



NEWSLETTER No. 3

October 2026

Dear Saint John's families,

We are on the final push through to the end of Term 1, with half term in sight! It has been an eight week term, which has allowed us to settle everyone in really well and establish some excellent routines and expectations. The learning has been impressive and the teachers' comments being made every day and in our Celebration Worship on a Friday are testament to the great work that the children are doing! Well done!

I am sure all of the children will need some time to rest over the half term; it is a good opportunity to catch up on family time where possible. Please, please do find some time to read books together, play in the parks around Cheltenham and perhaps attempt some of the games that were talked about in the Open Classrooms session. None of these activities cost any money, so do take advantage of the library in town and the wonderful open spaces around Cheltenham. Here is one of many websites for activities at half term:

<https://nclbcheltenham.org.uk/october-half-term-free-activities>

Remember to post photos onto Dojo; they can be celebrated within the classroom when we return to school.

At the end of the first week back, we are celebrating Divali. We have one of our family members coming in to speak to the whole school and to each class. We will also be creating Rangoli patterns in Art. We are inviting children to wear party/festival clothing, including traditional clothing. It would be wonderful to see some of the African, Asian, European, South American clothing worn by our families. Or to be "dressed up" as if for a party - no high heels though please!



Lastly, you will have received a flyer this week about some "stay & play" events aimed at children who will be joining Reception in September 2027. If you know anyone who has a child this age, do let them know that they can visit at any point. Just be in touch with the office on 01242 523786.

Have a lovely half term. Rest, relax and read!

We look forward to seeing you in November! Mrs Beevers :)

WHOLE SCHOOL DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Friday 23rd October: 9.30am Celebration of Learning at Highbury Church, GL52 6DT

Friday 23rd October: School finishes at 3:15pm

Monday 2nd November: Term starts again at 8.45am

Friday 6th November: Divali Day: details on Dojo soon!

Friday 13th November: Children in Need (wear spots!)

Fri 27th & Mon 30th Nov: **SCHOOL CLOSED** for INSET

Saturday 5th December: Christmas Fair 1pm - 3pm

Wednesday 9th December: 1.30pm Nativity at Highbury

Tuesday 15th December: School trip to the Panto

Thursday 17th December: 2pm Christmas Service at St Luke's Church, GL53 7JJ

Friday 18th December: School finishes at 2pm

Monday 4th January: **SCHOOL CLOSED** for INSET

Friday 15th January: 6pm School Disco

Thursday 11th February: 9.30am Celebration of Learning

Friday 12th February: School closes at 3.15pm

Thursday 4th March: World Book Day (costumes!)

Friday 12th March: 9am Open Classrooms

Friday 19th March: Red Nose Day (wear red!)

Tuesday 23rd March: 2pm Easter Service at St Luke's

Thursday 25th March: Mad Hair Day (wear mad hair!)

Monday 3rd May: Bank Holiday—School Closed

Wednesday 26th May: 9.30am Celebration of Learning

Thursday 27th May: 3.15pm finish (Fri = INSET)

Friday 11th June: Sports Day

Monday 21st June: 2pm Open Classrooms

Friday 2nd July: Summer Fair in the late afternoon

Wednesday 14th July: 10.30am Y6/KS2 Show at Highbury

Tuesday 20th July: 2pm Leavers' Service at St Luke's

Wednesday 21st July: School finishes at 2pm



Written by Sharon Morrow TA



What an exciting first half term **Reception** have had! This week, the children had a visit from Rev Wheaton, who spoke to them about their RE topic 'Why is God important to Christians?' It was a super way to sum up their learning over the last term. In Maths, the children have been learning to count in order and instantly recognise written numerals 1,2 and 3. They also designed their own repeating patterns in playdough! The children's challenges in class this week included filling different sized containers with sand to see which holds the most and least, painting using something other than a paintbrush and writing a shopping list for the Three Bears. They have also spent plenty of time playing in the Autumn sunshine! Have a lovely half term break!



Last week, **Year 1** had a fantastic time at the Cheltenham Literature Festival! The children enjoyed an exciting talk with Sarah McIntyre and Philip Reeve, who shared their wonderful Adventuremice books with them. They also took part in a fun and engaging storytelling session, which inspired their imaginations and brought stories to life. Back at school, the children have loved exploring our outdoor area and getting stuck into messy play, where they have enjoyed investigating different materials, getting creative and learning through hands-on experiences. It has been wonderful to see the children's curiosity, creativity and confidence continue to grow as they explore, discover and learn together both inside and outside the classroom.



As part of their writing unit of work on writing instructions, **Year 2** followed a set of instructions and made pirate biscuits. The instructions were easy to follow as they included a 'How to' title, a 'What you need' section with bullet points and clear simple sentences with the 'bossy verb' at the start of each sentence. Everyone agreed the pirate biscuits were delicious! The children also went to the Literature Festival last week and listened to Phillip Reeve and Sara McIntyre talk about how they write and illustrate their books. They enjoyed a draw-along session with them too. After lunch, the children enjoyed a story-telling session in the story telling tent as well.



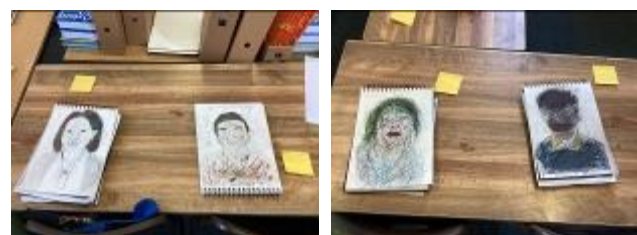
Year 3 have had another wonderfully busy week! The children have been using the iPads to research and discover more about the Bronze Age and Iron Age, building on their learning about life in prehistoric Britain. They also stepped back in time to become real-life Stone Age cave painters! The children put their artistic skills to the test by creating cave art on paper attached to the walls and used the ends of paintbrushes to mimic the sticks that might have been used. To top off their exciting week, they visited the Literature Festival, where they had the fantastic opportunity to meet author Jenny McLachlan. She has inspired the children with her stories and creativity and they cannot wait to see where their imaginations take them next!



Year 4 had a brilliant time at the Literature Festival. The children attended a talk from Jenny McLachlan about her Land of Roar series and are looking forward to reading one of her books for their next class read. They also enjoyed a fantastic drama workshop, led by Gemma, which explored a myth that the Ancient Greeks used to explain the seasons. Gemma was in role as the Goddess of Nature throughout and the children helped her to solve the mystery of Persephone's disappearance! They really got into character and created a brilliant performance at the end of the workshop. Thank you to Gemma for planning such an enjoyable morning!



Year 5 have been completing their art unit, exploring how gestural marks can convey emotion and movement. The children developed techniques and ideas that they could use in a final portrait of themselves. They then completed a "gallery walk" where they could enjoy and give positive feedback to each other's work. On Monday, the class enjoyed a Maya Day to round off their history unit. They discussed what this civilisation ate and the importance of maize and cacao to their culture and beliefs. The children then had an opportunity to taste the flavours of the Ancient Maya with a corn salad using only ingredients available to the Maya and an authentic spiced chocolate drink. Later, the children learnt about the Maya number system and writing system, creating their own numbers and glyphs.



Year 6 had a fantastic time visiting the Cheltenham Literature Festival, where they had the exciting opportunity to see author Katherine Rundell and hear about her love of storytelling. When they returned to school, the children were delighted to receive a very special gift from Queen Camilla – a copy of Katherine Rundell's book 'Impossible Creatures'! The children stepped back in time for their Victorian Day, experiencing what life was like for children at school during the Victorian era! Dressed in their fantastic costumes, the children took part in traditional lessons and experienced some of the strict routines that Victorian pupils would have followed. They also had a go at sewing their own samplers, developing their skills and discovering how different school life was over 150 years ago.



Our community has done it again! Over 161 kg of food donations in 3 days for the Cheltenham Food Bank. School Council and I cannot thank you enough for your kindness and generosity. I want to say a huge thank you to School Council for leading on this project; they have done an incredible job from start to finish, including gathering and counting the produce today. This was a class competition however, what is more important is how the whole Saint John's community has come together to support families across Cheltenham. After our donations last week, Sarah from Cheltenham Food Bank came to host an assembly with the children. She thanked the children and families for your generosity, told a positive impact story from the food bank and read a lovely story book called 'It's a No Money Day' - there is a link here so you can hear it read aloud:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QTI1ZYXO6Q>

Thank you again for your generosity. The children are looking forward to continuing to build our relationship with the food bank.



The disco was a great success. Thank you, everyone, we hope you enjoyed it as much as we did! We raised £470 for the school!



The next PTFA event is the Christmas Fair. We hope you and all your loved ones can come too! The Christmas Fair will be on Saturday December 5th at 1pm! If you could help support us with this, we would really appreciate it so please do get in touch!



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

Governor Spotlight:



Rev Patrick Wheaton
(Vice-Chair & Safeguarding Governor)

I have been a governor since 2016 and I am the vicar at St Luke's (Saint John's parish church). I have the privilege of leading Collective Worship every Wednesday and enjoy teaching Bible stories to all of the children. Sometimes, I am invited into classes to teach some of the RE curriculum. We love inviting the school to the church for services three times a year: Christmas, Easter and the Leavers' Service.

Anyone is welcome to join us at St Luke's on a Sunday morning at 10am. We also have a toddlers group called Seedlings on a Thursday morning at 10am. Please do say Hello if you see me in town!



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