



NEWSLETTER No. 4

October 2024

Dear Saint John's families,

We have made it to the end of the first term and there is a real sense of achievement when we look back over the past eight weeks.

The school feels very settled despite our disrupted start and the children have flourished both inside and outside the classroom! In this newsletter, there are lots of photographs to enjoy and I know that families love seeing the Dojo messages each week, with so many examples of children's learning.

Of particular note are the two whole school days:

iSingPOP where the children are able to learn new songs and enjoy learning actions too!

Diwali where we spent the day learning about this Hindu Festival of Light and took part in Indian dancing and making clay pots for tea-lights.

It was also lovely to go to Highbury Church for our Celebration of Learning where we saw some impressive progression of learning from Reception up to Year 6. Each class did a great job. Well done!

Sadly, we have to say farewell to Ms Dawid who has been working in Reception for the last couple of years. It has been brilliant having her with us, engaging with the children and the families in such a positive manner. Her smiley face (and cool clothes) will be missed and we wish her all the best for the future.

We also say goodbye to Mrs Omar. Mrs Omar has worked in the school for nearly ten years and has taught various year groups, with her final few years being in Year 5/6. She has led different subjects and was to be found doing a final clear out of the Science resource cupboard late on Wednesday evening, wanting to leave things organised and ready for those who take on the different responsibilities! It will be sad to say goodbye, but we are hopeful that she may return to Saint John's to do some supply teaching at some point in the future.

We are pleased to have had many applicants for the positions available at Saint John's and those who visited and those invited to interview were extremely positive about their experience. The children's interactions with (unknown) adults were impressive and they engaged in the interview process with great enthusiasm! After quite a busy few days, we have made appointments and so will be welcoming Mrs Kiely into Year 5 as a full-time class teacher straight after half term. Mrs Boussadia and Mrs Whittam will be joining our teaching assistant team, with some shuffling around based on staff availability and skill set, as well (obviously) as the needs of the children. In addition, we interviewed for a Caretaker and have appointed Mr Tennant. He comes with a huge amount of experience and capability and we are delighted that he will be making those improvements to our premises which make such a difference to our daily life.

We are sure you will be very welcoming to all those joining our school community and no doubt they will become familiar faces within a short time.

During these past two weeks, we have had visitors viewing the school: parents of children starting in Reception 2025 are considering which school suits them best. There has been some lovely feedback during these visits to the Saint John's:

"It is so calm around this school!"

"The children are polite to each other, aren't they?"

"School seems a lot more exciting than when I was young!"

"I am pleased to hear about the partnerships with other schools; it sounds as though you are an outward-facing school. I like that."

"Swimming every year from Year 2 upwards? That's amazing. Much more than other schools!"

I feel very proud and privileged to work here.

Have a great half term. Keep safe!

Mrs Beavers



Written by Sharon Morrow TA



Reception children have been learning Michael Rosen's story 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. They have created a story map to retell the tale. They have also been making Mobilo models and having fun playing in the garden.



During Science this term, **Year 1** have been learning about everyday materials. As part of this work, the children carried out a simple experiment to test which material would be best to patch up a broken umbrella. They worked in small groups to test each material and tried to be fair when carrying out their experiment, using the same number of drops on each piece of material. The children discovered that the 'waxy material' would be best to patch up the umbrella because the drops off water ran off the material and didn't soak through it.



During Science, **Year 2** have been learning about micro-habitats. The children enjoyed looking in the front garden to see if they could find any minibeasts. They found lots of things including snails, ants, spiders and a wasp.



Year 3 had a fantastic time at the Wilson Museum. The children learnt lots about the Stone Age and loved all the related activities. They explored replica artefacts, had a go at cave painting and even learnt the ancient art of weaving.



As part of their current History topic based upon the local area, **Year 4** went on a field trip that focussed on the changing architecture located in streets in proximity of the school. As part of their work, the children took photos of the different architectural features as well as carrying out sketches of the Georgian houses on the Evesham Road. Following on from their fieldtrip, the children looked at copies of census documents to find out who would have been living in the local houses during 1901.



Year 5 ended their Maya topic in style with a Maya Day at school. During the day, they explored various aspects of Maya life including food, housing and entertainment in the form of a ball game, Pok-a-Tok. The children were surprised to learn that when playing Pok-a-Tok, players were not allowed to use their hands or feet - only their heads, shoulders, elbows, wrists and hips. They had a go at playing this game themselves and found it incredibly challenging! Fortunately, no rules such as sacrificing members of the losing team to the gods were in place and the game ended peacefully! The children also tried different flavours of Maya's favourite food - chocolate! They tasted mint, orange, milk, chilli, ginger and dark chocolate (85% cocoa) and liked most flavours except dark chocolate - they thought it was too bitter! On another day, the children visited Cheltenham College to see their artwork on display in the new art gallery.



Recently in Maths, **Year 6** have been looking at square and cube numbers. To help us visualise and understand these special numbers, we created arrays using counters or built them using smaller cubes to prove that certain numbers are indeed square or cube. In Science, we have been finding out how nutrients that we ingest can be transported around the body. We learned that, through a process of diffusion and osmosis, nutrient-rich solutions can be delivered to individual cells. We demonstrated this by using skittles where the colourings represented nutrients. When dissolved in water, the nutrients could be transported in a solution and passed through semi-permeable membranes to nourish cells. Our Jelly Baby experiment gave us an idea of how this works.



The whole school enjoyed iSingPOP sessions. The theme was 'flourishing', to remind us of our school motto. The children loved learning their songs and actions, which we will use in Collective Worship going forward!



The whole school enjoyed a day learning about Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Light. The children took part in a dance workshop, made Diya lamps out of clay, created Rangoli patterns and drew Mehndi designs. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn about a world religion.



The Junior children enjoyed a trip to the Cheltenham Literature Festival.

Year 3 and Year 4 saw Hannah Gold, who wrote 'Turtle Moon'.

Year 5 and Year 6 saw Onjali Rauf, who wrote 'The Letter with the Golden Stamp'.



The children were great ambassadors for Saint John's - a credit to us!

We hope these visits mean that books and reading continue to be part of our children's enjoyment at home and school.

The football season has well and truly started with all three of our teams in action over the past fortnight. The girls enjoyed a tournament at Charlton Kings and showed great character and resilience in four games played against much bigger schools. It was great to see the improvement in confidence as the games went on. The development squad travelled to Bishops Cleeve Primary School for a 6-a-side friendly and came away with a very creditable 3-3 draw while the 1st Team won the small schools section of the Albert Dix Trophy and were awarded gold medals!



Thank you everyone for your kind support with our first Bake Sale of the year - we raised £55. We appreciate everyone who donated some baked goods and anyone who bought them!



We are super excited for the first disco of the year on Friday 15th November from 6:30pm to 8pm! Tickets will be sold at the door for £2 and your children will be able to dance the night away! Reception children will need to be accompanied by an adult for this event.

Do you know of any businesses who would be able to support our Christmas Raffle by donating a prize? Please do get in touch with us by emailing or finding one of us at the gates.

ptfa@st-johns-pri.gloucs.sch.uk



November 15th 6:30pm - 8pm

Tickets £2 per child at the Door
 Reception Kids must be accompanied by an Adult
 Remember to bring change for stalls and tuck shop
 No mobile Phones



Mrs Russell and the Trussell Trust team at St. Paul's Church would like to say **THANK YOU** for all the wonderful food donations at Harvest - they were very gratefully received.



We enjoyed a wonderful Celebration of Learning at Highbury Church. Each year group presented their learning from this term, with the Reception class singing a song about "Dear Zoo" - a favourite book for many of us! Thank you to the families who joined us for this event.



A fun-filled alternative to Halloween.
Let us know if you are coming along for party time and tea.
office@stlukescheltenham.org.uk
Parent/guardian need to stay for the duration.

