



Dates for the diary

6 th December	Secret presents room
7 th December	PTA Quizmas event
10 th December	Years 1 and 2 Nativity - 9.30am Dress rehearsal younger siblings are welcome to attend.
11 th December	Years 1 and 2 Nativity - 1.45pm. First Performance (no younger siblings)
12 th December	Years 1 and 2 Nativity - 9.30am. Second performance (no younger siblings)
13 th December	Early Years Christmas singing performance followed by mince pies – 2pm start Parent Rep meeting 9am
17 th December	Year 3 Christmas church service 2pm – Year 3 parents welcome to attend
19 th December	Christmas lunch at school – wear your Christmas jumper today!
20 th December	Last day of term 2
6 th January 2025	INSET day
7 th January	First day of term 3

Friday 6th January 2024

Welcome to the penultimate newsletter of 2024! The gloominess of the weather (today excepted) is a huge contrast to the Christmas magic in school. Children are busy preparing for their nativities and carol concerts, and we have festive singing echoing through the halls. Mrs King returns in the last week of term to help with more Christmas fun as the whole school enjoys a Christmas themed RE day.

I hope your Christmas preparations are also in full swing - we are now well into our advent calendars and, from what the children have been telling me, most of you have your Christmas trees up and your houses suitably decorated. One of the great things about Christmas is the fact that we can all enjoy it for different reasons, whether that is coming together as a family, giving and receiving presents, going to magical church services or the wonders of Father Christmas.

The children are doing some Christmas themed learning, with Year 4 writing festive Waitrose adverts. By pure coincidence, I found myself in a Waitrose last weekend – for those unfamiliar, it sells the same stuff as all the other supermarkets, but with airs and graces; it is loved by both the elderly and anyone who dresses up just to buy their groceries.

Being a 51-year-old man working in a primary school, I rarely lower the average age when I walk into a room, but this happened last weekend as I stepped across the threshold of a packed Waitrose in Crowborough; going to a busy supermarket on a Saturday (when you have the whole week available) is clearly one of the joys of the festive season for people of a certain age.

I would like to thank our brilliant PTA team as well as all of the lovely parents who volunteered their time to wrap presents and/or who made donations for the secret presents room. You have done a very wonderful thing and made lots of children very happy.



Free junior lunches for years 3 to 6 in January

Once again, our amazing anonymous donor has offered to help out this festive season by paying for all junior lunches in the month of January. Therefore, if your child is in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) they can have a school lunch for free from the start of next term until the end of the month (7th until 31st January). I do not need to tell you quite how generous this is. If you feel you can afford to pay for your lunches, but would like to help out, please make a donation to one of our local food banks. However, this is a gift to the children of the school and nobody should feel under any pressure to make a contribution. I cannot thank our wonderful donor enough for their kindness.

Lunches

Please remember that, if your child is having a packed lunch, this should be a healthy, balanced lunch without any chocolate bars, crisps or any foods containing nuts. We've also noticed recently in KS2 that children are trying to be kind and share food with their friends. Whilst the sentiment of this is admirable, and something that makes St James' children so lovely, we cannot allow this in the lunch hall. I'm sure you will understand the importance of knowing what food your child is or is not eating each day.

Playtimes

We have recently started to use more of our grounds during lunch playtime, in particular some areas that the children normally only get to use in the summer months. Children in Years R, 1 and 2 now have regular time on the Trim Trail around the field where they can climb, balance and swing to their hearts content. In addition to the very popular "Bank", Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 now have regular time on the Static Exercise Equipment, Climbing Frame and All-Weather Track, where they can play chasing games which involve running at full speed without the fear of falling on a hard playground.

We're glad that the children are enjoying these new opportunities but would like to apologise for how muddy they may be coming home now. My usual repertoire of parroted phrases ("what are you doing with that stick?" and "skipping ropes are only for skipping") has now been joined by "keep to the track please", as children nip onto the grass/mud to zip past each other in an effort not to get 'tagged'. It seems, however, that speed outweighs cleanliness in most children's view and perhaps that's something to be admired (especially if you're not the one doing the washing). Their laughing, happy faces reflect the saying of a well-known detergent brand, 'Dirt is good'.

Miss Hayward

Parent Rep meeting

If you are a Parent Rep and free for a meeting after drop-off on Friday 13th December, then it would be lovely to meet you to talk about how the term has started, what the school's plans are for the year ahead and share thoughts and ideas. We will meet straight after drop-off and will do our best to keep it under an hour in length.

Key Stage 2 Accelerated Reader Challenges

Here are the overall winners from last week (**28th November 2024**)

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Benny in Vole Class	Vole Class 2,759,249 words	Jack in Osprey Class 22 quizzes	Badger Class 157 quizzes



833,174 words			
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These classes also read more than one million words last week:

- Osprey – 1,718,790 words
- Owl – 1,131,513 words
- Dormouse – 1,033,755 words

A special mention to Alex and Aneesh in Badger Class who each passed 21 quizzes and were just succeeded by Jack who passed 22 quizzes last week.

Here are the overall winners for this week (**6th December 2024**):

Highest Individual Word Count	Highest Class Word Count	Highest Individual Number of Quizzes Passed	Highest Class Quizzes Passed
Jessie in Nightingale Class 522,757 words	Vole Class 1,191,539 words	Naomi in Dormouse Class 14 quizzes	Badger Class 75 quizzes

A special mention to Jessie (Nightingale Class) and Hela (Swift Class) who passed 13 quizzes each and were just succeeded by Naomi this week.

A huge “Well Done” to all our winners.

Keep Reading!
Mrs Simpson

Kindest regards,
John Tutt

