



End of year newsletter – Monday 19th July 2021

Dear parents,

Thank you

I would like to begin by thanking all of you for your patience, support and understanding over the last 18 months. I would also like to thank my amazing team who have worked so hard to put the children first and make this year as successful and “normal” as it was possible to make it. They have been simply fantastic and have met every challenge not just successfully, but cheerfully too. They have made me feel very proud to be their headteacher.

We have almost reached the end of another odd year at school.

We will be welcoming new members of staff and new children to the school and saying goodbye to others. I would like to make a special mention to those families whose last child is leaving us, and whose long relationship with St James' is coming to an end.

My youngest child, Henry, left primary school on Friday and it was a very emotional day - Mrs Tutt started crying on Thursday evening to get in a good head start. The little boy who will still happily hold Dad's hand in public and proudly declare to anyone who will listen “this is my dad”, will soon become like his two older brothers who, when with friends, will literally cross the street to avoid me. Where did Henry's seven years go, or the 16 years over which we have had a relationship with their primary school? Those Year 6 children leaving this week were running around in their oversized uniforms in Reception such a short time ago.

The Righteous Brothers prided themselves on getting things right (hence the name), and their music was filled with examples of their impressive general knowledge (“lonely rivers flow, to the sea, to the sea...yeah” - geographically spot on). However time definitely does not go by “so slowly”; if anything it has jammed its foot onto the accelerator.

You may not have heard of the great Kenny Rogers, but back in the 1980s his unappreciated CDs were always first to be marked down in the bargain baskets at Our Price. In 1980 he teamed up with the amazing Dolly Parton to sing “Islands in the Stream”. I have always felt that, as long as you ignore all the lyrics in the verses and most of the lyrics in the chorus (in fact just keep the words: “Islands in the stream, that is what we are” & the line “we rely on each other (ah ha)”), this song exactly sums up how it feels for us to be adults in a school. Streams of children flow past us and go out into the world while we stand still as proud onlookers, deeply privileged to have had a unique opportunity to make a difference to the most special human beings on the planet. We have the opportunity to work with young people at the most exciting time of their lives – every day is different, memorable and magical. Thank you for trusting us and making this possible.

Of course “we rely on each other (ah ha)”; school is about partnerships and trust between staff, pupils, parents and the whole community working together for a common goal.

If you have children still at primary school next year, then treasure every second – they will soon be at secondary school and you will wonder where that time went. If your children are leaving us then thank you for giving us that



precious time with them, thank you to the children for making every day so special and thank you to everyone for keeping the river flowing (fairly) smoothly over the last eighteen months.

To use one last set of water-based metaphors, I will stop gushing, turn off the taps, cut the flannel and get down to some news; fact-based important things that need to be known.

Test and trace

Schools have received new guidance on this - I wrote this section of the last newsletter before the guidance changed, so apologies. From 19th July Test and Trace will handle all contact tracing and requests to isolate, not schools. Therefore from the 19th July you should work via NHS Test and Trace if your child tests positive for COVID-19 (but we would be grateful if you would let us know too until the end of term).

COVID measures

As I have said before, we are keeping the same measures in place until the end of term. Wearing a mask outside on site at drop off and pick up would be appreciated but is not mandatory. Please take a look at the last newsletter for more information on the plans for next year.

Leavers

We have another member of staff leaving us this week. Thank you to Vanessa Ahmed who has worked in Beech class this year and has been working at St James' since January 2019; she has been an amazing person to have on the team. I would like to thank her for all she has done and wish her well in the future.

Ofsted Parent View

Thank you to the four parents who have completed this for me. I would be extremely grateful if you could find some time to complete this before the end of term, especially those Year 6 parent who are about to leave us. Just as a reminder:

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/parent-view-results/survey/result/13858/11>

Mobile phones and other smart devices

Just a brief reminder that these are not allowed in school.

Sports day results

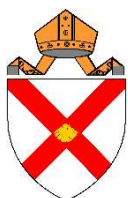
What a day of sport we had last week! In the infants all the children were winners – congratulations! In Key Stage 2 the results were as follows:

Sportsmanship:	Hilbert
Morning events:	Dunorlan
Afternoon track events:	Grove

Congratulations to Calverley too for playing the game and trying their best throughout the day; it was a close run thing. Thanks again to Mrs Dennett for organising the infants and Mr Hodges for organising the juniors.

Midday supervisors needed

We are in need of midday supervisors to help look after the children at lunchtimes. If you would like to know more about the role, please call the office and ask to speak to Angie Pierce. If you are interested in joining and would like an application form, please call and ask for Angie Walker. If your name is Angie this might get confusing.



Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges

Many congratulations to this week's winners:

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Number of Quizzes Achieved	Highest Class Word Count
Divit in Fox Class	Divit in Fox Class	Chaffinch Class
1,351,400 words	54 quizzes	5,780,247 words

Thank you so much for all your support with reading this year. It is very much appreciated.

Ms Simpson

Pete the Pond

Exciting news! The school pond has been completely refurbished and a new dipping platform built in by the amazing team led by Pete the Pond.

Nathan, Terry, Daniel and Lawrence did an absolutely superb job over 2 days, clearing the pond, restocking and building a new platform, ready for the children to enjoy next term. In addition, they built a hedgehog house, a huge bug hotel and a hibernaculum from the leftovers of the old decking. Pete, in the meantime, delighted the children by showing them the newts and frogs recovered from the overgrown sedges and introducing them to his parrot, Lottie, a star in her own right!

Many thanks to them for their hard work and time spent with the children. We will all thoroughly enjoy this incredible new resource for years to come.

Mrs Hadley



A message from Stephen Pollard CBE, Chair of Governors

Dear Parents,

As we reach the end of a school year like no other, I would just like to extend the thanks of the whole Governing Body to all of you for helping the School to deliver the best education possible to your children. You have had a lot to put up with: lockdowns, home schooling, sudden requirements to isolate your children, staggered start and finishing times, and curbs on some out-of-school activities. Thank you for your cooperation and support; and a special thanks to all the children for working and behaving so well at such a difficult time. We would also like to thank and congratulate Mr Tutt, Miss Hayward and all the staff for their exceptional achievements in keeping the show on the road over the past 16 months. We wish them, and you, a happy and peaceful summer, and look forward to welcoming many of you back in September. Our best wishes also go to those students who are going on to secondary school.

Dates for the diary

19 th July	New reception children visiting (am) Year 6 afternoon and evening performances
20 th July	New reception children visiting (pm) Year 6 leavers' service (Year 6 parents only invited) Year 6 evening performance
21 st July	End of term
1 st September	INSET day
2 nd September	First day back for children (Years 1 to 6) Early Years stay and play (am)
3 rd September	Early Years stay and play (pm)
9 th September	11+ Kent Tests
21 st October	Last day of term 11+ results sent to parents
22 nd October	INSET day
31 st October	Deadline for secondary school applications
1 st November	1st day of new term

Have a lovely summer and again, thank you all, as always.

John Tutt
July 2021

