

NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM MRS METCALFE AND MR LEHMANN

Dear Parents/Carers

This is the final newsletter of the Autumn Term 2025, and it seems to have gone so quickly! It seems that only yesterday that we were welcoming our new Year R children in on their first day and they have all settled so well. We have come to the end of a very long term and the whole school community is looking forward to a well-earned rest. The prospect of Christmas cheers us and lifts our spirits away from the cold and dark weather of the season.

The Autumn Term is always a busy one. Our pupils have worked extremely hard, earning dojo points, bronze badges, improving their handwriting to use the golden pens and learning many new skills. We have had lots of lovely opportunities to have visitors in this term, from the history man, trips to the planetarium, theatre, Cathedral, Bishop Palace Gardens, Glyndebourne Opera and Forest School to name but a few.

Our Christmas performances are always very special events and I'm sure you'll agree that this year was no exception. It was so lovely to have all the children together with parents as the audience to see this memory making experience. The children in the Infant School were so excited about performing for everyone and their enthusiasm and enjoyment was matched only by the quality of the performance they gave - fabulous! A huge thank you to all our staff for the patience and dedication with the excited children in their classes.

Thank you to the PTA for their hard work and commitment and to you for supporting our events so enthusiastically. The school Christmas Fair was so lovely with lots of different stalls, and we raised an amazing £756.10. A huge thank you to Mrs Brocklehurst and the PTA parents for the hard work behind the scenes at organising this event, it wouldn't go ahead without you!

As we prepare ourselves for what is such a magical time of year, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the children, parents/carers and staff a happy, safe and peaceful Christmas (as peaceful as it can be!). And I pray that over the busy days ahead, we will all have moments - however brief - to marvel again at the mystery of the Christmas Story.

We hope that you have a very Merry Christmas

Attendance Matters

Recent research from the Department for Education (March 2025) highlights a crucial link between school attendance and academic achievement. The findings confirm that regular attendance is essential for primary school children to succeed and develop key life skills.

Why Attendance Matters

- ✓ **Higher Achievement** – Pupils who attend school regularly perform better academically, particularly in subjects like English and Maths.
- ✓ **Social & Cognitive Development** – Attending school every day helps children build friendships, develop social skills, and grow in confidence.
- ✓ **Long-Term Benefits** – Good attendance lays the foundation for future success in education and career opportunities.

The Impact of Poor Attendance

Unfortunately, missing school can have a significant negative effect on a child's education and overall well-being:

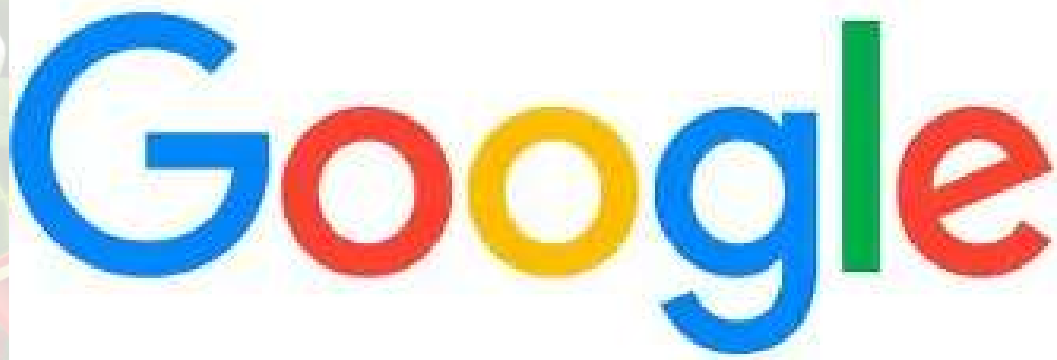
- ✘ **Lower Achievement** – Children with high absence rates often struggle with tests, fall behind their peers, and find it harder to catch up.
- ✘ **Social & Emotional Struggles** – Absence can lead to feelings of isolation, lower self-esteem, and difficulty forming friendships.
- ✘ **Future Challenges** – Poor attendance can affect long-term prospects, including access to higher education and career opportunities.

Our Commitment to Supporting Families

At St Josephs Infant and Junior school we believe that every child deserves the best start in life, and attendance plays a key role in this.

Here's how we support our families:

- ✓ **Encouraging 100% Attendance** – Our goal is to ensure all pupils make the most of their education.
- ✓ **Family Support** – We work closely with parents to understand and remove any barriers to attendance, offering help from Mrs Sheppard, early support services, and SEND support where needed.
- ✓ **Monitoring & Communication** – We track attendance regularly and will stay in touch with families to address any concerns promptly.



Internet Safety Information for Parents

From the beginning of December 2025 Google is releasing new and updated parental controls for Android devices.

These include:

- **Set the amount of screen time that can be spent on a device each day to help establish healthy habits.**
- **Set downtime schedules to automatically lock the device at night to ensure restful sleep without distraction.**
- **Control app usage by limiting time spent on specific apps, or blocking apps entirely.**
- **Add more time by granting extra minutes when a time limit is reached, or to extend a scheduled break.**

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/top-tips-for-staying-safe-online-at-christmas>



Young Writers®

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Our Year 5 pupils entered the Young Writers competition ‘I Have A Dream’. We are delighted to announce that Skyla and Anna’s work has been chosen to be published in the “I Have A Dream - Pages of Wonder” which is amazing! The girls received a bookmark and certificate for their achievement.

Having their work chosen is something to be very proud of as it doesn’t happen every day! Their writing really impressed and it was clear how engaged and inspired these children were. We can’t wait to read their work again when it is published! d

Nursery.

Local storyteller Chris North brought to life a variety of well-loved Christmas stories for our youngest members of the St Joseph's community. There was plenty of interactive opportunities to join in including helping make the voices and sound effects!

Stories included 'One Snowy Night' with Percy the Park Keeper; The Snowman; and Chris' own story, 'The Christmas Star in the Woods'.

There was also a game of 'We're going on a polar bear hunt' inspired by the well-known book plus some Christmas songs.

Our little ones had lots of fun using their imagination and being part of the stories.



Robin Class

This term in Robin class we have been exploring nature in the cold weather and using our senses to describe what has changed outside with the season.

For our work in Drawing Club we have enjoyed a huge range of books from *The Little Red Hen*, *The Jolly Postman* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The children have really enjoyed learning the stories and then retelling their own version. Whilst reading *The Little Red Hen*, we also made jam sandwiches and enjoyed hot chocolate.

Robin class have continued to flourish to work as a team, build good relationships with all and it has been a joy to see their creativity.

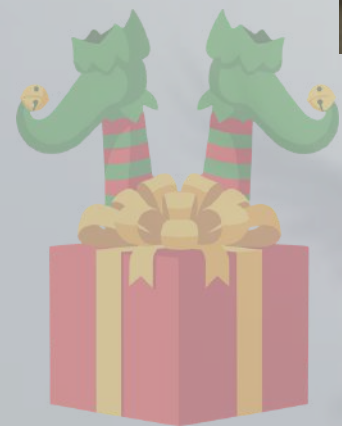




Starling Class

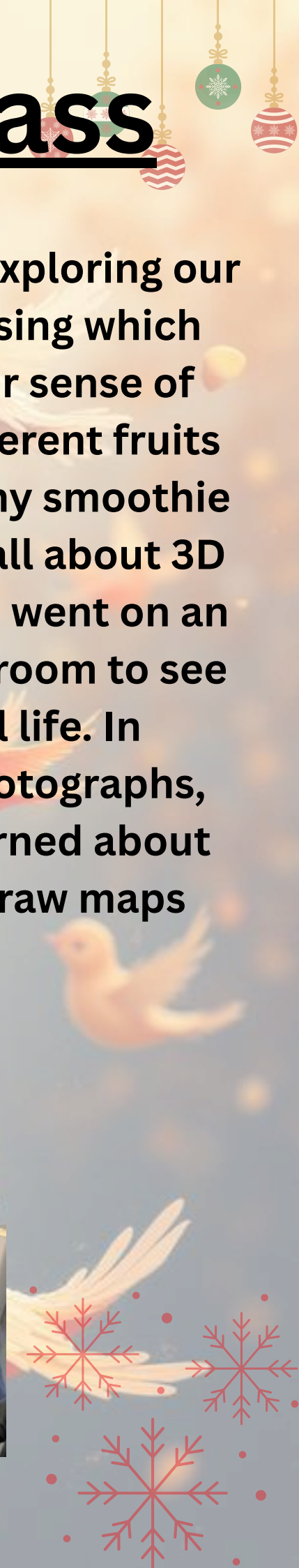


Starlings have had a truly magical time diving into the world of Fairytales! Each week brought a new adventure: we baked bread with the Little Red Hen, became detectives to solve Goldilocks' crime, and engineered strong bridges for the Three Billy Goats. A highlight was watching the adults perform Jack and the Beanstalk—what a treat! Beyond the stories, we embraced the outdoors at Forest School, making delicious pancakes over the fire and learning new skills in nature. We also enjoyed getting festive, celebrating different holidays together, and sharing lots of joyful moments. Most importantly, we've grown in confidence, independence, and friendships. Looking ahead to Spring 1, we'll be exploring all the seasons through exciting activities, ending with a fantastic farm trip to bring our learning to life!



Goldfinch Class

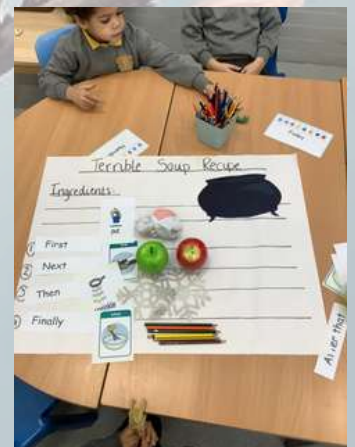
This term in Year 1, we've been busy exploring our senses in Science! We enjoyed guessing which object was in the feely bag using our sense of touch. We had lots of fun tasting different fruits and using our ideas to design a healthy smoothie in DT. In Maths, we've been learning all about 3D shapes and their properties. We even went on an exciting shape hunt around the classroom to see what shapes we could find in real life. In Geography, we discovered aerial photographs, created maps of our school, and learned about map symbols to help us read and draw maps accurately.



Wren Class

In Wren class this term we have been creating our own Terrible Recipe's from our class book – Billy and the Beast!

The children have been coming up with some truly disgusting ideas and working hard on using their imperative verbs and time adverbials to write their instructions. We have also been having a brilliant time at Forest School. We've been out in almost every weather this term and have loved seeing how our environment has changed with the seasons. We even got to enjoy some hot chocolate, pancakes and marshmallows. Wren class have become experts in their five senses this term and have loved doing experiments to build their knowledge of how our bodies work! We also have been creating our own smoothies and tasting different ingredients to decide what would go together best!



Owl Class

This term in Owl class we have been looking at 'Wolves' and 'The Snowman', using our understanding of expanded noun phrases and different sentence types to create some wonderful pieces of writing! In maths we have been looking at addition and subtraction across 10 and have been using resources to support our understanding. In science we have been looking at microhabitats and where different animals would live - we have designed a microhabitat for an insect of our choosing and described what it needs to survive! We started our history topic with a visit from a friend of Guy Fawkes, who started our learning on the gunpowder plot! We have been learning about the different food groups in design technology and are going to be making our own wraps at the end of term! In religious education we have looked at the importance of candles and in PSHE we have discussed families and how all families are different. We have made digital music in computing and listened to a variety of musical pieces to understand the dynamics and tempo in music as well as practicing our songs for the Christmas Concert! PE has had a focus of yoga and invasion games!





St Gabriel Class



This half term, St Gabriel have been fully immersed in our exciting topic, *Mighty Mountains!* The children have explored how mountains are formed, discovered famous peaks in the UK and around the world, and learned about major mountain ranges. In Science, we've investigated solids, liquids, and gases through hands-on experiments, exploring melting, freezing, boiling points, evaporation, and condensation. Pupils have developed a deeper understanding of how particle arrangements create the materials we see every day.

We've also enjoyed engaging in *Godly Play* sessions led by Zena and Father Paul, where children expressed their spiritual responses creatively using Lego, playdough, pictures, and even their own PowerPoint presentations. These activities have helped us reflect on how each of us responds to RE lessons in unique ways, broadening our understanding of the wider world.

To finish the half term, we celebrated everything we have learned in our Djembe drumming sessions with a fantastic performance for parents and the Infant school children.

We can't wait for the holidays to begin!



St Paul Class



Autumn 2 term in St Paul Class has been full of creativity and discovery! We completed our first proper school trip to the cinema to watch Bad Guys 2! We explored the fascinating world of mountains, learning how they are formed, and carried out a science experiment investigating the melting points of different solids as part of our work on solids, liquids, and gases! In English, we became biographers, writing detailed accounts of the life of Sir Edmund Hillary, and enjoyed reading two brilliant books, The Iron Man and The Wild Robot, which sparked lots of imagination and discussion amongst the class. The class worked hard practicing for their fantastic djembe drumming performance which they bravely completed in front of parents and much of the school! Finally, to finish the term with a creative flourish, we designed and built our very own junk Ironmen. Mr Hamilton, Miss Warren and St Paul Class want to thank families for all their support in these activities including all donations and supporting any in school events.





St Bartholomew Class

This half term, St Bartholomew have had lots of fun exploring the world of mountains. We have spent time learning about different types of mountains, where they are in the world and how they are formed. They have further explored this learning by researching and writing a biography about a famous mountaineer which the children found fascinating.

The children have enjoyed their Forest School lessons which they have been doing with Leader Luke in Kelly's Garden. They have planted trees, created wooden reindeers and cooked pancakes. These outdoor sessions have helped the children to learn and better appreciate the world outside of our classroom.

To finish our year, the children participated in a live lesson hosted in Antarctica, watched Bad Guys 2 at the cinema and have started to build their very own Iron Man out of recyclable materials!

Finally, a huge well done for their fantastic drumming performances - you did yourselves and your teachers proud.

Thank you to all parents who were able to attend.





St Anne Class



This term, St Anne have been diving into the fascinating world of Vikings in History, exploring artefacts and uncovering the secrets of this incredible era. The children have shown great enthusiasm as they investigated how the Vikings lived, worked, and travelled. Alongside this, every Friday has been dedicated to Forest School, where pupils have embraced outdoor learning. They've enjoyed carving, discovering new games, cooking delicious treats over the fire, and even planting new trees to help our environment thrive. It's been a wonderful half term full of creativity, curiosity, and hands-on experiences.





St Catherine Class



This term, Year 5 have been exploring the fascinating world of forces! Our focus was on gravity and whether the mass of an object affects how it falls. The children carried out an experiment using balls of different weights, carefully predicting, observing, and recording their results. It was a brilliant opportunity for the class to think like scientists—asking questions, testing ideas, and discussing what they found.

Alongside their science work, Year 5 have almost finished their second-class text, Viking Boy. The children are really enjoying the story and are eagerly waiting to find out what happens to Gunnar and Skuli in the final chapter!





St Richard Class



We've had an exciting and busy term! Our classes enjoyed a fantastic trip to the cinema to watch *How to Train Your Dragon*—a real treat that everyone loved. We've also been enjoying some brilliant books in class, including *Wonder* and *The Boy at the Back of the Class*. In addition, we've been listening to *The Boy Who Saved Christmas* in preparation for our Christmas outing to the Chichester Festival Theatre, where we'll see the magical performance live. It promises to be a colourful and festive experience!

Celebrating Success

Alongside our regular Star of the Week, we now have a Golden Pen Award! The children are really striving forward and challenging themselves to improve their handwriting and presentation to win the Golden Handwriting Pen each week. We're also thrilled to share that one child in our class has already read half a million words, and there are a few close behind! Our aim is to reach one million words this academic year—why not make it your New Year's Resolution?

Looking Back

Last term, we had the incredible opportunity to visit Glyndebourne and watch the opera *The Railway Children*. It was an unforgettable experience that brought music and storytelling to life.

Coming Up Next Term

Next term is packed with exciting learning! We'll be introducing Forest School sessions, giving pupils the chance to learn and explore outdoors in a hands-on way. In Maths, as we prepare for SATs, we'll begin by focusing on fractions, and any extra practice at home with multiplication and division will make this work much easier.

We're also delighted that so many of you have signed up for the residential next year—this is really great news and something we're all looking forward to!

