



Dates for the diary

29 th January	Year 6 bikeability starts
9 th February	INSET day – school closed
12 th February	Half term week
19 th February	Term 4 starts
22 nd March	Parent Rep meeting
26 th March	Year 5 led church service (2pm – Y5 parents welcome to attend)
28 th March	Easter Egg hunt and end of term
29 th March	Easter holidays start
15 th April	Children return to school
18 th June	Sports Day

Newsletter – Friday 26th January 2024

Dear parents and carers,

In the words of one parent “you have to get through quite a lot of guff in Mr Tutt’s newsletters before you get to any actual news”. I am pleased to tell you that this is no exception. At the next Parent Rep meeting I’ll float the idea of producing a “guff lite” newsletter, where I’ll communicate only in bullet points and nouns.

Communication

As a society we have become deskilled – there are things that we easily accomplished a few decades ago that now seem completely impossible. In 1993 a group of friends, travelling from multiple locations, successfully rendezvoused at the Chandos Pub near Charing Cross station at 7pm on a weekday evening. There were no mobile phones among us and none of us had started using email. We knew that we would have to wait a bit longer for Bill, because Bill was always late for everything, but we knew he would be there.

Thinking back, it almost seems as if we came together through some mystical dark art. That meet up was not a fluke, but a frequent occurrence – we did it all the time. Groups or pairs of people would successfully meet up at various places at all sorts of times; in fact they had been doing it thousands of years. How?

When we fast forward to 2024, without a mobile phone nobody is going anywhere, nobody is meeting anyone, and nobody can even work out where anything is or what’s happening. There is now no way I would manage to meet anyone anywhere without a mobile phone and a reliable internet connection.

The answer to how we used to manage it is actually very straightforward – we used to talk to each other. If we lived apart then we made a phone call and caught up properly. Sometimes we even wrote a letter with real words and articulated emotions rather than symbols. It worked. But over the last 30 years we have narrowed our communication to utilitarian and functional snippets.

Some of the newer ways of communicating are better than others. I have always thought that Alicia Keys writing, publishing then performing a song in response to seeing a woman in flames (“This girl is on fire!”) was not the



best way to summon help, when extinguishing the victim with a blanket before dialling 999 would have been more appropriate. I suppose the thought was there and that's what counts.

In the same way, email is often not the best method of communicating with your child's teacher. Email is best used when you would like to let the teacher know something or ask to speak to them. The intended tone is frequently lost or misconstrued; messages that are any longer than a line or two are far better dealt with through talking. If you have a concern or worry, please arrange a meeting with your child's teacher and they will be happy to discuss them with you. As Bob Hoskins said in 1994: "It's good to talk".

Road works

We had no notice of the current roadworks, but they are due to continue until 11th February. In the meantime, please allow longer for your journey if travelling by car. Or walk.

Year 1 stunning start

Year 1 began their Heroes and Villains topic by thinking about what it means to be a hero and the everyday heroes who help us. For our stunning start we were visited by Dr Daruwalla, who works as a GP. He came to talk to us about his job and we looked at some of his equipment, including as a stethoscope, otoscope and blood pressure monitor. We told Dr Daruwalla about the different ailments we had visited a doctor for, and he shared lots of interesting facts about the human body, such as why we are a bit taller in the morning and why it is good if he can hear noises in a patient's tummy. He also told us about how a certain fizzy drink used to be taken as a medicine. We loved it when Dr Daruwalla demonstrated how much blood an adult has using a bucket of water and some food colouring. Thank you Dr Daruwalla!



Mrs Ledger

Setting a good example

Please do not cross on the red man at school drop off or pick up times as it sets a bad example to those waiting. The older children walk themselves to and from school, and we and their parents drill into them the importance of using the crossing points and waiting for the green man before starting to cross.

School disco

Thank you to Steph and Suzie and all the other PTA helpers at last week's school disco. The children looked like they were having a wonderful time – we even saw a significant amount of actual dancing.



St James' Orchestra

On Tuesday, 15 musicians went to Speldhurst School to take part in a workshop with the Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra. Considering our children have only had two practice sessions together, they sounded amazing when playing together alongside Speldhurst's orchestra and the members of RTWSO. Their hard work practising outside of rehearsals was obvious and they did us all very proud with their attitudes and manners towards our hosts. Well done everybody!

Mrs Piper

Year 6 visitor

Year 6 had the privilege of a visit from a scientist called Steph who studied at Cambridge University and now works for the Faraday institute. We were captivated with exciting experiments and science facts. Year 6 do an RE unit on science and religion and she is both a scientist and a Christian. A favourite illustration was when she asked the children to explain to her why a kettle was boiling. They excelled in telling her when and how water boils. She then told the children that the water was boiling because she wanted a cup of tea! She went on to explain that science and faith answer different questions. Science answers 'how questions' but faith answers 'why questions'. How does the kettle boil? and why does it boil? are both important but very different. We had an exciting discussion about how scientists think the world was made and then why Christians believe God made it for us. Year 6 did some deep thinking and came up with some excellent questions! Well done Year 6.

Mrs King

Staffing news

We are very sad to be saying "goodbye" to Angie Walker who is leaving us at the start of April and who has been working for St James' for the last 20 years, first at the Junior School and then at the amalgamated primary. Angie works in the school office and has had a huge impact on the school in so many ways, not least in supporting the choir. We are going to miss her enormously, both professionally and personally and we wish her well for the future.

As you know, Sophie Stock and Sarah Greenfield will be starting their maternity leave in March. Rachel Piper will take over from Sarah in Squirrel Class on Mondays and Tuesdays. Vicky Oakley will take over from Sarah in Rabbit on a Friday, and from Sophie in Stoat Class on a Wednesday. Becky Clarke will take over from Sophie in Owl Class at the start of the week. Barry Pritchard will teach in Nightingale Class all week. Phew.

Parent Rep meeting

If available, could parent reps come to school for a second meeting on Friday 22nd March after drop off?

Attendance

School target	96.5%
Current whole school attendance	95.5%

Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges 26.01.24

"I think it's the books that you read when you're young that live with you forever." — J.K. Rowling

Which books did you read when you were young that you still remember now? Have you still got them? Have you or would you read them or share them with your child? What a lovely way to instil a love of books and reading!



Here are this week's overall winners:

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Yusuf in Osprey Class 757,458 words	Osprey Class 2,168,185 words	Raffi in Swift Class 24 quizzes	Badger Class 105 quizzes

- **Swift** Class also read over one million words this week – **1,089,755** words.

Well done to all classes and Keep Reading!

Mrs Simpson

Have a lovely weekend.

Kindest regards,

John Tutt

