



Dates for the diary

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

28 th February	PTA Clothes Swap
4 th to 6 th March	Y4 Amelia Scott visits (1 session per class)
4 th March	Secondary schools transition meeting – 6pm (see below)
5 th March	World Book Day (see below)
10 th to 12 th March	Y1 Amelia Scott visits (1 session per class)
16 th to 18 th March	School book fair
23 rd March	Year 6 residential week
30 th March	NHS school health – Hearing screening for all reception classes
31 st March	Optional information session for parents about play 9am
31 st March	Year 5 Easter Church service 2pm – Year 5 parents are welcome to attend.
1 st April	RE day – Easter
2 nd April	Last day of term 4
3 rd April	Easter holidays
20 th April	First day of term 5

Friday 27th February 2026

Dear parents and carers,

The recent (and temporary) improvement in the weather was the hot topic of the week – it is remarkable how a little bit of sunshine can lift moods and put a spring in everyone's step. The days are getting longer, and you can almost feel our Vitamin D reserves topping themselves up as the sunlight bathes your skin... which then triggers the anxiety of the dangers from sun exposure - especially if you have seen that person on YouTube who advocates covering up every square centimetre, even at night in case errant UV is reflected off the moon.

I had a poor night's sleep last night, so the breakfast decision took longer than expected, which allowed the YouTubers to again take over my brain: if I have eggs, I'll get the protein my body needs, but my gut will miss the benefits of natural yoghurt and berries. Anyone else find themselves googling the protein content of a medium egg and comparing that to a couple of dollops of yoghurt?

This is where you realise that you are a victim of the countless health (and other) influencers that seem to infest every social media space – your recommended watch lists have taken control of your life.

As an adult, hopefully you understand that these are pathetically indulgent first world problems, but it is a reminder that we are not immune from the nonsense which is pumped at us each day. Perhaps health and fitness content is more prevalent in my feed than yours – you may have content directed at you which is tailored to make you anxious or angry about something else.



If online content can have this effect on adults, our children are far more vulnerable, many of whom spend so much time fixated by it.

You may have heard that all of the Tunbridge Wells secondary schools are making an important announcement about Smartphones very soon. We hope that primaries will soon follow suit to give parents a decent chance of delaying Smartphones for their children for a few more precious years – our brains may already be scrambled but we can make sure that our children's brain chemistry remains more balanced.

Secondary transition parent meeting

A last reminder that this is next week (Wednesday 4th March) at 6pm. Attendance is voluntary, and this will cover the secondary options available in this area.

Communication & email

I just wanted to remind people about our email protocols, as we have had an increasing number of lengthy messages sent to teachers. I have asked teachers not to engage in lengthy email exchanges as they never seem to resolve and take a huge amount of their time.

Please keep any emails to the school brief and succinct as this really helps us stick to the things that matter. Any message longer than a short paragraph is always better dealt with through a face-to-face meeting or telephone call.

If you have a problem or a concern, we really want to hear from you – communication is vital; however we will not be engaging in an exchange of emails if there is a complex issue that needs a resolution, but will arrange time to talk it through and give it the time and attention it deserves.

I ask teachers not to check or respond to messages after 5pm, and emails may not be read on the same day they are sent – teachers spend most of their day in front of the children and not on their computers checking their inboxes. If your concern is urgent, please speak to a member of staff on the gate or in the office or give us a call.

Uniform expectations

Please refer to the school's uniform policy for the main uniform and PE kit, especially regarding footwear. We have noticed an increase in the variety of clothing, hair accessories and footwear across the school.

Mr Stevens – Running the London Marathon

This April, I will be taking on the incredible challenge of running the London Marathon in support of Cancer Research UK, The Bowelbabe Fund. This will be my first ever marathon - in fact, I only started running recently - so it truly is a step into the unknown!

My motivation is deeply personal. In 2022, my wife was diagnosed with stage four bowel cancer. After a long and difficult journey, she achieved remission late last year. Yay! We are profoundly grateful for the research, treatment, and care that made this possible. Now, I hope to give something back.

As a Year 6 teacher, I feel incredibly blessed to have been supported so kindly by our wonderful school community during that time.

If you are in a position to sponsor me, I would be enormously grateful. However, I completely understand that not everyone can give - sharing my story and sponsorship link is just as appreciated. Thank you for your support.



<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/running-with-love-and-gratitude-for-my-wife-leigh-and-team-bowelbabe>

Girls' Football

On Thursday 12th February, the girls' football team played in the Kent County Schools finals at Sporting Club Thamesmead. The girls qualified as West Kent champions, with a 100% league record so far this year.

They were among the best 8 Primary Schools in the whole of Kent, which was a huge achievement in itself!

The girls played some brilliant football against some strong teams - including drawing in the group stage against one of the finalists. They represented the school and the district superbly and should be really proud of what a super season they have had. Well done girls!!



Playtime

I wrote to you before half term with a request for children to have wellies, waterproof jackets and waterproof trousers in school. At the time, I did predict that this might bring about a change to the weather, and it has. Therefore, I would like to take full credit for the glorious sunshine that we have experienced this week. You're welcome. That said, this is England and today is proof that the wonderful weather is not guaranteed to last, so the request for wet weather gear still stands. I believe some teachers may have indicated that children do not need these - please ignore them. We have new welly storage arriving in the next few weeks. Feel free to send in named kit at any point from now onwards or, if you would rather wait until the storage arrives, I will let you know as soon as it is here. Please drop in any donations of spare kit to the office. Thank you to those parents who have already sent some of these in.

I hope your children have come home this week talking positively about our new 'Craze of the Week' scheme. As I said previously, this is just the beginning of the changes we plan to make here at St James'. Changes which will create more opportunities for children to engage in open-ended play, which is un-structured and child led. We intend to introduce activities which allow our children to spend more time appreciating nature, building resilience, developing social and emotional skills, learning how to assess risk, as well as being more physically active. And of course, having lots of fun too!

I would like to invite you to an information session to share more information about this on Tuesday 31st March at 9:00. If you would like to attend, please come to the main school office. Afterwards, I will send out the slides of my presentation for anyone who is unable to attend.

I am very excited about where we are going with this and can't wait to share this with you all.





Two children playing an imaginative game of 'Stone Age'.



A group of children playing a collaborative game to tip each other off a seesaw made from a branch.

Miss Hayward

Year 1's visit from a superhero!

Earlier this week the Year 1 children were surprised, delighted and maybe a little over-excited by a flying visit from a superhero! They had read a news report about a superhero who was rescuing cats from trees with their stretchy arms and lifting cars out of the numerous St James' potholes with their super strength.

The friendly, mysterious and vaguely familiar hero circulated outside and through the classrooms before zooming off on a mission. The children were left with many questions and theories to discuss, and they are excited to learn more about their Heroes and Villains topic this term. Rumours that the superhero's day-to-day job is headteacher of a local school are so far unconfirmed!

Safer Internet Day

What a fantastic buzz we had in school the week before the half term break! We joined millions worldwide to celebrate Safer Internet Day, diving into this year's timely theme: 'Smart tech, safe choices - exploring the safe and responsible use of AI'.

The excitement kicked off with Mr Stevens, who led high-energy, interactive assemblies for all the children. Using a mix of catchy music, vibrant pictures, and clever videos, he challenged everyone to become "digital detectives". The hall was filled with hands up as we debated: "Is this a human masterpiece or the work of an AI computer?". The learning didn't stop there! Every class held dedicated sessions, with many tuning into brilliant live lessons from CBBC, Natterhub, or Teach She Can. From creating "safe AI" posters to completing tricky class tasks, the children's hard work is now proudly celebrated in our class floor books.

It was a truly fun and inspiring day for our entire school community. We hope your children came home with plenty of stories and tips to share with you! Keep those conversations going—together, we can make safe choices in a smart-tech world.

Here is our new display in the hall, celebrating our learning and a reminder for us to be internet smart!

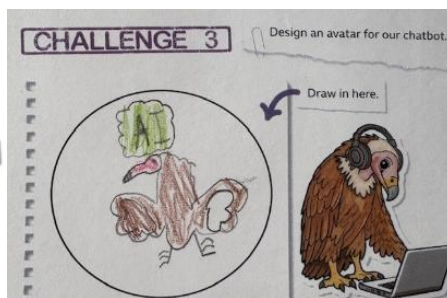




Of course, a couple of classes wanted to share a bit of the fun. Here's Badger and Dormouse, with a snippet of what they got up to.

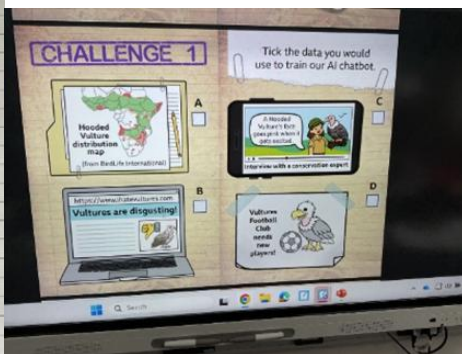
We joined the BBC's Live Lesson and, together with lots of other primary schools, we explored how to program an AI chatbot. We told the chatbot we wanted it to answer as if it were an endangered hooded vulture and we learnt about the importance of selecting reliable, accurate, and unbiased training data. We also came up with some system prompts that prevented 'bad' AI behaviour. Then we had a go at designing an avatar for the chatbot. The lesson was great fun, and we found we had the catchy AI song going around in our heads all afternoon!

Badger class



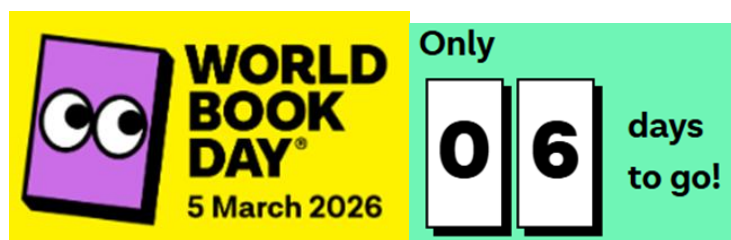
In Year 4 we designed AI avatars and learned about information that would be safe to 'feed' to an AI Bot and information that should not be shared.

Dormouse Class



World Book Day

A reminder!



We are very much looking forward to World Book Day next week. Please refer to last term's letter for more details about how we are celebrating this special day in school and how your child can join in the fun.

Mrs Simpson

Book tokens and World Book Day £1 books

Each child will receive their 2026 World Book Day £1 book token soon.

- EITHER swap it for one of the specially published World Book Day £1 books
- OR use it to get £1 off ANY book or audiobook costing £2.99 or more from participating bookshops, supermarkets or high street retailers which can be found here: <https://www.worldbookday.com/books-and-tokens/books/participating-retailers/>

If you would like to preview this year's special £1 books, please go here: <https://www.worldbookday.com/books-and-tokens/books/>

We are very much looking forward to celebrating the fun in reading and enjoying lots of books with our children on this year's World Book Day.

Thank you so much for all your support.

Mrs Simpson

Book fair

The Book Fair will be arriving at school in March with hundreds of the best new children's books to choose from.

At the Book Fair, you'll be able to browse over 200 of the books children really want to read, from award-winners and new releases to beloved favourites and bestsellers, all at amazing prices. Plus, for every book bought, you help to **earn FREE BOOKS for our school!** We truly value your support but are also acutely aware of the rise in the cost of living but would really like you to come along if you can.

The Book Fair will be open on:

Friday 13th March, Tuesday 17th March and Wednesday 18th March from 3:20 – 3:50pm in the KS2 hall.

If you would like to browse some of the books available, please look here:

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

We will not be taking cash so please bring your bank card to complete a card machine or online payment. If you can't make it to the Book Fair or your child attends After School Club and you would like them to be able to purchase a book, then Book Fair Gift Vouchers are the simple, secure way to ensure your child gets the books they want. The parent link above also tells you all you need to know, including more about making payments at the Fair.



Children may use their **£1 World Book Day Token** at the Book Fair towards the cost of a book if they would like to. We hope to see you there and very much look forward to welcoming you to the Book Fair.

Thank you so much,

The English Team

Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges

Clearly, we have lots of children who agree that reading is good for your brain! Here are the overall winners for last term:

➤ **Winners for Term 3 2026:**

Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
Naomi in Nightingale Class 1,573,587 words	Chaffinch Class 6,895,092 words	Gianna in Badger Class 72 quizzes	Badger Class 668 quizzes

In addition to Naomi, these children also read more than one million words last term:

- Arthur and Gianna in Badger Class
- Aaron in Chaffinch Class
- Yudai in Kestrel Class

All Key Stage 2 classes but one read more than one million words last term. In addition to Chaffinch Class, Kestrel, Nightingale and Badger Classes each read more than five million words last term. Wow!

➤ **Winners for this week (27th February 2026):**

Individual Highest Word Count	Class Highest Word Count	Individual Most Quizzes Passed	Class Most Quizzes Passed
Benjamin in Osprey Class 257,154 words	Chaffinch Class 1,457,987 words	Jarvis in Dormouse Class 16 quizzes	Dormouse Class 88 quizzes

A very big well done to all the children for their achievements last term and for the start of this term. Super reading everyone – please keep it up! Every word and every quiz passed really does count.

Mrs Simpson

Have a great weekend.

John Tutt
Head Teacher

