

Newsletter

Weekly news at St Christopher's



Dear Parents,

As we reach the end of the half term, I wanted to thank Mrs. West and Mrs. Wanstall for holding the fort so admirably while I was away last week. Their dedication and hard work ensured that everything

ran smoothly in my absence, and I couldn't be more thankful for their support.

Speaking of last week, spending time in Dorset with Year 4 was an absolute delight. Seeing the children outside the classroom environment was not only enjoyable but also incredibly illuminating. It's fascinating to observe another side of the students as they interact with their peers and navigate new experiences. I also very much enjoyed visiting the Year 5 at Bowles this week, for the very same reason, although it seems every year for the past three years, I get there and it rains. I am clearly the bringer of bad weather, as they had experienced glorious sun the day before!

Reflecting on both of these trips, I thought it would be worthwhile to share that the primary aim of our residential trips goes beyond academic learning. These excursions are designed to impart vital life lessons, particularly in fostering independence and organisational skills. When children are away from home and the safe, structured environment you so lovingly create, they face the challenge of managing their belongings and taking responsibility for themselves. It was eye-opening to see how many found this quite a task and how much they learned in those three days. As adults, we often step in to manage various aspects of our children's lives, sometimes without giving them the opportunity to fail, learn, and develop essential skills. On the residentials, the children had to navigate tasks like changing beds, sitting at the dinner table until everyone had finished eating, or helping to tidy up after meals. These might seem simple, but they teach valuable lessons in responsibility and cooperation, and it's these tasks that the children found challenging. Additionally, many of the children found joy in tasks like vacuuming their rooms with Henry the Hoover before we left Dorset, which made me wonder how often they are asked to contribute to household chores at home. Not for monetary

rewards, but simply to be helpful and to play a part in family life.

In our modern era, these small yet significant tasks are often overlooked. It may seem nostalgic or perhaps rather rose-tinted of me, but these were expectations when I was a child as I imagine many of these were for you, and the skills and expectations remain valuable today and will serve our children well in the future. If I took away anything from the trip, apart from how much I enjoyed being with the pupils, it was my hope that you also see the need for this and continue fostering these life skills at home, helping your children grow into responsible and capable individuals.

We have finalised our staffing for next year. As you know, I believe it's important for teachers and teaching assistants to avoid remaining in the same year group for too long, as it can lead to institutionalism. Continuous professional learning is crucial for teachers to remain effective practitioners. Research indicates that transitioning between year groups significantly enhances professional learning, providing an opportunity for growth that strengthens practice and pedagogy. The staff list for next year will appear later in the newsletter. In addition to the staffing grid, we are excited to welcome Ms. Williams as our new Art/DT teacher who brings a lot of skills from a variety of teaching backgrounds, as well as working as a children's book illustrator. We also have new teaching assistants joining us: in Year 4, Mrs. Dorman and Aldridge, and our maternity cover TA in Year 1 while Miss James is away, Mrs Baklanov. All of these TAs have a wealth of experience in schools and we are delighted to have their expertise joining our team. Mrs. Dodd will be joining the Learning Enrichment team next year to support and enrich groups across the school. In addition, Miss Atkinson will also be leaving at the end of the year to explore new avenues, and our best wishes go with her along with our thanks for all she has done for the School.

I hope you enjoy the half-term. Let's hope for sun and warm weather!

See you all on Monday 3rd June.

Mr Carter

Head Teacher

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Year 4 Residential

This year, we introduced a different Year 4 residential with new opportunities for the children to experience. With much excitement, we travelled to Swanage, Dorset, to stay at an educational centre called Leeson House where we could even see the sea! As soon as we arrived at Leeson House, we went for a walk in the surrounding countryside and learnt about smugglers that used the local barns to store smuggled goods. Unfortunately, we couldn't help the pouring rain, but we showed great resilience throughout our wet walk and enjoyed being with our friends nevertheless.

After finding out about who we were sharing dorms with and some unpacking, we had dinner (hot dogs were a hit!) and got ready for our evening activity of orienteering. In the mobile classrooms, we learnt the basics of map reading and then were sent out in pairs (again in the pouring rain!) to track down the markers around the grounds. We got drenched, but we really enjoyed the freedom to explore the nature around us.

The next morning, after quite a late night (especially the boys' dorm of 13!) we ate our breakfast and packed our lunches ready for spending the morning on the beach at Studland Bay. Luckily, the weather had now decided to do a complete turnaround and sunglasses and sunscreen was now a necessity! We played on the beach, which was a highlight for many, and learnt about how coastal erosion happened, and sand dunes were formed. We even got to play in a huge sand dune. To finish the excursion we were able to buy an ice cream and eat it with our friends on the beach.

On our return to Leeson House, we were set a new map reading task and were able to spend more time tracking a different set of symbols. After a much welcome dinner, in which plates were practically licked clean, we had a slightly earlier bedtime as the teachers were hoping that we would go to sleep quicker. Let's just say it was a quieter night - as everyone was exhausted from our busy day and all the fresh air at the beach.

The last morning involved tackling a harder orienteering challenge, which was met with great excitement, fire lighting and team games. Everyone had a go at starting a fire using a

special kind of firelighter (a steel) which proved much harder than it looked than when our leader Eric did it! The team games were certainly quite a challenge for our tired brains, although being able to do this in the glorious sunshine, was certainly a treat!

Leeson House was a brilliant residential, and the children were absolutely amazing. They were full of enthusiasm and energy for every activity, not to mention the buckets of resilience that we needed when it rained. Those raincoats certainly got worn! Lots of new learning took place from a Geographical element as well as those vital life skills. The freedom and the independence that adorned the children will stand them in good stead as they progress into Year 5 and beyond.



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Minds in Motion

This week the Minds in Motion team delivered another assembly to the school. This week, the focus was on ADHD and meant the children were able to discuss what ADHD might look like and listened to some first-hand accounts of how someone with ADHD might think. It was lovely to see the group of children present so confidently to the school and it is clear that they enjoyed the chance to speak about what they had learned at Minds in Motion.

Minds in Motion will continue focusing on neurodiversity until the end of the school year but in September, will begin exploring diversity as a whole. This should allow for even more inclusivity across the school and provide pupils the chance to speak on different topics. Minds in Motion continues to be a wonderful way for children to

volunteer their time and learn about other people around them, improving the core values of the school, that everybody has a voice and everybody deserves the chance to be heard.



Reception Theatre Trip

Reception were transported to the magical world of Zog the dragon and his doctor friends when we visited the Churchill Theatre last week. The excitement grew as we took our seats in the packed theatre and awaited the arrival of Zog... Would he fly? Would he breathe fire?

The Reception children were entranced throughout the production, which was full of high energy songs, dancing and lots of laughter.

The children were great ambassadors for the school and this was a fantastic opportunity for the children to see a favourite story brought to life and to enjoy the magic that is live theatre.

Oh and Zog did fly...!



Drama and Music: Year 1, 2 and 3 Concert

We enjoyed a fantastic concert from Year 1, 2 and 3 on Wednesday this week. The Junior Choir opened the concert with an energetic performance of 'Pets' and 'Let it go'. Year 1 gave a hugely enthusiastic performance of 'The little pigs' jive' and looked like they were enjoying their performance as much as we were! Year 2 brought us 'The prehistoric animal brigade' complete with percussion and Year 3 amazed us with their recorder pieces, songs and an impressive array of solo performances on various instruments. Thank you to all who made up our lovely large audience, and to all the pupils for a wonderful concert!



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Staff list for 2024-2025

Phase of school	Class	Teacher	Teaching Assistant/s
Preschool Mrs Jones (Head of Preschool)	Bumblebee	Mrs Jones	Mrs Salim Mrs Bradshaw Mrs Meacock Mrs Bruin Ms Steeden
	Ladybird	Mr Styles	
	Butterfly	Mrs Conway	
Pre-Prep Mrs Chamadia (Head of Pre-Prep)	RC	Mrs Cornish	Mrs Vasey
	RO	Mrs Oliver	Mrs Coombs-Organ
	1H	Ms Heselwood	Mrs Malcolm and Mrs Reilly
	1O	Mr Organ	Mrs Baklanov
	2C	Mrs Chamadia	Mrs Craig
	2J	Miss Johns	Mrs Cremer
Prep Miss Rule (Head of Prep)	3C	Mr Codd	Mrs Goberdhan
	4M	Mrs Morris	Mrs Dorman
	4C	Mr Chowdhury	Mrs Aldridge
	5R	Miss Leaf	Mrs Dempsey
	5S	Mrs Shivers	
	6R	Miss Rule	Mrs Michael
	6P	Mr Pretara	

Secondary School Fair

We are excited to remind you about our upcoming Secondary School Fair, taking place on **Thursday, 6th June, from 16:30 to 19:00**.

This event is designed for all parents, but especially aimed at those with children in Year 4 and 5. The fair will be a valuable opportunity for you to meet representatives from various secondary schools. To help us prepare and ensure we can accommodate everyone, please register your interest in attending [here](#).

What's Happening Next Week

-  **Monday 3rd Yune**
 - Year 6 workshop (09:00-10:30)
 - Year 3-6 Girls Athletics @ Croydon High, selected pupils to play (15:20-17:00)
-  **Thursday 22th May**
 - Secondary School Fair (16:30-19:00)
-  **Friday 7th June**
 - Whole School Art Day