



Newsletter

7th February 2020

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This week has been science week and has seen some really great learning across the school. We decided to focus on the eco aspects of the science curriculum, thinking about the properties of materials in particular. This has led to a variety of projects linked to reducing/recycling/reuse waste; in Year 4 the children have been sorting all the plastic bottle tops and are going to carry out a special art project. Year 5 have had a very busy week, receiving a visit from an astronomer on Thursday, and are also planning a charity initiative to support young girls. They've also introduced a plan to the school which will hopefully reduce the number of plastic pens we throw into our landfill bins. This week has also been Children's Mental Health week, and across the school classes have been talking about ways to look after their mental health and well-being.

I met with a representative of the Borough on Monday regarding the mobile classroom—this will be removed in the coming weeks, probably during the Easter break. We really wanted to keep this space, spruce up the outside and use it for a music space and a community room. Unfortunately, we're beholden to a political promise made by the Mayor, who said that all such classrooms would be removed from all Bedford Schools. We have plans for how we could use this space, and once these are firmed up, I will let you know.

Our last week of term is looking busy! A lot of staff are out on training across the week—see later in the newsletter for specific details. Mrs Hawkins feels well enough to return to full time teaching, which is a huge relief to us all; thank you to everyone in Year 3 for their patient understanding, and to Mrs Sims and Miss Robson for doing such a sterling shop of ensuring stability for the children.

Wishing you all a very happy and peaceful weekend,

Maria & all the team at St James'

Class/Group Photographs – 25th February 2020—ACTION REQUIRED FROM ALL PARENTS

All children are invited to take part in class/group photographs on 25th February, 2020. The photographs will be taken by Tempest Photography, all photographers have enhanced DBS checks, and the school has confirmed that appropriate Data Protection measures are in place, in line with the GDPR. You must give us consent if you would like your child to be photographed as part of a group, so the consent slips must be returned to school by **Monday, 10th February**. After this date, we will be preparing lists of children's names for the photographs, so do not miss this deadline, otherwise your child's name will not go on our lists. **If we do not hear from you, then we will assume that you do not want your child to be part of the photographs and will be excluded from the photograph.**

Staffing Information

Tuesday	Mrs Owens & Mrs Sims out of school—RWI training Mr Renzi out of school—Mental Health & well-being training
Wednesday	Mrs Owens & Mrs Sims out of school—RWI training Miss Kassim-Lowe out of school—Maths training Mrs Lawless out with Y5—Singing Playgrounds project
Thursday	Mr Renzi and Mrs Lawless out of school in the afternoon for music projects
Friday	Miss Kassim-Lowe out of school—Maths training



Pupil Governor News



Do you like animals?

The animals in Australia are suffering and we want to help them! We want to raise money to help the animals who have been hurt and lost their homes in the Australian Bushfires. We have decided to have a **cake sale on Wednesday 12th February** (please support us by donating cakes nearer the time) and hold a **MUFTI Day on Friday 28th February** (wear your own or animal themed clothes). We will be donating the money we have raised to the 'World Wildlife Fund'.

Help us and save the animals!

Attendance Issues

We are very concerned by the growing numbers of children who have very low attendance and/or poor punctuality—there are 33 children whose current attendance is below the minimum standard of 95% - this reflects nearly 1/5 of our school and is not acceptable. Of those 33 children, 11 have attendance below 90%, which is the government's trigger for 'persistent absenteeism' - this could lead to intervention from the Education Welfare Service, who could decide to take legal action. Children with poor attendance will not make good progress at school—simply put, we can not teach your child if they are not in school! It is parent's responsibility to ensure regular attendance at school, and this is what the 95% threshold represents. We know children get ill, especially just before and after Christmas, but now that the winter is nearly behind us, we expect a significant improvement in attendance.

Additionally, we have huge numbers of children who are persistently late to school, and are reviewing this situation with a view to referring repeated latecomers to the Education Welfare Service. School starts at 8.50—if your child arrives at 9.00 every day, then they are missing 50 minutes of school time every week. Our lessons start promptly at 9.00—if your child arrives at school late, then they will be late to their first lesson because they have to unpack their belongings, register and order their dinner—this takes approximately 10 minutes, so that then becomes 20 minutes of lost school time. They also disrupt the learning of other children, because the teacher has to monitor their lateness rather than teach. Lateness due to traffic problems, missing the alarm, having a bad night etc is fine once in a while, it happens to us all. It is not fine when this is the excuse most days.

Our whole school target for attendance is 97%. Currently, our school attendance is **97.1%**, so very well done to those 137 children who have superb attendance!

This week's attendance figures for each class:

Class	Attendance	Number of lates
Robins	98.2%	0
Whinchats	94.6%	2
Canaries	98.7%	0
Green Jays	98.4%	1
Kingfishers	96.5%	2
Peacocks	98.8%	1
Sabrewings	98.3%	4

Event	Date & Time	Class	Staff Lead	Notes
Orienteering Day	Mon 10th Feb	1	FL	See separate letter
KS1 & 2 Gymnastics competition	Tues 11th Feb	Y1-6	GH	
Pupil Governors Cake sale	Weds 12th Feb	All	CD	After school—please support if you can!
Valentine's Breakfast	Fri 14th Feb	All	GH	Mrs Hawkins will send details home in due course
Half Term	17th-21st Feb	All		
Class Photos	Tues 25th Feb	All	DS	
Parents Information Session—phonics	Tues 25th Feb 5.00	All	CD, FL	Open to all parents, but of most interest to parents in Reception and Year 1
MUFTI for Australian animals	Friday, 28th Feb	All	CD	
Book Week	w/b 2nd March	All	IL	
Multi sports event	Tues 10th March	Y3, 4	GH, LR	
Book Blink	Fri 13th March 3.00-3.30	All		Finishes at 3.30
Parent Teachers Meetings	Tuesday 17th March 4.00-8.30pm	All		
KS1 SATs meeting for parents	Tues 24th March 5.00	Y2	SP	
Multi Sports event	Thurs 26th March	Y1, 2	SP, FL	
Easter Service	Thurs 2nd April 9.30	All		
MUFTI—last day of term	Fri 3rd April	All		

Class Assemblies 2.30pm	Spring	Summer
Robins	6th March	25th June
Whinchats	28th February	3rd July
Canaries	7th February	12th June
Green Jays	14th February	22nd May
Kingfishers	31st January	15th May
Peacocks	24th January	1st May
Sabrewings	17th January	26th June

May Day Bank Holiday

Please be aware that the date has changed this year, and the Bank Holiday will be on **FRIDAY 8TH MAY 2020** (rather than Monday 4th)

Being Bold.

We are hoping to make upcycled craft items to sell at the Christmas fair this year. All the profit from our stall will go towards a charity called Plan International. We would like to be able to sponsor a girl with Plan International Be Bold for Brave Girls Campaign to have basic things we have like clean water, healthcare, education and rights.

We are looking for donations of the following items and materials:

- Colourful T-shirts and sweatshirts
- Christmassy fabrics
- Men's cotton shirts
- Any other fabric scraps! (Bright, metallic and colourful please!)
- Felt
- Cottons & embroidery threads
- Ribbons, buttons & beads
- Zips less than 30cm

We are very grateful for any donations.

Please put all your donations into the box in the office.

Head Lice

We have had several reported cases of Head Lice in school. Please can you check your child's hair and treat accordingly. Please treat head lice as soon as you spot them. You should check everyone in the house and start treating anyone who has head lice on the same day. There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. Treatments to get rid of head lice are available to buy from pharmacies, supermarkets and online.



HM Government



CORONAVIRUS: PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Government and NHS are well prepared to deal with this virus.

You can help too.

Germs can live on some surfaces for hours.

To protect yourself and others:

- Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.
- Bin the tissue, and to kill the germs, wash your hands with soap and water, or use a sanitiser gel.
- If you have arrived back from China within 14 days follow the specific advice for returning travellers.

This is the best way to slow the spread of almost any germs, including Coronavirus.

Find out more at gov.uk/coronavirus

BEDFORD
BLUES



COMMUNITY

**FEBRUARY
HALF-TERM
RUGBY CAMP**

at Goldington Road

PLAY THE BLUES WAY

Tue 18 Feb

Wed 19 Feb

Thu 20 Feb

9am-3pm

£30 a day

£70 for 3 days

- Open to boys & girls
- All abilities welcome
- Ages 5-15
- Free Bedford Blues kid's match ticket

BOOK HERE

Dear Parents and Carers,

Notice of Vacancy for Parent Governor at St James' CEVA Primary School

The governing body is responsible for both the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing body carries out its role by setting the vision for the school and then ensuring that the school works efficiently and effectively towards achieving its vision. It does this by building a thorough knowledge of the school and its community, by both supporting and constructively challenging the leaders, and by ensuring accountability and compliance. The governing body of our school is made up of parent governors, staff governors, and those appointed by church foundations.

A vacancy has arisen for a parent governor on our governing body. The governing body is asking you to nominate someone with parental responsibility for a child at the school. If it receives more than one nomination, then a ballot will be held. Before you decide to nominate someone, or indeed stand yourself, you may want to know a bit more about what is involved. Governors need not be experts in the field of education. What they do need is an interest in the school and in the welfare of all our children and the time and willingness to get involved. The skills you have can be very useful to the governing body. At the moment the governing body is lacking governors who have expertise in human relations, health and safety and compliance, although it is not a prerequisite that only people with those skills can be elected. If you are someone with the required experience, would you consider applying?

Governors also need what is known as 'soft skills' – the ability to be able to build relationships with a range of people, to be able to work as part of a team, to be able to question, and to make connections between different types of information. All governors are expected to be able to read straightforward budget reports and data on school standards.

Our governing body expects governors to

- attend **two** termly meetings of the full governing body
- sit on a committee and attend the meetings which are usually held **twice** a term
- visit the School formally for monitoring purposes at least **three** times year
- visit the School informally at least **three** times a year
- commit to attend training courses, perform additional research as required and take part in monitoring a specific area within the school.

In return, our governing body commits to

- provide you with a structured induction
- provide access to quality training via Bedford Borough Council
- provide you with an experienced governor as mentor
- provide informal feedback on your contribution to the governing body on a bi-annual basis

If you would like to find out more about how you can contribute to governance at our school, please email the school office with your contact details and we will pass on your details to the Chair of Governors who will then arrange a time for a conversation.

If you would like to stand for election, please complete the nomination form (available from the school office or by emailing office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk) and return it to the school not later than **14th February 2020**. Nominations must be from parents with children at the school on the day that nominations close. Parents putting their names forward are invited to provide some brief biographical details limited to not more than 150 words suitable for inclusion in the ballot paper. Parents who have paid employment in the school for 500 hours per academic year or more or who are elected members of the Local Authority are not eligible to stand in this election. Anyone standing for election must certify that he/she is not disqualified for any reason (this information can be provided upon request). The successful candidate will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service form regarding their suitability to have access to children and young people and will not be able to take up their appointment until clearance has been received. If there are more nominations than vacancies the election will be by secret ballot. If that is necessary, voting papers will be sent to all parents together with details of the ballot procedure.

Maria Soulsby
On Behalf of the Governing Body

St James' PSA News



First PSA meeting of the year

Last week we had our first PSA meet up of 2020. We'd love to see some new faces at these meet ups, so have decided to alternate the meetings between a Monday morning and a Thursday morning (and are hoping to throw in some evening meet ups too, although they may have to be at the pub – what a shame!) As such, our next PSA Meet-up will be on Monday, March 2, at 9am in the Mobile Classroom. These are very casual meetings, with tea and biscuits and younger siblings welcome to attend.

We have some great events planned this year, and as always will need some volunteers to make these possible. In particular, we are looking for someone to organise an adult-only quiz night. So, if you know of someone who runs quizzes or just fancy having a go, please contact Eleanor Holton or Caz Bargery on Classlist or talk to your class PSA rep.

We are also holding a Children's Cake Decorating workshop for Mother's Day. Watch this space for more information and details on how to book a space.

And don't forget to hire our Party Pack for your Children's Party this year. It's just £5 and includes 30 cups, bowls and plates, as well as jugs, tablecloths and bunting. A great way to raise money for the school and cut down on paper wastage.



Dates for your diary

- PSA meet-up Monday, March 2, 9-10am, mobile classroom
- Children's cake decorating workshop Saturday, March 21 (timings tbc)
- Pre-loved Uniform Sale Friday, April 3, after school in playground (last Friday of every term)
- Children's Disco Wednesday, May 20 (timings tbc)

Don't forget...

- Easy Fundraising Raise money by shopping online through www.easyfundraising.org
- Stikins Use School fundraising number: 19770 at www.stikins.co.uk to raise funds.
- Stamptastic Use PTA code: MK40 48D at www.stamptastic.co.uk to raise funds.

Keep in touch...



Sign up to classlist to keep up to date with all the PSA news and connect with other parents. Register at: www.classlist.com



Follow our facebook page "Friends of St James' Primary School Biddenham"