



Dates for the diary

22 nd October	Year 2 Harvest church service 2pm – Year 2 parents welcome to attend
23 rd October	PTA disco
24 th October	Last day of term 1
25 th October	INSET day
28 th October	Half term week
4 th November	First day of term 2
5 th November	PTA AGM (change of date)
15 th November	Rock Star Day
17 th December	Year 3 Christmas church service 2pm – Year 3 parents welcome to attend
20 th December	Last day of term 2
6 th January 2025	INSET day
7 th January	First day of term 3

Friday 18th October 2024

We are nearly at the end of our first term, and it has been a long one. 8 weeks is as long as a term gets and the children are clearly getting very tired and in need of a chance to rest and recuperate after working so hard. It has been wonderful to see how well the children and adults have worked together to form those special relationships that are so important for successful schools. We have seen the children settle and grow into their new classes and we are very proud of them.

Year 3 had their first overnight trip while at St James' at Carroty Wood in Tonbridge. I was lucky enough to spend some time with two out of the three Year 3 classes, and was humbled by the hard work of our staff who put so much into making this such a special event for the children. I was also impressed by the children's determination to make the most of the opportunity and cram in as much fun as was possible in the time they had.

The St James' community is one which works together, with kindness and respect for others for the benefit of the whole school and I had this in my mind as I returned from Carroty Wood on Friday morning last week via the Pembury Road.

You are probably already aware that there are two roundabouts on the road from Pembury to Tunbridge Wells and there are two lanes approaching the second. As Clint Eastwood said: "There are two types of people in the world my friend", and these two lanes effectively divide humanity. I am not suggesting that Clint had Pembury in mind when he said it – back then the Pembury bypass "was all fields", but it sums up how I feel every time I find the need to travel from Pembury to Tunbridge Wells.

As I said, there are two lanes approaching the second roundabout: the left lane is to go straight ahead towards Tunbridge Wells while the right lane is to turn right towards Tonbridge. Fewer people seem want to go Tonbridge (for some reason) so the left-hand queue is longer.



Most people want to go to straight ahead to Tunbridge Wells and just sit and wait in the queue (me included); a minority, who want to go to Tonbridge, use the right lane. However, another small but sizeable minority who want to go to Tunbridge Wells use the right lane anyway to jump the queue and then barge their way in after the roundabout.

Honestly, it has not been not their driving or pushing in that has annoyed me – rubbish drivers are everywhere as I see every time I take my bike for a ride. What always got to me is why I was so bothered about it – until Friday.

As I returned from Carrotty Wood and queued in that left-hand lane, it occurred to me to take inspiration from the Year 3 children who had done so well working together in their teams, and the staff team that had worked so hard to look after them. I remembered that all we can do is ensure we are doing the right thing by not putting ourselves before others and to keep in mind that there are others in that queue who may have a far more important journey than we do but who wait patiently in line all the same. The ability to queue goes further than just awaiting your turn: queuing is about working as a team, in the knowledge that by doing so we will all get there in our own time; to queue is to understand and appreciate our innate equality; queuing is a part of our heritage and what makes us who we are. Those patiently queuing, even if they do not realise it, are living the St James' spirit and I am proud to wait in a line either behind or in front of them. In the same way I pity those who clearly do not share these values.

In summary, this monologue is a very long-winded way of saying the children have been amazing, I am proud of my team and please use the correct lane when approaching a roundabout.

Harvest

We celebrate Harvest next week, and as a part of that celebration we like to collect as many tins as possible for the local foodbank. If you can afford to do so, we would be grateful if you could buy a couple of extra tins when shopping so your child can bring them to school next week. We will be collecting all week.

Staffing news

We are very sorry to be saying goodbye to Karen Phillips who has been at St James' for more than 17 years and is currently working in Rabbit class. Karen has also been the person solely responsible for feeding the children and staff at the Year 3 Carrotty Wood residentials over the last few years. Karen has been a fantastic Teaching Assistant and will be fondly remembered and sadly missed; we wish her a wonderful life after St James' and I would like to say a huge "thank you" for all she has done for our school and the many children she has worked with.

Thank you to the PTA committee

I just want to say a "thank you" to the small but wonderful team who lead the St James' PTA. This small group of volunteers give up hours of their time to arrange activities for the children or raise much needed money for the school – we are immensely grateful to them.

Please remember that the PTA are all volunteers, and they do their very best to organise these lovely events that are such an important part of the school calendar. If you have the time to help and grow this small but dedicated team this would be very much appreciated; if anyone has ideas or improvements please come along and have your say at the AGM or join the committee.



School information

If you have moved house (in the last 6 months), or changed your mobile number, email address etc please let the office know. Wherever possible, please make sure we have at least two emergency contacts on file.

Secondary applications

Secondary applications must be made online by the 31st October. Oversubscription criteria and other information for all local secondary schools are available on the KCC website.

Rock Star Day – years 3 to 6

On Friday 15th November 2024 we invite the children in years 3 to 6 to our Rock Star Day. Children can wear rock clothes and will be playing Times Table Rock Stars against each other in the hall whilst live musicians play rock music.

There will be prizes to be won and we will improve our multiplication recall at the same time. More information to follow....

Early Years news

The children in reception have had a very busy first half term at school. They have been making friends, learning about each other, identifying similarities and differences between us and our families, along with exploring the school environment. They have had fun on the trim trail and have thoroughly enjoyed spending time in their woodland sessions.

The children are getting really tired so will definitely welcome the half term break when it arrives.

If anyone has any old spare uniform that your child has grown out of that could be kindly donated to reception for those occasional accidents, we would be hugely grateful. We are very short of boys' underwear, socks, trousers and girl's underwear, tights, socks and school dresses.



Train to teach through Teach Kent & Sussex

Did you know that St James Primary school works with Teach Kent & Sussex to provide exceptional school-based teacher training? Schools like ours play an important role in training new teachers, many of whom hear about us through our community networks.

Whether you have spent time working in a school environment, are a recent graduate, or are looking for a complete change in career, teaching could be for you.

Why not join Teach Kent & Sussex's Train to Teach information event at Bennett Memorial School on Tuesday 22nd October at 7pm to find out more? To register for this free to attend event please do so at:



<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/train-to-teach-information-event-teach-kent-sussex-tickets-1026740958847?aff=oddtcreator>

Team your existing skills and life experiences with Teach Kent & Sussex’s high-quality teacher training and qualify as a primary or secondary school teacher in 12 months (full-time training) or 24 months (part-time training). Financial help as you train is available, with bursaries and scholarships for up to £31,000 in some secondary subjects.

Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges 18th October 2024

Each week, it is always a pleasure to look at the number of words read and the number of quizzes passed by each child in all the KS2 classes. Every child, and every class, has the opportunity to be the week’s leaders so every word and every quiz really does count. Here are the overall winners from the last two weeks:

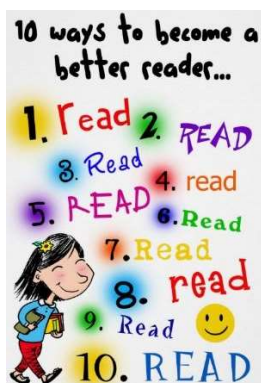
- **11th October 2024**

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Aaron in Vole Class 272,297 words	Stoat Class 1,075,540 words	Hela in Swift Class 30 quizzes	Swift Class 150 quizzes

- **17th October 2024**

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Shameta in Kestrel Class 298,782 words	Kestrel Class 806,200 words	Hela in Swift Class 19 quizzes	Dormouse Class 87 quizzes

Keep reading everyone!
Mrs Simpson



Kindest regards,
John Tutt

