

St John's VA C of E Primary School

NEWSLETTER

Finding the light in ourselves and each other (John 8:12)



16/01/26

Spring Term 1

Value: Joy

Welcome message from the Headteacher

Happy New Year to all!

Dear all,

Happy New Year to all. I hope you have all enjoyed your holiday break. It's been a very cold start to the term with days of snow and days of ice! We have been working hard to de-ice the school grounds on a regular basis.

We were busy on our inset day looking at emotional intelligence and reviewing supporting children removing labels and barriers and considering how to be able to reach our pupils best outcomes. It was good to see that our staff have been very positive with developing our methodology further with this.

We have begun to update our OPAL lunch times, getting new container boxes and beginning to tweak the playground to ensure we have more toys and equipment out. Please read below for our wish list of toys that children may not want to play with anymore. We are really excited to see our children using new equipment and the OPAL way. They have enjoyed playing with the snow and the muddy puddles!

New iPads have been put into Year 1 and 2 now and are ready to be used by the children. I have also seen some incredible homework on Seesaw from over Christmas which is great to see.

The weather has been a range of snow, ice and rain. Thank you to everyone coming into school dressed appropriately with hats and gloves. Please continue to keep an eye out on the weather, we have some brave children wearing shorts.

Drama classes with our Drama teacher Sam will now be moved to Year 2 and 3 on a Friday. This is to help with speaking and listening skills as well as oracy learning. Half the class are with Sam allowing class teachers to have the other half doing intensive lessons to really knuckle down key skills that they are studying.

We look forward to the rest of the half term. Have a great weekend.
Mr Worton-Geer

Pupil quote of the week- Eric (Reception): I have enjoyed being back at school playing with my friends. I like it when we are outside and football.
Quote from the bible- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus".

Improvements to the school:

We have had several improvements so far:

- Our new front gate area will begin soon and take several weeks, please be patient when entering the school during school hours as this may take longer than normal.
- The communication and social media policy has been created after the feedback from the survey.
- New iPads for Year 1 and 2 are now in the classes
- We are beginning to move into our next phase of OPAL – please see below for more information.
- A new back up internet line is being put into place.





Highlights

Here is some useful information that is happening in the school.

Attendance:

Week commencing 5th January 2026

Year	Percent	Place
Nursery	100%	Joint 1 st
Year 1	95.7%	3 rd
Year 2	100%	Joint 1 st
Year 3	95.4%	5 th
Year 4	95.6%	4 th
Year 5	88.8%	7 th
Year 6	94.9%	6 th
Year R	97.3%	2 nd

Amazon Wish list

We have created our amazon wish list if parents would like to buy items for the school – this would be greatly appreciated. The link is found [here](#). Throughout the year we will update the wish list.

Colder weather:

In the event that we need to close the school, for example due to inclement weather, we will send an email to all parents and students.

The aim will be to send this message out by 7.30am. The message will inform you of whether we are closing, opening later, opening just for a few year groups, different footwear etc. The outcome of whether we close entirely, close for some year groups, start later etc will vary depending on each situation. We will also put the information on our school website and Facebook page.

In the event we do need to close the school, we will advise on work set.

Essentials: warm coat, gloves and hat. Please bring in spare socks if your child would benefit from them.

Helpful links for parenting and supporting our children:

<https://events.hertfordshire.gov.uk/local-offer?category=9ae900f5-5b1a-4e19-b127-8c9d885964ae%2Cf52a2404-59b1-4722-94b5-8da4dc902027>

OPAL:

The children are all extremely excited about our new playground project. As mentioned in the OPAL launch letter sent out at the start of the programme, we will be continuing collecting loose parts for children to play with. The items we are looking for will enable us to enjoy a wider range of play experiences during playtime (see below for some examples):

- Suitcases of any size and type
- Anything on wheels/castors
- Plastic milk crates/supermarket delivery crates/plastic bread trays
- Briefcases, especially hard cased ones
- Road signs and cones
- Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, work tables, wooden spoons, chopping boards
- Tools like small spades/shovels, trowels and brooms
- Tubes of various sizes and various materials
- Buckets
- Nets and thick ropes
- Cars
- Dinosaurs
- Barbies/ action figures
- Keyboards/torches/laptops/calculators/mobile phones/desk phones/webcams/cameras that are no longer working
- Fabric (large sheets/brightly coloured fabric)
- Foam sheets/bodyboards/camping roll mats/yoga mats
- Wooden pallets
- Metal frames
- Cable drums
- Guttering

- Noodles (the type you use in the swimming pool!)
- Hats/scarves/jazzy shirts/elasticated skirts/waistcoats/wedding dresses/character costumes
- Pegs (to help to set up dens)

If you have any items to donate, they will need to be brought to Mrs Davies-Goldder. Staff will be on the main gate and will direct you to where the items need to be left. Please bring your items in between 8:30 and 8:50 any morning.

If you are able to, or you know anyone who can, donate a large number of plastic boxes/crates/pallets, please contact the school office.

Thank you for your continued support with our OPAL Primary Programme. We look forward to sharing more of what we have been getting up to at playtimes very soon.

Get ready to play... OPAL BINGO

Laundry basket 	Suitcase 	Wooden spoons 	Action figures 	Plastic trucks
Dress up items 	Cars 	Dinosaurs 	Pans 	Plastic dolls
Lego 	Wheelbarrow 	Fabric 	Plastic tubes 	Tarpaulin
Beach spades 	Buckets 	Trowels 	Watering cans 	Cardboard
Guttering 	Wooden planks 	Baking pans 	PVC pipes 	Chalk

Child Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the food we have and the friends we've made. Thank you for our school, our homes and the places we live. Thank you for all the presents we had at Christmas and at other special times. (Viola – Year 4)



Calendar

Wednesday 21 st January	Phonics Assessment Workshop – 8:50am
Friday 23 rd January	Forest School – Year 4
Wednesday 28 th January	Year 4 MTC workshop 8:50am and 2:50pm
Friday 30 th January	Forest School – Year 3
Monday 2 nd February -Thursday 5 th February	MOCK SAT's Week – Year 6
Friday 6 th February	Forest School – Year 2
Monday 9 th – 15 th February	Children's Mental health Week
Tuesday 10 th February	Safer Internet Day
Friday 13 th February	Forest School – Year 1
Monday 16 th -Friday 20 th February	Half Term
Monday 23 rd February	Return to school
Friday 27 th February	Forest School - Year 6
Thursday 5 th March	World Book Day
Friday 6 th March	Forest school – Year 5
Monday 9 th -Friday 13 th March	Science Week
Wednesday 11 th March	Year 1-6 Science Workshop
Thursday 12 th March	Book Look Day- 2:45pm
Friday 13 th March	Forest School – Year 4
Monday 16 th -Friday 20 th March	Year 6 Residential trip to Essex Outdoors
Friday 20 th March	Forest School – Year 3
Monday 23 rd -Thursday 26 th March	Mock SAT's Week (Year 6)
Wednesday 25 th and Thursday 26 th March	Parent Consultations
Friday 27 th March	Forest School – Year 2
Friday 27 th March	Last day of term – finish 1:30pm

Forest School

This term, we will be focusing on a range of outdoor skills, including fire safety and management, knot-tying techniques, and building simple shelters. These activities are designed to help children grow in confidence, resilience, and independence as they learn to work with natural materials and collaborate with their peers.

Please ensure that children come to school dressed appropriately on Forest School days. They will be spending extended periods outdoors and are likely to get muddy, wet, or cold. Warm layers, waterproof clothing, and sturdy footwear make a big difference to their comfort and enjoyment.

Our Forest School curriculum is something we are continually developing. As our grounds have now reached a stage where we can expand and enrich the learning opportunities, we are excited to introduce more structured progression in skills and knowledge. Over time, children will revisit key skills at increasing levels of challenge, helping them build mastery and confidence.





Academic Highlights

Here is some useful information that is happening in the school.

Nursery:



Nursery have had a fantastic start to the year, welcoming some new friends as members of our class. We have been reading stories about animals from antarctica and rescuing penguins and polar bears from ice! We are learning to hold a pencil and write our names, tracing the letters and trying to form them correctly.

Reception:



Reception are learning about dinosaurs this half term. We have made a fun dino world in our role play area and have been reading about Mary Anning, a female palaeontologist in 1799. Today we drew dinosaurs on the playground and showed the children how big the Giganotosaurus was by drawing and measuring a line from the gate to the classroom, it was 13.5metres in length!

Year 1:



Year 1: Year 1 have made a brilliant start to the Spring Term, despite the cold and wet weather! The children have loved our cricket sessions with Hertfordshire Cricket, building skills and confidence and have been full of energy in dance as they explored movement by pretending to be Baloo the Bear. In Spanish, we have begun learning our colours and in Drawing Club the children have produced some fantastic writing, confidently joining two main clauses using the conjunction 'and'. A super start to the term! ☀

Year 2:



Year 2 have been learning about money on maths. This week we created our own stalls and sold items to our peers in order to work out the correct change.

Year 3:



In Year 3 the children have really enjoyed their weekly library slot. They have been discovering new books and finding a cosy nook to read a favourite book.

Year 4:



Following a wonderful Christmas break, Year 4 have settled back into school life tremendously well! We have begun work on several new units across all subjects - including Mountains & Volcanoes in Geography and Programming in Computing. We've also been very fortunate to welcome Hertfordshire Cricket back into school, and they will be running specialist cricket sessions on each Monday up until

February half-term.

Year 5:

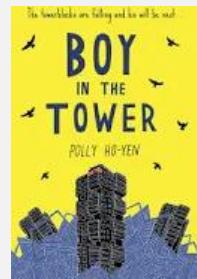


A group of Year 5 have volunteered to become Sports Leaders – they had their first training session on Monday, and this is what Eloise and Frank had to say:

"On Monday, the 12th of January 2026, we did some activities such as STEP* and a game where we passed a tennis

ball clockwise around a circle and ran anti-clockwise around the circle . We were learning how to be good activity creators. We did it at lunchtime for half an hour. We will do it every Monday for this half term, and then we will be officially playground leaders!"

Year 6:



In Y6 we have been on the edge of our seats waiting for the next installment of 'The Boy in the Tower' in our English lessons. We have been working hard on using relative clauses and brackets to enhance our writing. The children are also very keen to share with parents and carers their Geography work on 'Brazil' from this week (sides can be found on seesaw).



Parish News

Here is some useful information that is happening in the Parish.

Digswell Parish Book Club

www.digswellparish.org.uk

Our Parish Book Club meets on the **Third Friday of each month** at

1030am at

The weekly café Coffee Pot, which is at St John's Church, Monks Rise

All are welcome.

2026 – A Year of Reading

January 16: *A House in Sicily* – Daphne Phelps

February 20: *Lent Group* – Jill Duffield

March 20: *Lent Group* – Jill Duffield

April 17: *Dragged Up Proppa* – Pip Fallow

May 15: *The Instrumentalist* – Harriet Constable

June 19: *What You Are Looking For Is In the Library* –

Michiko Aoyama

July 17: *The Dead Sea* – Nir Arielli

August 21: *A Voyage Around the Queen* – Craig

Brown

September 18: *The Penguin Lessons* – Tom

Michell

October 16: *Lessons in Chemistry* – Bonnie

Garmus

November 20: *Make it Do: A Spitfire Pilot's True*

Story of WW2, Grit and Survival – Ken Cam

December 4: *The Home Child* – Liz Berry



PARISH OF DIGSWELL FORWARD PLANNER 2025 as at 020126

Sundays: 9:30am Parish Eucharist at St John's Church (3rd Sunday All Age)

Tuesdays: 10am Parish Midweek Eucharist at Christ the King Hub followed by Coffee Morning

Thursdays: 9am Tea Toast & Toddlers at Christ the King Hub (1st and 3rd only)

Fridays: 9am- 12 Noon Coffee Pot at St John's Cafe.

Saturdays: 9:15am A Moment of Healing at St John's Church (1st Saturday only)

Saturdays: 10am-1pm The Hub Cafe at Christ the King Hub.

January

Thu 1	10am NAMING OF JESUS Eucharist at St John's Church.
Sun 4	EVE OF EPIPHANY SERVICES
Tue 6	9.30am FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY EUCHARIST at Christ the King Hub
Fri 16	10.30am Parish Book Club at Coffee Pot
Thu 22	7.30pm St John's Church Committee via Zoom
Sun 25	4pm Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service at Focolare Centre
Tue 27	12 Noon January Lunch at the Cowper Arms
Tue 27	7.30pm Christ the King Hub Working Group via Zoom
Thu 29	7.30pm Finance Committee via Zoom

February

Sun 1	FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS SERVICES
Wed 4	11:00am Study Day at the Rectory. Introducing 1 Corinthians.
Sat 7	9.45am Extended Ministry Group at St John's Church
Mon 16	2pm "Silence" at St John's Church
Tue 17	8pm Standing Committee via Zoom
Wed 18	12 Noon- 7pm Parish Pancakes at the Cowper Arms
Fri 20	ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES
Mon 23	10.30am Parish Book Club at Coffee Pot
Mon 23	2pm First of 5 Lent Groups at Digswell Village Church (also on 2, 9, 16 & 23 March)
Tue 24	7.30pm Parochial Church Council Meeting via Zoom
Fri 27	7.30pm First of 5 Lent Groups via Zoom (also on 3, 10, 17, 24 March)
Fri 27	10.30am First of 5 Lent Groups at Coffee Pot (also on 6, 13, 20, 27 March)

March

Mon 9	7.30pm Parochial Church Council Meeting via Zoom
Tue 10	7.30pm Deanery Synod at St Mary's North Mymms
Sun 15	MOTHERING SUNDAY
Fri 20	10.30am Parish Book Club at Coffee Pot
Sun 22	11am Parish AGMs at St John's Church
Wed 25	Homerswood Easter Service
Wed 25	2pm "Silence" at St John's Church

August

Thu 6	FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION
Sat 8	7pm Transfiguration Tapas at the Rectory
Wed 12	Study Day at St John's Church
Fri 21	10.30am Parish Book Club at Coffee Pot
Mon 31	BANK HOLIDAY

September

Thu 3	7.30pm Christ the King Hub Working Group via Zoom
Sat 5	9.45am Extended Ministry Group at St John's Church
Tue 8	7.30pm St John's Church Committee via Zoom
Thu 10	7.30pm Finance Committee via Zoom
Fri 11	8.50am Patronal Weekend School Eucharist
Sat 12	1.30pm Patronal Weekend Afternoon Teas
Sun 13	10.30am Patronal Eucharist followed by BBQ jointly with DVC
Mon 14	7.30pm Parochial Church Council Meeting via Zoom
Fri 18	10.30am Parish Book Club at Coffee Pot

October

Sun 4	HARVEST FESTIVAL
Sat 10	PCC and Church Committees Away Day
Wed 14	7.30pm Deanery Synod at venue to be confirmed
Fri 16	10.30am Parish Book Club at Coffee Pot

November

Sun 1	ALL SOULS SUNDAY
Sun 8	REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
Wed 11	REMEMBRANCE DAY
Tue 17	7.30pm St John's Church Committee via Zoom
Wed 18	7.30pm Christ the King Hub Working Group via Zoom
Thu 19	7.30pm Finance Committee via Zoom
Fri 20	10.30am Parish Book Club at Coffee Pot
Sat 21	9.15am Extended Ministry Group at St John's Church
Sun 22	FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING
Mon 23	8pm Standing Committee via Zoom
Wed 25	12 Noon Clergy Chapter Meets at Cowper Arms, Digswell
Sat 28	10am Parish Christmas Market
Sun 29	ADVENT SUNDAY

December

Wed 2	11am Advent Study Lunch at the Rectory
Thu 3	7.30pm Parochial Church Council Meeting via Zoom
Fri 4	10.30am Parish Book Club at Coffee Pot
Sun 13	10.30am Digswell Nativity
Sun 20	12.15pm Parish Christmas Dinner in Church
Thu 24	10.30am Congregational 9 Lessons and Carols followed by Christmas Party at the Rectory with Secret Santa
Fri 25	CHRISTMAS DAY
Sun 27	11am JOINT SERVICE AT DIGSWELL VILLAGE CHURCH

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The Friends News

Here is some useful information that is happening with the Friends.

This academic year we are going to host the AGM at school on Friday 13th February 2026 at 1:30pm. Mr Worton-Geer will be hosting with teas and coffees to invite all parents to attend so that we can build a team of support the school. There are named roles here such as Chair, vice chair, treasurer and Secretary but also Reps for each class and non-named roles. Together we can support the school to develop a strong community that will help raise money for our children. Please come along.

Dates for the diary for half termly meetings are:

Friday 13th February 2026 at 1:30pm – AGM voting for roles

Wednesday 25th February 2026 – welcome new committee and discussion on World book day- a focus on Wonka.

Wednesday 25th March 2026

Wednesday 29th April 2026

Wednesday 24th June 2026



These are the cake sale dates

Yr 5 - 16/1/26
Yr 4 - 13/2/26
Yr 3 - 27/2/26
Yr 2 - 13/3/26
Yr 1 - 17/4/26
Yr R - 08/5/26
Yr N - 22/5/26



PLEASE COME AND SUPPORT OUR
AGM

**Friday 13th February at
1:30pm**

Refreshments will be
provided

Our future events that we would like to run and
will need support are:

Mother's Day project

Father's Day project

Sports Day

Year 6 Show

Odd shoe day

Target: £10,000

Total so far:
£7466.50

World Book day

Sport's day

Father's day
projects

Mother's day
projects

Christmas
bizarre
£1966.50

Fireworks
£2200

Anonymous
Donations
£1000

Tesco Grant
£1000

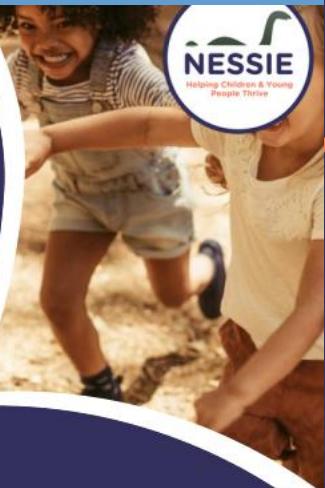
Quiz night
£1300



INCREDIBLE YEARS PARENTING PROGRAMME

A program for parents and carers of children aged 4 - 11 years in Welwyn and Hatfield, who are struggling with their child's behaviour at home.

Does your child display anxious, aggressive, argumentative, destructive behaviour and or refusal to follow instructions? Then this course is for you. This supportive program aims to develop parenting strategies tailored to you and your individual family's needs.



"This program is transformational in helping coach, support and gently challenge unhelpful thoughts or behaviours. Could not recommend more for parents of children of any age or background"

The Incredible Years - 10 Week Parenting Programme

For dads and male carers of children aged 4-11 in Welwyn and Hatfield whose children display anxious and aggressive behaviour at home.



"It helps you change the way you are as a parent and makes a better life for them (our children). It's had an amazing impact on our children"

Swallow Dell School, Blackthorn Road,
Welwyn Garden City
AL7 3JP

Monday's
5:45pm - 7:45pm
12th January 2026 - 23rd
March 2026
[BOOK HERE](#)



https://procfu.com/nespubbooking?pf-context=screen_27&pf-clicked-id=3204044178



Who's in
Charge?

A FREE* 8 WEEK COURSE FOR PARENTS/CARERS LIVING WITH A STRONG-WILLED CHILD

COURSE COVERS:

- ENTITLEMENT VERSUS RESPONSIBILITY
- CONSEQUENCES
- ANGER
- ASSERTIVENESS
- SELF-CARE
- COOPERATIVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

PROGRAMME CONSISTS OF 8 X 2 HOUR
WEEKLY SESSIONS

DATES:

Monday evenings,
starts Feb 2026 - exact
date to be confirmed

TIME: 6:30-8:30pm

LOCATION: Onslow
St. Audrey's School

To book a place, please use the QR code or go to
this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/q1ci0btEX5>



*Please note that this course is only available for free to
our partner schools, details of which can be found here:
<https://www.welwynschools.org.uk/welwynschools/partnership/our-schools/>



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- COOPERATIVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

PROGRAMME CONSISTS OF 8 X 2 HOUR
WEEKLY SESSIONS

DATES:

Wednesdays from 28th
Jan - 25th March (no
session in half-term)

TIME: 9:30-11:30am

LOCATION: Peartree
Primary School



To book a place, please use the QR code or go to
this link:
<https://forms.office.com/e/UzmG701hmR>

*Please note that this course is only available for free to
our partner schools, details of which can be found here:
<https://www.welwynschools.org.uk/welwynschools/partnership/our-schools/>