



Remember that term dates and other dates are available on the school website.

20 th October	Year 3 Carrotty Wood over next 4 days
20 th October	Year 4 church service 2pm - Year 4 parents welcome to attend
20 th October	Harvest Festival – Donations to be brought in please!
26 th October	Half term week
2 nd November	Inset Day (School closed)
2 nd November	Secondary school application window closes today (see below)
3 rd November	First day of Term 2
3 rd & 5 th November	Parent consultations
4 th November	Own clothes day – Donations for Secret present room
6 th November	Individual School Photos
11 th November	Sharing learning (2:45pm) Y1 to Y6
12 th November	Sharing learning (8:45am) Y1 to Y6
2 nd December	PTA Wreath Making
4 th December	PTA Christmas secret present room
8 th to 10 th December	Infant nativity performances to parents
11 th December	Flu vaccinations
15 th December	Year 3 church service (2pm start) – Y3 parents welcome to attend
16 th December	Christmas Lunch and Christmas jumper day
17 th December	RE day
18 th December	Last day of term
4 th January 2027	First day of Term 3

Friday 16th October 2026

Happy Friday everyone! Welcome to the last newsletter of Term 1, the one you've all been waiting for. We are seven weeks into the school year with no unforeseen crises, animal incursions or random building material related sudden closures.

What a rainy morning we had at drop off - I realise I am getting old, but not yet old enough to be used to spending a whole morning feeling damp from the waist down.

Last week, at lunchtime on the St James' field, I saw two children playing a game of conkers. This was the first time I had seen anyone playing the game since the early 1980s and I had an instant flash of excitement – my hopes for a revival of heritage children's pastimes seemed to be becoming a reality. When I was a child, playing conkers was as much a part of school life as an entire week spent weaving baskets for the harvest tins (?), meat with tubes or unfeasibly pink custard for school lunch, dinner ladies with the compassion of a gulag prison guard, or the classic "vest and pants!" call out before a PE lesson. Speaking of which, when did universal vest wearing stop being a thing?



I have been trying to encourage children to experience the highs and lows, thrills and spills of competitive conkering in Crowborough and, with so many excellent conkers going to waste, now is as good a time as any to dip into the sport. For those of you worried about the risk of allergies, I have checked whether conkers are suitable in an otherwise nut-free school, and it seems we are safe on that front. If your child wishes to bring conkers into school, they are very welcome – safety goggles and protective equipment are not required.

Right, let's get into pre-half term school news.

Unclaimed bicycle

There is a black children's Donnay bicycle locked up in our bike shed which has been there for around 5 months. Please can you call the school office if this belongs to you – if not we will cut the lock and remove as space is at a premium in that shed (and it is amazing to see so many children cycling or scooting to school).

On the matter of the bicycle shed, if your child cycles to school please store their bike as carefully as you can – sometimes bikes are left in a large pile. Bicycles are very precious things so please store as carefully as you can.

Secondary school admissions

Please take a look at the attached flyer which gives guidance and links for applying for a secondary school (for parents with children in Year 6). We are here to help if you have any questions. The deadline for making your application is **2nd November**.

Primary school admissions

If you have a child who is due to start primary school in September 2027, then please be advised applications are open between Friday 6th November 2026 - Friday 15th January 2027 and can be made at www.kent.gov.uk/primaryadmissions. If parents are unable to access the online site, an alternative format can be requested by emailing kentonlineadmissions@kent.gov.uk.

Harvest Festival

We will be collecting donations for St Matts community larder on Tuesday 20th October which is the date of our Harvest Festival service at the church. Suggested donations include pasta, cereal, rice, tinned foods, pasta sauce, jam or squash. We will have a table set up outside the junior building near the school office on the day for you to drop off any donations. For more information on the Community larder and how it helps please click on the link. [St.Matt's Church St. Matt's Community Larder - St.Matt's Church](#)

Own clothes day Wednesday 4th November

Children will be able to come to school on Wednesday 4th November in their own clothes in exchange for donations for the secret present room.

Please could we have donations of brand-new items for the children to choose from as gifts. Including for adult women, adult men and children of all ages.

There will be drop off points open from 8.30-9.00 at the junior and infant end of the carpark on Wednesday the 4th November.

Also, a reminder that tickets for the secret present room are on sale now.

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/stjamesinfantandjuniorschoolspta/2440988>

The Secret Present Room will take place on Friday 4th December. Tickets are £5 each, instructions are on the ticket website.



Children receiving 'targeted or extended' free school meals (not including those on universal free school meals in the infants) receive 2 free tickets each to the present room, please register for these at the school office from the 19th October onwards.

Shared Learning 11th & 12th November

This will be for years 1 - 6. Reception will be organising a separate event in the new year when the children are more settled at school. Therefore, children in reception will arrive at school as normal. Information will come out next half term.

New Lunch Menu

There will be a new lunch menu starting after October half term. The menu is attached. As always please pre order on Arbor. From half term, if your child does not have a meal ordered, you will be asked to bring a packed lunch up to the school. Our office will not be able to add meals to Arbor on your behalf.

Poppy Appeal 2026

From the 3rd November we will be selling poppies, snap bands, reflective poppies, wristbands, poppy stickers and pencils. We will be coming round the children's classroom each day during the week. We will only sell one item per child as otherwise everything is sold in the first day – your generosity will be much appreciated. The suggested donation is £1 for reflective poppies, wristbands, and pencils and £2 for the snap bands.

Football Update – A Great Week for St James!

It's been a busy week of football for St James, with two exciting matches showcasing the talent, determination and sportsmanship of our boys' teams.

On Tuesday, our **B team** took on St Barnabas in the St James area El Clásico! The boys put in a fantastic performance, securing an impressive **7–1 victory**. Even more importantly, they were excellent representatives of the school, demonstrating great teamwork, respect and sportsmanship throughout. Well done, boys!

On Thursday, our **A team** faced a very strong Speldhurst side in the West Kent Cup. It was a thrilling, end-to-end contest, with both teams battling hard for victory. Speldhurst took an early lead before St James fought back brilliantly to go 2–1 ahead. However, Speldhurst found an equaliser, taking the game to a penalty shootout after a hard-fought 2–2 draw. Sadly, the penalties didn't go our way this time, but the boys can be incredibly proud of their performance and determination.

Well done to everyone who represented St James this week! Whether celebrating a fantastic win or showing resilience in a tough contest, all the boys did the school proud!

Mr Fern

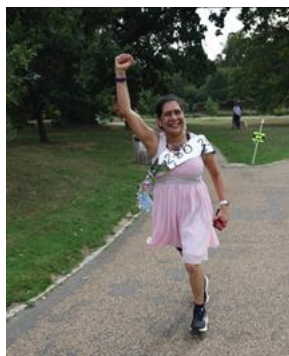
Mrs McFarlin

One of our wonderful teaching assistants, Juanita (Mrs McFarlin) has been an inspiring ambassador for health, fitness and community spirit. Having been a Parkrun ambassador since her first run in 2017, a couple of weeks ago, she reached a truly remarkable milestone of 250 Park Runs, celebrated in style at Royal Tunbridge Wells Parkrun, Dunorlan Park. Even more impressively, on top of this, Juanita has also contributed over 180 volunteer sessions, generously supporting others on their own Parkrun journeys too.

Juanita's enthusiasm for running is infectious, and her passion has encouraged many colleagues to lace up their trainers and take part in local running events. We would like to thank Juanita for everything she does and



congratulate her on this fantastic achievement. Your commitment, encouragement and positivity are valued by everyone who knows you. Well done, Juanita! 🏃 🌸



Seen here running in this beautiful pink dress to help celebrate a friend's wedding that day!

Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges

A really huge “Well Done” to all our winners over the past two weeks.

Here are last week’s winners (9th October):

	Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
Year 6	Kate in Osprey	Owl	Daelyn in Osprey	Osprey
Year 5	Alessandro in Nightingale	Chaffinch	John in Chaffinch	Chaffinch
Year 4	Oscar Cz in Stoat	Dormouse	Leo in Dormouse	Dormouse
Year 3	Athena in Badger	Badger	James in Fox	Fox

- A special mention to Owl and Osprey who read more than one million words last week.

The winners for this week (16th October) are:

	Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
Year 6	Alistair in Kestrel	Kestrel	Kate in Osprey	Osprey
Year 5	Arlo in Nightingale	Nightingale	Jarvis in Swift	Swift
Year 4	Oscar Cz in Stoat	Vole	Leo in Dormouse	Dormouse
Year 3	Athena in Badger	Badger	Emily in Deer	Badger



- A special mention to Kestrel and Nightingale who read more than one million words this week.

Please keep reading everyone.

Mrs Simpson

Library events

Southborough have a visit from local children's author Mara Bergman at Southborough library on Tuesday 27th October between 11.00 – 11.45am. This is a free activity – no need to book, for more information talk to a member of staff or email southboroughlibrary@kent.gov.uk

Tuesday 27 October - Gruffalo activity at Sherwood library, 1.00 - 2:30pm

Join us for a fun and imaginative workshop inspired by Julia Donaldson's much-loved story The Gruffalo. This session encourages families to enjoy stories together, spark creativity and build a love of reading through play. The session is free, but booking is required.

Please email sherwoodlibrary@kent.gov.uk for more information.

Thursday 29 October - Discover, Explore, Create - Halloween Fun at Sherwood Library, 10am - midday

This October half-term, children are invited to enjoy our free Halloween themed drop-in activities. From creepy crafts to spooky creations, there is plenty of fun to discover.

Free drop-in session.

Please email sherwoodlibrary@kent.gov.uk for more information

Paddock Wood Library - Halloween Costume Swap (during October)

The Halloween Costume swap is back at Paddock Wood library! Drop off clean/gently used Halloween costumes and dress up accessories during library opening hours throughout October and choose something new to take away.

Please email paddockwoodlibrary@kent.gov.uk for more information

Rusthall Library - Welly Boot and Raincoat Swap (during October)

We are looking for donations for our Welly Boot swap at Rusthall library. Please drop off good condition, clean boots and raincoats (all ages welcome) at the library and find something new to take away.

Please email rusthalllibrary@kent.gov.uk for more information

Half term activities around Tunbridge Wells

With October half-term approaching, you may find this free guide for local families useful: **10 Things to Do for a Tenner or Less This October Half-Term and Halloween 2026!**

Tunbridge Wells Puppetry Festival

Have fun this half-term at the Tunbridge Wells Puppetry Festival, 26–31 October!

Come and enjoy world-class puppetry in all its forms, because not all puppets have strings!

There are free and ticketed performances and workshops taking place across Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, including Royal Victoria Place, Southborough Civic Centre, The Forum and The Pantiles.

Special offer: Use discount code **TICKLEMONSTER** to receive **25% off tickets!**

To explore the programme and book tickets, visit:

[Whats On 2026 – Tw Puppetry Festival](#)



Notcutts Garden Centre

Notcutts Garden Centre and we will be running a "Kids Eat Free" promotion this October half term from Saturday 24th October until Sunday 1st November, when purchased with an adult meal.

Half term holiday clubs

Here are a few suggestions if you are looking for childcare this half term.

Forest school holiday club: <https://bookaby.me/treehouse-education-limited/whats-on#venue=bdd77eaf>

Bricks 4 Kidz October Half Term Lego 🖱️ <https://uk.bricks4kidznow.com/profile.php?id=7847&programid=5728>

Megacamps: www.megacamps.net or call 0333 012 4278

We are delighted to announce that this October half-term, we will once again partner with **Kent County Council** to offer a limited number of **fully funded HAF (Holiday, Activity and Food) places** for children currently eligible for **Targeted Free School Meals** at our Tunbridge Wells Camp, located at **St. Mark's C of E Primary School**, Ramsyle Road.

Each child eligible for the HAF programme receives 5 credits, which can be used to book **5 sessions across 5 days**, with the option to attend either our **morning (AM)** or **afternoon (PM)** sessions.

We will be running from Monday, October 26th, to Friday, October 30th.

Parents of eligible children need to obtain their HAF Voucher Code from yourselves or Kent Council and then book via the [Holiday Activities](#) website.

Have a great weekend.

Kindest regards,
John Tutt

