



St James and St John C of E Primary School Newsletter

Friday 9th January 2026
www.stjamesandstjohnschool.co.uk
office@stjstj.co.uk

Go, shine in the world



Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year and **Welcome Back** to school :) We are pleased to have pupils back working hard on their learning and playing with their friends. It's been lovely to say hello to many of you on the gate. Please read the guide below to the new Ofsted language. We are fortunate that Mr Webb is an Ofsted inspector, who helps check the school is doing as well as it can :)

With best wishes, **Mr Evans (Head of School)** and **Mr Webb (Executive Headteacher)**



Understanding the new Ofsted Report Cards and Grades

You may have noticed in the media that the way Ofsted grades schools has changed since November 2025.

Ofsted no longer give schools one overall judgement and there is new language for grades in **eight different areas** like 'attendance and behaviour', 'achievement', 'personal development'.

A typical school report card can be seen below, with a coloured circle for each area inspected.

New grades from November 2025

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	●
Urgent improvement	



Old language

Outstanding
Good
Requires improvement
Inadequate

Ofsted have released a guide for parents to help explain their changes. In this, they say that "It's important to understand that the new grades can't be compared to the old ones" and that "The 'expected standard' is just that – it means the school or other provider is doing everything that it should be doing".

Ofsted have said they expect schools to be graded as the 'Expected Standard' in most areas as it is a high standard; with perhaps some 'Strong' areas and 'Needs Attention' in other areas.

[You can watch Ofsted's video guide for parents by clicking here](#)

St James and St John is likely to be inspected very soon. As always, we welcome inspection and the opportunity to show the many aspects the school does well.

I have received and read the St James and St John CE Primary School newsletter of **09.01.2026**

Name of child _____ Class _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS SLIP TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE AND YOUR CHILD MIGHT WIN A PRIZE :)



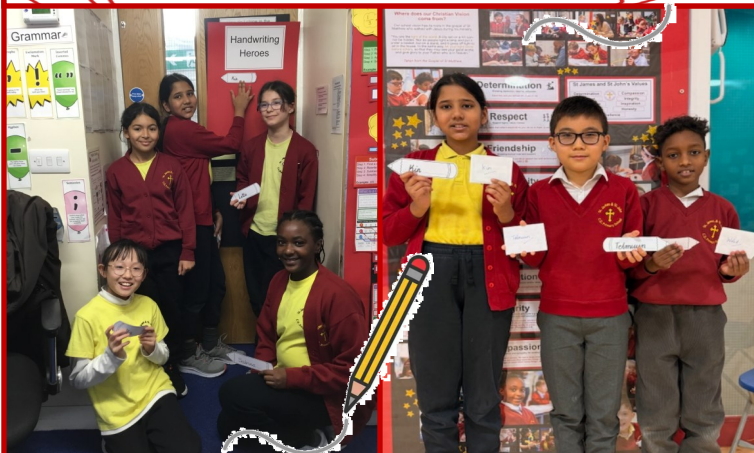
Handwriting Week at St. James and St. John

Handwriting Week...

Research shows that handwriting is one of the key components of a **strong foundation** for life-long learning. This week, it has been '**Handwriting Week**' at St James and St John: to promote the importance of **correct letter formation** and **joined up handwriting**; to establish **good handwriting habits**; and to encourage children to **use their best handwriting** in every lesson.

Mr. Peters led a **Coffee Morning** for parents yesterday with information about '*How we teach handwriting and how to support your child with handwriting at home*', a summary of which you can read on pages 3 and 4 of this week's newsletter.

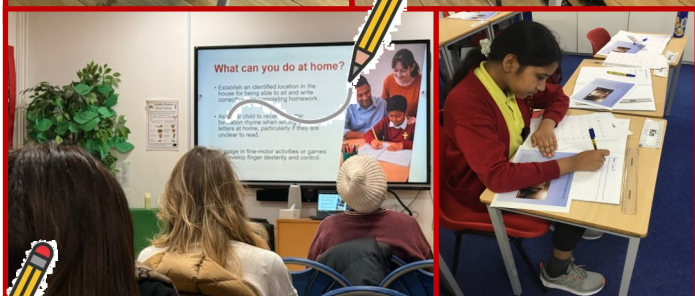
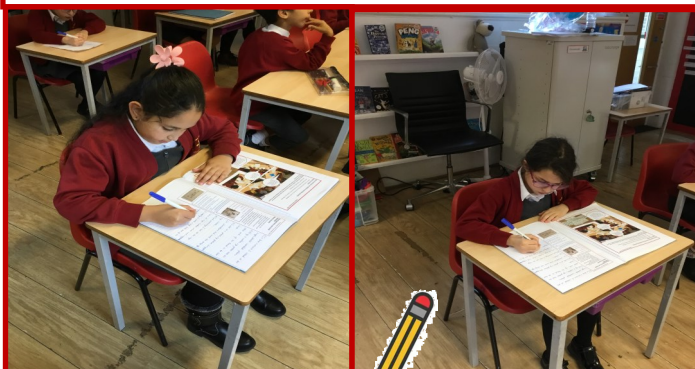
Celebrating 'Handwriting Heroes'



If children complete their learning using their best handwriting across all subjects in all books, and if they meet the expectations for handwriting for their class, they will become a '**Handwriting Hero**' and their name goes up on their classroom wall.

In addition, children who can demonstrate the Handwriting Hero expectations for KS2, across all subjects and in all books, will be awarded a £10 book voucher from '**Waterstones**' in our weekly Celebration Assembly.

Mr Peters and Mr Evans awarded lots of pencils and vouchers to children in a special Handwriting Week assembly. Congratulations to all of our Handwriting Heroes, and to all children for '*working hard*' and '*trying their best*' (**Golden Rule 7**).



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Attendance...

Congratulations to **Y2** for having the **BEST ATTENDANCE** this week. **ALL Y2** pupils came to school every day; **Y2** really showed the school value of **Community** by helping their class to have the best attendance, this week. **James** and **John** (our attendance bears) will come and stay with **Y2** for the whole of next week :)

Please make sure your child is in school every single day this term unless they are too unwell to come to school. Thank you for your help with this :)



Everyone at some point in their life will struggle with something. If you're affected right now with anxiety, depression, trauma, grief, overwhelm, anger or relationship issues, I can help.

Counselling helps people to quickly figure out their present challenges, get clear on what to change and how, and then bravely take first steps to repair, rebuild or transform their life going forward.

I'm Juliette Jackson a counsellor and psychotherapist (HG.Dip.P)
www.juliettejackson.co.uk

I work with parents and carers like you from your child's school for no charge.

Booking a session is easy

Text me on 07887553124 or e mail me juliette@juliettejackson.co.uk and I'll get back to you.



Our Prayer of the week...

Happy New Year to all of our school community.

Loving God,

Another term begins and at school Learning and working together.
Bless our school, our home from home.
Keep us safe and well.
Bless all of our pupils and keep us on the right path.
Bless our teachers and support staff, Who look after us to grow in knowledge and skills.
Amen



Person of the Week!

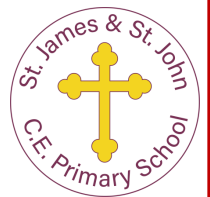
Nursery - Tanner
Reception - Muhammad
Year 1 - Nilan
Year 2 - Alexandre
Year 3 - Rafael
Year 4 - Mimi
Year 5 - Diogo
Year 6 - Maya



St James and St John Local Advisory Board Parent Member

We are pleased to let you know that James McCollough, who is a parent in Year 4, has put themselves forward for the vacancy and been appointed as a parent member of the LAB.

We thank James for giving his time to support the school.

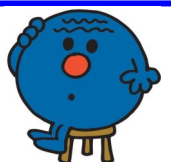


Handwriting Heroes Assembly



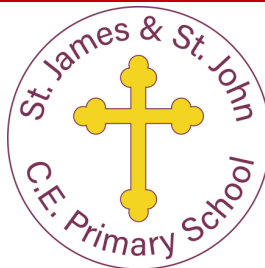
Don't let a little worry turn into a big one...

If you or your child are worried about something or have any questions, please phone the school office and book an appointment to see their class teacher, Mr. Evans or Mr. Peters. **We are always really pleased to meet with you and chat things through.**



An important deadline - Tell your friends!

If you or someone you know would like a place in our Reception class for September 2026, then **applications must be made by 15th January 2026.**



Do not miss the deadline!

Applications to Reception must be made through eadmissions.org.uk by and a separate school application form handed in.

If your child is currently in St James and St John's Nursery, then **you must still apply.** Please remind other parents about applying for Reception if this applies to their child.

Encourage them to name our fantastic school!

An admissions policy and application form can be picked up from the school office or on our website www.stjamesandstjohnschool.co.uk

Do phone the office on **020 7504 0535** if you have any questions.

We are always happy to help :-)

Our School Golden Rules

As we begin a new term, class teachers have been reminding children of our Golden Rules, in assembly and in class. Parents tell us that their children are coming home and talking about the Golden Rules and how much they like them. Parents also say that they are useful at home, too. To make sure our school is a place where all children can learn, be safe and **'shine in the world'**, our pupils follow the **GOLDEN RULES.**



The Golden Rules

1. Do be kind, helpful and polite.
Don't hurt people's feelings by being rude or unkind.
2. Do be gentle. Don't hurt or play fight.
3. Do listen to people and follow instructions.
Don't ignore people or interrupt them.
4. Do look after our things. Don't waste or damage things.
5. Do be honest. Don't tell lies or cover up the truth.
6. Do understand it's OK to make mistakes.
Don't laugh at those who are brave enough to have a go.
7. Do work hard and try your best. Don't waste time or give up easily.



Important Dates for your Diary...

Monday 12th January - Y2 History Trip to the *Florence Nightingale Museum*

Wednesday 14th January - Y6 PSHCE Visit to London Transport Museum - for Y6 Junior Citizenship Scheme

Thursday 29th January - Y5 History Trip to the *Charles Dickens Museum* - for Explorer Tour

Thursday 29th January - Y4 Non Uniform Day

Friday 30th January - Y4 History Trip to the British Museum - *How Roman was Roman Britain?*

Friday 30th January - Non Uniform Day (for all classes except Y4)

Monday 2nd February - Y5 RE Trip to Westminster Abbey

Wednesday 4th February - Y6 West End Theatre Trip - *Matilda* at Cambridge Theatre

Friday 6th February—*Movie Afternoon and Movie Night* (more information to follow...)

Monday 9th February - Y3 History Trip to the *British Museum* - for *Prehistoric Britain Tour*

Tuesday 10th March - Y6 Trip to Pizza Express - for *food technology / pizza making workshop*

Thursday 12th March - Y6 Trip to Houses of Parliament - for *Tour and Workshop*

Friday 13th March - Y2 Science Trip to Hyde Park Lookout Centre - for *Life Cycles Workshop*

Monday 16th - 20th February— Half Term

Tuesday 24th March - Y1 Trip to Hyde Park Lookout Centre - exploring seasons

Friday 27th February - Academic Review Day

Friday 27th March - Last day of Spring Term

Work of the Week!

Every week a brilliant piece of children's work is showcased in the school lobby (next to the office). This week's brilliant piece of work is by Kin in Year 6.



This week, as part of Handwriting Week, Y6 have been focusing on refining their handwriting skills through dedicated lessons, with an emphasis on consistency, fluency, an presentation.

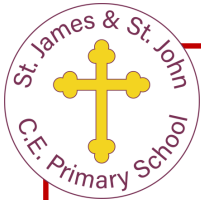
Kin applied the skills taught in handwriting lessons carefully, ensuring her letters were well formed, evenly sized, and consistently spaced. Her writing shows clear attention to detail and a strong commitment to producing work she can be proud of. Kin has set a strong example to others to become a 'Handwriting Hero' through her effort, pride, and high standards.

Well done, Kin!

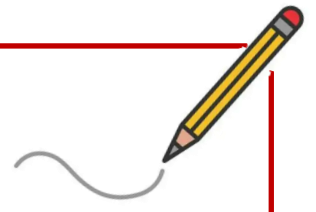
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Handwriting at St James and St John...



This week, it has been Handwriting Week at St James and St John: *to promote the importance of correct letter formation and joined up handwriting; to establish good handwriting habits; and encourage children to use their best handwriting in every lesson.*

Mr. Peters led a Coffee Morning for parents yesterday, with information about 'How we teach handwriting and why it is important', a summary of which you can read below:

Handwriting forms one of the **strong foundations** for children to be successful in their learning. It is a foundational component of the teaching of phonics in early reading and writing.



In Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1, handwriting is taught as a part of the phonics lessons. This occurs every day. Handwriting activities are also included as components of continuous provision in Nursery & Reception.

In Key Stage 2, handwriting is taught in three lessons per week. These specific lessons focus on the skills of handwriting in combination with the teaching of spelling words.

What are the stages of handwriting?

Stage 1 - Handwriting Posture

The correct handwriting position requires the writer to:

- be sitting with their bottom in the back of the chair;
- have two feet on the floor;
- be positioned approximately one fist's distance from the table or desk;
- have a straight back with relaxed shoulders;
- have a slight lean towards the table;
- have the paper or book on slight slant to make the physical act of writing comfortable;
- have the non-writing hand holding the paper or book during writing.



Stage 2 - Pencil Grip

Children are taught the correct tripod grip when holding pencils and pens. This grip is developmental and requires developed fine-motor skills. The grip will be modelled and monitored by the teacher to ensure that the pencil/pen is being held by the tips of the thumb and index fingers whilst resting on the middle finger of the writing hand.

Correct tension will also be modelled and monitored by the teacher to ensure that there are no barriers to writing stamina. Holding the pencil /pen too tightly can cause discomfort and long-term dislike of writing.



Stage 3 - Letter Formation

Pupils are taught the correct letter formation from Nursery and Reception as a part of the *Little Wandle: Letters and Sounds – Revised Phonics Programme*. This is modelled by the teacher and reinforced when writing under the visualiser and on whiteboards and pupils practise letter formation consistently in every phonics lesson.

Stage 4 - Relative Size

Pupils are taught how to write letters with the correct size and position on lines in relation to all other letters. The school uses a position system of the sun, boat and water model. Letters are taught as belonging to these different groups

Stage 5 - Joins

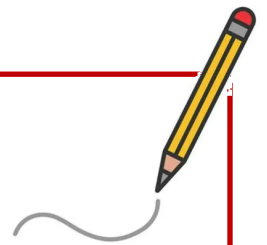
Pupils are taught how to join the different types of letters with 2 basic joins:

- arm join (diagonal join)
- washing line join (horizontal join)



Stage 6 - Fluency and Consistency

Practising handwriting in explicit handwriting lessons helps students become fluent with handwriting and therefore more able to focus on completing tasks in other subjects.



If children are automatically writing without thinking about how to form letters correctly, they have more thinking space to concentrate on the specific tasks in other subjects e.g. explaining how evaporation occurs in science; writing a non-chronological report about Nelson Mandela in English; or, philosophically responding to questions about empathy in R.E as opposed to having to think about the physical act of writing.

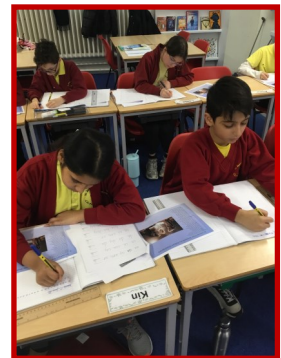
Setting expectations that handwriting is of a good standard in all subjects help establish consistency in handwriting across learning.

Why is teaching handwriting important?

Research shows that handwriting is one of the key components of a strong foundation for life-long learning. Fluent and consistent handwriting helps develop effective communication skills both in written and spoken form.



Studies and data also shows that best performance in literacy tasks was demonstrated by those students who had explicit handwriting practice. [National Institute of Health (NIH) 2021]



Research published in 'Scientific American' also identifies that writing by hand is better for memory and learning, which has significant positive benefits for student learning across all subjects.

What can you do at home?

There are many things you can do at home to support the development of handwriting.

- Establish an identified location in the house for being able to sit and write correctly when completing homework.
- Ask your child to recall the letter formation rhyme when writing certain letters at home, particularly if they are unclear to read.
- Engage in fine-motor activities or games to develop finger dexterity and control. These could be connected to hanging out washing, playing board games with small pieces, completing jigsaw puzzles, building things out of Lego or Duplo.

