



Dates for the diary

12 th May	Year 6 SATs week
19 th – 21 st May	Book fair after school (see below)
20 th May	Year 4 church service 2pm (all Y4 parents welcome)
26 th May	Half term week
2 nd June	INSET day
3 rd June	First day of term 6
4 th June	Secondary transition talk for Year 5 parents (6pm)
9 th June	Phonics screenings this week for all Year 1 and some Year 2 children
10 th & 12 th June	Year 5 parent consultation
17 th June	Sports Day
18 th June	Smartphone free childhoods meeting (7pm)
24 th June	New entrant parents' welcome evening
8 th & 10 th July	Parent consultations (except Year 5)
12 th July	Summer fair
21 st July	Year 6 leavers' service at the church 2pm (all Y6 parents welcome)
1 st September	INSET day
2 nd September	First day of the school year for children in years 1 to 6.

Friday 2nd May 2025

What a wonderful week we have had - everything seems better when the sun is shining.

Following on from my last newsletter, one of our St James' parents has offered to lead a meeting on Smartphone free childhoods, and obviously I was delighted to accept. More information is below, and it would be great to see as many parents there as can make it.

Stephen Pollard, our Chair of Governors

Unfortunately, Stephen is unwell at present and has resigned as Chair of Governors at St James' while he concentrates on his recovery. Stephen has been on the governing body for the last 30 years and is going to remain on the team. There will be an election at our next meeting in May for a new chair. All of us at St James' send Stephen our love and best wishes as he begins his treatment.

I will update you on our new chair after the next meeting but, in the interim, our Vice Chairs Judith Hammill and Nina Skomorowski-Brown will step up. Their contact details are on the governor page of the website.



Smartphone free childhoods meeting

For anyone concerned about the risks that smartphones pose to our children's wellbeing, you are warmly invited to a meeting at the school on Wednesday 18th June at 7pm. You may have heard of the idea to delay giving smartphones to our children (#smartphone free childhood). Like me you may think it's the right thing to do, but be unsure about whether it's realistic in the face of the inevitable pressure from our kids who want to fit in with their peers. But what if there is a way that together, we can make it work? A way that we can help them enjoy a childhood based on play, and learn from their real-world experiences in one of the safest places they could live (Tunbridge Wells!). A way to equip them with the tools they need to navigate the world as the happy and engaged adults of the future that we want them to be. What if we could achieve it? I will be discussing these ideas on 18th June, please join me.

Dr. Erin Carroll

Parent to St James children in Yr 5 and 2

Class mixing

As you know, for the last 5 years, we have mixed the classes as they move from Year 3 to 4. When we were two separate schools this mix always occurred in Year 2, and this was moved to Year 3 as I was concerned that the transition to another school was more than enough change for the children for one year.

Moving forwards, we are going to mix the children's classes twice as they move through the school – once at the end of Year 2 and then again at the end of Year 4.

The current Year 3 class will be mixed this year, and will not then be mixed again. Year 2 will also be mixed this year as they move into Year 3, and will then again at the end of Year 4. The current Year 4 will not be mixed again as they were only mixed last year.

We know that mixing classes can cause havoc with parent WhatsApp groups, but we do have excellent reasons for it. We believe that it strongly benefits the children. They make new friends and usually keep their current friendships as well. We realise that making genuine new friendships takes time, but the mix-up will be worth it for the individual children in the long term, as well as for the classes and for the cohesion of the whole school community.

The main reasons for mixing children as they go through the school are below:

- It ensures that the children develop a wider friendship group as they get to know more children – it helps build the year group as a team
- Children learn to manage change and transitions in preparation for secondary school
- Classes remain balanced as they move through the school even after children have left and started - for example each class has a similar boy/girl mix or mix of children with additional needs
- Issues with friendships can be managed effectively.

The teachers in years 2 and 3 will soon send separate letters to you with more information on how this is managed at St James'.

St James' Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

This week I met with Mr Pritchard and our school's new Anti-Bullying Ambassadors - Kacper, Azzura, Jessica, Elsie, Alex, Lucy, Sophie, Sienna, Ivana and Amelia from Year 5. They told me lots about their recent training for this role, including how to recognise someone who may be experiencing bullying and how we need to reframe our



language around bullying. They explained that we should use the term 'perpetrator of bullying' rather than 'bully', and 'target' rather than 'victim', to help separate the actions from the people involved and give the clear message that bullying is something that can be stopped, it's not an inherent part of someone that cannot be changed or an inevitable part of growing up. They had lots of ideas about what they would like to do across the school during the time they are in this role; including giving presentations to classes, running drop-in sessions to give children opportunities to talk to them and organising fundraising events to support Anti-Bullying charities. I was blown away by their maturity, confidence and willingness to give their time to help others. One of our school's targets this year, is '*To make St James' the best school for all pupils*' and I think our new Anti-Bullying Ambassadors will be an asset in helping this happen this year and beyond.

Miss Hayward

Book fair

The Book Fair will be arriving in school later this month with hundreds of the best new children's books to choose from. This year you will be able to purchase 3 books for the price of 2 if you would like to. The cheapest of your three books will be absolutely free!

Being acutely aware of the rise in the cost of living, there will be books priced at £2.99 and approximately 30% of all the titles will be under £5.

The Book Fair will be open for you and your child to come on:

· Monday 19th May, Tuesday 20th May and Wednesday 21st May from 3:20 – 3:50pm

It will be in the KS2 hall.

Books and other information - If you would like to browse some of the books available, please look here:

<https://bookfairs.scholastic.co.uk/parents>.

We will not be able to take any cash payments so please bring your bank card details to complete an online payment.

The link above also tells you all you need to know, including more about making a payment at the Fair.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Book Fair. We truly value your support as every book you buy helps us to get FREE BOOKS for our classrooms or library!

Thank you.

The English Team

NELFT Online Parent Workshops

The Emotional Wellbeing Team are offering the following Online Parent Workshops between now and July - Starting Primary School, Starting Secondary School, Supporting your child with fears and worries, Understanding behaviour and Understanding resilience. Please see the poster below and attached flyers for details. You can register using the QR codes on the posters.

Mrs Wardell





North East London
NHS Foundation Trust



Kent Emotional Wellbeing Team
Medway Emotional Support Team

Online Parent Workshops

Aimed at parents of children in primary school




SCAN ME

Supporting Your Child with Starting Primary School 14/05/2025 10:30am—12:30pm




SCAN ME



SCAN ME

Helping Your Child Move to Secondary School 20/05/25 17:30pm—19:30pm



SCAN ME



SCAN ME

Understanding Your Child's Behaviour 10/06/25 18:00pm—20:00pm



SCAN ME




SCAN ME

Me & My Child Understanding Resilience 24/06/2025 17:30pm —19:30pm



SCAN ME



SCAN ME

Supporting Your Child with Worries & Fears 07/07/25 10:30am—12:30pm



SCAN ME

Year 1 stunning start

Last Friday, Year 1 embarked on their summer term topic with a special "flight"! In the morning, they took their passports to the airport and headed through check in, security and the airport shop until they reached their gate. Once their flight was called, they boarded the plane and took their seats to watch a safety video, enjoy refreshments, onboard entertainment and looking at the countries they passed over, including France, Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. On arrival, the children worked in teams on a treasure hunt to locate puzzle pieces, which they put together to reveal that we were in the continent of Africa. They then discovered that we were specifically in Kenya. In the afternoon the children explored a range of activities, such as going on a safari, and making animal silhouette paintings and African patterns. Tired from their adventures, they took their flight home and enjoyed a landing over the city of London, looking out for landmarks they knew along the way. Year 1 are now feeling inspired to learn more about Kenya!



Mrs Ledger



Early Years



The children in Early Years started their new summer topic this week, 'Let's Go On An Adventure,' by participating in a drama workshop led by PERFORM. The children became explorers to rescue a white lion from extinction. I wonder where the adventures will lead us as we continue our journey as explorers?

Plea - reception are extremely low on spare underwear items, school socks and tights. If your child has outgrown any of these items, Early Years would welcome them for those little accidents. We are also looking for metal utensils for our mud kitchen area, such as large spoons, ladles, spatulas, pots and pans, along with any old wallpaper rolls that you may have tucked away, left over from a decorating project. Any of these items would be greatly received. Thank you.

The Early Years Team

Orchestra members needed

We are looking for some new members to join our school orchestra club. Anyone in Year 3, 4, 5 or 6 can join as long as they can play the first three notes on their instruments. It is a fun, welcoming club that takes place on a Wednesday lunch time and is run by Mrs Smith who is a member of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra.

If you are interested in joining, please email yvonne@mylittleorchestra.co.uk

Mrs Piper

Children's dietary needs

Please can you let your child's class teacher know if their dietary needs have changed, e.g. They have become vegetarian or have developed an intolerance to a food/ingredient.

In order to ensure that specific diets are catered for, please let us know these changes even if your child has a packed lunch most days.

Transition to secondary school talk

If you have a child in Year 5 (or Year 4 and would like a head start), then at 6pm on 4th June I am giving a talk in the KS2 hall about the transition from primary to secondary school. The aim of the evening is to make the choices you have clear, describe the process for making an application and explain the 11+ processes. This will also give Y5 parents some information prior to their meetings with their teachers the following week. It should be finished by 7pm, but those who have heard enough are welcome to leave at any time before that.



Sunshine!

Please give your child a hat to bring to school and apply some sun cream to noses etc before they leave the house. Some children have been coming to school in sunglasses. UV light causes damage to the eyes so we can see why parents might give their children a pair to bring to school. We are fine with children wearing sensible sunglasses (after all, many children wear glasses all of the time to support their vision), but we will remove them if any safety concerns arise – you would be surprised how some children can turn even a humble pair of sunglasses into a dangerous object.

Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges

Here are the overall winners of our reading challenges for Term 4 and the first two weeks of this term:

➤ Winners for Term 4 2025:

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Kate in Dormouse Class 2,384,006 words	Dormouse Class 8,107,945 words	Naomi in Dormouse Class 97 quizzes	Stoat Class 478 quizzes

Every class read more than one million words last term so here is a special mention for all of them!

- o **Osprey** Class – **6,105,936** words
- o **Stoat** Class – **5,325,271** words
- o **Vole** Class – **4,821,718** words
- o **Swift** Class – **3,662,092** words
- o **Nightingale** Class – **3,286,100** words
- o **Chaffinch** Class – **2,661,906** words
- o **Owl** Class – **2,543,468** words
- o **Deer** Class – **2,361,538** words
- o **Kestrel** Class – **2,335,906** words
- o **Badger** Class - **1,101,743** words
- o **Fox** Class – **1,090,707** words

➤ Winners for the week ending 25th April 2025:

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Isabelle W in Osprey Class 632,684 words	Owl Class 1,856,228 words	Naomi in Dormouse Class 13 quizzes	Vole Class 47 quizzes

In addition to Owl Class, these classes also read more than one million words that week:

- o **Dormouse** Class – **1,588,996** words
- o **Nightingale** Class – **1,022,340** words



- o **Osprey Class – 1,675,218 words**

➤ **Winners for the week ending 2nd May 2025:**

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Naomi in Dormouse Class 464,805 words	Osprey Class 1,474,963 words	Naomi in Dormouse Class 15 quizzes	Swift Class 65 quizzes

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

- o **Dormouse Class – 1,298,967 words**
- o **Swift Class – 1,108,571 words**

A very big well done to all the children for their achievements last term and for the start of this term. Every word and every quiz passed really does count, so thank you for your encouragement and support. Mrs Simpson

Kindest regards,
John Tutt

