



Dates for the diary

19 th July	Reception/Year 1 end of year assembly (KS2 hall 2:30pm)
22 nd July	Year 6 leavers' service (2pm start)
23 rd July	Last day of the school year
2 nd September	INSET day
3 rd September	First day of the new school year
9 th September	Early Years start part time
9 th September	Meet the teacher - Years 4 & 5
10 th September	Meet the teacher - Years 2 & 3
11 th September	Meet the teacher - Years 1 & 6
16 th September	Early Years start full time
18 th September	Meet the teacher - Reception

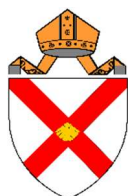
(Nearly) End of Year Newsletter - 19th July 2024

The phrase "you couldn't make it up" is an overused one, although possibly accurate for the last few weeks. On Wednesday I wrote the first draft for this newsletter opening, where I was thankful for a calmer school year. I even suggested that to all the new Reception parents it must have seemed as if they were sending their children to a normal school, just like the ones their friends send their children to. After yesterday's "incident", I am therefore saying nothing about the next few days. I would just like to single out Katie Smith, one of our Forest School teachers, who immediately gave chase yesterday while trying to take a photograph, without a thought for her own wellbeing. Total legend and St James' hero.

In common with most adults, headteachers are worriers; there is always something for your mind to fix upon in the early hours and, in those rare wakeful 2am occasions when there isn't, you find yourself trying to think one up. Some headteachers seem to have the weight of the world upon their shoulders, with demands increasing and resources diminishing. However, rarely a day passes when I do not feel truly blessed for being the head at this school.

On a rare sunny lunchtime last week, I was supervising on the junior field and watching the children playing on the climbing frame with complete joy. Obviously, I had a worry on my mind at the time. It occurred to me at that moment, that my entire job really boils down to facilitating the pure joy of these children and giving them the best possible start in life. When put like this, I honestly cannot think of a better cause to have devoted my life.

The Year 6 play was amazing, and we will miss those wonderful children as their time at St James' comes to an end. It does not seem 5 minutes ago that I was greeting their parents at the new Reception welcome evening in 2017. Their love of life and learning has left a mark on us all - we are proud of their achievements and know they will make their new schools' proud. Some of the families are leaving the school after many years and I thank them for putting their faith and trust in our school.



St James' has the best staff team of any school I know, and they are united in their passion for doing their best by the children. Two of those wonderful people are, as you know, leaving us at the end of this year and I would like to thank again Mrs King and Mrs Featherstone for the years of hard work, energy and love they have given the staff and children. We will miss them terribly and wish them a well-deserved, restful retirement. Mrs King had her leavers' assemblies this morning and took her challenges brilliantly. Mrs Featherstone has her ordeal on Tuesday next week. I have a few photos of Mrs King below, who had to walk blindfolded through trays of different substances, while guessing what she was standing in.



Like St James', families have their own rituals. The Tutt family annual summer plans revolve around a trip to various mountains, where we cycle up to the top and back down again; the feeling of achievement after having cycled up a mountain, surrounded by stunning beauty, never gets old. Usually, my immune system collapses as soon as the school has broken up; last year was no different so I somehow climbed the Passo Stelvio, in Italy, alongside my youngest son (on my 50th birthday), with a chest infection and hacking cough. I spent 20km cycling uphill, following Henry and feeling like one of those ordinary bunnies, trying to keep up with the Duracell one.



The climb was a steady grind, counting down through 39 hairpins (each one is numbered) of spectacular scenery, with the silence only periodically marred by the fast cars or noisy motorcycles. My 70-year-old uncle had reached the top more than a few minutes before us. The views from the summit, with the road zig zagging down the other side and with my wife and middle son in the distance, steadily working their way together up the last few hairpins, made me almost burst into tears with pride and an overwhelming feeling of joy at such a perfect moment.

Likewise, we have reached the summit of the school year, and we have reached it together as a community, if not as a family. As this term ends and I look back down the metaphorical slopes of the school year, with the



challenges the children and staff have met and overcome, and the journeys taken and the achievements made, but also the countless perfect moments that we are privileged to witness each day, I feel much the same now as I sit writing this. I love this school.

Have a lovely summer and I look forward to seeing you to do this all over again in September. If you are in or around the Pyrenees in early August, all being well, we may see you there.

Year 6 Play

Year 6 have performed their play, Ali Baba and the Bongo Bandits, to many audiences this week. They have made us all proud and we have loved watching the characters building through the week. Thanks to all of those who came along to watch and joined in with the laughter and applause - it really makes such a difference!



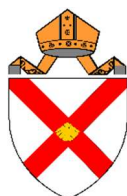
Mrs Holland

Netball

The St James' team ended a very successful year with the traditional alumni netball match. There was a great response from last year's year 6 and it was lovely to see them back and looking the same but somehow so much taller. It was especially lovely to see the boys and to see that they still had an interest in netball as a sport for all. The game was fast and highly skilful. By the third quarter the year 7 team were 9-5 up. In the last quarter as I have come to expect a resilient year 6 fought back and the game ended 10 all.

The team leaves St James' in the proud position of winning most of their matches and winners of the Tunbridge Wells Schools Netball tournament and runners up in the Kent Schools tournament.

Miss Gibson



Miss Gibson

We want to say a huge thank you to Mrs Gibson for her continuous netball sessions over the last year. Thanks to her, our netball team have become so skilled that the whole area is too scared to play us, knowing how many points they will lose by! She has been a true champion at getting the children game aware. What a star!

Year 4

Year 4 have had a fantastic finish to their Anglo-Saxon topic, making brooches and masks linked to the Sutton Hoo discovery as our Art for the term.



Mrs Jones

Year 6 hoodies and jumpers

Year 6 are welcome to wear their hoodies to school next week. In exchange, if you have a child in Year 6 and this is your last child at the school, we would be immensely grateful if you could bring in your child's jumper(s) and donate them to the PTA.

Piano tuning

If you can tune our piano, or know someone who can, we would love to hear from you (or them)! Please contact Rachel Piper at rpiper@st-james.kent.sch.uk if you can help.

Toy donations

For next year we are hoping to expand our resources for children with additional needs and would like to provide a bank of nurturing resources to support this. If you are having a sort out over the summer, we would be grateful for any donations of nursery aged toys.

In particular, we are hoping for resources such as:

- simple puzzles
- shape sorters
- home themed role play toys
- any sensory toys
- small world toys
- cause and effect toys (push a button and something happens!)



Many thanks
SEN Team

Donations for Year 1

Year 1 are hoping to revamp their outdoor area. We are looking for:

Dressing up clothes (hats, scarves and handbags too)

Small pans

Cooking utensils (whisks, large spoons)

Picnic plates and cutlery.

Gardening tools (small)

Bamboo sticks

Plastic jugs

Measuring spoons

Toy cars

Play people

Wood bark

Large pebbles (the sort you find on Hasting beach)

Old plastic fish tanks

Paint brushes any size

Meet the teacher

At the start of the school year, we invite all those parents (who are able) to come into school to meet their child's teacher. These take place on the days/dates at the top of this newsletter. The start time is 2:45pm and they will be finished by 3:10 in time for Reception parents to collect their children.

Have a lovely summer everyone. See you on Monday!

Kindest regards, deepest thanks and very best wishes,

John Tutt

