



HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the wet, winter months come to an end, I was heartened to see the snowdrops surrounding many areas of the school site this week, a simple sign that Spring is on the way! With over half the year already complete, we are so incredibly proud of everything the children have achieved so far.

I can often find the months just after Christmas relentless, but there have been some shining moments to keep me going. For example, watching our Year 3 and 4 netballers celebrate a wonderful victory at Cranborne Middle School. In the pressure of a highly competitive final, they worked as a team, demonstrating our school values in abundance. I was equally impressed watching Hedgehog class share their learning with their parents this term as part of their latest Parent Share event and bravely performing on their Ocarina's. Of course, our visit from Archbishop Samuel was a moment of inspiration and reflection for the whole school and I hope we are all inspired to think of ways in which we might make a tangible difference in Mangbondo Primary School and the surrounding areas.

During the Spring Term we have also launched Stormbreak across the school which focussed on using physical movement to teach and support our children's mental health. These pit stop moments throughout the week give teachers a chance to use movement to explore the five key themes of resilience, relationships, hope and optimism, self-worth and self-care.

As we look ahead to the remainder of the year, life at St James' is jam packed with exciting school trips, workshops, sporting fixtures, celebration days and musical performances.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Lawford



St. James'
CE First School



Diocese of Salisbury
Academy Trust

KEY DIARY DATES

- 19/02 First Day of Spring Two
- 21/02 Cottage Consultation Evening
- 23/02 Parent Survey Closes
- 27/02 Y4 Wessex Water Workshops
- 04/03 Author Visit
- 07/03 World Book Day
- 11/03 Easter Experience at Wimborne Minster
- 14/03 Owls Anglo Saxon Day
- 21/03 Foxes Farm Trip
- 22/03 Squirrels Dorset Rural Music School Choir Performance
- 22/03 Owls Samba Performance
- 26/03 Easter Service at Holtwood
- 27/03 Last Day of Spring Two
- 28/03 INSET

LAURA ROBERTS

Owls Teacher and Assistant
Headteacher



What a fantastic and busy half-term it has been! I am extremely proud of Owls for the dedication and enthusiasm they have shown to their learning and how supportive and caring of each other they continue to be. This half-term, we have been reading the adventure story, 'Lost on Gibbon Island' by Jess Butterworth. The book features 12-year-old Lark, who finds herself shipwrecked on a Cambodian island with no one but a baby gibbon for company. We have enjoyed the twists and turns the book has offered and Jess Butterworth is definitely one of our new favourite authors!

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. In our English lessons, we focused on the animals of South America and the children enjoyed writing their own non-chronological reports linked to this.

During our maths lessons, both Year 3 and 4 have been focusing on developing their knowledge of length and perimeter. In addition to this, the children have begun their 'Number Sense' fluency sessions which are supporting the children developing rapid recall of their times table facts.

Owls continue to amaze me with their creativity. During our Art lessons, the children have explored the work of Paul Cézanne and have developed their knowledge and skills linked to still life and observational drawing. For their end outcome, the children produced their own still life collages which they are extremely proud of.

The children have shown brilliant teamwork during our PE lessons whereby they have created their own carnival dances using formations, canon and unison. As part of the Dorset Musicianship Programme, Owls have completed their first five samba lessons and are looking forward to continuing to develop their skills next half-term. I am looking forward to their final performance next half-term.

Owls enjoyed their question and answer session with the Archbishop of South Sudan. After learning about the lives of children at Mangbondi Primary School, it was wonderful to see the children so empowered to make a difference – watch this space!

Wishing all of the St James' community a great half-term break.

**OWLS 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 basketball.

We have read a really exciting whole class text; *The Nothing to See Here Hotel* (the first in a series that the class are keen to continue with). The story has had the children in fits of giggles and has inspired their creativity and imagination. We have discussed the possibilities of an invisible magical hotel on Brighton seafront that is run by magical creatures who must not be spotted by humans! During our English lessons, we have been looking at stories about being angry, linking this to our PSHE work about our feelings. The children have written their own short story using 'Angry Arthur' by Hiawyn Orama as their inspiration. We have learnt all about conjunctions and prepositions in order to make our writing even more exciting. The children then wowed me by jam packing their stories with expanded noun phrases and similes.

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 with Mrs Trevor, 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 computing, the children have shown great team work skills by collaborating and encouraging one another to 'give it a go'. They have learnt about programming and debugging and have designed their own BeeBot mats creating an algorithm to successfully get the BeeBot to its end location. Finally, in Geography they have shown great understanding and knowledge towards their topic of 'Counties; a study of Dorset'. They have compared the counties that Dorset borders. The unit came to an end with a chance for the children to create their own leaflets telling everyone why Dorset would be great to visit and what they could do! We have been really lucky this half term to have had three visitors come in to speak to us!

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 were then excited to celebrate world religion week with a Hinduism workshop, where all the children had a chance to try on traditional clothes and learn about another religion. We have been using this to write lovely recounts in English all about our day. Just last week the Archbishop of South Sudan visited us and told us all about what life is like in South Sudan and how it is different to our own, Squirrels class listened so respectfully asking lots of very sensible and well thought out questions. We are excited to see what is next. We wish you a great and relaxing half term.

SQUIRRELS CLASS NEWS

TRACY HOBBS

Hedgehogs Class Teacher



They say time flies when you are having fun and both have been true this half term in Hedgehogs class! We have been so busy practicing all of our skills in reading, writing and maths and I have been blown away by the amazing work the children have produced.

Even though it has been a short half term, we have been so lucky to have special visitors into school. We were very pleased to see Harold the giraffe again in the SCARF workshop and he taught us how to keep our bodies healthy. Dressing up and exploring the artefacts in the Hinduism workshop was also a highlight of the term and we enjoyed taking part in some meditation which we have continued in our 'Stormbreak' activities.

Hedgehog class have also been very excited to take part in the RSPB big school bird watch. We made pine cone bird feeders and have been so pleased to see such a variety of birds coming into feed. The birds have been inspiration for our art project.

We have looked closely at birds and feathers sketching them in our books and using this to design and make 3D sculptures of birds.

Our focus in geography has been looking at the differences between physical and human geography. We have been learning the names of the countries and capital cities of the United Kingdom as well as comparing the landscape of Dorset with London. London was the focus at the start of the term for our English learning when we took off on a golden lion to visit the sites in Katies' London. Our writing focus then moved on to link with our work in science on the topic of animals. In science we sorted and classified animals into groups and thought about whether animals were carnivores, herbivores or omnivores. We then used our learning to write fact files in English, using questions as sub headings. We have finished our English learning by reading the wonderful text 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' and writing our own versions of the story.

Alongside all of this, we have begun using the laptops in our computing lessons, exploring how to use a mouse to create art work on screen - we created some beautiful spiky hedgehogs! In our music lessons we have listened and responded to a range of different songs and have loved learning to play the ocarinas, something that we will continue to practice for the rest of the year.

Can I just once again say a big thank you for all your support this half term. I hope you and all the children in Hedgehog class have a super half-term break and come back full of energy for spring two, when we shall be setting sail to explore new lands and meeting a little girl who manages to upset three bears – can we help fix her mess by making the youngest bear a new chair? We wait to see!

HEDGEHOGS CLASS NEWS



TIME TO SHARE

In Hedgehog's class, we continue to focus our learning towards an opportunity to share our learning with parents. At the end of this term, we welcomed around thirty parents and carers to help evaluate the children's bird that they made as part of their Art and Science learning. The children also performed their Ocarinas for the first time with three different pieces which they had been learning in Music.

It is wonderful to share our learning on a more regular basis and hope to grow these Time to Share events across the school.





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 been enthused about their learning within our theme and are proving to be independent learners; well done Foxes! All children have worked so hard and will no doubt be looking forward to some rest over the holiday with family and friends.



This half-term 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. Our key text has been 'Lost and Found' and the children have loved using our outside stage area to perform this story using our class story map to show case some lovely story language. 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 have an understanding why these are used by many of the Inuit people. I am sure your children have come home singing the Ocean song – they are amazing at naming the 5 oceans.



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.



SOUTH SUDAN LINK

Last year, the Sudan Medical Link took vital supplies to South Sudan, a country devastated by war. As part of their trip, Dr Robin Sadler asked the school to collect clothes to give to those in need as part of his visit. Since then, we have been building a friendship with Archbishop Samuel and Kombo Clement, who is the headteacher at Mangbondo Primary School in the Yambio region.

We were privileged to welcome Archbishop Samuel to the school who spoke about life in South Sudan and how schooling is different from ours. As part of his visit, we presented him with a St James' bear, who we named 'Barnabas' which means encourager. Barnabas is travelling all the way to South Sudan to be part of Mangbondo Primary School. As our partnership grows, we have encouraged the children of St James' to think about how they can play their part in making a difference.





ॐ HINDUISM WORKSHOPS

To celebrate World Faith Day, all the children enjoyed a visit from Krishna Dali, who gave them a lively workshop about the Hindu faith, and some of its stories and customs. As well as helping her to re-enact the story of Rama and Sita which has become the festival of Diwali, they were able to try dressing up in saris and turbans, and to experience some Hindu music and dance.

As well as the fun the children had, they were also given an opportunity to realise that there are similarities between Christians and Hindus, for instance, a belief in one all-powerful God, belief in a soul, that you should look after your mind and body to keep it healthy, and that education is very important.

Liz Barnard

Foundation Governor



CELEBRATING PHONICS SUCCESS

Earlier in the term, we received a letter from the Minister for Schools congratulating us on our incredible phonics results last year. We love to read and we want all our children to leave us as fluent readers and are continually investing to improve the teaching of reading. Here is a snippet of what he said...

“With 96% of pupils in Year 1 meeting the expected standard, St James’ First School is in the top 4% of all primary schools”

None of this would have been possible without our wonderful team who have all invested, researched, planned and refined our early reading scheme to ensure we give every child at St James' the best possible start. Finally, a special thank you, to the parents and carers for all the hours spent reading at home, filling out reading records and promoting a love of reading.



ENSURING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

As a school, we are continually looking for ways to improve and provide the best possible education for every child who attends St James'. This cycle of school improvement is closely monitored by the Senior Leadership Team, the Governors and the Trust. Over the course of a year, we have three Academy Improvement Meetings (you can think of this as a one-day Ofsted inspection) that focus our time and efforts to ensure that the results celebrated above become the norm. In an AIM, we gather a huge amount of information to support our own judgements; observing lessons, interviewing subject leaders, speaking with pupils and taking a deep dive into the work the children produce. We use all of this 'data' to help us streamline our processes and improve outcomes for our children.

I also value your feedback and would encourage you to take time to complete the Spring Parent Survey. Our last survey was in June 2022 before I took post and, whilst much has changed, I want to hear your voice as valued members of our school community.

Mr Lawford

GOVERNOR SUPPORT

In the penultimate week of term, we had our Spring Academy Improvement Meeting. This is a really important part of the support and development that the Trust offer us. An expert practitioner from the central team, who is also a qualified Ofsted inspector, spends a whole day in school, usually with a guest such as another Trust headteacher. They do lesson observations, quiz senior leaders and subject leaders and speak to our children about their learning and how secure they feel in important areas like internet safety and telling worries to school adults.

This event is always well-supported by governors, as it is wonderful to spend quality time in school under the guidance of an expert, but the constructive feedback we receive enables us to focus on areas that we need to monitor over the next few months. These visits really are of huge value to all leaders and staff as they offer us an independent overview of how well we are doing, what we need to do to get even better and also some excellent intelligence on the latest Ofsted and SIAMS areas of focus. They are a great example of how being part of something bigger can benefit all of us at St James' and ensure that we are doing our very best for our children.

Cliff Beard (Chair of Governors)



GARDENING CLUB

We have had a wonderful start to our St James' Gardening Club, the children have been busy and engaged from the start and shown such enthusiasm and a willingness to get stuck in, even when weeding frozen soil! One of our Hedgehog gardeners carried on weeding till all the pots outside her classroom were spruced up, a few days later bright pink Cyclamen sprang into life as if to say thank you.

Our young gardeners have started at an exciting time (despite the grey weather and bare earth) as they have been involved in waking up the garden and making plans. They have been busy clearing leaves, repotting broken pots, taking care of bulbs that needed a little love and germinating sweet peas. We used the paper towel method and so far, have had remarkable success with the first seedlings already potted on and growing well! Come late spring, there will be an abundance of colour and scent from the sweet peas and hopefully they will be ready to pick in time to make posies for the May Fayre.

During our clear up we were incredibly lucky to find lots of earthworms in our soil, this is a fabulous sign we have healthy and fertile soil!

Before half term we will be taking cuttings from succulents and potting them up and after half term we will be planting Ranunculus bulbs, these will burst into life during May in the most incredible jewel colours, so put your orders in soon for cut flowers!

We have plans for lots of colourful flowers around the school so if you have any spare seeds or surplus plants, we would love to give them a new home, thank you.

We want to say a huge thank you to all the young gardeners for all their hard work, we cannot wait to keep growing and caring for our outside space with them. It will be such a joy to watch everything start to bloom in the coming months.

Mrs Shergold



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