



Dates for the diary

17 th January	School discos for all years
29 th January	Year 6 bikeability starts
9 th February	INSET day – school closed
12 th February	Half term week
19 th February	Term 4 starts
26 th March	Year 5 led church service (2pm – Y5 parents welcome to attend)
28 th March	Easter Egg hunt and end of term
29 th March	Easter holidays start

Newsletter – Friday 12th January 2024

Dear parents and carers,

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you had a restful and enjoyable Christmas, and that you were fortunate enough to have been able to take a decent break from work over the festive period. Most of all, I hope that 2024 has got off to an amazing start for you.

2024 has already given us the answer on how to get widespread public support and political engagement on any issue – simply create an ITV drama about it. It seems odd that people needed to watch a fictional portrayal about those poor, wrongly convicted postmasters to trigger an empathy response that I always assumed should come naturally to any story of human suffering. Either this, or people just don't watch or listen to the real news anymore.

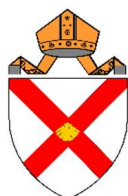
The lesson from this is clear: we need to dramatise the news with familiar actors playing the part of those suffering around the world. Key concerns such as global warming and the plight of refugees would suddenly become important enough to the TV viewing demographic for them to start to engage and demand change and compassionate policies.

Once these global issues had been tackled we could take advantage at a Tunbridge Wells level and ask some A-list names to star in dramas tackling local issues: Helen Mirren stars as the distraught school neighbour whose drive is blocked every school day morning; Toby Jones stars as the long-suffering father who has to walk his children to school past people in parked cars idling their engines. Problems solved.

Fortunately, we have such a wonderful school community that no dramatisation is necessary for full engagement with school matters. Please read on for some start of term news.

Driving within the school car park

Please can parents dropping off at Breakfast Club or collecting from after school clubs please drive slowly and safely inside the school grounds. Remember that pedestrians on the footpath have priority when car drivers wish



to enter or leave the school driveway – a secondary child walking to school was narrowly missed by a parent in a car on Thursday morning.

Staffing news

We are very sad to be saying “goodbye” to Jane Simkins who has been working in Dormouse class this year and at St James’ for (seemingly) longer than I have been alive! Jane has had a variety of roles including Clerk to the Governors and Senior Teaching Assistant and carries out other crucial roles involving supporting children with medicines, allergies, first aid and helping to organise the Year 6 residential. She will be sorely missed by us all and we wish her well in her retirement.

We have your bunny

A bunny has been found that must have fallen off a child’s bag. It is healthy and in good spirits. If this bunny belongs to your child, please let the school office know. The image is below – the photo may look a bit like a hostage mugshot, but I can assure you that the bunny is in good spirits and is currently supporting me with several crucial aspects of school leadership.



School council message on parking with the engine running (with a slightly menacing ending)

Firstly, the new school council members are meeting on a Wednesday lunchtime to talk about what the school needs. We are asking our classmates what is right for the school and what it needs.

Last year school council and some other people made banners to advise people to turn off their engines when they are parked. They are going on the fence outside the school gate so please look out for them. Make sure you do what they say.

St James’ School Council

Early Years

Reception have started the topic 'Abracadabra!' The children were very excited on Tuesday to discover there was a scene from the story 'The Princess and the Wizard' in their classrooms. All of the characters from the story had been turned to stone. The children have been busy exploring the school environment to see if they can track down Princess Eliza and The Wizard. We are wondering what will happen next!



Lucy Coward



Year 2 topic starter

On Monday, Year 2 received a very exciting letter inviting them to spend a day exploring what it would be like to be a King or Queen. They were granted the titles of 'Lord' or 'Lady' and explored different aspects of royal life. The children discovered where Kings and Queens might live and had a go at building their own castles; designed their own crowns and explored royal etiquette and posed for their own royal portraits. We are now diving into our topic and exploring some royal figures throughout history, starting with Henry VIII.

Sarah Greenfield



Year 4 topic starter

Year 4 have enjoyed their stunning start by flying to the North Pole. With their passports ready, they went through security and they flew on an Icelandic Air plane. During the flight the children enjoyed drinks and snacks before landing at the North Pole ready to take a journey down the Meridian line this term.

Kate Jones



Attendance

School target	96.5%
Current whole school attendance	95.6%

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**



PE uniform news reminder

Black shadow stripe shorts are now available to purchase from Price & Buckland for the KS1 PE shorts. There are no green shorts in stock so we are moving over to black for the whole school. However, there is no need to change if people still have green shorts, and these will still be an accepted part of the school PE kit until they all wear out.

Spare uniform items

We are in need of any KS2 girls' knickers or tights your children may have grown out of. Also, any spare swimming kit would be fantastic. Clean only please!

Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges 12.01.24

What a fantastic start to this term of reading we have had so far! We continue to strongly promote reading for pleasure and encourage all children to maximise the reading opportunities they have, and there have been some incredible achievements since the start of this term.

Here are this week's overall winners:

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Divit in Osprey Class 687,123 words	Osprey Class 2,218,836 words	Isabelle B in Swift Class 15 quizzes	Badger Class 81 quizzes

In addition to Osprey Class, these classes also read more than one million words:

- **Owl Class – 1,908,129** words
- **Kestrel Class – 1,472,615** words
- **Stoat Class – 1,388,526** words
- **Badger Class – 1,356,814** words
- **Chaffinch Class – 1,229,188** words
- **Dormouse Class – 1,169,883** words
- **Swift Class – 1,089,755** words

Thank you for all your support and encouragement with reading at home. Together, we can develop all children's life-long love of reading.

Mrs Simpson

Have a lovely weekend.

Kindest regards,

John Tutt

