

St John's VA C of E Primary School

NEWSLETTER



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

13/02/26

Spring Term 1 Value: Joy

Welcome message from the Headteacher

Half way through the year!

Dear all,

It has been a very wet and muddy fortnight. I just want to say a huge thank you for everyone contributing towards our Outdoor Playing and Learning. The children are beginning to explore the pallets, toys, action figures and of course the mud. We enjoy the children playing in the mud but also ask if you can talk to your children about being sensible in the mud. We have had a few extremely muddy children. We also will be doing more play assemblies on how to play effectively.

The mud kitchen equipment is growing as well as the dressing up box. We have chosen to keep the dressing up box for the warmer weather so that costumes do not get dirty. Thank you to the parents who have brought in wet and mud suits. This allows the children to continue to enjoy play time without getting too messy.

There have been many sporting events over the past few weeks as well as cricket being run weekly on Monday's. Thank you Mr Draper for organising this and our other events for the children. Taking some of the Year 1 and 2 children to Tennis was amazing and the children have learnt key skills which include being able to hit and move on the tennis court.

Learning across the school continues to show in many lessons, Year 6 have completed their first mocks last week and are preparing for their upcoming SATs. I have been visiting the classes and have seen some incredible writing – a huge focus for the rest of the year is on handwriting and how we can develop fluency and stamina in writing.

The school continues to develop the new front entrance way. We currently have several fence lines up and gates are being installed. During half term, the gates will be connected to a new system allowing them to hopefully be in operation on the first day back after half term. We are awaiting funding for stage 2 and 3 of our entrance, development of the carpark and moving the office so it is forward facing. We are awaiting the diocese for an outcome of our bid. Watch this space.

If I don't see you today, please have a great restful half term, next half term is only 5 weeks before we reach Summer and hopefully better weather!
- Mr Worton-Geer

Pupil quote of the week- Mariam (Y5) - I really like the school that we have lots of sports across the school and we have fun at lunchtimes. I really enjoy my class and my friends.

Quote from the bible- Psalm 118:24 "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Improvements to the school:

We have had several improvements so far:

- The new fence line has been installed and the gates are going in shortly. The electricians have also been added in preparation for the gates to be set up on a Paxton system.
- We greatly appreciate the items and toys for OPAL, children are enjoying play times and getting a bit muddy.
- New iPads have been set up for EYFS and a new school laptop is set up.
- We are awaiting a quote for the sunken play equipment that overnight has caused a bounce patch. I will keep you posted on this area which has been taped off.
- New signage for the carpark and front entrance is beginning to be worked on, any ideas would be greatly appreciated.



Highlights

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

Raising money for the school



Tuesday 10th February 2026

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are very excited to be welcoming **Commonwealth Gold gymnast Steve Frew** to St. John's on Thursday 26th February 2026.

Steve will be leading a **sponsored fitness circuit** with all pupils, followed by a **motivational assembly**, and **Q&A session**. The aim of the event is to **inspire the pupils** to be more physically active, but just as importantly, encourage them to discover and pursue their **passion in life**.

The event will both connect the pupils to an extraordinary athlete role model and **raise money for new sports equipment** in the school, as well as supporting both athletes and para-athletes, so that they can continue to inspire the next generation.



A sponsorship form will be sent home with your child to use to help raise money for the event. You can also sponsor your child by visiting: www.greatathletes.org and clicking on the button “**Set up a Fundraiser Page**”. Alternatively, you can scan the QR code to go directly to the online sponsorship page.

As a thank you, pupils will receive the following thank-you gifts for meeting these milestones:

- **Raise any money:** an A5 sheet of motivational stickers
- **Raise £10 or more:** a blue Great Athletes wristband
- **Raise £25 or more:** a blue wristband, and a red wristband with Steve Frew's signature
- **Raise £50 or more:** all the above, plus a signed Steve Frew poster

Please ensure that the sponsorship form and money are returned to the school office **1 week** after the event has taken place.

Please also make sure that your children come to school on the event day with their PE Kits!

Thank you in anticipation of creating a terrific and memorable event

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.



Attendance:

Week commencing 2nd February 2026

Year	Percent	Place
Nursery	100%	1 st
Year 1	97.9%	5 th
Year 2	99.3%	2 nd
Year 3	94.3%	7 th
Year 4	99%	3 rd
Year 5	95%	6 th
Year 6	94.1%	8 th
Year R	98.3%	4 th

'Extreme reading challenge'

In the school day, we will be focusing on some activities which will encourage reading for pleasure. However, we would also like the children to have some reading fun before World Book Day, and we will need parent/ carer help for this one...

Take photos of themselves reading in unusual places, for example:

- Under a table
- In a blanket fort
- Upside down on the sofa
- Outside under a tree
- In pyjamas with a torch

The photos can be sent to your child's class teacher via email (the school office admin) or added onto seesaw.



BIG YELLOW FRIDAY
13th MARCH
Wear Yellow Day
visit www.bigyellowfriday.org for more details
Make a difference to children with life long liver disease
BRITISH LIVER TRUST
British Liver Trust, Unit 1, Vanta Court, 20 Jewry Street, Winchester, SO23 8FE
Registered Charity No. 298858 (England and Wales), Scotland SC042140
Children's Liver Disease Foundation

On Friday 13th March, we would like all pupils and staff to wear an item of clothing that is yellow and all donations will be collected at the gate on the Friday in sponsor of the Big Yellow Friday. This is raising money for charity to support children with life long liver disease. Please see this link for more information on the Big Yellow

Friday. <https://childliverdisease.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/BYF-2026-Fundraising-Pack-v2.pdf>

Parent Consultations Schedule:

Please wait for the Arbor email to book your slots

Tuesday 24th March – Year 1 and Year 6

- **Format:** Face-to-face
- **Time:** 3:00pm–6:30pm (break 5:00–5:30pm)
- **Location:** Library Mrs Scott and Miss Brady will be attending their National Professional Qualification training on Wednesday, so Year 1 and Year 6 will hold their consultations on Tuesday.

Wednesday 25th March – Nursery, Reception, Years 2–5

- **Format:** Face-to-face
- **Time:** 3:00pm–6:30pm (break 5:00–5:30pm)
- **Location:** Hall

Thursday 26th March – Reception to Year 6

- **Format:** Face-to-face and online
- **Time:**
 - 3:00pm–5:00pm face-to-face
 - 5:30pm–6:30pm online appointments only
 - (Break 5:00–5:30pm)

If you would like to arrange sibling appointments on the same day, Thursday may be the most convenient option. Throughout all consultation evenings, Mr Worton-Geer and Mrs de la Croix will be available and moving between spaces should you need to speak with them.

Child Prayer:

George (Y5) - Dear God, help us throughout this term to improve our learning and have fun at school. Keep us safe over half term and allow us to grow more next half term. Amen

Calendar

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)
Tuesday 24 th , 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
Monday 30 th March – Friday 10 th April	Easter Holidays
Monday 13 th April	INSET Day
Tuesday 14 th April	First day back for children
Tuesday 28 th April – Friday 1 st May	Year 5 Residential Trip to Fellowship Afloat
Monday 4 th May	Bank Holiday
Monday 11 th May – Thursday 14 th May	Year 6 SATs
Friday 15 th May	Year 6 Party and Dress down day - £2 donation
Monday 25 th May – Friday 29 th May	May half term

Forest School

This term, we will be focusing on a range of outdoor skills, including fire safety and management, knotting- 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:



In Nursery, we have been practising our fine and gross motor skills, lying on the floor and mark making onto big sheets of paper. We have also been focusing on different ways to represent numbers, using 5 frames, drawing dots and using playdough and counters to show amounts.

We have been thinking about the different feelings that we have, especially love, with Valentines Day coming up, thinking of the different reasons why we love the people that are special to us.

Year 1:



It is hard to believe the children are already **halfway through Year 1** – time really does fly when you're having fun! Mondays with **Hertfordshire Cricket** have been a huge hit, with the children loving learning about the sport and developing their cricket skills. In Maths, we've been

busy sharpening our addition and subtraction skills within 20, while in English we've been mastering contractions and confidently popping them into sentences.

Year 3:



In year 3, we enjoyed an art activity where we made careful observations of our partner as we drew their portrait. We tried really hard and it was a lot of fun.

Year 5:



Year 6 read their own stories, based around the book "The Boy in the Tower", to the Year 5 children.

"I felt proud because I got to read my story that I wrote out loud to someone" (Cody Yr 6)

"I felt happy I was reading it

to someone, and they can enjoy my story. I also got their opinion" (George Yr 6)

This is what Year 5 had to say: creative, amusing, thrilling, cliffhanger!

"Rollercoaster – sad and then exciting"

"Not sure what was going to happen next – unpredictable, well-written"

Reception:



In Reception this week we are learning about Chinese New Year. Mrs Gradon delivered an amazing workshop where we learnt about The Great Race, tasted Chinese fruit and practiced cutting Chinese paper. Every child received a special red

envelope with a chocolate coin. What a great experience for the children, thank you.

Year 2:

We had a fantastic time on a texture hunt on the school



grounds for our art work. We have experimented with a range of paint tools to create texture linked to what we found outside. We also continued to develop our colour mixing skills to try and match the colours we found in the

environment. We had lots of paint filled, messy fun! Thank you so much to all of the parents/carers that kindly donated resources for us to use for our painting lessons.

Year 4:



Y4 have been extra busy over the last couple of weeks. We have competed in multiple sporting events such as the Rapid-Fire Cricket and Indoor Athletics at Stanborough. We have also begun to practice our Easter production alongside Y3, rehearsals are coming along nicely, and we can't wait to show you our hard work in March!

Year 6:



Year 6 have been working super hard on publishing their adventure stories, they have also read them aloud to others. In PSHE, we had a lot of fun and giggles when playing

'pass the ball' game where you need to pass the ball around the circle but cannot use your feet!



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

In RE this half term, Year 2 have been learning about, 'The Gospel and The Good News'. We had a visit from Father Rob who spoke to the children about how Christians believe Jesus brings good news to everyone, especially those in need. The children were encouraged to reflect on stories told and what this means to them and how these morals could be used in their life. They were engaged, listened carefully and had lots of questions for Father Rob!



- Sunday 15** **Sunday Before Lent**
Audio Service for This Week *a link is sent*
9:30am All Age Worship St John's Church
- Monday 16** 8:30am Morning Prayer
8:00pm Standing Committee *via Zoom*
- Tuesday 17** 10:00am Eucharist at Christ the King Hub
12 Noon **PARISH PANCAKES AT COWPER ARMS** until 8pm
8:30pm Compline – *a link is sent*
- Weds 18** **ASH WEDNESDAY**
8:30am Morning Prayer
12:00pm EUCHARIST and Imposition of the Ashes at St John's Church
- Thursday 19** 9:15am Tea Toast & Toddlers at Christ the King Hub
8:30pm Compline *a link is sent*
- Friday 20** 8:30am Morning Prayer
9:00am Coffee Pot at St John's Café
10:30am Parish Book Club at Coffee Pot
- Saturday 21** 7:45am Fr Rob presents *Thought for the Day* on BBC Radio 4
8:30am Morning Prayer
10:00am Hub Café at Christ the King Hub
- Sunday 22** **LENT ONE**
Weekly Audio Service *a link is sent*
9:30am Parish Eucharist at St John's Church
11:00am Anglican led Worship at Digswell Village Church
- Monday 23** 8:30am Morning Prayer
2:00pm Lent Group at Digswell Village Church
7:30pm PCC Meeting *via Zoom*
- Tuesday 24** 8:50am Collective Worship at St John's School
10:00am Eucharist at Christ the King Hub
12 Noon Welwyn Garden City Church leaders meet at New Zion Church
7:30pm Lent Group *via Zoom*
8:30pm Compline – *a link is sent*
- Weds 25** 8:30am Morning Prayer
- Thursday 26** 8:30pm Compline *a link is sent*
- Friday 27** 8:30am Morning Prayer
9:00am Coffee Pot at St John's Café
10:30am Lent Group at Coffee Pot
- Saturday 28** 8:30am Morning Prayer
10:00am Hub Café at Christ the King Hub
1:30pm Fr Rob & Selina lead seminar at the Diocesan Office

PARISH PANCAKES

on Shrove Tuesday, 17 Feb 2026
12 Noon - 8pm.

The pub will be open as usual serving a wide range of cold and hot drinks as well as its usual menu but all pancakes purchased on the day will be donated to the parish's work with schools.

Although it is half term we hope that you will publicise this widely to parents, staff and governors as it may be something nice to do for those not going away for the holiday.

Pancakes are just £1.50 each including a range of fillings and payment can now be made in cash or card.

Ash Wednesday

12.30pm Parish Eucharist at St John's Church.

Racial Justice Sunday in February

As Racial Justice Sunday approaches the Diocese has announced major changes in its engagement with racial equality and justice.

<https://resource.stalbansdiocese.org/newsletters/a-new-commitment-to-racial-justice/>

St John's VA C of E Primary School NEWSLETTER



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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 2025 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 to 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 2025 at 1:30pm – AGM voting for roles

Wednesday 11th February 2025 – welcome new committee and discussion on World book day- a focus on Wonka.

Wednesday 25th March 2025

Wednesday 29th April 2025

Wednesday 24th June 2025



The Friends of St John's School, Digswell

**PLEASE COME AND SUPPORT OUR
AGM**

**Friday 13th February 2026
1:30pm**

Refreshments will be provided

Target: £10,000

Total so far:
£7466.50

World Book day

Sport's day

Father's day projects

Mother's day projects

Christmas bazaar
£1966.50

Fireworks
£2200

Anonymous Donations
£1000

Tesco Grant
£1000

Quiz night
£1300

These are the cake sale dates

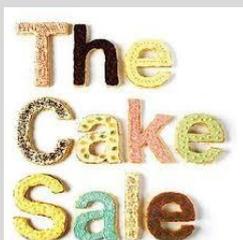
Yr 3 - 27/2/26

Yr 2 - 13/3/26

Yr 1 - 17/4/26

R - 8/5/26

N - 22/5/26



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

- Christmas Fair
- Christmas Cards
- Mother's Day project
- Father's Day project
- Sports Day
- Year 6 Show
- Odd shoe day

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"

8th January - 26th March '26
Every Thursday
10am -12pm
(apart from half term)

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

Scan the QR code
to book now!



Email Subject: Help improve children's wellbeing – take part in the SHINE Survey

FAO/Recipients: parents and carers of Reception and Year 6 children

Dear parents and carers,

We are pleased to invite you to take part in the **SHINE (Studying Happiness, self-Image and Nutrition and Eating in children) Parent & Carer Survey**. The survey will help us understand the health and wellbeing of children in **Reception (4-5 years)** and **Year 6 (10-11 years)**. The survey is open to parents and carers of children in these year groups.

The survey takes around **20 minutes** and can be completed **online (or on paper, if preferred** – see below). It includes questions about:

- Your child's mental wellbeing,
- You and your child's eating and physical activity habits,
- Your household and background.

By sharing your experiences, you will help us make changes at both local and national levels to support children's wellbeing.

As a thank you for taking part, you can enter a **prize draw** to win one of **four £50 shopping vouchers**, awarded to parents and carers in your local community.

The information you provide will only be used only for research purposes and will be kept completely confidential.

[Click here to access the survey.](#)

For more details, [visit our website.](#)

If you have any questions or want a paper version of the survey, contact the study team at shine@ucl.ac.uk.

Thank you for supporting this important research,
The SHINE Study Team



SHINE is a collaboration between University College London, Durham University and Newcastle University.



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

DATES:

Mondays from 23rd Feb (no session in half-term)

TIME: 6:30-8:30pm

PROGRAMME CONSISTS OF 8 X 2 HOUR WEEKLY SESSIONS

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:

<http://www.welwynhatschoolspartnership.com/our-schools/>

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- SELF-CARE
- COOPERATIVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

DATES:

Wednesdays from 25th Feb (no session in half-term)

TIME: 9:30-11:30am

PROGRAMME CONSISTS OF 8 X 2 HOUR WEEKLY SESSIONS

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:

<http://www.welwynhatschoolspartnership.com/our-schools/>

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Is your child in
Reception or Year 6
at primary school?

Have they been
measured as part of
the National Child
Measurement
Programme?



We'd love to hear from you!

Please complete our survey about the letter you received for the National Child Measurement Programme. Any feedback will mean we can continue improving our communications and better meet the needs of your child.



Scan the **QR code** or type in the
survey link

**We Need
Your Help!**



<https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/NCMPfeedback/>