



St James the Great Church of England Primary School and Nursery

January Newsletter



Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of January, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on what has been a positive and energetic start to the new term. The children have settled back into school life with enthusiasm, and it has been wonderful to see classrooms filled with curiosity, kindness, and great learning.

Despite the cold weather, children across the school have embraced new topics, new challenges, and new routines. Staff have commented on how engaged the pupils have been, and we are already seeing some fantastic progress and participation. Thank you for your continued support in helping the term begin so smoothly.

OPAL Play

We are pleased to be developing our playtimes through the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) programme, a nationally recognised approach that improves the quality of children's play. You will have received a letter about this last week.

High-quality play is essential for children's wellbeing and development. Through OPAL, children are given more freedom, time and a wider range of resources to encourage creativity, cooperation, resilience and problem-solving. You may begin to notice changes in the playground in the coming week. After half term the children will learn all about OPAL in an assembly- I'm sure they will be very excited to tell you all about it themselves.

We are excited about the positive impact OPAL is going to have on children's happiness and engagement at school. If you think you may have anything that would benefit our new approach then please let us know- small world toys are much needed for the first phase of our implementation and we would be very grateful for any donations!

Reminder about drop off

We kindly remind parents that if you wish to contact your child's teacher, this should be done through the agreed school communication channels rather than at the classroom door. Teachers are not always able to have conversations at drop-off or pick-up times as they are supervising children and preparing for learning. Using the correct channels helps ensure messages are received, responded to appropriately and that teaching time is protected. I have attached the communication flow chart for your information. Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Best wishes

Mrs L Turner

Headteacher

'A Christian community achieving excellence and equality'

Love

Joy

Peace

Faithfulness

Kindness

Goodness

Forgiveness

Self-Control

Keeping Our School Community Safe: A Message About Parking and Driving

Over recent weeks, I have been exploring a range of ways to improve the safety of parking and driving around the school. This has included discussions with Parking Enforcement Officers and the Police, who share our concerns about the risks posed by unsafe driving and inconsiderate parking at drop-off and pick-up times.

The Police have been very clear in the advice they have given, and I would like to pass this guidance on to all parents and carers:

Reporting Dangerous Driving

- Immediate danger: Any incidents involving dangerous or careless driving, vehicles creating an immediate risk, or near misses should be reported at the time via 999.

After the fact reports: If you witness dangerous behaviour after it has occurred, and you have details such as the registration number, you can report it by calling 101 or by using the Essex Police online reporting service.

Parking Enforcement

- Issues such as parking on double yellow lines, blocking pavements, or causing obstruction fall under the responsibility of Essex County Council Parking Enforcement.

If these issues are persistent, parents may wish to raise concerns with the Council directly so they can consider targeted enforcement outside the school.

Evidence Gathering

- If it is safe to do so, recording dates, times, photos, or noting any patterns of behaviour can be extremely helpful.
- This information can support both Police and Council enforcement and help build a clear picture of what is happening.

We all share a responsibility within both the school and the wider community to drive and park safely. Unsafe behaviour not only puts children at risk but also affects families, neighbours, and staff. I would strongly urge everyone to report incidents whenever possible and to model safe and considerate behaviour every day.

The Cupboard @ St James – Here to Support Our School Community

We would like to remind families about **The Cupboard @ St James**, our very own school based food bank designed to offer a little extra support to anyone who may need it. We know that circumstances can change quickly, and sometimes a helping hand can make all the difference. The Cupboard is here for exactly that reason.

If you would prefer a more discreet option, you can contact **Mrs Herring**, who will be more than happy to put together a selection of items for you. These can then be collected at the end of the school day at a time that suits you.



St James Primary School & Nursery - 2025-26 – Key Dates

Spring Term 2026	
Friday 6 th February	Osan class Eucharist
Friday 13 th February	Llullaq class Eucharist
Half Term – Monday 16 th February – Friday 20 th February	
Thursday 5 th March	World Book Day
Tuesday 10 th March	Parents evening
Thursday 12 th March	Parents evening
Friday 20 th March	Comic relief day
Tuesday 17 th March	Movie Night KS1
Thursday 24 th March	Movie Night KS2
Thursday 26 th March	School Disco
Friday 27 th March	Church Easter service for the children
Friday 27 th March	Last day of Spring Term
Easter Holidays Monday 30 th March – Friday 10 th April	
Summer Term 2026	
Monday 13 th April	First day of Summer Term
Monday 4 th May	Non-Pupil Day – May Bank Holiday
Monday 11 th May- Thursday	Year 6 SATs Week
Monday 18 th May	Year 6 Putt in the Park
Tuesday 19 th May	Year 6 Putt in the Park
Half Term Monday 25 th May – Friday 29 th May	
Monday 1 st June- Wednesday	Year 6 Residential
Monday 1 st June- Friday 12 th June	Year 4 Times Table Check
Monday 8 th June- Monday 15 th June	Year 1 Phonics Screening Test
Wednesday 10 th June	Sports Day (EYFS and KS1 AM/KS2 PM)
Wednesday 17 th June	Reserve sports day
Friday 26 th June	MULTI CULTURAL DAY
Friday 10 th July	Reports to parents
Friday 17 th July	Last Day of Summer Term