



Dates for the diary

22 nd March	Parent Rep meeting & Easter Egg Bingo after school
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
15 th April	Children return to school
17 th April	Sharing Learning (14:45 until 15:15)
18 th April	Sharing Learning (8:45 until 9:15)
22 nd April	Year 6 residential week
13 th May	SATs week
18 th June	Sports Day
2 nd September	INSET day
3 rd September	First day of the new school year

Newsletter Extra– Friday 15th March

Dear parents and carers,

We have certainly had a busy couple of weeks, with the Ofsted inspection as the “highlight”. Perhaps due to post-Ofsted weariness I have fewer contributions than usual, so please accept this introduction as the “padding” it is intended to be.

Ofsted – 5th and 6th March

We had a team of four inspectors on day one and three of those returned on day two. We feel they were a mainly fair team who tried their best to come to some accurate judgements on our school. Overall, staff were treated with kindness and respect, and we are thankful to them for that. The inspection itself (my second within 12 months) reinforced the subjective nature of Ofsted and how different inspectors interpret the guidance in different ways and then come to different judgements on the same thing. We cannot share the provisional outcome with you, but we are very grateful that it is over.

So far, we have only had verbal feedback and await the draft report. Once I have given my feedback on the draft (headteachers’ feedback is almost always completely ignored), it then goes through several layers of “blanding” in order to ensure it is as generic and without substance as possible. The final report, along with those one-word gradings, will usually be published within 30 school days and we hope that it retains the positive messages we were given verbally.

My main highlight though was not the Ofsted framework, the inspection or its findings as that will have to wait for the published report. My reason for writing this section is to express profound gratitude to many people.

262 parents completed Parent View and of those, 155 included comments in the free text section, of which the overwhelming majority were positive and supportive. Unfortunately, only 4 of these comments were shared with us; schools do not have access to them. However, these 4 comments were enough to bring tears from my team



(good tears). The lead inspector said that the response to Parent View and the level of positivity was “exceptional”. Many parents also brought in cards, snacks or sent messages to us via email. Even the messages on the absence line were supportive (once the parent had finished explaining the symptoms).

Staff and pupils were also surveyed via anonymous online forms and their responses were humbling. The children were amazing ambassadors for those two days, as they are for every other day.

I cannot thank our community enough (parents, governors and staff alike) for their support and understanding. Good wishes, smiles and jokes, professionalism and a dedication to making the life of every child we care for the best it can be, is at the heart of who we are and what we do. St James’ is a special place and one that it is a privilege to be a part of.

I only hope that the outcome of the inspection is one that will justify your trust. My fears of letting my team down and you down (along with my phobias of large spiders and food cooked by children) have been a consistent part of my psyche for the last seven years; for that reason, this week has felt like a strange one.

RE day

We are excited to have our special RE Easter Day on the 27th March which is the last Wednesday of term. All children need a pair of wellies so if they are not at school already, please could they bring them in, along with a waterproof, warm coat. Thank you.

Tricia King

Year 2 Tennis Taster Session

On Tuesday, Year 2 were visited by tennis coaches Clint and Jennie. They experienced a tennis taster session involving lots of footwork drills as well as using their hand-eye coordination to bounce and catch the ball. Clint and Jennie demonstrated some of the other skills that could be explored if the children were keen to take up tennis. Bar one slight confusion between Andy Murray and Andy Warhol (at least we know the children can recall artists they have studied this year), the children showed a great understanding of tennis and all had a wonderful time. Thank you to Mrs Naismith for arranging the session for us.

Sarah Greenfield

Attendance

School target	96.5%
Current whole school attendance	95.7%

Netball update

The St James netball teams competed in the Tunbridge Wells 7's netball tournament. We entered two teams. All the children played superbly and showed off their skills impressively. The B team, mainly composed of year 5 unfortunately won only one of their matches but as this was the first time they had played together they were very impressive.

The A team won each of their 'round' matches: shooting and defending with great teamwork and skill. The final, however was much closer, but the team never gave up and fought themselves back to be victorious and take the trophy again.

Sue Gibson

Kindest regards,



