

School Newsletter

October 2022



ST. ALBAN'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
LEAD THE WAY

End of Autumn term 1

Dear Parents,

Where have the past six weeks gone?

It's been a busy but very productive first half-term and it has been wonderful to see how quickly the children have settled back into school after a long, hot summer. On my trips around the school and from reading this newsletter it is fantastic to see all the incredible work the children have been doing. I'm very proud of each and everyone of them!

I have to mention our new Reception children - what a lovely group! From day one they have worked really well together.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff for their hard work, they often mention that your kind words and encouragement really make a difference at the end of the day.

Thank you for your support.

Mr Brannigan

Message from Mrs Pocock

To My St Alban's Family

Thank you so much for your kind words and generosity at the end of my final term. It was my pleasure to be part of so many children's learning journey at St Alban's. You will always be in my thoughts.

With Love,
Mrs Pocock xxx



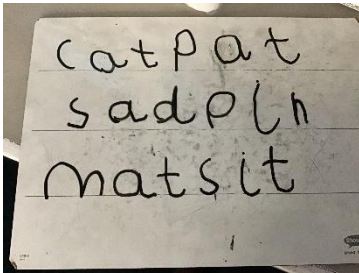
Reception year

We are so proud of how the Reception children have settled in to school life. From skipping into school to smiling as they re-join their family, they are a happy, caring group of children. They have been working so hard during this half term and are already seeing their own progress. We have been on an Autumn walk around the school, had great fun on the pirate ship and enjoyed gymnastics as well as our weekly dance workshops.





We have been learning about pairs, repeating patterns, length, height, comparing and sorting in maths. We have learnt lots of new phonic sounds and are beginning to use them to write words.



We have been working together as a class and really getting to know our new friends.



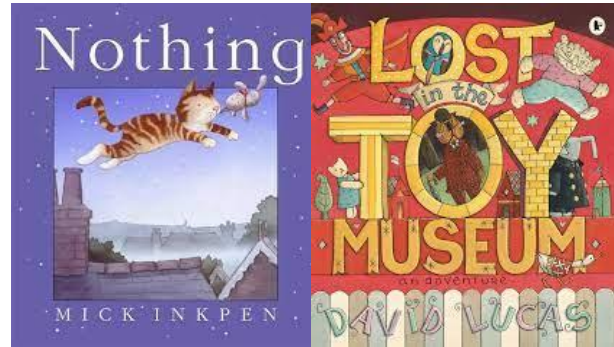


Year 1

Year 1 has made a great start to the term and settled into school life well.

English

Linked to our history topic, Toys and Games, we have been reading 'Nothing' by Mick Inkpen and 'Lost in the Toy Museum' by David Lucas.



We have had great fun predicting what a story might be about and have been using role-play and the written word to describe interesting settings and characters. Finally, we have been using our imagination to change story endings.

History

We have been learning about the past by studying toys and games. In particular, we have considered how the toys we play with differ from those of our parents and grandparents.



Our learning was brought to life by an interactive workshop run by Chertsey Museum, who brought in old toys and games for us to play with. Following our workshop, we created an exhibit about our favourite toy from the past.



Science

We have begun our Seasons topic with a sketch of the beautiful St Alban's Sycamore tree, discussing the colourful leaves and predicting what might happen as we move into winter. We will revisit our tree throughout the year to observe how it changes.

We have also been looking at what Autumn sounds, feels and looks like, capturing our ideas as a story stick.



Year 2

Year 2 have made a great start to the term and have been settling in beautifully.

English

This term, the children have been learning all about the journey Paddington makes. They have been learning about where Paddington has come from and the many adventures he takes with the Brown family and friends. The children enjoyed writing their own story when Paddington visits the Tower of London.



Geography

Whilst the children have been learning about the many adventures with Paddington, they have started to learn about where Paddington came from in Lima and how it compares to his life in London. They have looked at the physical and human features of Lima and how this may be different to London.

Science

In Science, the children have been learning about living things and their habitats. The children went into the wildlife garden to look at the living things we have in school and thought about the habitat that is best suited for these living things. The children then had a go at making their own food chains and how the producer links to the consumer and the predator.





Year 3

Year 3 had a busy start to the school year as they headed off to Chiltern Open Air Museum in the second week. The children had an opportunity to become archaeologists and dig around for artefacts. Once they had gathered the artefacts they tried to identify what time period they were from and if they fitted together in a puzzle activity. During this task, they also dug around poo to work out what our ancestors ate!



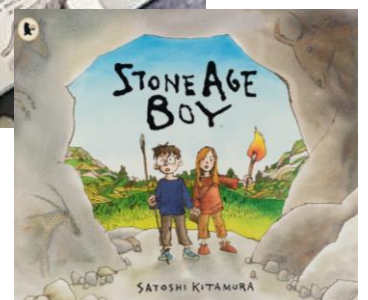
Later on in the day the children worked with a stone age facilitator who taught the children to hunt using spears and spear throwers. She also taught them to create fire and build dens out of animal skin. It started our stone age topic brilliantly and the children learnt some new life skills.



English

To fit nicely with our Stone age topic, in English we have been reading *The Stone Age Boy* by Satoshi Kitamura. The children explored character description, setting description and even got to write their own adaptation of the story.

To support their writing they were also able to use our class reading book *24 Hours In the Stone Age* which is a non-fiction book all written in cartoons.



History

In History the children have spent some time looking in detail at the Palaeolithic, the Mesolithic and the Neolithic timeline and how we can gather information from archaeological sites such as Skara Brae. So far we have looked closely at how they lived and what tools they used to survive.

Science

In science this term we have been looking at rocks and soils. Our first task was to understand the new terminology such as igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary. We then went on to explore which type of rock would be the most suitable for a roof. After looking at the permeability of a piece of chalk, granite and slate we decided unanimously that we would rather use the slate.

To help us understand the levels in soils we demonstrated this by creating our own edible soil diagram.

For the bedrock we used Weetabix. Next we used cornflakes for the parent soil. Then for the subsoil we used cheerio's and finally the top soil was made from oats.



RE

In RE our topic has been God's Loving Home. We explored what made a loving home and what our responsibilities were to help create a loving home. We linked this to being part of God's community and how he can guide us. During our response time we decided to join the whole of Year 3 together to reflect on their learning and for them to share their different experiences.



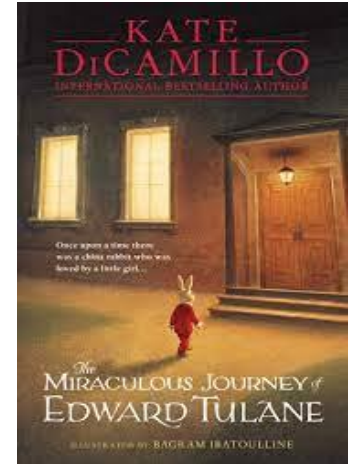


Year 4

Year 4 have had a great start to the new year. They have engaged brilliantly with their new learning and have enjoyed an exciting range of different topics across the curriculum.

English – Edward Tulane

Year 4 have enjoyed reading all about Edward Tulane, the main character from our focus text 'The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane' and have shown excellent inference skills by making insightful predictions about what his 'miraculous journey' might entail. Since the beginning of term, we have written a letter from the perspective of Abilene, Edward's owner, as well as a character description of his alias, Suzanna. The children have demonstrated their excellent vocabulary in spoken and written English so far, especially when performing their own 'Reader's Theatre' production of Chapter 5.



Music

This term, Year 4 have benefitted from music tuition when learning to play the clarinet. The children have developed their understanding of pitch and tempo in these lessons and have worked hard to master the art of assembling their instruments effectively. Aside from learning how to play pieces of music individually and as a group, learning this instrument has helped the children strengthen their breathing by demanding specific breath control to produce sound.

Science

As part of their learning about the human digestive system, the children have conducted a long-term experiment investigating the effects of different liquids on the teeth. Although the effects of sugar were as predicted, the children have been surprised to see how much the eggshells have changed when left in orange juice. These findings have definitely served as a good reminder to brush our teeth regularly!

History – The Romans

In order to deepen the children's knowledge and understanding of their Romans topic, Year 4 hosted a 'Life in Roman Britain' workshop at school on Thursday 22nd September 2022. The workshop placed the children in an imaginary Roman fort occupied by the Roman IX Legion, completing work on the fort's principal buildings. Throughout the day, the children were encouraged to use critical thinking skills and imagination to maintain the safety of the fort while taking part in dramatic role-play activities, simulating Roman battle formations such as the Tortoise and the Wedge, as well as participating in a Roman feast and re-enacting the Roman fable 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf'.





Year 5

Year 5 has had a wonderful start to the year! The children have settled in really well and have been enjoying lots of creative learning opportunities.

In Geography, we have been making Seismographs and simulating earthquakes to see if they work. We have also made our own earthquake resistant buildings.



We have taken our maths skills outside and completed some fantastic active learning activities, such as Jumpy Rounding and Addition & Subtraction Detectives.



As part of our English learning, we have been working with a local author, Cath Howe. She has brought our class text to life and helped us develop our poetry performances. We have also taken part in a Fire Safety workshop which we all found really useful.



Year 5 love Science and so we have decided to have a Scientist of the Week in each class. We have been incredibly impressed by the variety and creativity of the experiments and everyone has been brilliant at showcasing their learning.



Year 6

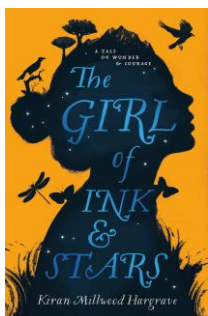
Year 6 have had a brilliant start to the academic year. They have immersed themselves into school life and risen to the challenge of taking on leadership positions and school responsibilities.

Active Maths

As part of Y6's work on number, place value and rounding, they have participated in active Maths lessons. The children had to complete a selection of Maths challenges which involved rounding whole numbers to a required degree of accuracy. It has been an enjoyable way of consolidating their learning.



Reading



This half term, they have enjoyed reading their class novel 'The Girl of Ink & Stars'

Science

Year 6 have been investigating light and how we see things. In groups, they created an investigation to observe what happens when light hits different materials. They also had a go at making some periscopes at home



Design & Technology

Year 6 have been given a design brief to renovate the local playground on Grange Road (off Beauchamp Road). Together the pupils visited the site and brainstormed ideas of how they could improve the playground for young children.

They will be using their knowledge of structures and mechanisms to create their playground.



RE
The children have been encouraged to reflect upon unconditional love and how this is evident in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Together they demonstrated this through drama.



In groups, pupils acted out a scene from the Prodigal Son and created freeze frames displaying unconditional love in our lives today.



English National Opera Visit

On Tuesday 27th September we were lucky enough to host a collection of singers and teachers from the English National Opera.

The day began with a riveting assembly where all of the children got to experience a live opera performance – it was a fantastic way to introduce children to Opera.

At break time and lunchtime, the visiting singers performed a selection of songs from different operas in the playground. Children flocked to come and hear some more fabulous singing.

Year 4 had opera workshops with the singers during the school day and had the opportunity to learn some vocal parts and practise their singing techniques.



I thought it was great because not just anyone could teach us to sing like that!

I was so entertained and enjoyed it so much. It's really impressive how loud they can sing with no microphones!

It was so exciting that they wanted to teach everyone to sing and learn about opera!





Football League

This term, we have entered two girls and two boys teams into the Esher district football league. Well done to all our Y5&6 pupils who have represented the school so far. Please see the results below so far:

Boys	Result	Win Loss Draw	Girls	Result	Win Loss Draw
St Albans VS Claygate	4-0	W	St Albans VS St Pauls	0-6	L
St Albans VS Esher Church	1-1	D	St Albans VS Hinchley Wood	0-5	L
St Albans VS St Andrews	8-1	W	St Albans VS Thames Ditton	1-8	L
St Albans VS St Lawrence B	1-1	D			
St Albans VS St Lawrence A	4-1	W			



School Parliament



This year, it was lovely to see so many children taking part in the School Parliament elections. Through an application and voting process, two children were selected from each class in Years three to six.

We have been meeting weekly to discuss ideas for how we can best improve our school. We want every child to feel valued and so we listen to ideas and feed them back to each other.

Although we are only a few weeks in, School Parliament has already recruited Playleaders to support children in the playground. These children have a very important role to play and are clearly visible with their yellow bibs on!

We really enjoy spending time in the Prayer Garden but noticed it was looking a little untidy. School Parliament gave up their time to clear it up so that we can all enjoy a Peaceful and calm space.





Green Team

To start off the new school year the children across the school had an opportunity to vote for the new members of the Green Team. They chose a very passionate team who have lots of ideas of things they want to put in place already.



The first task of the year was to ensure that the rest of the school were using the bins appropriately. Unfortunately the wet and windy weather we had in September resulted in rubbish being left on the floor. Our fantastic Green Team have been out daily with litter pickers to support our St Albans environment and set the example to the others.

At the start of October the WOW Travel Tracker started up again to challenge the children to come to school in a range of different ways. This will continued to be monitored and the children have an opportunity win badges and prizes for their achievements.

On October the 4th it was World Animal Day. Some members of the Green Team presented a power point and a video that explained what World Animal Day was and ways in which we can support the animals of the world.



Finally, our big challenge for this term will be continuing on the hard work from last year. At the end of the year, School Parliament got in contact with St Lawrence school to ask for some support in getting a crossing for Walton Road. This is because both of our schools use this road and it can be a very busy and dangerous place to cross. They have kindly agreed to work with us in contacting our local MP and council to provide awareness of our plight in the community. We are excited to see what will happen and the positive impact it will have on the community.

Mini Vinnies

The Mini Vinnies group meet to pray, discuss and support however they can to help make a difference in their communities. This half term, a group of Year 5 pupils have visited Beauchamp Court care home every Friday afternoon and participated in an NHS funded project with Together With Music!

The project involves making intergenerational music connections and our pupils enjoying music based activities with people with dementia. The project has been very successful and our pupils have enjoyed making a positive difference in the community.



Next half term, Y5&6 pupils will be welcoming more Y3&4 pupils to the Mini Vinnies group.





Attendance and Punctuality

At St Alban's we take attendance and punctuality very seriously. We aim to have an attendance figure in excess of the national average.

Regular Attendance means Punctual Attendance

Arriving on time for school is important as late arrivals are disruptive for the class and can be embarrassing for the child who is late. Children can also miss important information during registration including the plan for the day.



Gates open at 8.40am – please try to get here as close to that time as possible. Children should be in and settled for the register at 08:55.

Late arrival is between 8.55am and 9.25am – you will need to sign your child in as late at the school office.

Lateness is recorded and monitored for every child.

Arrival after 9.25am (after registers close) is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

It is essential that your child is at school on time and ready to learn.

Any unauthorised absence negatively impacts on our overall attendance figure as well as your child's attendance and achievement levels.

Did you know?

That by being just 5 minutes late each day means that you lose 3 ½ days a year of learning.

- 5 minutes = 3 ½ days lost learning
- 10 minutes – 7 days lost learning
- 15 minutes = 10 ½ days lost learning
- 20 minutes = 14 days lost learning
- 30 minutes – 21 days lost learning





Attendance and Punctuality

Absence through illness

We understand and appreciate that children can become ill and that it is not always easy to decide whether to send them into school or keep them at home, so to help you with this decision we have devised a useful reference guide.

RED - STAY AT HOME

Sickness & Diarrhoea - 48 hours must have elapsed before a child can return to school from the last episode.

AMBER - SEEK ADVICE

Headache, Feeling Sick, Tummy Ache.

Children often feel unwell if they are anxious, so if in doubt contact the school for advice.

GREEN - COME TO SCHOOL

Mild cough, Cold, Sore Throat, Feeling Tired.

We will always contact you if your child is ill during the school day

Attendance and Punctuality

Absence Procedures

If your child is too ill to attend school, please contact the school office before 8:55 am with full details of your child's illness/symptoms; leaving a message on the school absence line (0208 979 5893).

When leaving a message please state the following:

- Child's name
- Class
- Detailed reason for absence (for example X has been sick in the night rather than X is unwell.)

If a child is absent from school without a reason being provided, the office staff will contact parents to ascertain the reasons for any absences, by leaving a detailed message it will save us having to make this contact.



Medical Appointments

We request that, where possible, routine medical and dentist appointments are arranged outside school hours as these appointments will affect your child's percentage attendance. We do understand that some appointments, such as hospital consultations, are not always possible to arrange outside of school hours. However, if your appointment time allows your child to come to school for registration and then leave, this will have a positive impact on their attendance figure. Likewise, if they are able to be back in school for afternoon registration – 1 pm – this will also have a positive impact.

Thank you for your support in helping to raise our school attendance. If you would like any support or advice on attendance or punctuality, please speak to your child's class teacher or contact the office to make an appointment with Miss Clarke, our attendance lead.





Information from the school office

Attendance Expectations for This Academic Year

Just to remind parents/carers that if they take their children out of school without authority for 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive) they will be liable to receive a penalty notice. Currently the amount payable under a penalty notice is £60.00 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days. Thereafter the amount increases to £120.00 if paid between 21 and 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Please note that penalty notices are issued per parent/carer per child so a family of two parents and two children will receive 4 penalty notices.

If you feel that your absence should be considered for exceptional circumstances to have leave approved, please complete a 'Request for leave of Absence' form that is available from our school website. The form should be submitted to the school office and at least 2 weeks' notice is required. Please see attached letter regarding Penalty Notices.

Parking and road safety

We would like to remind and encourage all parents to park safely and considerately.

Please always bear in mind that by not parking safely the consequences of your action can be life changing. Please support the school in this very important matter.

- **Always looking for a safe place to park** – Beauchamp road is very long with lots of parking available a short walk from the school gates
- **Never** stop in the middle of the road to let your children out
- **Never** let your children exit the car straight onto the road
- **Never** park on the zig-zag lines
- Drive well within the speed limit and be **extra vigilant** when approaching the school
- If **you live close enough to walk** then please do – walking is a great way to start the day with fantastic health and well-being benefits

Attachments

- Give Rugby a try with OC girls
- Penalty Notice letter



Key staff teams

For our new parents, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our key SLT, SEN and DSL members.

Senior Leadership Team

Mr M Brannigan	Headteacher
Mrs C Martin	Deputy Headteacher
Miss C Clarke	Assistant Headteacher
Miss E Daly	Assistant Headteacher
Mrs A Mettrick	Assistant Headteacher

SEN Team

Mrs C Martin	SENCO
Miss S Alston	SEN Consultant

Safeguarding Team

Miss C Clarke	Designated DSL Lead
Mrs C Martin	DSL
Mrs A Mettrick	DSL
Mr M Brannigan	DSL
Miss E Daly	DSL

For any confidential matters, please email the DSL team at:

dsl@stalbans.surrey.sch.uk