

School Newsletter

Spring 2 2025

In harmony we
Nurture, Inspire, Flourish



Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your continued support this Easter half term - we have been delighted with the learning and passion shown by all your children through the many fantastic opportunities offered to them. We loved sharing their outcomes and next steps at our Parent Consultations last week and would like to thank you all for your kind words about the wonderful reports written by our teachers. We also thank you for all your contributions to make our learning experiences so special, particularly our Multicultural Book Week costumes and your help with so many experiences throughout the term.

Some of our Year 5s are busy training to be Peer Mentors to make our school even better at lunchtimes and Pupil Parliament are busy naming our Houses: Leith, Box, Spook and Flint - all our neighbouring hills, and creating Prefect roles for our Year 6s in summer term. I am sure you will all agree with me that our teachers go over and above every term with the wonderful trips to Hever Castle, Junior Citizen, Duckling visits, Discovery Centre, geography visit to Dorking, Oliver production, Priory Dance Show and Forest School among others.

We have been having a really great Easter build up in school. The children really enjoyed our Easter Bonnet Parade in Early Years. We had a wonderful Easter Pause day and are thrilled to be doing our Easter Sponsored walk again. The Easter Service was a lovely spiritual worship wonderfully delivered by Year 3, the church team, our children and staff and we thank Friends of St John's for organising the discos last week. A huge amount of organisation goes into these events and volunteers to join Friends and help out with events are hugely welcome.



Our Friday celebration worships are certainly exciting places to be, and you are all very welcome to join whether you have been alerted to your child being a golden award or not; we love to share. We celebrate all our values every week and look forward to hearing about your children's learning. Don't forget to look at the School Website regularly. School letters and policies are also on the Website for you to have a look at.

Finally, have a Happy Easter everyone. Have a happy, safe and restful school holiday - we'll see you on Tuesday 22nd April. There is much to celebrate and be thankful for at St John's. It is only so great because of the brilliant children, hardworking dedicated staff, amazing Friends (PTA) and volunteers, our Local Committee, and a whole host of people from the Trust and the wider community.

We would like to offer our huge thanks to you all as parents and carers for all your support and we can't wait to launch into summer term with even more excitement and learning opportunities to come.

Kind Regards

Jacky Fyson

Executive Headteacher

Nursery Happiness Class

We have had an exciting half term and the children have loved experimenting with magnets as we explored many different materials and their properties.

Early Years have also been very creative and designed an Easter bonnet which symbolises new beginnings as Christians believe Easter is a time for renewal. They all took part in our Easter bonnet parade and received a praise for their hard work and commitment to achieving such wonderful bonnets!



Reception Kindness Class

This half term we have been learning through the Harmony principle of Cycle. We have explored many different lifecycles and even got to watch a lifecycle happen first hand when our baby ducklings came to stay!

During our time with the ducklings we wrote descriptions of them, explored the story structure of The ugly Duckling, drew observational feather pictures and even gave the ducklings a bath!



Reception Kindness Class

We then went on to learn the lifecycle of a butterfly and became hungry little caterpillars and gobbled our way through some scrumptious fruit. During our food tasting sessions we made a fabulous bank of words to describe the taste of each, we also had our wonderful Grandma FANTASTIC giving us some new words to add to our bank of vocabulary, thanks Grandma F.



Year 1 Love Class

During our "Turrets and Tiaras" topic, we have been exploring the fascinating world of castles and royalty. We delved into the features of castles, which included a wonderful trip to Hever Castle. The sun was shining, and it made for a perfect day to explore the castle firsthand. Walking through its grand halls and seeing its towering turrets helped us truly appreciate the features of a real-life castle!

Another highlight of this term was celebrating Multicultural Book Week, where we had a fantastic visit from an illustrator. This gave us a great opportunity to learn about the vital role illustrations play in stories. Inspired by this, we applied our new understanding into our own stories, making sure that the illustrations we created truly brought our tales to life.



Our focus on castles also extended into nonfiction writing. We spent time looking at the features of nonfiction texts and how they present factual information. Using this knowledge, we created our own fact files about castles, highlighting key details about their architecture, history, and function. This helped reinforce our understanding of both castles and nonfiction writing structures.

In maths, we've been focusing on measurement and counting on from ten. This has allowed us to practice our skills with both numbers and practical measurement, making the learning process both fun and relevant to our topic. All in all, it's been an exciting and enriching experience as we've immersed ourselves in the world of turrets, tiaras, and castle life!

Year 2 Trust Class

Our trip this term was to the Look Out Centre, and the kids had an absolute blast! They got stuck into all sorts of hands-on science and nature exhibits, exploring how the world works in the most fun and interactive way. From exciting science to amazing builds, there was something for everyone to enjoy.



You know the kids have had a brilliant day when they say 'that can not have been 4 hours. Please, please can we stay longer?!'. If you have not yet explored the 'Look Out Discovery Centre' in Bracknell, it is definitely one to visit.

Year 2 Trust Class

Year 2 have been learning about the Easter story. They explored key features and incorporated them into their own Easter gardens. The children thoroughly enjoyed sourcing materials from the farm to bring their creations to life, using natural elements to represent important Easter themes.



Year 3 Cooperation Class

What a busy half term we have had! Our Geography learning this term has been all about Dorking and what could be done to improve the transport. We walked to Dorking and completed a traffic survey. We were amazed at how many cars and other vehicles we saw in the relatively short time we were there.



It was Year 3's turn to be part of Open the book which the children love doing.



In computing, they are in the middle of making animations. They had to work hard on moving the characters only a small amount so each frame moved smoothly, it was trickier than they thought! When all the groups have had a turn the animations will be uploaded onto Google classroom.

The final part of this term culminated in our Easter performance. We were so proud of the children, they didn't need any direction on the day and spoke loudly and clearly throughout, what superstars!

Year 4 Resilience Class

What an amazing half term that we have had! Obviously the main event was PGL, the children that joined us showed every single school value and conquered so many fears (even forcing us to have a go at different activities). We enjoyed some amazing evening activities, including roasting marshmallows. The children that stayed with Miss Ebdon had an amazing few days as well, creating their own erupting volcano along with many other activities.



We have also been continuing our learning of Europe by focussing in on Italy, comparing our way of life to that in Italy. The children have created some amazing fact files and have written a holiday brochure for a destination in Italy.

Year 5 Courage Class

Art

Year 5 have been busy exploring mixed media and printing in their art lessons. Here are some designs from Leah, Georgie and Lexi. We will be using these to create retro-futuristic final pieces inspired by artists.



Science

In science, we have been exploring materials and changes. We have completed some great investigations, including growing salt crystals over a period of time. This is a picture of the end results of our investigation.



Year 6 Respect Class



Work and War have dominated life in the Year 6 class this term.

Work : busy preparing for SATs, the children have worked hard to complete mock assessments and can be proud of their effort and resilience.

War : the children have loved finding out all about the Second World War and took time out of modern life to step back into the 1940s in our World War II Experience Day.



Lt Bridgman from the local air cadets kindly volunteered to introduce the class to what life might have been like for those men conscripted into the military. The children learned that “At ease” is not as easy as you might think, and were drilled to march as one unit. They heard tales of the Lieutenant’s grandfather, whose life was saved by a well-placed pocket mirror which still bears the hole made by the bullet.



In the afternoon there was a change of pace, as the children learned the skills of “make do and mend” popular at this time. The class darned socks and sewed buttons - learning to thread needles and tie knots as well as sewing stitches. In our throwaway society, these are skills which are as needed today as they were back in the 1940s. Kim also told tales of brave men and women who sewed secret messages (and even maps) into their clothing and then showed a dress that she had made using an old tent.

Forest School - The Great Outdoors!

Year 5 developed their resilience early on in the Spring Term during our Forest School sessions, as we were faced with some very cold and muddy conditions.

They used a tarp and two poles as a makeshift stretcher; planted Elder Rods, learning that propagating from cuttings creates clones; enjoyed playing team hide 'n' seek; made mini campfires that they tried to keep alight for at least one minute; got involved with campfire cooking; and dug huge holes!



Reception, Year 2 and Year 4 spent time down on the farm leading their own learning. Games were played to help our younger learners about safety around the campfire and we had fun tapping out rhythms with sticks.

Year 2 learnt about biomimicry as part of their game involving bird survival. They also enjoyed hugging the hens and practising their climbing.

Year 4 linked their classroom science work about classification by pond dipping and using keys to identify and group the creatures they found. They also refreshed their toolwork skills.



Visit to Squires Garden Centre

Some of Year 2 went on a visit to Squires Garden Centre to learn how to grow potatoes and are now looking after them so that they can harvest lots of potatoes later in the summer. They will then return to Squires for the grand weigh-in and turn their potatoes into chips!



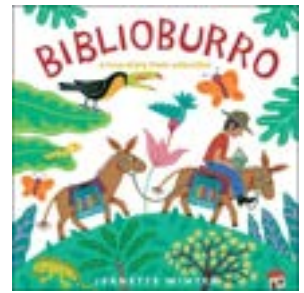
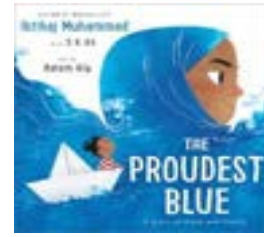
Eco Warriors

Meanwhile, following our Year 2 Eco Day at Guildford Cathedral, our enthusiastic Eco Warriors have been reflecting on their hopes for our World and had the exciting task of emptying our tumbler compost bin. They reported it was a bit pongy, but were pleased that the composting system they chose last year is now providing soil to use down on Jolly John's Farm.





Multicultural Book Week



We had a fantastic Multicultural book week this half term. The children enjoyed an inspirational visit from the illustrator/author Karin Littlewood. She presented her intriguing drawing and writing processes and told us her story 'Immi' using music and actions, which was powerful and enjoyable. Each class had a workshop with her where they started to make story necklaces - every child thoroughly enjoyed their time with Karin.



Every class had a multicultural text to focus on and have produced some pieces of writing - look out for the display in school!

We also had lovely partner class reading sessions. The classes were paired up and given a nice half hour slot to read to each other. It was wonderful to see classes socialising together and sharing a love for reading.

Throughout the week, we were busy working on our oracy skills. Every child had to prove their favourite character was The Ultimate Character! We had some fantastic debates in every class. A few chosen children performed in our celebration assembly - it was great to hear such passion and dedication for book characters!

Of course, on Friday so many children dressed up as their favourite characters. Thank you for helping your child choose and come in their outfits- everyone looked amazing!

Celebration Assembly

Well done to all of the children that have received a Golden Awards certificate in celebration assembly this term.



Ash Wednesday

We had a wonderful visit from our St John's Church team last week. Our Open The Book team shared their fortnightly bible story ably assisted by our lovely children. As it was Ash Wednesday, Rev Peter also joined us to deliver our Ashing Service, giving children the sign of the cross on their forehead as an act of remembrance.



Oliver Twist - M and M Productions

The children had an amazing treat after working so hard on their learning this half term. M and M productions visited and performed Oliver to the whole school. Such a fantastic morning.



Diary Dates 2024/25

April

4th April	End of Term Finish 1.15pm/ Mufti Day
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5th - 21st April	Easter Holidays
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22nd April	Children Return to School
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23rd April	Year 1 Wisley Trip
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24th April	Reception Bocketts Farm Trip
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29th April	Year 4 SES Reservoir Trip
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30th April	Nursery Manor Farm
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May

1st May	Year 4 Juniper Hall Trip
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5th May	Bank Holiday
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8th May	Whole School Class Photos
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12th-15th May	Year 6 SATs Week
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13th May	Year 2 Rural Life Museum
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15th May	Year 5 Space Exhibition
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16th May	Year 6 Outdoor Learning Day-(End of SATs Celebration)
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19th May	Year 5 Royal Observatory
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21st May	Year 3 Wisley Gardens Trip
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23rd May	Reception Outdoor Learning Day
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26th-30th May	Half Term
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Diary Dates 2024/25

June

2nd -6th June

Year 6 Isle of Wight Residential Trip

16th June

Year 2 Squires Potato Harvesting

24th June

Year 5 Wisley Gardens Trip

25th June

Year 4 Weald and Downland Museum

25th June

Year 6 Outdoor Learning Day

26th June

Mufti Day- Come dressed as something you want to be when you are older

26th June

Year 2 Godstone Farm

27th June

Sports Day

July

1st July

Year 1 Reigate Beekeepers Trip

2nd July

Year 4 Outdoor Learning Day

3rd July

Nursery Health Workshop

4th July

Summer Fayre 14.00-16.00

9th July

Nursery Outdoor Learning Day

9th July

Year 3 Natural History Museum Tring

11th July

Crazy Mufti Day-Break the Rules

14th July

Year 6 Leavers Service at St John's Church

16th July

Year 2 Outdoor Learning Day

16th July

Nursery Last Day of Term

Diary Dates 2024/25

June

17th July

End of Term - 13.15 Finish/ Mufti Day

18th-22nd July

Inset Days

**23rd July-31st
August**

Summer Holidays

Why is Attendance Important?

Missing school has a huge impact on how well a pupil gets on at school. The more school a child misses, the harder it is for them to get into a routine of attending regularly and catch up on the work they have missed.

How can you help?

- Be open - Every parent struggles at some point, no parent is perfect! If you're having difficulties getting your child into school come and talk to a member of staff - we can help work through the issues and barriers.
- Engage - We are keen to work with families and support where we can. Helen Young, our Home School Link Worker, is always happy to talk and to signpost parents to further support.



Attendance Matters

Every student. Every day.

Be an Attendance Hero...



Here Every day Ready On time



Absence due to illness

We understand and appreciate that children can be ill and it is not always easy to decide whether to send them to school or keep them at home. If your child is too poorly to attend school, please contact the school office before 9.00am with full details of your child's illness or symptoms. If you are unsure whether your child is well enough for school then the NHS webpage may help - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Children often describe feeling unwell - headache, feeling sick, stomach ache - when they are anxious or worried about something. Please contact us for advice and support as missing school will often make that worry grow.

Term Time Holidays

Just a reminder that school cannot authorise family holidays during term time. Absence from school for any reason can have a negative impact on a child's education and achievement. All requests for leave of absence during term time will be viewed by Mrs Fyson. Absence can only be authorised for exceptional circumstances.

Any unauthorised absences, including holidays and unexplained absences are at risk of being referred to Surrey County Council for a Fixed Penalty Notice.



Our Attendance Target is 96%

Just to remind parents/carers that if they take their children out of school without authority for 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive), then the following will apply:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children in a rolling 3 year period since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer per child, in the Magistrates Court under s444 Education Act 1996.

Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising pupil absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Supporting Our Young Carers

Did you know that some of our very own students are young carers? Young carers are children who take on significant responsibilities at home, helping to care for a family member who might be ill, disabled, or facing other challenges. This might include helping with household chores, administering medication, or providing emotional support.

Why It's Important to Recognise Young Carers

Being a young carer can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be challenging. These responsibilities can sometimes make it difficult to keep up with schoolwork and social activities. It's important to recognise and support our young carers so that they don't feel isolated or overwhelmed.

How We Can Help

At our school, we are committed to supporting our young carers. Here's how we can help:

- **Provide a Listening Ear:** We have a dedicated staff member available for young carers to talk to about their experiences and feelings.
- **Flexible Homework Deadlines:** We understand that juggling caring responsibilities and schoolwork can be tough, so we offer flexible homework deadlines for young carers.
- **Young Carers Support Group:** We are looking into how we can facilitate our own young carers group where young carers can connect with others in similar situations.
- **Access to Resources:** We provide information about external organisations that can offer additional support and advice for young carers and their families.

Get Involved!

If you feel your child is a young carer please don't hesitate to let us know. Our dedicated Young Carer Champion is our Home School Link Worker, Helen Young. Feel free to phone her at school or email her at hyoung@stjohnsdorking.uk

Here is a link for Surrey Action for Carers who you can turn to for support, they offer huge amounts of support for Young Carers in Surrey.

<https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/who-we-help/young-carers-under-18/>

SEN PARENT PEER SUPPORT

This weekly peer support group for parents of children with special educational needs is a safe understanding space to connect with others and share experiences to support each other.



Weekly on Mondays (term-time only)

Starting 17 March

at 9.30am to 10.30am

**At The Jam Place, Hamilton House, 299 Kingston
Rd, Leatherhead KT22 2FP**

MFT supports adults in Surrey to improve and maintain their mental wellbeing through one-to-one support, courses, groups and activities.

To book your place, you need to register with MFT first and then contact:

01372 375400, text 07929 024722,
email info@maryfrancestrust.org.uk
or visit www.maryfrancestrust.org.uk



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Inspiring Mental Wellbeing