

The week ahead @ Saint James

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

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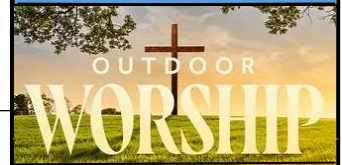


Friday 24th April

Issue 182

Thurs 30 th April	Mon 4 th May	Tues 5 th May	Mon 11 th May	Fri 15 th May	Thurs 21 st May	Fri 22 nd May
Break the Rules Day and School Disco	Bank Holiday	INSET day school closed to pupils	Start of Key Stage 2 SATs tests	Sports Day Morning – KS2 Afternoon – KS1	Ascension Church service Year 1 & 2	Last day of the half term

Collective Worship



This week's theme:

Outdoor Worship

This week's story:

Bible passages related to outdoor worship

Isaiah 61:1

Peter 5:7

A message from the Senior Leadership team

It's been particularly busy this week and we've certainly spent a lot of it outside! Collective Worship has taken place outside, with activities involving balloons, trees and balancing beams and we've also seen a number of sporting events that have taken place. Before the main event in London, this weekend, we've held a mini London marathon in school, with children completing two miles around the site. However, that's not the only sporting event we've witnessed this week. As you'll read below, there was a fairly significant football game that took place on Wednesday, at the culmination of an impressive run in the Hampshire Cup.

Unfortunately, it hasn't all been exciting or good news, as we have learned of the sad passing of Sally Harrison, a beloved former member of staff who was our Senior Admin Officer between 1994 and 2018. She will be sadly missed by everyone who knew her.

Hampshire Cup Champions!



Saint James etch their names into Hampshire Cup football history!

As Southampton FC continue their push for promotion back to the Premier League and prepare for a semi-final in one of England's most prestigious cup competitions, the FA Cup, another team from a little closer to home have already gone one better. They've stepped out onto the pitch for the final of their most prestigious competition, the Hampshire Schools' Cup, and won!

Unlike the build-up to the FA Cup Final, where wall-to-wall television coverage tracks every breakfast choice, suited pitch inspection and pre-match interview, we didn't need live TV to follow the progress of our fantastic team. There were no leisurely morning strolls across the grass, no matching suits and certainly no microphones in sight. Instead, matchday for our players included a full programme of Maths, English and Collective Worship, alongside all the usual features of a normal school day, before heading off to contest a county final. They certainly are a calm and grounded team.

After a long, resilient and pulse raising cup run, the boys were finally ready to kick-off in what is Saint James' first ever appearance in the Hampshire Cup Final, in a game against Hook with Warsash. What's more impressive about the occasion is that it is also our first time as a school entering the competition! Whilst those two observations maybe unfamiliar, there was nothing unfamiliar about the line-up that took to the pitch at Stoneham Lane on Wednesday. Ben, Henry, Charlie, Lucas, Taylor, Max, Connor, Jude, Harry and Jordan were all present and injury-free!

The game got underway with a bumper crowd eagerly watching. It is no exaggeration to say that there were over 150 spectators in attendance; a throng of supporters so large that the organisers conceded it must be a record! Immediately, Ben was called into action as a long kick off fell perfectly to the Hook striker. Brilliant positioning and great bravery saw him make an excellent save. This was clearly going to be a big test for our all-conquering team.

Although Hook looked the more confident side for the opening passages of play, Saint James soon took control of the possession and set about playing their football. Henry played a superb ball down the right wing to find the tricky feet of Connor, who ran past the opposing player. Sensibly and unselfishly, he cut the ball back to Taylor who, after a slightly loose touch, rolled the ball into the back of the net. 1-0!

Continued overleaf

Next, Lucas took control of the ball and glided effortlessly past the Hook team. The chorus of Sade's 'Smooth operator' seemed to play around the pitch as he opened his body up and rifled a confident shot home. 2-0!

Harry, Jude and Jordan entered the pitch soon after, with instructions to slow the game down and get us to half-time with a 2-0 lead. They did just that! We have been so lucky to have such an excellent trio of substitutes this season and they really have been unsung heroes in this competition. Half time and Saint James were cruising at 2-0! Surely, time to put our feet up and start engraving the cup already? Not a chance!

The second half was the antithesis of the first. Hook began brightly and stayed dominant throughout the half, causing all sorts of problems for the dogged Saint James team. Their renewed efforts soon paid off, as they were awarded a dubious penalty. The spot kick was quickly and confidently dispatched, with little Ben could do about it. 2-1 – the game was far from over!

Saint James battled to regain control of possession and tried to re-establish themselves in the game, but Hook were truly relentless. Finding himself with time on the edge of the box, a Hook player fired an excellent right footed strike into the bottom left corner. 2-2.

With Saint James supporters chewing nervously on their nails, Mr Walsh remained calm and initiated a tactical change. When Saint James are in need of composure there is one player who can always be relied upon... Harry. Commanding the centre of the pitch, with clear instructions to regain possession of the ball, break up patterns of play and give us a chance to win the game. He was outstanding.

The tide had turned again and Saint James were the more dominant team in the final minutes. Unfortunately, their dominance didn't reward them with the winning goal. So extra time it was. Two halves of three minutes saw further Saint James dominance; Taylor was a threat down the left hand side and Max was causing problems of his own down the right. A brilliant piece of build-up play saw Taylor through on goal with a glorious chance. Fully expecting to see the net bulge, the goalkeeper pulled off an impressive save and the ensured that the game would be decided by the lottery of a dreaded penalty shootout. Many of us can probably still remember the wayward kicks of Bukayo Saka and Jadon Sancho in the Euros final of 2020 and even as far back as the infamous misses of Gareth Southgate in 1996 and Stuart Pearce in 1990. Inevitably those painful memories resurfaced as soon as the referee blew the final whistle. Thankfully even the most recent of these games was when most of our players were 4 or 5 years old and too long ago to influence our courageous team!

Before we get to the exciting and nerve-wracking shootout, a quick mention has to be made for our centre back duo of Henry and Charlie. They were absolutely outstanding in the game. We have come to expect performances of this sort from Henry across the last few rounds; a combination of skill, talent and raw physical ability, but Charlie saved his best till last. It was an absolute colossal performance from him. Mr Walsh has joked with him all year about his shooting boots, but today he showed us why he is a stalwart in defence. The pair of them must share the accolade of man of the match. So... the penalties;

Saint James Penalty 1. Henry. Confidently stepped up and dispatched a right footed strike which flew into the top left corner. 1-0!

Hook Penalty 1. Ben dives the right way but is beaten by a right-footed strike into the bottom corner. 1-1

Saint James Penalty 2. Clearly no one has ever told Connor that even the best penalty-takers can be nervous. Confidence personified, he stepped up and smashed the leather off of the ball and into the top right corner. Thankfully it was on target, as otherwise it would have been on the motorway with the power of the shot! 2-1!

Hook Penalty 2. Having already beaten Ben once from the spot, Hook's best player stepped confidently up to the ball. Thankfully Ben was the equal of his powerful right-footed shot; making himself big and producing an excellent save.

Saint James penalty 3. Whenever you could wish for a player to step up and field the pressure of a Hampshire cup final winning opportunity. You couldn't wish for anyone better than Mr Smooth himself, Lucas. His confident right-footed shot was dispatched with precision into the bottom left corner... CHAMPIONS!!!

And that concludes a phenomenal cup run. The boys have been outstanding from start to finish. Our parents have been wonderful supporters and have got behind us every step of the way. The support in the final almost means as much to the team as the trophy itself... but maybe not quite!

We would also like to extend our enormous thanks to Mr Walsh, ably assisted by Mr Whitlock, for the impressive coaching throughout. Rumour has it that he has been dubbed the 'Primary School Pep', after the highly decorated Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola. We would like to add that he has assured us that it is only a coincidence that the manager of Chelsea lost his job on the same day of our cup final success. He has promised he will still be with us, next season! Some cup facts for the football statisticians of West End; Games played:6 Goals scored:36 Goals against:8

Africa comes alive in Year 2, due to a visit from the headteacher!

Year 2 were recently treated to a very special visitor this week: Mrs Marsh popped into class to bring their Africa topic to life. Regaling them with stories about her visit to Rwanda, she described how she met children, visited schools and discovered what everyday life is really like. The children listened wide-eyed as she described school days that look very different from their own... and some that felt surprisingly familiar.

One familiar item that looked surprisingly different was the football she shared; not mass-produced in a factory with thousands of clones but made from expertly tied rope and fabric. She also shared two handmade rag dolls, each one unique and clearly well-loved. Year 2 were fascinated and it sparked brilliant discussions about creativity, resourcefulness and how fun and happiness isn't determined by access to the internet or the latest toys and gadgets.

As if that wasn't impressive enough, Mrs Marsh's first-hand knowledge came with an extra dose of expertise; after all she was born and grew up in South Africa. Year 2 quickly realised that having a headteacher who can talk about Africa from real experience is a benefit that not many children will experience.



Year 4 go with the flow in their river study!

Our Year 4 children have proved they are certainly not out of their depth when it comes to learning about rivers! As a 'hook' to launch their topic, the children were immersed in a full day of river-based learning led by Holly and David from the Wessex Rivers Trust. This action-packed day helped knowledge flow freely as pupils explored the journey of a river from source to sea, investigated the fascinating creatures that inhabit our waterways and discovered why conserving water is so important. A real watershed moment in their learning!

With a particular focus on our local River Itchen, the children learned how it rises just south of New Alresford and flows 26 miles before joining Southampton Water beneath the Itchen Bridge. They were amazed to discover that the Itchen is a chalk stream — one of the rarest and most special types of river in the world. In fact, there are only around 210 chalk streams globally, with an impressive 160 of them found right here in England. Proof that our local river really does make a splash on the world stage!

Guided expertly by Holly, one of our river educators for the day, the children then set about constructing their own scale model of the River Itchen across the hall floor. Thankfully (and much to the relief of our site team), Wessex Rivers Trust is very keen on water conservation, so the river's course and meanders were created using flowing blue fabric, rather than actually flooding the hall!

Once the upper, middle and lower courses of the river were labelled, the children added features they might expect to find along its length. From animals, birds and fish that call the river home to houses and businesses that rely on it for livelihoods and lovely views, the result was an impressively authentic recreation. Thankfully it wasn't too authentic; others eight times larger than houses would certainly cause a stir!

You might think a visiting rivers team would limit opportunities for hands on learning with wildlife, but this was far from the case... because the wildlife came to us! Holly had visited the river the night before and arrived armed with an enormous cool box full of aquatic plants and creatures. The children carefully studied and classified what they found, from freshwater shrimps to leeches. Viewed through a digital microscope and projected onto the interactive whiteboard, these tiny creatures looked more like extra-terrestrial visitors than river residents!

Of course, no study of rivers would be complete without considering the impact humans have on our waterways and why water conservation matters. As citizens of the future, our children will need to protect rivers and use water more wisely than generations before them.

This message really hit home during an activity exploring daily water use. Armed with a clear 500ml bottle of rainwater, the children added teaspoons of water to a central bucket whenever they identified wasteful behaviours. Leaving the tap running while brushing teeth? That's three teaspoons gone. Not reusing leftover washing up water to help plants grow? That's a few more splashed in. One teaspoon may not seem like much, but each class managed to fill a surprisingly large amount over the course of the session. Even more alarmingly, the children learned that the average person in the UK uses around 150 litres of water every single day!

Year 4 had a thoroughly enjoyable and enriching day with the Wessex Rivers Trust and would like to extend a huge thank you to Holly and David for making learning so engaging. With such a strong start, they certainly won't be out of their depth when completing their Rivers topic this half term.

So, how do you follow a day immersed in learning about Britain's waterways? Naturally, by diving straight into your first swimming lesson at Saint James! Year 4 rounded off an exciting start to the week with their first visit to Wildern pool, beginning their journey to master yet another body of water through confident front and back crawl. From rivers to lanes — these children are really going with the flow!



In loving memory of Sally Harrison: a beloved member of our Saint James Family

The length of time people remain in a single role can vary widely, influenced by factors such as age, life stage and changing employment patterns. Recent figures suggest that the average employee now spends just under four years in one workplace. Anything beyond that is surely a reflection of not only commitment, but also genuine care for the role and the people within it. At Saint James, past and present, we are incredibly fortunate to have had many staff who have dedicated large parts of their lives to serving our community and caring for our children.

Sally Harrison was one such person. Sally was part of the Saint James family for many years, working at the school from 1994 until 2018, and even volunteering prior to this. For 24 years she served as our Senior Admin Officer and, for many of those years, her voice was the warm and familiar greeting heard on the school's answerphone. Always welcoming and unfailingly supportive, Sally was a much-valued colleague and a reassuring presence for staff, parents and children alike.

When Sally left Saint James in 2018, it was a sad day for our school community, though we looked forward to hearing about her plans for a well-earned retirement. True to her generous nature, Sally later returned to volunteer, supporting children with their reading, before this was sadly cut short by the lockdown in 2020.

It is therefore with great sadness that we share the news that Sally Harrison passed away last week. She was a much-loved wife, parent, grandparent, friend and colleague, and she will be deeply missed by all who knew her. Our thoughts and prayers are with Sally's family, and with everyone whose lives she touched.



Left to right: Mrs Harrison, Mrs Sparshott and Mrs Rogers

Up in the air, rooted to the spot and trying not to wobble: Saint James children enjoy outdoor worship!

Clearly the sun has been made aware that it is now the beginning of the Summer term, as it has been a pleasure to be outside in the sunshine this week. Whilst the lovely weather has given ideal conditions for the usual playground games and activities, orienteering and use of our conservation area, there has also been another activity this week that has benefited from the sunshine: Collective Worship. Armed with balloons and benches and gathered round an impressive old tree, it is apparent that, when you mix fresh air, faith and a few everyday objects, you get a week full of wonder, wisdom... and the occasional wobble.

Whilst many of the children are used to seeing balloons at celebrations, such as birthday parties, it appears that very few have used them for prayer. Saying prayers, either during Collective Worship or in the classroom, is usually a quiet, calm and reflective time where children bow heads and resist distraction. However, it is clear that when balloons are introduced to this form of worship, it invokes a surprising amount of excitement. After talking about prayer as a way of telling God what's in our hearts, each child wrote their name and a prayer onto a balloon. Some chose prayers for family, friends or the world, whilst others seemed to be asking for divine intervention in the fortunes of their football team!

Then came the big moment. On a signal, everyone let go at once... and suddenly the playground was filled with balloons zooming, diving and whooshing about. It was a perfect picture of prayers rising up to God (although possibly taking the scenic route on the way)! After collecting their balloon, the children eagerly took it home - proving that prayer doesn't stop when worship ends.

With Saint James Primary School being on its current site since the 1970s, after moving from the building that is now the Hilldene Centre, there are now a number of mature trees on our school grounds. However, some of these were clearly growing before the school was built and have a tree preservation order protecting them. As well as being a fantastic habitat for birds and animals, if they could talk they surely would have witnessed a plethora of interesting playground conversations!

Locating one of the oldest and biggest trees they could find, the children measured it round the waist to help them determine how old it was. Measuring tape in hand, the pupils treated 'their' tree like a member of *Weight Watchers*, carefully taking the measurement of the trunk. Whereas we imagine most *Weight Watchers* members view a reducing figure as a positive sign of weight loss, the children discovered that the larger the measurement (for a tree at least) was a sign of age and experience! The chosen trees had seen a lot of Saint James history; children have come and gone, playground games and activities have grown and waned in popularity and a whole new building, the Camino, has appeared.

After listening to a thought-provoking Bible passage from Isaiah about becoming 'oaks of righteousness', the children reflected on how people grow through challenges — just like trees do. Every ring tells a story. Every storm strengthens the roots. It was calm, thoughtful and peaceful; a magical moment that felt a world away from lessons about fractions or fronted adverbials.

Usually, if a child was described as quite 'wobbly' with their learning, you might reasonably think that they were insecure in their understanding of concepts or have misconceptions. However, the final activity of the week actually benefitted from children being 'wobbly' as it helped them to understand the concept!

During the Balancing Act worship, a brave volunteer attempted to walk along a beam while 'worries' were added; friendship worries, school worries, big worries, little worries... until staying upright became extremely tricky. The message landed perfectly: life gets harder when we try to carry everything alone. After a quiet moment of reflection, children wrote down a worry of their own and gleefully threw it away, remembering the verse, '*Cast all your worries on Him, because He cares for you.*'

With smiles, more confident steps and a distinct look of relief, the child balancing carefully visibly became lighter as the worries were collected and disposed of by adults.

After a joyful, meaningful and memory-making week, full of laughter, faith and fresh air, there was conclusive proof that worship doesn't need to be restrained by four walls. So, if your child has come home talking about prayers that fly, trees with feelings or worries being thrown away, now you know why!



Egg-citing new developments: a baby boom for Blue tits

Linden homes, Bovis, Bellway and Miller homes are all house builders on the nearby Boorley Park development. However, we have some, just as impressive, home builders in school. After weeks of hard work, the Blue tits finally finished their cosy nest! Built from grass and moss and insulated with soft, fluffy feathers, it is the ideal habitat for raising a young family. Thankfully, it was just in time as, on Monday 13th April, the first egg appeared. We're very egg-cited!

Blue tits habitually lay one egg each day and, by Tuesday 21st April, the last egg was laid, making nine eggs in total.

For now, the mother bird is keeping the eggs warm, sitting very still while the babies grow inside. This will take about two weeks. Meanwhile, her partner is a very hands-on dad, flying back and forth like an *Uber Eats* driver bringing wiggly caterpillars to the mother so she can stay strong.

The children have loved predicting how many eggs will be laid and have asked thoughtful questions, using new Science words they have learned (such as incubation).



INSET days for the upcoming year 2026 / 27

We have now finalised our INSET days for the forthcoming academic year, 2026/2027. We hope that sharing the dates this far in advance allows you to make any necessary childcare arrangements. Please see a list of the dates below:

1 September 2026

2 September 2026

23 October 2026

4 May 2027

7 June 2027

To ensure that your child thrives at school, it is vital they have good attendance. Days of absence can create gaps in learning, a reduction in confidence and difficulty in sustaining friendships. However, we understand that financial pressures can make holidays during term time an appealing proposition. With time away being enriching and important for so many, we can appreciate the conflict families face over booking holidays.

For that reason, we wanted to take the opportunity now to share the INSET days scheduled for the next academic year. Families receive a penalty notice if they miss 5 days of schooling. By coinciding a family break with a weekend and INSET day, there is a window of opportunity to minimise disruption to schooling, avoid a penalty fine and book a holiday at a reduced rate. Our preference is for families to try and have their holiday in school holidays but where that is not possible, we ask you to limit disruption to your child's education.

We are aware that a number of local schools (Wildern, Deer Park and Boorley Park) will be having a two-week half-term break in October this year. To support our families and to help you avoid any potential penalty notices should you wish to take a family holiday during this period, we have agreed to schedule an INSET day on Friday 23 October. By placing this INSET day at the end of the week, we hope it provides you with greater flexibility and makes it easier to align any planned family time with the extended breaks that other schools are offering. This decision has been made thoughtfully and with the intention of supporting our school community as much as possible.

Whilst we can see how the impact of poor attendance negatively influences the academic progress and personal development of children, we need to emphasise that we do not like to issue penalty notices. We adhere to Government guidance on issuing these and receive no percentage of the fines you incur. These are paid directly to Hampshire County Council. We would always urge you to strive for 100% attendance for your children.

Thank you for your understanding and continued cooperation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school office.

Sjsa
The PTA for Saint James School

SPRING DISCO

Thursday 30th April

Year R: 2.00pm-2.45pm
Year 1 & 2: 2.45pm-3.45pm
Year 3 & 4: 4.00pm-5.00pm
Year 5 & 6: 5.15pm-6.15pm

Tickets £4.50: Includes water or squash, and a snack!
(NO high heels or phones allowed)

To book and pay for your child's place please visit
<https://sjsa.sumupstore.com/product/disco-30th-april-add-to-cart-and-leave-child-s-name-class-dietary-needs-and-night-owl-arrangements-in-message-to-merchant> or scan the QR code.
Please ensure you 'ADD TO BASKET' and enter your child's name and class in the 'Your Message to Merchant' and include any dietary requirements or Night Owls arrangements.

Saint James School Association (Sjsa)

Break the Rules Day

Thursday 30th April

FOR 1 DAY ONLY, YOU CAN BREAK THESE SCHOOLS RULES

- Wear school uniform
- No squash in water bottles
- No nail varnish
- No crazy hair
- No temporary tattoos
- No make-up or face paint
- No football kits

Please give cash to your child's teacher on the day

Sjsa
The PTA for Saint James School

50p PER RULE YOU BREAK

ITCHEN VALLEY SUMMER CHALLENGE

9TH JULY & 20TH AUGUST



REGISTER NOW!



MAKE YOUR MILES MATTER

% of every ticket goes to Naomi House - Jacks Plac

Junior 1m

5 & 10km

Kids: £9.75
Adults: £24

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Ultimate evening out
- Unique Finishers Medal
- Free Race Photos
- Post Race Snacks
- Prizes



Scan the QR code to book your spot

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hello@dashtogether.co.uk



FREE!

Multi Sports - for Youth Mental Wellbeing



Attendee Sign Up

Time Thursdays at 3:30-4:30pm (Ages 10-16)
Term-time session

Venue Leigh Park Community Centre, Dunsbury Way, Leigh Park, Havant PO9 5BG

Description Fun, free and interactive session to enjoy different games & activities and help improve the mental wellbeing of young people. A great way to help build confidence and self-esteem and meet new people!

This group is provided **FREE** by mental health charity Sport In Mind for the benefit of local young people. Any questions email youth@sportinmind.org

[f](https://www.facebook.com/sportinmind) [i](https://www.instagram.com/sportinmind) [l](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sportinmind) info@sportinmind.org www.sportinmind.org 03001021400



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County Council

Do you want to work in Health and Social Care?

Come and join our Skills Bootcamps

Starting 27th April 2026

This course runs Monday-Friday 9.30-2.30 for three weeks (27th - 15th May 2026)

Venue: John Pounds Centre, 23 Queen Street, Portsmouth, PO1 3HN

For more information or to book onto the Skills Bootcamps please contact Itchen College Adult Education on 02380 446156 or courses@itchen.ac.uk

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KICKSTART YOUR CAREER WITH SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

Do you want to work in Early Years?

Come and join our Skills Bootcamps

The course runs for 3 weeks, Monday- Friday, 9.30-2.30

Dates: Monday 20th April- Friday 8th May (no session on Monday 4th May)

Venue: Leonardo Hotel, Charlotte Place, Southampton, SO14 0TB

For more information or to book onto the Skills Bootcamps please contact Itchen College on 02380 446156 or email courses@itchen.ac.uk

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