



HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is becoming increasingly difficult to eloquently summarise in just a few paragraphs all that happens in a half-term at St James'. It is also impossible for me to highlight all my favourite moments, there are just too many. If I had one takeaway, it would be this, the children at St James' are fantastic and it is an incredible privilege to serve education in such a vibrant community.

Earlier this month, our Trust celebrated its 10th Birthday. What started as just a few schools in need of support has now grown to 28 schools with almost 5000 pupils. This Christmas, we have been part of the Trust for 3 years and continue to benefit from being part of this family of schools. During my time as headteacher, DSAT have continually supported us to go beyond expectations for the children of St James'.

Christmas is another birthday we are perhaps more accustomed to celebrating but one that can often feel somewhat overwhelming. What presents to buy, what food to cook, which family are we seeing this year? When the big day comes and goes we can often feel deflated by all the hype. However, at the heart of Christmas is a simple message of hope.

Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2:11

Whatever you believe, Christmas can be a message of hope to all of us. It's a time where we all come together and coalesce round a single moment of hope and we should use this to love and serve our community.

Finally, can I just say a heartfelt thanks to my team who continually go above and beyond to provide the best possible outcomes for our community. Have a wonderful Christmas break and we look forward to welcome you all back in 2024.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Lawford



St. James'
CE First School



Diocese of Salisbury
Academy Trust

KEY DIARY DATES

- 02/01 INSET
- 03/01 First Day of Spring 1
- 03/01 Interim Reports Sent to Parents
- 08/01 Spring 1 Clubs Begin
- 09/01 SCARF PSHCE Workshops
- 11/01 Year 3 & 4 Netball Festival at Cranborne Middle
- 16/01 Parents Evening
- 18/01 Parents Evening
- 25/01 Hinduism Day
- 09/02 Last Day of Spring 1

LAURA ROBERTS

Owls Teacher and Assistant Headteacher



Well done to Owls for another brilliant half-term. One of our highlights of this half-term has been reading 'The Boy at the Back of the Class' by Onjali Q. Raúf which highlights the importance of friendship and kindness. I have been extremely impressed with the maturity and compassion Owls have shown developing their understanding of refugees. We have continued to also enjoy our daily 'Love to Read' sessions where we have shared many different picture books, poems and non-fiction texts linked to our school values.

During our English lessons, the children have developed their understanding of using inverted commas and have applied this when writing their own Mrs Pepperpot-inspired narratives. We have also developed our understanding of sentence combining through using conjunctions and sentence expanding using expanded noun phrases and fronted adverbials to up-level our sentences.

In Mathematics, we have worked hard at developing our understanding of multiplication and division. Year 4 have continued to prepare for their Multiplication Tables Check in June and have improved their heatmaps on TTRS.

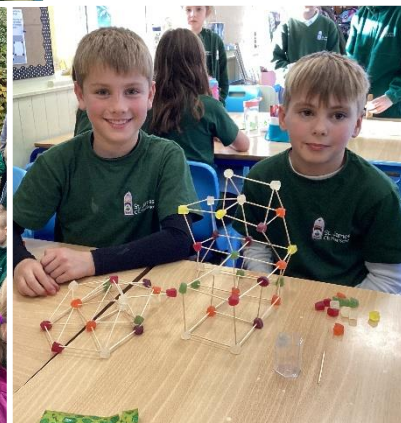
A highlight of our Tuesdays is our afternoon science lessons. In Year 3, the children have developed their understanding of light and in Year 4 the children have completed learning linked to sound. The children have conducted many investigations and have developed their confidence setting up fair tests, making careful observations, taking accurate measurements and drawing conclusions.

Across the wider curriculum, Owls have enjoyed becoming historians and have developed their knowledge of the Roman Empire. In addition to this, Owls have demonstrated fantastic creativity during their design technology learning linked to structures and designing and making their own pavilions. They worked hard to ensure that their pavilions were strong, stable and aesthetically pleasing.

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 wonderful Christmas and best wishes for 2024.



OWLS CLASS NEWS





HOLLY ANNELS

Squirrels Class Teacher

As we approach the festive season, I just wanted to thank all Squirrels Class children for a wonderful Autumn term. It has been an extremely busy half term with new topics, visitors and trips to church! Here's an insight into the adventures of Squirrels Class!

SQUIRRELS CLASS NEWS

In class we have read Rabbit and Bear; A Bite in the Night and are currently reading Georges Marvellous Medicine. We have thoroughly enjoyed reading Rabbit and Bear, it has had the children in fits of giggles and we are looking forward to reading the next book in the series in love to read after Christmas. In English, the children have written their own descriptions. Their creativity and imagination never fails to surprise me and they have used the most wonderful vocabulary to describe their snowy scenes! In Art we have been looking at Stone age art and creating our own cave drawings. The children have absolutely loved this. During PE, it's been lovely to see them all participating and joining in with football, the children have become rather competitive! Again, it's great to see the children supporting one another and working as a team. In science year 2 have been looking at hygiene and the importance of washing our hands! We completed an experiment to see how mouldy our bread would go after touching it which they have been fascinated by.



Next half term, we have lots of things to look forward to. Our new subjects will be DT, Computing and Geography. I would like to thank you all for your support this half term, it's been a busy term and now it's time to celebrate and spend time with our families.

I wish you all very happy holidays!

TRACY HOBBS

Hedgehogs Class Teacher



It is so hard to believe that Hedgehog class have been together for a whole term the time has simply flown by! Once again, they have continued to amaze me not only with their academic progress but with their attitude to learning and their care and respect for each other.

Our term began with our 'Funny Bones' topic where we had great fun reading the Funny Bones stories by Janet and Allan Ahlberg and looking at Mr Funny Bones the skeleton. We labelled the parts of the body and found out about our senses - the children loved trying to guess what was in the smelly pots and identifying what could be seen in the optical illusions.

This half term we have had a history focus learning about the incredible work of Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale. The children have thoroughly enjoyed reading and learning about their lives and achievements – they particularly enjoyed the story of Vlad the flea who lived on a rat in the Crimean war hospital! I think for all the children the highlight of their learning was being able to share their knowledge both with the school and parents in assembly, we definitely have some budding performers in Hedgehog class.

In art we have focused on colour learning all about primary colours and how to mix secondary colours. We explored the idea of hot and cold colours and how to lighten and darken colours. All of our experimenting culminated in the children producing their own piece of art work, linked to our maths learning on 2D shapes, in the style of our focus artist Sonia Delaunay.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful Christmas break full of the joys of the season and a happy new year when I look forward to seeing all the children again. I wonder which little bear will be paying a visit with his marmalade sandwiches in our 'London's Calling' topic? Get ready also to look to the skies as, for science and art, we join in the RSPB'S big garden bird watch and sculpt our own 3D creations in the 'Flight of the Birds'!



HEDGEHOGS CLASS NEWS





FOXES CLASS NEWS

AMANDA WALKER

Foxes Class Teacher

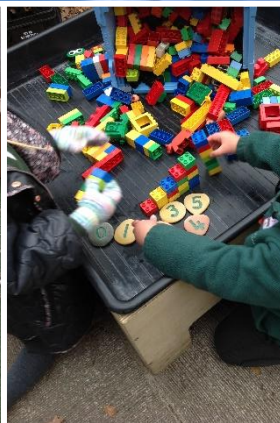


Congratulations to all of Foxes, not only for completing their first full term at school, but also for their amazing Nativity performance. They were all superstars and worked so hard to learn their lines and songs too. It never ceases to amaze me how children so young can stand up in front of such a large audience and perform so well without being fazed; we were so proud of each and every one of them.

This half-term has been a busy one. Our theme has been 'Into the Woods' and part of this has seen us looking at countries across the world that have bears – polar bears, brown bears, moon bears and sloth bears to name just a few. We have loved learning the story of Owl Babies and retelling this in our play, then changing the story to make it our own to become 'Fox Babies' during our Talk for Writing sessions. We have learnt about nocturnal animals, animal habitats and what animals like to eat. The children have become more confident recognising their sounds and are now beginning to use this knowledge to write words and even attempt short sentences!

Next half term our theme is 'A Long Time Ago' and will cover learning about dinosaurs, polar landscapes and artefacts from the past. We will also explore the Lunar New Year celebration and learn about how this is celebrated. We will continue to use our inside and outside learning space and make use of our wider grounds for a 'Winter Walk'.

We look forward to seeing all of the children's smiley faces in the new year and cannot wait to hear their holiday news!





CHRISTMAS NATIVITY SPECIAL REPORT



The Christmas Nativity is always a highlight of my Autumn Term. Foxes class have settled so well into life at St James' but it takes a tremendous amount of courage to stand up in front of the whole school and so many parents and perform. This year's rendition of 'The Sleepy Shepherd' was a huge success with brave solos, wonderful collective singing and memorable moments. Hinton Martell is a beautiful venue and we hope that you enjoyed the performance. A special thank you to the parishioners of Hinton Martell who made us feel so welcome and to all the parents, carers and wider family who came out to support us.

Mrs Walker





A NEW PUSH ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

With the New Year comes the opportunity to make resolutions to help improve our wellbeing. Here at St James in 2024 our resolution is to help equip our children with the skills to positively shape and support their mental health for life through the launch of a new programme called Stormbreak.

It is a fact that childhood mental health problems are rising rapidly and children are less active than ever before. Stormbreak supports primary aged children's mental health and emotional wellbeing through a range of simple and inclusive movements focussed on the key areas of: resilience; self-worth; relationships; self-care; hope and optimism. Each one has been carefully planned to encourage discussion and communication about our emotions, feelings and wellbeing and highlights skills and strategies to help support us being mentally healthy and well.

Foxes have been lucky enough to experience some of these over the last couple of weeks and their enthusiasm and participation has been amazing. In January, Stormbreak will be rolled out to the rest of the school so everyone will have the opportunity to explore how movement can shape and support their mental health now and in the future. Stormbreak is coming, watch this space!

Mrs Gudger (ELSA & Stormbreak Leader)



VOLUNTEER DAY 2023

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who turned out to help decorate Squirrel's classroom. Before our team of able painters descended on a Saturday earlier this term, the classroom was dark, tired and very yellow!

With a new whiteboard, new tables and freshly painted walls, Squirrel's classroom has been transformed.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The foundation of a successful school is building strong and meaningful partnerships with parents and the wider community. We are proud of the partnerships we already have and are actively looking to strengthen and develop new ones.



DSAT TURNS 10!

Happy Birthday DSAT! This was the message of a joyful celebration in Wilton Church on the afternoon of 21st November this year. DSAT was celebrating 10 years since its foundation, a significant milestone and one which deserved a real celebration. We were delighted that Bishop Stephen was able to be with us and to join in throughout. We opened with the hymn 'Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart' and we heard how DSAT began with the vision for a family of schools which would come together and grow. 'Growing' was a theme throughout the service, with the parable of the sower and the parable of the mustard seed among our readings.

There were contributions from children from local schools, singing and joining in the readings and prayers. They were supported by headteachers and by members of the DSAT team. Headteachers and Trustees were also involved. Heads spoke movingly about what DSAT meant to them in their schools and Mr Lacey told us the story about how the Trust had grown and developed.

To end, Bishop Stephen led us all in a rousing 'Happy Birthday to us' and gave us his blessing.

Rosemary Tong

Chair of Trustees



TREE PLANTING

Many years ago, parents within our school community put their hands to work and planted the Hedge Maze that sits on our site. I am constantly reminded how your investment of time and effort has created a unique feature of our school. In November, Owls class looked to continue this tradition and were joined by Treecall Consultancy to help plant new trees across our site for the benefit of generations to come. Maybe they will come back in 30 years' time and be able to say, 'I planted that tree!'



SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWS

We are so proud to be on the School Council for our incredible school and have been VERY busy already. We had our first meeting on 18th October and Mrs Trevor gave us our badges and journals that we have been busy collecting notes in from our class members. We meet most Wednesday mornings and have made a good start already. So far during our meetings, Mrs Trevor has told us about our role and we've made posters for the cake sale for Children in Need. Some of our members (who were available) assisted with the cake sales after school and we were very proud to undertake our first responsibilities. Currently, we are working closely with Mr Lawford with some improvements we think will benefit our school. Some recent developments that are already in motion and were on our wish list are the tree planting and redecoration of the classrooms. Last week we drafted a letter to Stewart's Garden Centre (that Isla kindly offered to write up) requesting some trees or large plants for our classrooms. We are hopeful they can help us with this. Many other projects are in the pipeline... no spoilers at this point but watch this space!

St James' School Council

(Isla, Arthur R, Emily T, Ethan, Maylei, Carson, Emily H, Amber and Mrs Trevor)



ST JAMES' REMEMBERS

The St James' community fell silent as it held its annual Remembrance service earlier this term. Each child took time to paint a poppy pebble which they then laid at our own memorial as part of the service. Thank you to all those parents and carers who supported the poppy painting and came out to support our Remembrance service. A big well done goes to the children who read poetry or lead prayers of Remembrance.

We also raised money for the Royal British Legion by selling Poppies after school each day.

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



DO YOUR CHILDREN ACCESS YOUTUBE?



YouTube is a video sharing social media platform that allows billions of people around the world to watch, share and upload their own videos. It is an astronomically popular platform that has had a huge social impact: influencing online culture on a global scale and creating new celebrities.

It is also a parental minefield which needs to be carefully navigated. Read the [NSO Parent & Carer Guide](#) for great advice about keeping your children safe.

GOVERNOR UPDATES

The big news for governors this term has been the introduction of a planned monitoring schedule to really focus our visits. In practice it means we have been working very closely with staff in key areas such as safeguarding, science leadership, special educational needs, staff development and pupil progress. It is about all leaders being accountable and supported and ensures that actions generated are properly followed up and resolved. It really is a privilege to experience how dedicated our staff are in doing the absolute best for our children.

It was wonderful for two of us to be involved in volunteer day in November, where some of our lovely staff and parents decorated the year 2/3 class. We managed to multi-task by engaging in a lot of networking and eating some cakes too, while proving that many hands make light work! On a serious note, this sort of help means we can spend more on our children, which is our top priority. Quotes for decorating classrooms run well into 4 figures, so volunteering really does have a clear impact on our provision. We plan to hold occasional volunteer days to spruce up parts of the school, so please do support them where you can.

Best wishes for a wonderful Christmas.

Cliff Beard – Chair of Governors

