



Newsletter – 6th November 2020

Dear parents,

Well, we have locked down again, and we now have some pupils and staff at home too. It was inevitable that we would be affected and my thoughts go out to the family with the confirmed case and to all of you at home. Like me, you are probably now beginning to come to terms with the prospect of each day seeming very similar to the last. Working in a school, this is something that I have never really had to experience, and I empathise with all those isolating, furloughed, working from home, struggling to keep their business afloat or sadly now out of work – I know that my two days so far does not compare in any way to those endless weeks during the last lockdown.

The sense of pulling together in a shared endeavour, alongside the hearty weekly applause for our key workers from the last lockdown seems to have been replaced with a weary sense of resignation, complaints from justifiably worried business owners and various arguments about statistical modelling. However people feel about the latest lockdown, the aims of protecting the NHS and ensuring it is not overwhelmed, as well as protecting the most clinically vulnerable in our community, are surely worthwhile causes for us all to support, even if doing so seems a bitter pill to swallow.

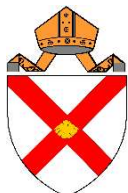
Yet again I am surprised by the fact that many people seem to have responded to a national emergency by buying too many toilet rolls, too much butter and too many bags of flour.

I became aware of this when butter & flour did not appear in our shopping delivery (my wife makes a tasty crumble each weekend) and our usual own brand toilet roll (cheap but functional) was substituted. Thankfully the toilet roll substitution was a realistic alternative (you half expect dried lasagne sheets or similar in this sort of situation), and we were supplied with a quilted and scented toilet tissue. I have to say that this is clear evidence that every cloud has a silver lining – the toilet rolls smell divine and have given our house a complete “scent makeover”; we have even put one on our living room mantelpiece and hidden others in the children’s bedrooms to act as air fresheners. I thoroughly recommend them to you.

Staying open

At St James’ we are very relieved to be allowed to stay open, and I know that is the feeling across the whole school. Hopefully we can maintain as much normality as possible for the children over the course of this term and next. If the local infection rate increases we will need to consider putting additional measures into place to make sure we stay open and do whatever we can to keep COVID at bay and as many children as possible in their classrooms. However, until further notice our staggered starts and maintenance of year group bubbles will continue, as will the importance of parents, pupils and staff isolating and arranging testing if symptoms develop.

In order to help us remain open, we would appreciate it if parents could strictly limit themselves to one adult per family at drop off and pick up. This is hard for us to police as we do not know all the parents as well as we might (who is living with/married to who etc), so please stick to the rules. Some couples



seem determined to both sneak into school at the same time; while I appreciate and applaud your togetherness, if couples are determined to spend quality time together I am happy to suggest better alternatives than the school run. The same goes for grandparents, so please pass this on to them if they are collecting or dropping off your children. It is essential to maintain social distancing at all times, and I really appreciate the almost universal wearing of masks.

Please can I also stress the importance of children arriving no more than 5 minutes before their scheduled start time. I have included these below in case people have misplaced their timetables. We have a particular issue with older children, who often walk to school with friends, arriving early – sometimes up to 20 minutes. This has been a particular issue this week. These children then mingle with other year groups waiting to go inside. Remember that registers and gates do not close until 9:15am for all year groups, and if you have children in more than one year group, these can all be dropped off at the same (later) time.

Years	Start time	Home time	Entrance/Exit
Reception	9:00	3:15	Early Years
Year 1	8:45	2:50	Infant entrance
Year 2	8:55	3:05	Year 2 gate
Year 3	8:45	2:55	Year 3 side gate
Year 4	9:00	3:10	KS2 playground
Year 5	8:45	2:55	KS2 playground
Year 6	9:10	3:20	Main entrance

Remembrance

Next Wednesday we mark Remembrance Day and remember all those who made sacrifices in all wars since the Great War of 1914. We will mark the day with a whole school assembly followed by a silence at 11am. As well as remembering service men and women, I think it is appropriate that this year we also consider our carers who again will be putting their own health at risk to look after others in care homes and hospitals across the country, as well as the shop workers, police, ambulance drivers, fire service, refuse collectors and all of those that look after us.

Parents' evenings

This term, we will be holding parent consultations via MS Teams, through your child's account to give you a chance to see how they have been getting on this term. These will be held the week commencing 30th November and more details about how to book a time with your teacher will follow soon. Most teachers will meet via video, although some will use audio only. We have been using Teams a lot in school and the audio connections are more stable, but we will leave it to the teachers to make the decision on the day.

Christmas play 2020

Christmas is a very special time, especially for children, and while that magic never really goes away it is never the same once we get older. We cannot afford to let a single Christmas go without making it as special as we can for the children, and Christmas at school just would not be the same without a nativity that includes small children doing the "star" actions while singing "Away in a Manger".



With this in mind, as it will not be possible to invite audiences in to the school, the classes in years R, 1 and 2 will be putting together a nativity which we would like to film and make available to parents before the end of term.

Year 4 are also keen to put together their Christmas play for parents to enjoy, and this will be filmed and shared in the same way.

Currently, a number of parents have not given consent for their children to appear in photos/video which appear on the school website. We will be asking parents to consider giving a one-off consent for the nativity only. Children will be performing with their class and no names will be shared (other than the usual emotive "Joseph", "Mary", "Donkey", "Shepherd 3", "4th Mouse" etc). We will hopefully be able to make the whole video available either through Teams or the school website for a limited time only. If parents choose to withhold consent then their child will not appear in the video.

The image/sound quality might not be the best available, but we hope the magic will still be there.

Please note that once the nativity is complete and available to view, it will not be permitted for parents to fast forward to just the part where their child's class is performing.

After school clubs

New guidelines for schools were published on Wednesday which means that we will have to suspend all after school sports/maths clubs until after the lockdown has ended. I really do not see any sense in this, as all clubs are kept within their year group bubbles and so children are at no greater risk than they would be at school. However, we have to follow the rules which are set out for us. We are allowed to continue with lunch time clubs and we are doing our best to see whether these can be organised for your children to attend should they wish to do so. MSporti have already expressed their willingness to run their clubs at lunchtimes and we will send you more information as soon as possible.

After school club/breakfast club is allowed to remain open as they are providing registered childcare to enable key workers to continue working.

Key Stage 1 photographs

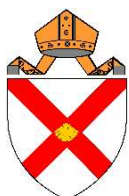
Braiswick will be in on November 16th to take individual photos of children in Years R, 1 and 2. Please ensure all children have a school jumper with them on the day and do your best to smooth down those lockdown haircuts.

Anti-Bullying week 2020

Anti-Bullying week begins on Monday 16th November. The theme for this year is: United Against Bullying. We would like to start the week by inviting the children to wear odd socks on Monday 26th November to remind us that we are all unique. In school, the children will take part in a range of different activities throughout the week.

Book character day (Lower Phase)

The children in the Lower Phase came to school on the last day of term dressed as their favourite book character. We had a Gangsta Granny, Matilda, Stickman and a number of Little Red Riding Hoods! Throughout the week, Mr Tutt and Miss Hayward shared stories with the classes and some children even had a go at sharing stories with children in other classes (all via Teams!) Thank you to all families



for helping to source/make such wonderful costumes for the children. They were so excited to share their character at school and it was a lovely way to end the term. This term, we are continuing to think about our favourite stories and poems as well as exploring stories from other cultures. If your child knows any stories from other cultures, please let the class team know and we will try to share these.

Miss Greenfield

Mr Tumnus' Tea Party

Year 3 had a very exciting day in Narnia (Thursday). All the children came in amazing costumes from the story of 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe'. A few arrived as evacuees with their gas masks, ration books and even a suitcase. There were the children from the story, animals (of all sorts), White Witches, lots of Aslans and so on. In the morning the children did a carousel of activities including a dance based on the story. We put them in charge of sorting out Narnia's lamp-posts by changing them to run on electricity. A couple of groups managed to light seven or eight bulbs using just one battery!

The White Witch changed animals to stone statues. Everyone had a go at changing a tree of twigs to stone using Plaster of Paris then they turned small animals, toys, pinecones, and shells to stone as well. Our 'Narnia' themed classrooms look like Christmas has come early because they are so well decorated in white, silver and blue with lots of lights. After lunch we went into the woods to play Narnia related games and finally we had our tea party. The children decorated their tables which looked stunning. Every child who wanted to, tried Turkish Delight. There were flasks of hot chocolate, special cakes and thoughtful treats to eat. It was a perfect day of escapism into an imaginary world.

Thank you parents for all your contributions and for finding brilliant costumes for your children.

Mrs King

Accelerated Reader

AR Challenge Winners

Well done to all KS2 classes for taking part in our Accelerated Reader challenge each week. All the teachers have been so impressed with the engagement and enjoyment from reading last term. Let's hope it continues! Below are last term's winners and our winners for this week.

Winner from last term:

Individual word count: Lily, Kestrel - 1,568,643

Most quizzes achieved: Charlie, Fox - 47

Class word count: Kestrel - 9,962,653

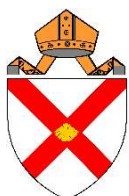
This week's winners:

Individual word count: Cleo, Vole - 617,453

Most quizzes achieved: Grace, Badger - 10

Class word count: Vole - 1,245,328

If your child would like to complete quizzes at home, please follow our unique school link which can be found on our school website under Learning and then Websites. Please encourage your children to complete the quizzes independently and to take their time.



Miss Stock

Forest School (and Badger Class) visit

Forest School and Badger class had a lovely visit at the end of last term from Jeff Cater of the Badger Trust, who came to see our very own badger sett and advise us on how we use the site. He also spoke with the children about the badgers he works with at Folly's Wildlife Rescue Centre, including the recent release of a rare albino, and answered an enormous number of brilliant questions from the children. He was very impressed by both the children and our school's approach to the care of our environment and the many creatures living here, so much so, that he is sending his wife, Jessica, to us in the Spring to speak about her speciality - hedgehogs!

Elsewhere in Forest School, we are loving seeing the huge variety of fungi popping up since the wet weather started and the children have fully embraced every inch of the mud that appeared as a result. We continue to be amazed and excited by the breadth of creativity and ideas the children bring to Forest School, from theatres and beauty salons to barter systems and kites, and grateful to have such wonderful grounds of which they take such enthusiastic ownership.

Mrs Hadley



House Netball

The Year 6 House Netball Tournament reached its conclusion this week. It has been great seeing the children taking part, enjoying their sport in school and performing to a high standard. The Tournament was organised and run by the House and Sports Captains with help from our Sports Leaders, so a big thank you and well done to those children involved. Congratulations to this year's champions...Dunorlan!

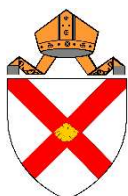
Final standings:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Played</u>	<u>Won</u>	<u>Draw</u>	<u>Lost</u>	<u>GD</u>	<u>Points</u>
1. Dunorlan	3	3	0	0	+12	9
2. Calverley	3	2	0	1	+3	7
3. Hilbert	3	1	0	2	-3	5
4. Grove	3	0	0	3	-12	3

Mr Hodges

Admissions 2021

I have finally managed to make the school tour video work on the school website. It can be accessed under the "About us" tab and then "Admissions". I have also attached a flyer from KCC with information on admissions for 2021.



COVID test results

We would be grateful if we could see a copy of any negative result to make sure everyone is following the correct procedures. Please email a copy to the school office. If your child is isolating, please can you let the office know the reason for this and what date the isolation period began on.

Have a good weekend and thank you all, as always.

John Tutt

November 2020

