

The week ahead @ Saint James

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

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Issue 140

Wed 2 nd Apr	Fri 4 th Apr		Tues 22 nd Apr	Thurs 24 th Apr	Fri 2 nd May
Easter lunch	Non-uniform day for Mountbatten hospice	Last day of Spring term	First day back after Easter break	Year 5 & 6 Easter Service at the church	SJSA – ‘Break the Rules’ Day

Collective Worship

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?
Matthew 7:3

This week's theme:

Assumptions

This week's bible story:

The Speck and the Plank

Matthew 7:1-5

A message from the Senior Leadership team

Happily, the improved weather we've been experiencing has coincided with our first two educational visits of the calendar year: Year R's visit to Manor Farm and Year 3's trip to Butser Ancient Farm. Both destinations are identified as farms by name alone, as the activities the children experienced on each of these visits could not be more different! However, there were some overarching similarities: the engagement, enrichment and hands-on learning that the children enjoyed on each trip. You can read about each of these exciting and worthwhile educational visits in this newsletter.

Will Year 1 be presented with a prize for creating toothpaste for an elephant? Maybe just a little plaque!

We appreciate that, when considering the 'worst' and 'best' of anything, it can be quite subjective. However, in a published list of the 'worst' jobs in the world, we wouldn't be quick to swap places with workers holding down a position in any of the top three. 'Roadkill collector' (apparently that's actually a job!), 'Manure inspector' and 'Portable toilet cleaner' are definitely not an appealing proposition! However, there is another job that, although it doesn't make the list, would not figure highly on the list of many people considering a career change: an elephant's dentist!

Although the prospect of tending to the teeth of world's largest land animal would be daunting for many people, now that our Year 1 children have enjoyed the opportunity of working with Dr Emma Lofthouse they are better prepared than most. Dr Lofthouse, a highly regarded research manager for the Global Health Team, led our enthusiastic children in creating toothpaste that was suitable for the tusks and teeth of the three recognised species of elephant.

To begin, Dr Lofthouse carefully mixed dry ice with hot water, causing the children to delight in the explosion and thick fog that consequently enveloped the playground. Then, to fully develop the toothpaste, a solution of hydrogen peroxide, food colouring and washing up liquid was carefully combined with warm water and yeast. As the yeast, acting as a catalyst, removed the oxygen from the hydrogen peroxide, the children revelled in the resultant pink foam that expanded from the bottle! A product that certainly looked up-to-the-task of cleaning all twenty-six of an elephants' incisors, molars and premolars!

Due to the nature of the chemicals and substances involved, the elephant toothpaste experiment needed to be tightly controlled and modelled by an experienced scientist. However, this didn't prevent the children from having some hands-on experiences of their own. The children created their own bath bombs using washing up liquid and enjoyed watching them fizz as they created them in the discarded trays from chocolate boxes. A truly rewarding experience that was almost as satisfying as a relaxing, bath bomb-enhanced, soak in the tub!

We would like to extend a huge 'thank you' to Dr Emma Lofthouse for providing such an enriching and enjoyable learning experience for our Year 1 children. We're sure we now have a few scientists and veterinary dentists of the future among the children of Portugal, Spain and Italy classes!



Getting Brain Fit



Brain best and Brain Stress

What happens when our needs are met well?

Last week we told you about *DOSE*, the mnemonic used to help us remember the feel-good chemicals released into our bloodstream when our needs are met well (Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin and Endorphins). The good feeling we experience when we are receiving a healthy 'DOSE' and our needs are being met well, is part of this positive physical change.

Unfortunately, we can also feel good and receive our 'DOSE' in unhelpful and anti-social ways, as well as helpful ones. At Saint James Primary School, we will always try to understand children's needs and divert them from receiving their 'DOSE' in an unhelpful way to obtaining it in a helpful way that is; *'Good for me, Good for you and Good for everyone'*.

For example, Dopamine is released when we feel capable and in control. This can be through knowing what you want to get good at and then achieving it (such as certain grade in Karate or Ballet or a specific number of goals or clean-sheets in football). However, it can also be gained, by some, through trying to win in a way that isn't kind to others or by taking other people's belongings.



There are more examples of how we can get our 'DOSE' in helpful or unhelpful ways, in last week's newsletter.

What happens when we obtain our daily 'DOSE' over time?

Our experiences over time change the way we view the world and enter situations. When a person's needs are met well time and time again, they start to enter situations more confidently, believing things will go well. It becomes easier for them to engage with the world and get on with others.

When needs are met well over time, stress levels are kept low in the body. This means that there is more capacity when times get tough. With more capacity, it is easier to be resilient when stressors come our way and stress chemicals are released. This then becomes growth stress!

How can I support my child at home?

It is important that we recognise that, when we get our daily 'DOSE' day-after-day, it shifts our balance towards resilience. It is easier to manage the stressors that come our way. Therefore, we should not leave obtaining our 'DOSE' to chance. We should plan ahead and find helpful ways to get our 'DOSE'. As a parent, you are the person who knows your child best. What are their likes and dislikes? What are they capable, competent and confident at? What makes them feel proud? In supporting your child to plan helpful ways to get their daily 'DOSE', you will be equipping them with the skills to manage their well-being and mental health into adulthood.

Brain Stress

What happens when needs are not met so well?

When stress chemicals are released, our clever brain turns some energy-greedy parts of our body **DOWN** to save energy:

1. Our digestive system is turned down (which is why we may not feel like eating when we're stressed, or we may overeat)
2. Our immune system is turned down (which is why stressed people are more vulnerable to illness).
3. Our pre-frontal cortex is turned down (which is why it is harder to remember things, stay calm, be flexible and manage impulses, when stress is high)

When stress chemicals are released, our clever brain also turns some parts of our body **UP** to help us survive:

1. More oxygen is sent to our hearts and lungs (this is to give energy for fight or flight)
2. Our senses become hyper alert (this is to help us be aware of other dangers and keep us safe)
3. Blood is pumped towards our organs and away from our limbs (this increases our heart rate, so we can fight or flight easily. It also means we lose less blood if our limbs are attacked)

Getting to know our danger brain

When our brain thinks we are unsafe, it raises an alarm. This alarm tells our body to get ready for danger. Cortisol and other stress chemicals are released into our system. In a similar way to how 'DOSE' makes positive physical changes to our body; these stress chemicals also make changes. These changes are to protect us from real danger:

It tells our body to become more **alert**, so we can keep track of the danger and notice any other new dangers around.

We become more **emotional**, so we can shout for help.

We become more **rigid**, so we are determined to keep fighting on and survive.

We become more **impulsive**, so we can escape quickly.

We call these 4 changes our **safety strengths**. They are great skills to use, if we are ever in 'real' danger. They can keep us safe.

Our brain is clever, once it knows we are safe the stress chemicals in our body go back down. We feel calm and relaxed again. Our brain can start to focus on other things like work or learning, instead of needing to focus on staying safe. Sometimes our brain thinks there is real danger when there isn't actually any real danger. Our brain can sometimes just trick us. It is good to ask ourselves – is this 'real' danger?

We might be struggling with homework – but is this real danger?

We might be feeling a bit left out – but is this real danger?

We can take control of our brains by stopping and saying, 'Is this real danger or just an unpleasant or difficult moment? Do I need my safety strengths? If not, we can think of a solution or ask for help.

Encourage your child to practise the following, the next time they get an unpleasant feeling inside.



Notice: When Cortisol rises in the body



Catch: The unpleasant feeling



Think: Is this 'REAL' danger?



Decide: What do I need to feel good?

How can I support my child at home?

By understanding what happens under stress, children are better able to get 'back on track'.

Help your child to self-soothe when things go wrong. Help them find the best way to self-soothe.

Give children daily opportunities to lower the stress chemicals in their bodies. Help them to work out the best ways to experience calm. Once they know, plan these daily even if only for a few minutes.

Help your child to work out what is causing the stress chemicals to rise. Ultimately, they can't change what they don't understand.

In school, we will also be working on this with the children.

Easter Holiday provision

If you are struggling for fun activities and provision for your children over the Easter holidays, there are a number of providers offering exciting activities (along with food) for your children to enjoy.

Please follow the link below to the Hampshire FISH website (Families Information and Services Hub) which will direct you to the local providers for this Easter Break. There are a variety running within the Eastleigh Borough across the 2 weeks. All these providers will be offering funded places for children eligible for free school meals, including the provision of food.

[Family Information and Services Hub | Service Listings](#)

Respecting our neighbours

Now that the mornings and evenings are becoming lighter, we are noticing more children walking, cycling and scooting to school. The pressure this alleviates on the traffic and parking in the roads around the school is noticeable and appreciated by our neighbours. However, we have been contacted by a few of the local residents, who would like us to remind our families and children about keeping to the designated pavements and footpaths.

In many instances it is simply stepping onto a driveway, when heavy footfall on the pavement makes it difficult to pass. This would not be a problem or a legitimate cause for complaint. However, footage from camera doorbells reveals that some of our children and families are taking shortcuts across gardens and running, scooting and cycling very close to the front door of some properties. With some of the local residents being elderly or infirm, this could be particularly problematic, if they were to exit their door at this time.

Whilst there is no suggestion that there is any malicious intent behind any of these actions, can you please reiterate the message to your children that we have already shared during Collective Worship. They should show respect to our neighbours and residents in the surrounding area by not crossing their gardens or taking shortcuts across their property.



VE DAY[©]
80TH ANNIVERSARY
A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION
8 MAY 2025



WE'LL MEET AGAIN

Please join West End Parish Council as we mark and celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Order of events

- Raising of the flag and speech from Councillor Rick MacDonald at The Parish Centre at 9am
- Lamp light of peace and VE Day Flag crafts in The Hatch Cafe from 7.30pm to 8.30pm
- Hot & Cold drinks from The Hatch Cafe team outside The Parish Centre from 7.30pm to 8.45pm
- Fish & Chips deal available from Best Fry between 7.30pm to 8.45pm
- Speeches from members of the Airforce, Army and Navy from 9pm
- Tribute Reading and Beacon Lighting at 9.30pm

Our Year 3 children made some fantastic Roman mosaics whilst at Butser Ancient Farm - they cut the tiles using a pair of Caesars!

We're truly surprised. When the vehicles turned up on Tuesday to transport our Year 3 children to their educational visit, neither one resembled a DeLorean or looked like it had the capacity to exceed 88 miles per hour! So how was it that 82 children, along with their teachers and supporting adults, were transported back in time for the day to experience life in Roman times? We imagine it must be something to do with the efforts that had been made by the staff at Butser Ancient Farm to make it as authentic an experience as possible.

As the coaches edged their way down the narrow track towards the car park, the children could have been looking out at scenes from the past 10,000 years of human history. Plumes of smoke funnelled through the thatched, conical roof of a Celtic round house and a faithfully created Saxon hall sat proudly in the field, only a short distance away from a Roman Villa!

Before the children began their day of exploration and learning, they were quizzed about what they already knew. Discovering that they were already extensively informed about life in Roman times, the staff at Butser knew they would have a job on their hands, when trying to enrich and enhance the children's learning.

Particularly impressive was the Roman villa, based on excavations from a site in Sparsholt near Winchester. As the children explored the authentically and painstakingly recreated building, they could really appreciate what life must have been like for Roman people, living in Britain, almost 2000 years ago. With walls painted based on evidence from plaster found during excavations, the children truly felt like they had travelled back in time. They even had the opportunity to observe a working hypocaust (an ancient Roman heating system, comprising of a hollow space under the floor of a building, into which hot air was directed).

During their exploration of the villa, the children admired the many mosaics adorning the floors of the building which gave them inspiration for their own creations. Using a selection of colourful tiles, the children created their own mosaics in a style befitting of a grand Roman home.

Life in Roman Britain was not all about working and there were many popular pastimes that Romans enjoyed. The children got the opportunity to experience one of these that was enjoyed across the empire; *Catch the bear*. Although the Romans were renowned for their use of wild animals in the coliseum, don't fret. *Catch the bear* was a popular Roman board game and not a challenge set to gladiators!

From Gaul to Byzantium, archaeological evidence suggests this asymmetric board game was popular among the Roman people. One player plays the 'bear' (represented by one counter) against an opponent with three 'hunters' (represented by three counters). If the 'hunters' corner the 'bear' and it is not able to escape, they win. If the 'bear' can avoid being cornered for thirty turns, he wins.

After this enjoyable 'down time', the children were pressed into the role filled by up to 55,000 Romans in Britain, a legionary. Assembled into strictly organised lines, the children were marched across the site with concisely barked orders from the instructors. Orchestrated to perfection, the children showed the same dedication that would have been shown by a soldier in the Roman army and were certainly deserving of their lunch when it was time.

The children brought their own lunches with them so weren't required to eat the diet of a Roman soldier. However, if they were, the balanced rations of wheat (which the soldiers ground and made into porridge, bread, or biscuits), meat (usually bacon), fish, poultry, cheese, vegetables, and fruit, would not have been too offensive to their palate. We do think they may have objected to the wine they were required to drink, though!

Romans were known for wearing impressive jewellery, setting precious stones such as opals, emeralds, diamonds, topaz and pearls into earrings, bracelets, rings, brooches and necklaces. Although the children were unable to work using these valuable gems during the course of the afternoon, they did fashion some beautiful rings using bronze wire and pliers. We do wonder, with Mother's Day approaching at the end of the month, how many of these exquisite pieces of jewellery will be presented on 30th March!

With most Romans working a six-hour day, beginning at dawn and ending at noon, it is perhaps no surprise that the children were tired as they climbed back onto the coach at the end of the afternoon. We're sure that their learning was enriched from the experiences of the day.

With a combined teaching experience of almost 50 years and the experience of welcoming over 35,000 children onto site every year, the staff at Butser Ancient Farm are used to working with many schools across the Key Stage 1, 2 and 3. It is therefore a pleasure to hear how impressed they were with the behaviour and attitude of our children. Throughout the day they commended the children on their fantastic behaviour and commented that it was rare to work with a group of children who conducted themselves in such an exemplary manner.

We would like to extend a huge 'thank you' to all the adults who supported us with this educational visit and helped make the experience so enjoyable and rewarding for the children.



How would our Year R children describe their first ever school trip to Manor Farm?

Legen-dairy, udderly amazing and sow much fun!

After hearing about the excellent behaviour and learning on the Year 3 visit to Butser Ancient Farm the previous day, our youngest children were not to be outdone. The children in Year R exemplified our values of Love, Respect and Courage exceptionally throughout their visit to Manor Farm. It is hard to believe that this was their first ever school trip – they represented Saint James Primary School fantastically, making the adults in the year team beam with pride!

After excelling in learning their Writing, Maths and Phonics this year, our enthusiastic children added one more skill to their already impressive array of talents; being a farmer for the day! The children excitedly took to the role, finding out from Farmer Helen about how to look after the animals. They were surprised to hear that their needs are just like us; they need food, water, space to move and somewhere to sleep. However, the children were pleased to discover that, even though a duck or goose may have donated their feathers to provide them with a comfortable pillow or duvet, they won't be needing to give up their bed to any of the vast array of animals they spotted during the day! They were also relieved to learn that their packed lunches were safe as well; animal feed looks far less appetising!

Whilst it was perhaps no surprise to spot the sheep, ponies, pigs and chickens that they saw, as these creatures are familiar sights on a working farm, the presence of guinea pigs was certainly more unexpected! When holding and stroking these small, yet hardy, rodents, the children learned valuable skills in how to handle small animals with care and respect.

After finding out about the different colours and sizes of egg they might expect to find on a farm, the children were taken to see the chickens and turkeys to see if they had laid any. Whilst a number of different eggs were observed, the children were unable to spot the source of chocolate eggs, surprising as we see so many in the shops at this time of year!

Whilst visiting the chickens, the children were amazed by the loud crowing from some of the farm's noisiest residents; the roosters. Whilst they're not responsible for the production of eggs, they certainly would prove useful as a powerful alarm. There is very little chance of their crowing going unnoticed!

Eggs are obviously one item of produce that originates from a farm, however the children were able to have hands-on experience with another: wool. After meeting with 'Auntie' Devon, she took them to meet her favourite animals on the farm: the sheep and alpacas. They learned that she likes to use their wool to make jumpers and taught them how to card it (a mechanical process that disentangles, cleans and intermixes fibres to produce wool suitable for spinning).

After a busy, enjoyable and exhausting day, the children returned to school with precious memories of their first school trip that will surely stay with them for years to come!

We would like to say an enormous thank you to everyone who accompanied our children on their visit to Manor Farm for enabling them to have such an enriching and enjoyable time.

