

The week ahead @ Saint James

“Be strong and courageous and do it!” 1 Chronicles 28:20

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Friday 18th September

Issue 196

Thurs 24 th Sept	Thurs 1 st Oct		Wed 7 th Oct	Thurs 8 th Oct	Thurs 15 th Oct	
Year 6 Beginning of Bikeability	Year 6 Last session of Bikeability	Burger Shack Special Menu – Pupil Census Day	Tour for parents of prospective Year R pupils	Harvest Festival in school and at the church	Tour for parents of prospective Year R pupils	SJSA Non- Uniform Day and Disco

Collective Worship



This week's theme:

Autumn

This week's story:

Ruth works in the Field

Ruth 2: 2-3

A message from the Senior Leadership team

Before we turn our thoughts to Harvest, our theme for Collective Worship this week has been thinking about the seasons and the changes we witness, as late Summer turns to early Autumn.

Interestingly, we've also been observing another change over the week; a change in our Year 6 children as they've gained independence, resilience and perseverance during their residential visit to PGL Liddington. Swapping Maths for climbing, Guided Reading for abseiling and English for canoeing, the children have been enjoying their action-packed week away at the residential centre, near Swindon.

From High in the Sky and from Dry to Wet; Year 6 Enjoyed a Trip to PGL They Won't Forget!

Parents with children in younger year groups could be forgiven for thinking that it was only the second full week of term and already our Year 6 children were unashamedly flaunting our uniform policy and expectations. As the children arrived at school on Monday morning, it was apparent to all who saw that no child was wearing anything resembling uniform and that their bags were significantly larger than anything that would comfortably fit in a locker! So, were the children en masse showing blatant defiance of school expectations, or was there a genuine reason for their different attire? Of course there was. It was the first day of the Year 6 residential to Liddington PGL!

The centre's good reviews and reputation, as well as a thoroughly enjoyable visit by last years' Year 6 cohort, suggested it would be a fabulous week away. Unsurprisingly, this proved to be the reality for our oldest children this year too. We would suggest there is a sweet spot, when travelling to a residential. Too long a journey and it's a waste of the day, whereas if the journey is too short the children don't feel like they've actually gone away. For this residential visit, we think we got it just right! The 70-mile trip down the A34 was completed by lunchtime, ready for the children to enjoy their first activities that afternoon.

With each activity group experiencing the activities in a different order, the rumours of what to expect soon spread as the week progressed. Although there may have been some diversity in opinions when it came to reflecting upon the difficulty and level of apprehension engendered by each activity there was one unanimous and overwhelming response to everything experienced – it was great fun! It would be impossible to recount every child's individual response to each activity, for that you'd need ask them personally. However, we thought we'd give you a summary of some of the highlights, so you can appreciate why the residential trip is always such a highlight for our children. Some of the activities the children (and staff!) enjoyed were:

***Vertical challenge** – a climbing wall with a difference where they had to negotiate a swinging ladder, rotating tyres, a traditional climbing wall and finally a cargo net to reach the top. Indeed, both words in the activity's title were thoroughly appropriate!

***Sensory trail** – with their sense of sight impaired by a pair of blacked-out goggles, the children negotiated their way over, under and around a series of obstacles by feel and through listening carefully to the instructions of the blind-folded team member in front who had already traversed the obstacle. This already tricky challenge only increased in difficulty due to the unwelcome and unnerving feeling of sudden unexpected showers. We imagine many of the children must have been puzzled at this, due to the blue, cloud-less skies when they donned their goggles. However, the staff members, who were stood nearby clutching their drinking bottles, seemed less surprised and also significantly less wet! The sense of team-building, collaboration and communication was certainly shown in abundance on this activity. As for any level of apprehension? It's remarkable what images the mind can conjure up, when being led



Continued overleaf

blindfolded through woods (however, staff squirting water bottles is probably not the first one that springs to mind!)

***Zip wire** – from the top of a tower of steps and secured by a harness, the children took a leap of faith, as they stepped off the wooden platform and begun their swift descent! They then needed to keep their wits about them as they undid their figure of eight carabiner and released a lever that was appropriately named *Reggie the Wedgie penguin*. Simply looking at the design of the lever, that was shaped like a curved beak, enabled the children to understand why it was named after a penguin. The realisation of the appropriateness of the other part of the name came later in the activity!

***Giant swing** – If, in Year 6, you think that the children are beyond gaining any excitement from a swing, you'd be forgiven. However, when that swing is winched many metres into the air by a willing group of children pulling in perfect coordination on a rope, the excitement level undoubtedly increases. Dangling, suspended from a harness, the children then controlled a rip-cord which released them to swing like a pendulum, level with the nearby treetops.

***Canoeing** -We imagine that most of our children were outside of their comfort zone for most of the week. Indeed, most of us probably would have been unless we were a bird or a fish, as most of the week was spent either on the water or high up in the air! Whilst children quickly gained enough confidence and competence, during their exploits in a canoe, to keep them dry, this newly-learned skill proved to be null and void, as most chose to leap into the pond at the end of the activity, anyway!

***Fencing** – Envisaging that they might need to earn their keep by installing posts and overlap panelling around the perimeter of the Liddington site, the children were pleasantly surprised that this activity involved an entirely different type of fencing! Although the sight of the foils they would be brandishing conjured up images of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, they soon learned how to wield it in a controlled way, more akin to a modern Olympian than a swashbuckling wannabe-Blackbeard!

Alongside the daily carousel of group activities, the children came together as a year group to enjoy the evening's activities. Ranging from *Ambush*, a highly competitive game of hide-and-seek led by the enthusiastic, camouflage-wearing, centre staff to the sports-day-with-a-difference, *PGL Challenge*; the children were truly ready for sleep when their heads eventually hit the pillow. However, a highlight has got to be their final night when the children rummaged through their suitcases to extract some of their last items of clean clothing, as they prepared to hit the dancefloor for the hotly-anticipated disco.

Whilst it appears inevitable that we praise the behaviour of our children on educational visits, the reality often is that their conduct is impeccable. This residential to Liddington was no exception. In a centre that hosts many schools throughout the year, including a number at the same time as our visit, the behaviour and manners of our Saint James children shone throughout the week and was commented on positively by many of the centre instructors. We are truly proud of them.

Memories were made, friendships were formed and bonds were strengthened; what an amazing start to their final year at Saint James Primary School. We cannot over emphasize the benefits that children can gain from residential visits. However, they are simply not possible without the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff involved. We would like to say an enormous 'thank you' to; Miss Howell, Mr Thompson, Mr Laycock, Mrs Pearce, Mrs Pearson, Mrs Malone and Mrs Waugh who all gave up their time with their own families to make this trip such a success. However, a special mention needs to be given to Mr Magrane whose superb organisation and leadership made the whole trip possible.



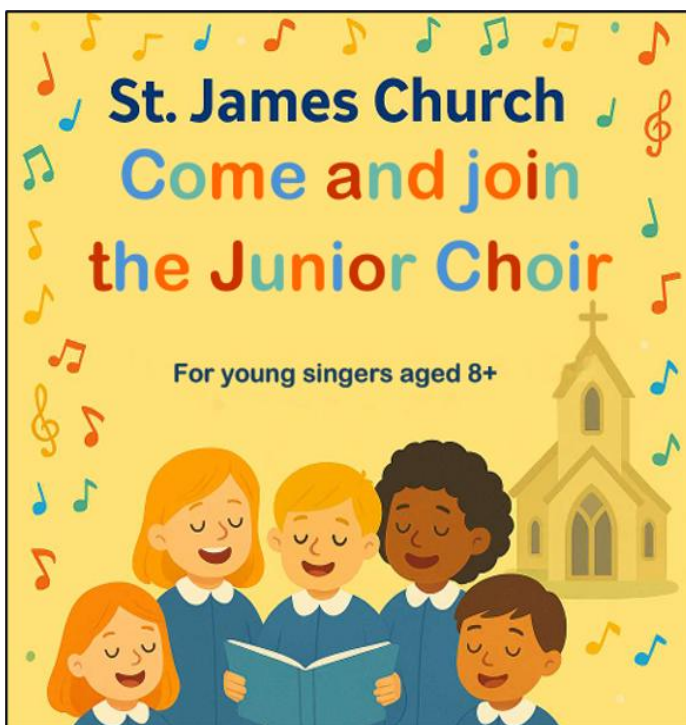
Harvest Service: A Tale of Two Venues!

What do Saint James Primary School's Harvest Services have in common with the famous Live Aid concerts of the 1980s? Both involve events taking place simultaneously in two different locations!

While Live Aid famously took place on both sides of the Atlantic, our Harvest Service will be held at the same time on either side of West End. Fortunately, unlike Phil Collins, who famously used Concorde to perform at both concerts on the same day, our children will only need to make the short journey to the junction of Church Hill and West End Road to reach St James' Church!

This year, Reverend Linda will lead worship in church, while children remaining at school will enjoy an equally engaging Harvest Service led by Reverend Vicky. As part of our Harvest celebrations, we will once again be supporting the local foodbank. If you would like to make a donation to help local families in need, the foodbank is currently particularly in need of: tinned soup, squash, packet rice, tinned fruit, tinned meat/hot dogs, tinned tuna, pasta sauce, jam/marmalade, crackers and baked beans.

Donations will be collected by the foodbank on **Thursday 8th October** following the Harvest Service. On the morning of the service, a collection table will be placed outside the front of the school building before school begins. Thank you in advance for your generosity and support. Every donation, no matter how small, can make a real difference to those in our local community.



St. James Church Come and join the Junior Choir

For young singers aged 8+

When: Rehearsal - Thursdays (from 8 October) from 6.00 – 6.45pm
Service - every first Sunday of the month from 9.00 – 10.40am

Where: St. James Church (during term time)

The children will sing at the first Sunday of the month. They will have lots of fun receiving voice and musical theory tuition and will work towards RSCM awards - and it's free!

To find out more come along to our 'Come and be a Chorister' information session

When: Thursday 8 October from 6 – 6.45pm

Where: St. James Church

Enjoy singing, refreshments and hear more about what's involved!

Contact Chris Fay stjameswe.music@gmail.com or
Rev. Vicky stjameswe.vicar@gmail.com for more information.

Starting school in September 2027

If your child is 4 or will turn 4 before 1 September 2027, they can start school in September 2027

Applications open for Hampshire residents on 1 November 2026

THE NATIONAL CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS **FRIDAY 15 JANUARY 2027**
DON'T MISS IT!

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For more information go to www.hants.gov.uk/admissions

Hampshire
County Council

hants.gov.uk

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First Words Together

Did you know speech and language is crucial for your child as it supports their learning, social skills and wellbeing?

Are you worried about your child's talking, listening or attention?

Would you like to help your child learn and become a confident talker?

If so, First Words Together may be for you...
Enjoy exploring stories, rhymes and learning 5 top tips with your child on our 5 week course

This course is for parents/carers of children aged 6 - 30 months

Scan the QR code to find out more and register your interest:

National Literacy Trust
Change your story

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Early Words Together

Is your child starting school soon? This free 6 week course will help your child's speech and language, learning, social skills and wellbeing.

Are you worried about your child's talking, listening or attention?

Would you like to get ideas for fun activities that will help your child be a confident talker and prepared for school?

If so, Early Words Together may be for you...
Enjoy exploring talking, singing rhymes, sharing books and playing together

This course is for parents/carers with children aged 3 - 4 years old

Scan the QR code to find out more and register your interest:

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