

THE RED SWEATER LETTER

A newsletter from St. John's Middle School



Message from Mrs A. Elwell

Headteacher

As I sit here looking at the Christmas tree shining brightly and bringing warmth to a dark morning, I'm reminded of just how quickly time passes. It seems only yesterday that we welcomed the pupils back for the start of a new academic year, and yet here we are already at the end of our first term.

It has been a busy, productive, and rewarding term, and we are incredibly proud of all that our pupils have achieved with many special moments shared in school with the pupils.

From the excitement of new topics to the wonderful buzz around seasonal activities, the children have brought energy and enthusiasm to every day. Their resilience, curiosity, and kindness have continued to shine through, making this a truly memorable start to the year.

Our school community has once again shown how strong it is. Your support, whether through attending events, staying in close communication, or supporting at home has made a meaningful difference, and we are deeply grateful.

As we draw the term to a close, we know that pupils and staff alike are ready for a much-needed break. The coming weeks are a chance to rest, celebrate, and enjoy time with family and friends.

On behalf of the entire school team, I wish you and your families a peaceful, joyful, and festive season. May it be filled with warmth, happiness, and well-deserved relaxation.

Thank you once again for a wonderful first term. We look forward to welcoming the pupils back in the new year, refreshed and ready for the learning adventures that await.

Merry Christmas
Mrs Alison Elwell

"MISTAKES ARE
PROOF THAT
YOU'RE
EXPLORING
NEW
POSSIBILITIES"

Message from Mrs. Hiron

Head of Year 6

As we approach the end of term, it has been extremely rewarding to reflect on the achievements of all our pupils as they have settled into their new academic year. Year 5 are now familiar with life at St John's and are beginning to show more independence and confidence in everything they do. Year 6 are facing the challenges ahead of them with determination and maturity. Year 7 are becoming more familiar with their Key Stage 3 lessons as they move closer to the top of the school, and Year 8 are embracing their new roles within school and beginning to look towards their future at high school.

This half-term has certainly been action-packed. Year 6 started the year with an educational trip to Witley Court for an art day, which has led to some amazing creations in their sketchbooks. Year 8 attended the annual Eisteddfod event at South Bromsgrove High School, where they thoroughly enjoyed seeing the houses compete and demonstrate their musical and artistic talents. Year 5 recently went to the pantomime, which was a real treat filled with humour and plenty of laughter. Year 7 enjoyed a recent bowling trip – a chance to relax and enjoy some friendly competition with their friends.

On top of all this, we have celebrated a wide range of achievements during our prize-giving. I was especially proud of those recognised for demonstrating our school values of love and perseverance, setting a wonderful example for others. Form tutors had an exceptionally difficult task choosing recipients from their forms, and I was truly impressed by the breadth of talent and skill on display. Well done to everyone.

As we approach the end of the year, the festive season brings even more excitement, including our new Christmas fayre, which was a great success, and our Christmas enrichment day. The range of jumpers worn by the children really did fill us with cheer.

After such a successful term, all that remains is to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous 2026. Thank you for all your support, and we look forward to welcoming your children back in January.

Collective Worship

By Miss C. Russell- Head of Music and Worship

Adoration of the Child by Gerrit van Honthorst

Behold, the great Creator makes
Himself a house of clay,
a robe of virgin flesh He takes
which He will wear for aye.

Hark, hark, the wise eternal Word
like a weak infant cries!
In form of servant is the Lord,
and God in cradle lies.

Glad shepherds ran to view this sight;
a choir of angels sings,
and eastern sages with delight
adore this King of kings.

Join then, all hearts that are not stone,
and all our voices prove,
to celebrate this holy One,
the God of peace and love.

This hymn, by seventeenth century poet, and Chaplain to King Charles I, Thomas Pestel, is one of my favourite carols. The King and Creator of all that is, and was, and ever will be; humbling himself to be born a fragile, human child, in the dirt, squalor and cold of a humble stable, in first century Palestine. Not born to the rich, powerful and influential. But instead to a people living under Roman occupation, into an ordinary family, living seemingly ordinary lines. And yet...

Angels, shepherds, magi...an angry King Herod, (and let's not forget the donkey!)...it's a story which can perhaps become so familiar at this time of year that we miss the mystery, the otherness, the scandalousness.

Hark, hark, the wise eternal Word
like a weak infant cries!
In form of servant is the Lord,
and God in cradle lies.

This half term we have been thinking about perseverance. About keeping going even when it is tough, even when the end is not in sight or we don't know how things will turn out. Mary and Joseph needed perseverance as they trudged towards Bethlehem. The shepherds needed perseverance as they watched over their flocks, night after night, on a cold lonely hillside. The Magi needed perseverance as they followed the star. And the people of Israel needed perseverance as they struggled under the Roman yoke, wonder when and where, and how rescue might come.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:5)

However Christmas finds you this year, whether it be joyful or difficult, quiet or chaotic, happy or sad; may the light and life of the stable of Bethlehem bring something of it's warmth, and mystery and life to you this Christmas and New Year.

Miss C. Russell

Christmas Dinner

All pupils recently visited Bromsgrove School to enjoy some festive time together. Whether they had a traditional Christmas dinner or brought a packed lunch from home, the day was filled with festive cheer from start to finish. Pupils were greeted with warm Christmas decorations and a joyful atmosphere that set the tone for the celebration. It was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to come together, share in the spirit of the season, and create happy memories. Overall, it was an incredibly enjoyable and festive day for all involved.

Informative Assemblies

Year 8 spent an exciting afternoon at South Bromsgrove High School, where they were invited to watch the school's Eisteddfod performance.

Celebration Assembly

We held our termly celebration assembly on 12th December. Congratulations to all our pupils who won awards for their hard work, perseverance and love. It was great to see so many smiling faces and hear the applause for our pupils winning their awards.

Well-being Assembly

Our year 7 Well-being mentors recently presented an assembly on Mental Health and Forgiveness at both Bromsgrove Prep and St John's. We have been working collaboratively with Bromsgrove School to support our peers and promote good self care and resilience. The pupils represented our school perfectly and their confidence and bravery when speaking is commendable. Thank you to all who took part and we now look forward to their developing role as mentors within school.

Mrs Upwood
Head of Year 7



Christmas Fayre

On Monday, 8th December, we held our first Christmas Fayre here at St John's, it was a brilliant event filled with festive cheer!

We enjoyed stalls featuring games, treats, hot beverages, cookie decorating, and so much more. Our choir sang beautifully throughout the event, adding a magical touch to the celebrations.

A huge thank you from all of us at St John's to everyone who attended our first Christmas Fayre.

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone whether you donated items or joined us on the day. We raised an incredible £1300 which will go towards supporting our school and pupils.

We hope to make this an annual tradition and look forward to welcoming you again next year!



Thank you

We would like to say a massive thank you to those who donated to our Christmas Fayre.

Not only did we receive amazing prizes from families and our school community. We also had some wonderful prizes donated by some local businesses.

Bremi's
Bayleys
Everyone Active
Fuso
and Ascotts



Your generosity helped make our event a great success. Thank you for your support!



KS2 Pantomime Trips

On the 1st and 16th of December, our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils had the exciting opportunity to visit the Swan Theatre in Worcester to watch the pantomime Sleeping Beauty. The pupils were treated to a magical performance full of laughter, music, and dazzling costumes, immersing them in the festive spirit.

The pupils were clearly captivated, laughing and clapping along with the characters and fully joining in the fun and excitement that make pantomimes such a memorable experience.

Christmas Service

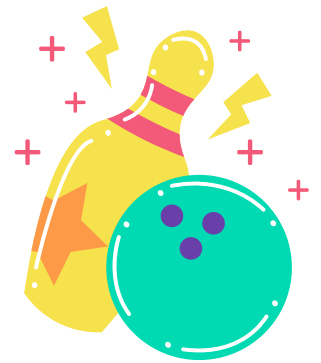
This year, we were delighted to hold our annual Christmas Service at Bromsgrove School. A small group of pupils performed the traditional Nativity, and it was wonderful to see so many parents join us for the Key Stage 2 services to share in the seasonal celebrations.

KS3 Bowling Trips

On the 4th and 5th December our Year 7 and 8 Pupils had a fantastic time on our annual Christmas bowling trip!

The afternoon was filled with laughter, friendly competition, and plenty of strikes and spares as pupils showcased their bowling skills.

In addition to the excitement on the lanes, they also enjoyed burgers/hotdogs and fries.



Christmas Jumper Day

On the 12th of December, we celebrated Christmas Jumper Day in support of Save the Children. It was wonderful to see everyone getting into the festive spirit with their colourful and creative jumpers.

Thanks to your generosity, we raised an amazing £272.51 for this fantastic cause. Well done and thank you to everyone who took part.

Butterfly Farm Visit

This half term, Launchpad pupils, along with a few other friends, visited Stratford's Butterfly Farm as part of their Art and Science topics. Throughout the term, pupils have been studying the classification of living things and developing their skills in drawing non-vertebrates.

Following an educational tour of the farm led by one of the guides, the pupils had the opportunity to explore a variety of creatures up close, including butterflies, moths, caterpillars, stick insects and iguanas. These close encounters brought their classroom learning to life and deepened their understanding of the natural world.

After the visit, the pupils enjoyed a walk down to the river to feed the swans, before spending some relaxing time at the local park.



Worcestershire Virtual School Games Sensory Walk

Just after half term Launch Pad took part in the 'Worcestershire Virtual School Games Sensory Walk'. This is an event which saw over 30 schools and 1367 pupils take part in an outdoor sensory experience aimed at exploring the local area using all senses. Launch pad enjoyed taking part in a scavenger hunt, collecting autumn leaves for an art activity and watching the squirrels and ducks. We even tried tree hugging!



Children in need

On 14th November pupils came to school with their spotty accessories for Children in need.

We would like to say a huge thank you for helping raise money for such a worthwhile cause.

Railway 200 Eco Art Competition Success!

Earlier this term, we were delighted to welcome Hayley Cartwright, Worcestershire Community Railway Officer, who launched the Railway 200 Eco Art Competition for our Year 5 and 6 pupils. The children rose to the challenge, creating incredible designs imagining how railway stations could look in the future.

This week, Hayley returned to present certificates to all participants and share some fantastic news—we had three winners from St John's!

Noah (Year 5) was named our School Star.

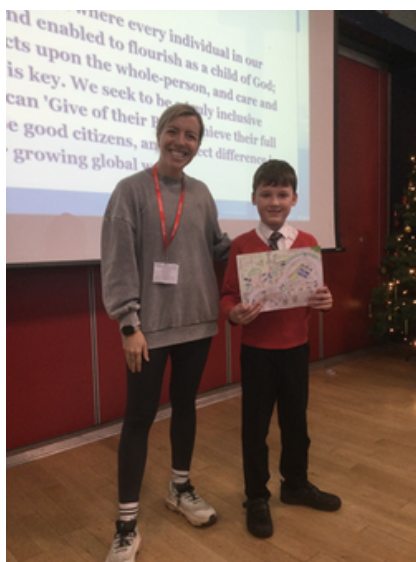
Minnie (Year 5) achieved 2nd place, winning a wonderful art set.

Harry (Year 6) was crowned the overall winner, earning a family trip to London—and his artwork will be proudly displayed at Bromsgrove train station!

Hayley was truly impressed by the creativity and high standard of work produced by our pupils.

Well done to everyone who took part—you made us proud!

The artwork will be displayed on the following link www.wcrp.org.uk



Remembrance Parade

We are incredibly proud of Frances, who took part in the Bromsgrove Remembrance Parade with great maturity and respect. Frances attended the service alongside her father, Royal Navy Commander James Mitchell, making the occasion especially meaningful for their family. During the ceremony, she laid a wreath on behalf of all children whose parents serve in the Armed Forces, honouring the commitment, bravery, and sacrifices made by military families. Her involvement in this important act of remembrance highlights the strength and unity of service families within our wider community, and we are pleased to recognise her thoughtful contribution.



Well done Stephanie and Freya!

Two of our pupils took part in the pantomime Dick Whittington at the Trinity Centre in Lickey. Stephanie and Freya both showcased their talent and enthusiasm throughout all six performances, shining on stage. We are incredibly proud of their hard work, commitment and achievement.

Thank you

We would like to say a huge thank you for ASDA for donated ingredients for Launchpad to make some delicious Rice Crispy Cakes.



Well done Harry

We are delighted to share that we have a Spirited Arts winner – Harry! He worked incredibly hard at home to create his piece, “Heaven’s Handshake”,

This is a fantastic achievement and a testament to his creativity, dedication, and talent. Well done, Harry – you’ve made us all very proud!

Heaven’s Handshake

By Harry , aged 10 from St Johns Middle School

I chose the title Heaven’s Handshake because I wanted to show that humans, God and animals are all linked. I have always loved animals and I started to think about how I could link religious beliefs and world views to my own. I wanted to symbolise the human and animal connection by drawing an animal paw reaching out to a human hand.

The animal paw has many different types of fur or skin patterns to represent all animals. The human hand has some of the different world religious symbols to show that this connection is across all faiths. I also wanted to show that God trusted humans to be responsible for animals, but they still ultimately belong to God as creator, like the quotation from the bible that is in my work. I thought about ‘gifts’ and decided to show animals inside a precious gem, given by God to humans. The light from the gem represents the Sikh idea that God’s divine light is present creatures. I thought it was important to include different species of animals in the gem – large and small and also animals that we consider food and those we don’t. I hope it makes people think about whether all animals are equal yet humans do not treat them equally.



Well Done Robyn



Robyn, One of our year 5 pupils has had a fantastic idea to raise money for Crisis at Christmas.

After helping her mom decorate for Christmas using small balloons, Robyn decided to turn one of the balloons into a reindeer. This inspired Robyn to create her “Wish Reindeers” these are accompanied with a leaflet and an adoption certificate to help raise money for Crisis at Christmas, a charity to help people experiencing homelessness at Christmas.

The idea of calling them a wish reindeer is they are filled with wishes and when they pop the wishes come true.

Crisis at Christmas say £29.80 would help 1 person to get advice, a warm meal and somewhere to stay. So far Robyn has raised £180!

We are incredibly proud of Robyn for her kindness, creativity and generosity



P.E update

Mr. Cowdrey- Head of P.E



Pupils across all year groups have been playing friendly netball fixtures against both Parkside and Aston Fields recently. All teams acquitted themselves brilliantly with a number of very positive results in preparation for District Competitions after Christmas.



Pupils represented the school excellently at the KS3 Badminton District Competition. One boys' team performed superbly to finish second overall, while another boys' team narrowly missed out on a place in the final after a closely contested set of matches.

The girls' team played well throughout the competition, showing great determination and teamwork in every match. All pupils involved should be commended, with every player winning at least one match during the event.



P.E update Continued

Mr. Cowdrey- Head of P.E

KS2 Girls won the Kidderminster Harriers football festival.

Ks2 Girls were 3-0 winners in county cup fixture v Walkwood

KS3 Girls were 4-2 winners against Alvechurch in County Cup

Y7 Boys team beat Christopher Whitehead 5-3 to progress to Quarter finals of competition.



Gingerbread Competition 2025

Mrs Stables- Head of D.T

What a fantastic start to the festive season here at St John's! It's hard to believe that this is already the third year of our Gingerbread Competition, and once again, we've seen an absolutely fabulous turnout. There is an undeniable magic in the air— the room is filled with the delightful aroma of gingerbread, and it's clear that Christmas has truly arrived at St John's.

This year, we've been blown away by the creativity on display. The gingerbread structures are a testament to the incredible imagination of our students, their families, and everyone involved. From snowy villages to intricate castles, the attention to detail has been remarkable. I would like to take a moment to thank all the parents, grandparents, and friends who have helped bring these masterpieces to life. Your support means so much, and I genuinely appreciate the time and effort you've all put in.

Mrs Elwell has been absolutely thrilled to see all the wonderful creations, though, as she will admit, she has dreaded the judging. Each entry is so special, and it's clear that a lot of hard work, love, and devotion have gone into each one. It's not easy choosing winners when all the entries are so impressive! So, a huge well done to all who entered—you are truly amazing!

Thanks to the generosity of everyone who participated, we will be able to purchase new items for our food department, which will be a great asset for our school community. So, thank you once again for your support!

The Winners!

Key Stage 2:

Winner: Karolina. S

Runner Up: Emily. K

Key Stage 3:

Winner: Isabelle. W

Runner Up: Eloise. H

It was wonderful to see more entries this year, and every participant received a little gift and a certificate to recognize their hard work and creativity.

Looking Ahead:

We are already looking forward to next year's Gingerbread Competition! Keep an eye out for entry forms and further details in November 2026. It promises to be another exciting event, and we can't wait to see what new ideas you all come up with!

Thank you once again to everyone who took part—whether as a participant, a supporter, or a judge. You've all made this event a huge success.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a joyful New Year! 🎄🎉



FORGIVENESS. LOVE. INTEGRITY. PERSEVERANCE

School Equipment update

As we approach the Christmas break, we would like to remind families of the essential equipment children need for school. Please take a moment over the break to check that your child has everything they require.

Compulsory Equipment:

Blue handwriting pens

Pencil

Ruler

School planner (provided at the start of the year)

Reading book

General notebook

Water bottle

An apron for Cooking

An apron or old t-shirt for Art

Recommended Additional Items:

Green & pink pen for responding to teacher feedback

Glue stick

Rubber

A set of colouring pencils

These items are needed every day (or on the relevant subject days). Children are expected to bring them into school, and consequences may be issued if they do not. If you require any support with accessing essential equipment, please contact your child's form tutor or Head of Year.

Scissors

Please note that children **do not** need to bring their own scissors to school. Age-appropriate scissors are available in all classrooms.

If a pupil does bring scissors from home, they must be children's blunt-ended scissors (similar to the type shown in the image). Adult scissors or sharp-bladed scissors are not permitted and will be confiscated.



Dates For The Diary



15th January: Year 5 Young Voices

2nd February: Poetry Slam

Parents Evening Dates:

26th January

27th January

9th February

10th February



Information on how to book parents evening will be sent out via parentmail in the new year.

Nut Safety Reminder

We have several pupils in school with severe nut allergies, including reactions that can be triggered by very small traces. To help keep everyone safe, we are asking all families to avoid sending any nuts or nut-based products into school. This includes items such as peanut butter, Nutella-style spreads, cereal bars containing nuts, and snacks with whole nuts.

Although we cannot guarantee a completely nut-free environment, reducing the presence of nuts in packed lunches and snacks significantly lowers the risk of accidental exposure for our most vulnerable children.

Thank you for your continued support in keeping our school community safe.

Social Media

We are excited to be launching our own Facebook and Instagram pages to keep you updated on any news and upcoming events as well as celebrate our pupil successes!

A form has been sent to you via Parentmail. Please take a moment to let us know if you give consent for your child to be involved in any posts we make.

If at any point during your child's time at St Johns you wish to change your consent please let the office know via email.

Christmas Card Competition

We have had some truly fantastic Christmas card designs submitted for our competition this year, and we were so impressed by the creativity, effort, and imagination shown by all the entrants. The standard was extremely high, which made choosing just one winner a very difficult task!

After much deliberation, we are delighted to announce the winner of our Christmas Card Competition. Congratulations to Thomas in Year 5!

Well done to all those who did enter, you should be very proud of your wonderful designs!



***Merry Christmas from everyone at St John's
Middle School***



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