



## NEWSLETTER No. 2

September 2023

Dear Saint John's families,

I have been impressed watching so many of the Reception children arriving at school and confidently walking into the building on their own. It has also been lovely seeing many of the class respond in the classroom; they are engaging with school routines positively.

We have also had a number of new pupils join us, some of whom have only just arrived in the country. We encourage the children to be welcoming and to include everyone in and I hope that the parents and carers involved will be welcomed by our families too.

Please do ensure that you have written down the dates for your diary which were sent out on Dojo. One key date is our event at Highbury Church on Friday 20th October, when each class will talk about what they have been learning this term. This is a lovely, informal event that gives our children the opportunity to get used to standing in front of an audience and speaking aloud.

Next week, we are heading off to the Literature Festival with Years 5 and 6 going on Monday and Years 1 and 2 and then 3 and 4 going on Tuesday. Please make sure that your children are dressed in school uniform, with a **waterproof coat** as there is a chance of rain. There are many free activities this weekend (and next) so I would encourage families to visit the centre of town! The event has a great atmosphere with lots of opportunities to have fun and find out about books and authors.

Our reputation around Cheltenham, perhaps also because of our inspection result of GOOD, continues to have a positive impact, with organisations and individuals being in touch to find out about Saint John's. We have been given the opportunity to go and plant some bulbs in Sandford Park to celebrate and focus on World Polio Day.

We also continue to be offered different events or activities at Cheltenham College; the partnership with this independent school has really helped us flourish.

### The Big Ambition

This government survey is for all children and young people aged 6-18 and for parents/carers who can complete the survey on behalf of children aged 0-5. Adults can assist any children who are unable to complete the survey independently.

The survey can be completed here: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigambition](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigambition)

Schools play a critical role in ensuring the government can hear from as many children and young people as possible. Please see The Big Ambition [webpage](#), where you will find lesson slides and additional resources, such as accessible versions of the survey, as well as responses to frequently asked questions.

### Children in Need

We will be celebrating Children in Need on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023. We will dress up with SPOTS and children are asked to bring in £1. We hope that you will support this charity event, knowing that Children in Need supports a wide range of amazing organisations caring for children. We will have an assembly at 9.15am on the Friday morning to talk about Children in Need and to celebrate our spottiness!

<https://www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/schools/primary-school/>

Please be aware of how tired your children may be; it has been a long week for many of them! This first half term can often be quite tough, getting back into the swing of school life. It is three more weeks until half term (starting on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October with NORMAL pick up time of 3.15pm) and so it is good to balance fun with rest at the weekend!

Have a lovely Saturday and Sunday; perhaps I will see you visiting the Literature Festival!

Mrs Beevers



Written by Sharon Morrow TA



The **Reception** children love starting each morning off with dough disco, where they squeeze playdough and dance along to music. This is a great, fun way to strengthen their hands ready for writing. They have also learned about being special in RE: we read the story of Elmer the elephant, who was different but very special to his friends. The children thought about ways in which we are all special and they came up with some great ideas, from 'looking after my little sister' to 'being a great runner', 'being able to swim' and 'being super fast on the scooter'.





As part of their Art unit of work on drawing, **Year 1** continued investigating different types of lines. The children looked at the work of Kandinsky and drew their own versions. They then used water colour paints to finish their work.





During RE, **Year 2** have been studying the Islamic patterns used to decorate the inside and outside of mosques. The children then created repeated patterns of their own.



**Year 4** used the playground space to help them understand how particles act in different states - solid, liquids and gases. The class are reading 'The Land of Roar' by Jenny McLachlan and were very excited to have received a letter from the author recently. Jenny McLachlan explained where she got some of her ideas and inspirations from as well as warning the class to 'watch out for the dragons'.





**Year 3** have enjoyed designing an experiment to explore the characteristics of rocks. They made great predictions and thought carefully about any changes they would make if they repeated the experiment. The children have also explored scale and proportion in Art. They sketched animals and then experimented with drawing them using charcoal.





**Year 5** thoroughly enjoyed their drumming session with Tim, who came to Saint John's to introduce the children to some rhythms that originated in Africa. To mark the beginning of Black History Month (1st-31st October), he told the children stories, taught them some drumming patterns and they even had the chance to create their own rhythms. You can certainly see the enjoyment in the smiling faces! For their Art unit this term, the children are focusing on sketching self-portraits. To begin with, they sketched a picture of themselves using continuous line drawing (not taking their pencil off the paper) and then, using tracing paper, wrote a piece of text, key words or a poem around the outline of their face. Following this, they painted backgrounds for their self-portraits to go onto using watered-down paint, which are now drying, ready for the next stage.



Thank you for supporting our Read for Good Readathon. We have already had several donations online and are off to a great start. The Read for Good charity provides a regular supply of brand new books along with storyteller visits to brighten up the days of children in all of the UK's main children's hospitals. Saint John's will also get a percentage of the money raised to buy new books for school. Keep up the great work and happy reading!





**Year 6** have been loving the opportunity to use Cheltenham College hockey facilities. Their improvement in just a few short weeks has been great to see and we look forward to playing in a mini festival next week. The children also really enjoyed their African drumming session to kick off Black History Month. Some super rhythms and grooves to move to were made. During Art, the children looked at the work of Edward Weston and his use of macro photography to create abstract images. Using fruit and vegetables, the children created some fabulous images of their own.



The **PTFA** Christmas Fair planning meeting will be at The Strand on Thursday 12th October at 8pm - everyone is welcome - please bring your ideas!



The Christmas Fair will be on Saturday 2nd December from 1pm - 3pm.

PTFA Disco dates are:

Friday 26th January 6.30 - 8pm

Friday 17th May 6.30 - 8pm