

St James curriculum News

WHAT'S IN THIS TERMS ISSUE?

- Spotlight on: Governors
- Sport at St James
- Class News
- Dates for your diary

Dear Parents and Carers,

'Curiosity' has been our curriculum driver this term, with children across school embarking on new historical enquiries which have taken them to the forest cooking on fire in Year 2 learning about the Great Fire of London to Year 4 going all the back to the Ancient Greeks. It was fantastic hearing about the questions the children had about the past and how it has inspired some brilliant writing this term! You will be able to read more about each classes learning further on in this term's newsletter. This has also inspired some interesting science enquiries, which has been great preparation for next term's Science Fair!

Linked to our curriculum focus of 'Curiosity', our value this term has been 'Wisdom'. In Collective Worship, we have thought about the messages in the Bible from King Solomon and the baby to Jesus and the parable of the Wise and Foolish builder 'Matthew 7:24-26'.



We also had some great success at this year's Vale Academy Trust Mini Speaks Competition! James and Oliver from Year 5 represented St. James brilliantly with their professionally delivered speeches! James gave a passionate performance showing some real knowledge for his chosen topic on the protection of tigers. Oliver's confidence and research into the facts around gender equality in football won St the trophy! We are incredibly proud of you both well done and congratulations!



Our Curriculum driver next term will be 'Empathy', with our value focus on 'Acceptance'.



Spotlight on: Governors

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing on behalf of the school governors to update you on developments at St James.

The local governing body (LGB) is a sub-committee of the Vale Academy Trust Board. We are responsible for the ethos, mission and vision of the school; holding the Headteacher to account for the performance of the school; and monitoring school finances. The LGB also has certain statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and equality.

The governors (John Durant, Joan Evans, Christine Grandison, Alan McPherson, Jonathan Phillips, Harriet Render, Caroline Watson) are relatively new to the role and I have been appointed, by the Trust, as Chair to support governors to deliver effective governance. Our priority is to work with Mrs Ottaway on the school ethos, mission and vision to ensure they reflect the character and ambition of the school. We will be holding a special LGB meeting in April before the consultative 'vision party' with you on 3 May. Your ideas and contribution are important because this work will drive the strategy for school improvement over the coming years.

Turning to the performance of the school, the Trust and the Headteacher have rigorous methodologies for self-evaluation and identifying strengths that can be built-on and areas for improvement. This work is captured in a self-evaluation document (known as the SEF) and an improvement plan (the SDP) that Mrs Ottaway and the school leaders are responsible for delivering. The governors have decided to take-on additional voluntary responsibilities where each governor will be aligned with one or more aspects of those plans, for example Quality of Education and Behaviour. This will enable the LGB to become more knowledgeable about these aspects of the school and more effective in monitoring implementation and impact. We are currently scoping out each lead role and the appropriate school contact so that governors can begin their lead roles next term. This will include governors meeting school leaders and visiting classes.

We also expect external assessment by Ofsted sometime this year as well an assessment of the religious character of the school by the Church of England inspection body next year. These inspections will provide valuable independent views of the school.

Finally, I am confident that the governing body will become progressively more effective and better able to support Mrs Ottaway to deliver her ambitious plans for the school and your children.

Please accept the best wishes from all the governors for a Happy Easter.

Kind regards,

Alan McPherson (Chair of Governors)

Sport at St James



Intra House Tag Rugby Competition

This term we competed in another whole school intra-competition. We all competed in a variation of tag rugby from Reception to year 6. Sports council did another fantastic jobs of running the Early years competitions. Well Done !



This term we has a clear winner.....PHEONIX!



With Pegasus closely behind
behind in 2nd place
Ghillie Dhu in 3rd place &
Griffin 4th place

Early Years News

Donaldson Class

This term we have been investigating and learning all about nature. From exploring the Forest School area in the beautiful sunshine, where we saw all sorts of insects and plants and used a magnifying glass to take a closer look at the world around us, to enjoying the snow! We have made stick men and done lots of delicious cooking as well as learning some new songs including leaning all about those jumping frogs!



Inkpen Class

For a short term, we have done so much in Inkpen this term! We have learnt all about the signs of Spring and the life cycles of plants and animals. We have done a lot of gardening, started to redesign our outdoor area and went on possibly the best school trip of all time to Farmer Gow's. We dressed up for World Book Day and spent the day enjoying our favourite stories too - a wonderful day.

Inkpen parents have been real heroes for us this term, taking us to the park, coming with us on our school trip, donating seeds and compost, designing amazing planters and the most incredible reading hut for us to use. We are a very lucky class!



Key Stage 1 News

Term 4 in Rosen class...

At the beginning of this term we had some postcards delivered giving us some clues towards our writing text, The Secret of Black Rock. The children fully immersed themselves and began questioning all the adults about this mysterious black rock – it was so much fun! We soon realized it was a sea creature that lived in the ocean, so we wrote a setting description to describes its habitat using our five senses. Please see Dojo for their individual writing.

In History we have been learning all about what history is and creating personal timelines (thank you for the photos). See some below...



We have been super busy in science learning all about wild animals within the UK. We even had a birding enthusiast who came and shared her bird expertise with us – it was great, thank you Mrs Oreffo! 😊

Outdoor Learning in Term 4



Nichols Class

Last term our learning started and finished in the forest! Our emersion day began with us cooking on an open fire, as an introduction to our history unit on The Great Fire of London. It ended with our patience being rewarded with our much anticipated adventure on our outdoor activity trip to 'Go Ape'. Every child in the class was brave and had the courage to try the high ropes course. It was lovely to see children working together to help each other with the obstacles, encouraging each other and reassuring their friends when they found things difficult.



Lower Key Stage 2 News

Roald Dahl Class

This term in history we have been building on our knowledge of the Stone Age from term 2 and learning how life changed in Britain through the Bronze and Iron Age. In English, we created our own Bronze Age pot out of clay and then wrote a Non-Chronological report. We learnt that pottery began in the early neolithic period and how it changed in the bronze and iron age to the present day. This week we held a class museum to display our pots and reports to our parents. In science, we have been carrying an observational science investigation to find out what plants need to grow. We also learnt that sometimes science doesn't always go to plan and you may need to try again.



Rowling Class

This term, Year 4 have had a fantastic time learning all about the Ancient Greeks and myths. We have explored a range of different Greek myths and monsters, as well as re-written the myth 'Theseus and the Minotaur' using our own mythical creatures. We have also been learning about what life would have been like for the Ancient Greeks and how very different, different parts of Greece were. Throughout Maths, we have been focusing on measurement, including length and perimeter, as well as fractions. In Science, we have been discovering how sound is created and how it travels. The children also had a great time experiencing World Book Day and dressing up in costumes. Finally, the children have also enjoyed making biscuits in our DT lessons, whilst working on how we can adapt and improve basic biscuit recipes.



Upper Key Stage 2 News

Ibbotson Class

Term started with us trying Anglo-Saxon food (not many takers for the curd cheese lozenges I'm afraid). We also had a go at carving some runes and identifying Anglo-Saxon artefacts. This kicked off a term full of Anglo-Saxon learning. In English we learned about Beowulf and how he defeated the monster Grendel and even listened to it being read in old English. We read a fictional account of the Anglo Saxon Boy as well as studying non-fiction about this time in history. Our history looked at evidence for Anglo Saxon occupation of our local area and some important Anglo Saxons.



During World Book Day we had lots of book themed fun ending with a Where's Wally scavenger hunt around the school grounds. We've looked at poetic devices and even written some fantastic poetry for ourselves – may be some of us will become authors and feature in a World Book Day of the future!



We've learned about systems and searching in our information technology lessons, discovering how pedestrian crossings work as well as Amazon lockers and looking at what goes on behind web searches. As well as doing healthy activity playing dodgeball and gymnastics in PE, we've learnt how to keeping ourselves healthy and avoid unhealthy activities in PSHE. Science has seen us exploring separating materials and dissolving solids. We've had some fascinating class discussions, investigated in small teams and conducted some interesting experiments. We finished off investigating how Mrs Ottaway can best make sugar dissolve in her cup of tea.

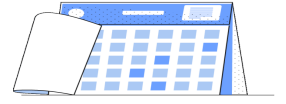
Shakespeare Class

The children have been working extremely hard this term. We have been learning all about the Maya and started off the topic by making shields and masks, as well as cooking our own tortillas and making Mayan hot chocolate. The tortillas didn't last very long at all!

Lat week, we all had a wonderful afternoon when we went to see the performance of High School Musical at King Alfred's with Year 5. It was a real treat to see other young people (including past pupils of St James) put on such a professional and enjoyable show. A huge thank you to them for inviting us



Key Dates for the Diary



April 2023

Monday 17th April: Start of Term 5

New curriculum driver: Empathy **Value:** Acceptance

May 2023

Monday 1st May: Bank Holiday

Friday 5th May: St James Coronation celebration - Afternoon Tea - Parents invited with open classrooms. All help very welcome!

Monday 8th May: Coronation Bank Holiday

Tuesday 9th May: Year 6 SATs week

Friday 12th May: PTA Donut Sale

Wednesday 15th - 19th May: PTA coin wars

Thursday 18th May: Whole school photographs

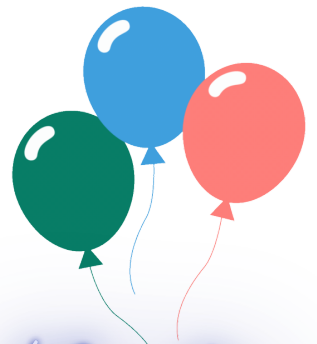
Thursday 18th May: St James Science Fair - 3:20 Parents welcomed

Friday 19th May: Year 6 Bikeability

Friday 26th May: PTA Ice Cream sale

Friday 26th May: End of Term

Term 6



July 15th St. James' Party
in the Park