



## NEWSLETTER No. 5

December 2023

Dear Saint John's families,

I am writing this on a Thursday evening as I know that tomorrow is going to be busy, busy: it is the first day of December! The Christmas countdown will begin and, as we finish so close to Christmas on the 22nd December, it will be a countdown to the end of term too! As always, I will be standing outside at the gate in a festive woolly hat; I have a different one for each day that we are in school in December. This year, I had to get hold of a couple of new ones!

### **Christmas Fair: Saturday 2nd December 1-3pm**

Tomorrow will also be busy as we will have some decorations to put up and preparations happen after school (and on Saturday morning) for our Saint John's school Christmas Fair! Donations have been brought in and the PTFA (Parent Teacher and Friend Association) having been putting together a lovely plan for this event; a big thank you to all those who have helped. I am sure there is still space, especially for setting up, helping with stalls or tidying up at the end!

Ultimately, the Christmas Fair only works if everyone comes and brings some money to spend! Doors will open at 1pm and we provide games and activities until 3pm, so please make sure that you come and join us!

### **Open Classroom and Tea with Mrs B 2.15pm**

Various parents and carers have said that they are coming for our Open Classroom/Tea with Mrs B at 2.15pm tomorrow, Friday 1st December. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are open for parents to come and see what the children have been up to and there is a chance to have a cup of tea/coffee at the end of the day too. I am looking forward to the opportunity to meet some of our new families, as we have many new parents of children in Reception. Even if you are an "old hand" and are very familiar with Saint John's, please come and make new parents and carers welcome to our school!

One of the greatest joys of being a head of a small, diverse primary school is listening to children engage with each other, particularly with those who speak different languages or enjoy different cultures at home. Our children are so welcoming to new pupils; we have had many new pupils arrive this term and they have come from all over the world! We have had many families visiting the school as they consider Saint John's for the next school year (joining Reception in September 2024) and many have commented on wanting their children to be a part of a community which is diverse and interesting, plus one that celebrates that diversity. Our Geography Day a couple of weeks ago highlighted the different countries which are familiar for our children.

As well as listening to the children chatting to each other in the classroom, hall during lunch or in the playground, I have also delighted in hearing our youngest children singing their nativity songs in preparation for the Nativity on Wednesday 13th December (1.30pm) and Thursday 14th December (morning, time to be confirmed). We encourage families to come to one or other of these "performances" and just ask families to be aware of the limited space at Highbury Church. We suggest two people from a family at a performance to ensure that everyone is able to fit into the church building! Please remember that it will be live-streamed too, so this may be a better option for some families.

Finally, please do come to the St Luke's Church Christmas service on Sunday 10th December, when our choir will be singing. There will be donkeys for donkey rides before and after the service - real live donkeys in the middle of Cheltenham! It would be lovely to see Saint John's families there: 10am (9.45am for the choir please).

Have a lovely weekend. Perhaps you are putting up some decorations, or seeing extended family, or doing some Christmas shopping? Enjoy the season!

Mrs Beevers



Written by Sharon Morrow TA



**Reception** class loved learning important facts about India as part of School's Geography Day. First, the class used 'Google Earth' to study our local area. They zoomed in to find our school, Saint John's and loved finding features around our local area, such as The Lido, Sandford Park and the Hospital. Next, they zoomed out to see the UK and noticed that it is an island with sea all around. Then the children looked at the countries across the world, highlighting where their class friends have lived, or have family e.g. Belgium, Latvia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Brazil, Italy, Zimbabwe, Algeria, China, Philippines, Albania, Greece and finally India! They learnt about the Taj Mahal, that the tiger is the national animal of India and the peacock is the national bird. They also listened to stories, 'Elephant Dance, a journey to India and The Tiger Child. Finally, they did lots of art and craft of these special animals. What a great day!





In **Year 1**, as part of their Science work on Everyday Materials, the children carried out an investigation to test which material would be best to patch up a ripped umbrella. The children needed to think about whether the material was waterproof and whether it was flexible as well. They had lots of fun and thought about trying to make their investigation as 'fair' as possible. We all worked co-operatively together as well.





During DT, **Year 2** were looking at structures and what shape they needed to be to be strong. They watched a video to get some ideas and then experimented with a piece of A4 paper, making it into a shape in order to support a pile of books. They discovered that a tube shape was the strongest and it supported the weight of quite a few books!





**Year 3** really enjoyed Geography Day. They learnt lots about South America before focusing on a country, Colombia. They researched this country, created a fact file to educate other classes and learnt how to speak some Spanish. In the afternoon, they designed and painted pebbles to show their learning. We hope to see some of these hidden around Cheltenham!





**Year 4** enjoyed a yoga session with Aaron from Move More. They learned a variety of poses - cat, cow, square, triangle, rectangle and circle (child's pose). At the end of the session, they shared their thoughts about things that they were thankful for.





**Year 5** enjoyed an afternoon at Pate's Grammar School for a computing workshop. The school organised transport and led the session in their new 'Cyber HQ'. The teachers at Pate's, supported by some of their students, worked incredibly well with the children. Year 5 children used new equipment throughout the session and wrote several codes to create a 'Reaction Game', wired up with microbits and a halo. The even more exciting part is that the equipment that the children used today will be loaned to Year 5 to teach a whole unit after Christmas, before they head back to Pate's for another two sessions. Exciting times ahead for computing in Year 5!





As part of anti-bullying week, **Year 6** took part in a BBC Live Lesson, where the children explored what bullying is, how “banter” may differ and thinking about how and where we can get support each other with this. During Maths, some groups have been completing investigations using practical apparatus to help spot patterns and make predictions. The children have also rounded off their Art unit on photography by completing the Getty Challenge. They chose a piece of artwork that they liked and tried to replicate it, using themselves and items around the home. Everyone who took part showed wonderful imagination and creativity.





A mixed Saint John's football team enjoyed an excellent game against Bishop's Cleeve, eventually winning 6-4. The goals were shared between the girls and the boys, with great performances from everyone involved.



# Community Carols



**Sunday 10th December at St Luke's**  
Join us at St Luke's for mulled wine, hot chocolate & donkey rides around the church

9.30am	refreshments and donkey rides
10am	donkey procession into church for carols, Bible readings, a short talk & prayers
10.45am	refreshments and donkey rides

