% of children scoring full marks (46% did this nationally) we are among the top achieving schools.

Another area of resounding success is the continued growth of our Nursery provision. In September Miss Jay was appointed Nursery Lead and was later joined by Mrs Lawrence in January. Under their careful leadership, confidence has grown in our provision and bookings continue to flourish for next year with a 25% growth year on year. To support this growth, we have grown the Nursery team and Mrs Hardyman and Mrs Ryan will be joining the team next year. As the Nursery continues to grow over the year, we are hoping to increase Forest School as part of the provision and will replicate the impact it has on the well-being and cohesiveness of our reception class with our youngest learners, so watch this space Nursery families.

I also find great hope and joy in our continued Trust collaboration. For our Year 3 and 4 children, the Priory cup was a resounding success with Football, Netball, Rounders and Athletics tournaments hosted across our four schools. Thank you to all those who not only competed and represented the school but did so with

a sense of togetherness. For our staff team, the Trust provides a wealth of professional development opportunities and a structure through which we continually look for school improvements. Earlier this month, we received a letter from the Trust indicating we have been categorised as a 'Leading' school in our new Trust Improvement Model which is testament not only to our schools ongoing success and continued improvement but our desire, and ability, to support the development of the schools around us. This is only possible because of the commitment from our whole team to always do their best in every moment.

So, as we begin take to stock and look ahead into next year, it is clear that 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. We also received the shock news last month that the Government has cancelled the Sports Premium funding which has supported many of our sporting activities. But I am relentlessly optimistic and will always look to utilise the opportunities available beyond the traditional income avenues to make our school a success. Earlier this week we received £1200 in funding from West Mercia Energy – I have my fingers crossed for the many other bids I have made. 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.



Earlier this week, one of my team made a comment that the Peace Garden has become a hub of many of our events. It has played host to our picnic lunches, we used it as a venue for Miss Gudger's retirement gathering and this morning we said a well-deserved 'Thank You' to our whole community. It was however in April that it became a focus of our celebration for beloved Tilly who lost her battle with cancer. Tilly was a bright and joy filled member of our community who demonstrated such resilience in the face of adversity. As part of our remembering, every child planted a butterfly in our garden. The butterfly holds a fragile beauty that hides the incredible transformation that took place. All who knew and loved Tilly understood how her infectious joy was transformational. As your children leave school today, they have each brought home a butterfly as a way of remembering Tilly. They have now flown the garden and will live on in our homes and hearts forever.

It is in both the highs and the lows that belonging finds space to flourish. Whether it is the collective tears shared together, or hands held on stage to the final applause, it is in our belonging where our love, hope and truth can resound. So, as we prepare for the summer holidays, I want to thank every member of our community for their love and hope this year. It is a joy and a privilege to lead such a fantastic team, shepherd such wonderful children and encourage such a supportive community. Please find time to enjoy the sun, time with friends and family and I very much look forward to welcoming you back to all the joys that our new year will bring.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Lawford





JUNGLE BOOK

To end the school year, our remarkably talented pupils took to the stage at the Layard Theatre to perform to a sold-out audience. The whole St James' community was treated to a vibrant and unforgettable production of Rudyard Kipling's 'The Jungle Book'. We joined Mowgli on his captivating journey through the jungle, accompanied by his loyal jungle pals.

What a spectacular performance it was! There was outstanding acting from our Year 3 and 4 cast, beautifully choreographed class dances and lively, uplifting songs. Every child truly shone on stage and we were immensely proud of them all.

The enthusiasm, happiness and teamwork displayed by the children were evident throughout, culminating in a heartwarming finale as the entire cast came together to sing 'King of the Jungle'. It was a wonderful and fitting way to conclude the school year and remains one of the highlights of the St James' calendar. We would like to thank you once again for providing costumes, props and supporting with practising lines.

Miss Roberts





I was delighted to be invited to the Layard Theatre at Canford School to see St James' production of the Jungle Book. I thought it was excellent, and I wrote the following to Mr Lawford:

'What a great show – school theatre at its very best! Loved it all: performances so well miked up; energy and enthusiasm of the cast; costumes and set; professional feel at a lovely theatre.'

I think children always remember being in a show for their whole lives – every child at St James will recall Jungle Book with pride, happiness and joy.

Jeff Hart

Town Mayor - Wimborne Minster





YEAR 4 LEAVERS

We are incredibly proud of our Year 4 pupils as they reach the end of their journey at St James'. Over the past five years, they have achieved so much and have been a wonderful credit to our school community.

Recently, the children attended the DSAT Leavers' Service at Salisbury Cathedral and this week they have led their in-school Leavers' Service. Both of these events have provided special opportunities to celebrate their achievements, reflect on happy memories and look ahead to the exciting opportunities that await them.

We wish all of our Year 4 pupils every success and happiness as they move on to middle school. We know they will continue to shine, embrace new challenges and always remember to 'Believe and Achieve!' We look forward to hearing about their future accomplishments.

Miss Roberts

