



Newsletter

23.3.18

office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk
head@stjamesvaschool.co.uk
primary@stjamesvaschool.co.uk

This week at St James'...

As we head towards the Easter break, it's been another busy week, with sport and music taking the limelight. During Sport Relief week, children have enjoyed hula hooping, skipping, circuit training, aerobics, daily miles, swimming, multi-skills, rugby, sports leading, football and gymnastics! Thank you for all your kind donations towards Sports Relief today—your children look fabulous in all their sports gear and I'm sure they will enjoy all the sporting challenges today, including the whole school conga planned for the end of the day!

Musically, it's been a busy week too. Kingfishers attended their Music Play Day on Tuesday, showcasing all their skills playing the ukulele. And, on Wednesday, our Canaries and Green Jays took part in the mass Schools Choir Sing On performance at the Corn Exchange. All children were, as always, absolutely brilliant and a real credit to our school family and to you! What has been really lovely is receiving emails from families, complimenting our staff and children on their hard work—thank you for this, we really do appreciate it when the good things we do are noticed!

Later on today, I will be meeting with our Building Team to agree the details of our upcoming build. We have finally been given the go ahead from Bedford Borough, and our new classrooms will be built over the coming term. Work starts in the Easter holidays, and will hopefully be finished well before the summer holidays. The Governing Body have worked tirelessly to plan this enormous project and overcome various hurdles which have been put in their way, so it's great to be at the point when ground is about to be broken. I will update you with specific details next week, and keep you posted with on-going development as we go. Exciting times!

Next week is our last week before the Easter break—don't forget that term finishes on Thursday. Wishing you all a peaceful and enjoyable weekend,

Maria Soulsby



Congratulations!

Ms Soulsby's Rainbow Moment last week was awarded to Canaries and Green Jays—you sang brilliantly on Wednesday, blowing everyone away with your talent. You also showed us just how sensible and mature you are when you leave school and represent us in the community and we are all extremely proud of you all—WELL DONE!

New Dates

Tuesday 17th April **Fit for Fun club starts**
Friday 4th May **Zoolab visit (whole school)**

Thursday, 29th March END OF TERM
Children return to school Tuesday, April 17th

Coming Up

Monday Robins Spring Walk
Wednesday Easter Service 2.00 start (1.30 at school to walk to Church)

Date Change: Tempest Photography Group Photos - date changed to **Thursday 7th June 2018 at 9.00 am**. Date change due to Year 5 being out due to Football Tournament final in Leighton Buzzard.

Rainbow Moment

My child has shown the Rainbow Promise in the following way at home:

Signed



Sing On—Thank you for your notes of appreciation!

Dear Ms Soulsby...

Please could you pass on our thanks to the staff and parent volunteers who supported the children at Sing On last night. It was wonderful to see the children performing with such confidence and talent! We are very aware that such opportunities are only available as a result of the dedication of the adults who are prepared to give up their own free time. Thank you once again.

I just wanted to send you an email as today was the first opportunity I have had to be a parent helper at an offsite at the sing off and I wanted to let you know how so impressed and proud I was of the teachers and pupils! I know you see it every day but it was the first opportunity I have had to see an off-site and witness the hard work and dedication that goes into taking our children out of school.

Please let the teachers and teaching assistants know how fab, caring, organised and attentive they were and how proud I felt of our school! I particularly want to thank Mrs LeNette who I thought was amazing in organizing everything and keeping our children safe! Thank you,

Just a note to say a huge 'thank you and well done' to the children, staff and helpers for your performances and contributions in making last night's performance at the Corn Exchange such a success. I thought the children sang beautifully, behaved impeccably and were a credit to the school. The soloists, dancers and actors were particularly impressive. It was good to see the event so well-supported by parents and friends. Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to everyone involved!



Twitter users.....Follow St James': [@StJamesHead](https://twitter.com/StJamesHead)

Next week, we welcome Miss Courtney-May Williams to St James', who will be with us for six weeks as part of her teacher training, working in Green Jays class.

Children's Easter Fun at St James' Church

Come and join us for sticking & glueing, making an Easter Garden both indoors and outdoors, Hot Cross Buns and of course an Easter Egg Hunt.

When: 10am-11am on Good Friday, 30 March

Where: St James's Church

All children (and parents!) welcome. No need to book. Just turn up. And it's absolutely free!

Any queries, contact katesmith278@btinternet.com

Fellow Parents,

It's been over a year now since I was elected Parent Governor and I am finally fulfilling an idea that I should share some of what I have seen and what we have been doing. I'll try to be brief!

Each half term we, the governors, meet on two occasions, once in the Full Governing Board meetings (FGB) and once in one of our two sub-committees. The Resources Committee deals with financial and other statutory information, income and expenditure...the more business side of things. The School Improvement Committee deals with the quality of the education the children receive.

I was drafted in following a request for someone with financial training and therefore I was immediately placed onto the Resources sub-committee. What immediately became apparent was the journey that this committee had been on over the past few years, in partnership with the head, to bring all of the financial and statutory reporting up to standard....and in so doing, ensure that the school is not only being well managed, but that both existing and future governors have the means to assess that it is being well managed.

Despite all of the challenges that are reported in these current austere times, the figures for last year and the forecast for this year reflect an extremely financially well-managed school.

Disappointed that there was no financial mismanagement or fraud for me to uncover, I hoped the upcoming Primary conversion might require some attention. Far from it. In fact, this really is something that should be better communicated and celebrated. We are all very fortunate that the current Chair of Governors, Tom Perry, works in this area and thanks to his years of knowledge and expertise he has actually taken the money offered by the council and managed to maximise it to such a level that we are now able to build three new classrooms instead of two. I could fill a few paragraphs about the amount of hard work and skill with which he is navigating this important transition in the school's history, but it probably won't make it through the edit. It really is one of those "cometh the hour, cometh the man" type scenarios. Yes TP, I'm comparing you to Churchill. You can pay me later.

With everything seemingly in good financial order we have begun embarking on trying to maximise our income and benchmark our spending. As well as the income we receive from the government for each pupil, there are also many grants and donations that can be applied for. Thanks to the hard work of a wide variety of governors we have so far already raised £25k during this school year, which is contributing to help buy all the nice-to-haves we all want to help further improve the education and fun to be had at St James.

And I'll finish by referencing that education. We need to get better at sharing with the parents the extraordinary results and achievements that we, the governors, are seeing being reported by the school. We all know about the "Good" Ofsted report but beneath that there is a constant stream of info that show serious and sustained achievement.

One such report was shared with us at the end of last year by Bedford Borough. It showed the Key Stage 1 and Phonics results for the 53 primary schools in the Bedford Borough. I decided to try to take all of these results and plug them into a spreadsheet to see if I could benchmark where St James sits within these schools in terms of these results. I took the 10 major categories of the report - which included Phonics results and reading, writing, maths all at basic level results and pupils showing a "greater understanding". St James' achieved such a high standard of results across all categories - generally significantly above the national average - that overall, my scoring system benchmarked St James as the 6th best set of results in the borough.

Make of that what you will. For me, as a parent that tries not to get too over-worried about results and am more happy about the safe and nurturing environment at St James, it is still obviously great to see results that indicate that this really is a school that is excelling.

And, in truth growth mindset spirit, the governors - along with the head, the teachers and the children - are all focussed on continuing on an upward trajectory.

Tom Krailing

Parent Governor

Holy Week

This Sunday is Palm Sunday, which signifies the start of Holy Week, the final week of Lent before Easter. This is a very special time in the Christian calendar. Jesus came back to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, was welcomed by crowds, but He knew it was to be His final week on Earth. Maundy Thursday is the time we remember the Last Supper, where Jesus shared His body and blood with his friends (bread and wine); later that night, He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsamane. On Good Friday, He was tried, condemned to death and then crucified. On Easter Sunday, Christians celebrate His glorious resurrection. And, of course, everyone enjoys an Easter Egg or two!



Term Dates 2018-2019

Term 1

Monday, 3rd September – Friday, 19th October

INSET Monday, 3rd, Tuesday 4th September

HALF TERM – MONDAY, 22nd – FRIDAY 26th OCTOBER

Term 2

Monday, 29th October – Friday, 21st December

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY – MONDAY, 24th DECEMBER – FRIDAY, 4th JANUARY

Term 3

Monday, 7th January – Friday, 8th February

HALF TERM – MONDAY, 11th - 15th FEBRUARY, 2019

Term 4

Monday, 18th February – Friday, 5th April

EASTER HOLIDAY – MONDAY, 8th – MONDAY, 22nd APRIL

Term 5

Tuesday, 23rd April – Friday, 24th May

INSET Tuesday, 23rd April

HALF TERM – MONDAY, 27th – 31st MAY

Term 6

Monday, 3rd June – Friday 19th July