

# THE RED SWEATER LETTER

A newsletter from St. John's Middle School



## Message from Mrs A. Elwell

Headteacher

I can hardly believe that we have already reached half term and are now halfway through the academic year. Time really does fly when school life is this busy!

The weather has certainly played its part this half term, with many very wet and grey days. I'm sure we are all looking forward to the arrival of spring, especially as the first spring flowers are starting to make an appearance and the evenings are slowly becoming lighter.

Despite the damp and gloomy weather, school life has been full of energy and excitement. One of the highlights was our Year 5 visit to Young Voices, where our pupils sang their hearts out and represented the school brilliantly. There were some very tired pupils and staff the next morning, but they all told me how much they had enjoyed the experience.

We have also launched our school social media pages on Facebook and Instagram, so please do follow us to see the many exciting things that happen in school on a daily basis.

It was lovely to welcome so many parents and carers into school, or virtually, for Parents' Evening. Thank you for taking the time to engage with staff and hear about your child's progress, your support makes a real difference.

Another highlight was our annual Poetry Slam, which once again transformed reluctant Year 7 poets into enthusiastic and competitive performers. We now have a winning team who will go on to represent us at the competition at the Palace Theatre later this year, and we are incredibly proud of them.

This half term also included several important focus weeks, including Holocaust Memorial, Internet Safety and Mental Health, all of which provided valuable opportunities for reflection, learning and discussion.

We were pleased to return to St John's Church for the first time this academic year, following its renovation, to come together as a school family for our Ash Wednesday service.

Alongside all of this, we somehow managed to fit in selling pancakes, a true military operation! As well as a Valentine's Day sale, giving pupils the chance to buy small gifts for friends and family. In sport, we have enjoyed great success, with both our Girls' and Boys' football teams winning their group stages and progressing through to the final of the Vertu Primary Schools Cup, a fantastic achievement.

I'm sure you will agree that it has been an extremely busy and productive first half of the term. Everyone now deserves a well-earned rest, ready to return refreshed and re-energised for the next half term.

Have a lovely Half Term.

Best Wishes

Mrs Elwell

"EVERY DAY  
IS A NEW  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO LEARN,  
GROW, AND  
DO YOUR  
BEST."

# Collective Worship

By Miss C. Russell- Head of Music and Worship

"...Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us..."

The Return of the Prodigal Son - Rembrandt

This halfterm we have been exploring forgiveness, how this value lies at the core of Christian belief, and how we can live it out in our everyday lives.

We have explored the story of The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32, The Unforgiving Servant - Matthew 18:21-35, and the story of the diminutive tax collector Zaccheus - Luke 19:1-10.

We have looked at how forgiveness can bring freedom, help us to be more generous, and reconcile broken relationships.

On Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February we gathered together at St John's Church for our (early!) Ash Wednesday Service, kindly led by Rev'd. Alan Conant, Bromsgrove Team Rector. As we approach the season of Lent all pupils and staff were offered the opportunity to receive ashes on their forehead, made by burning the palm Sunday crosses from the previous year, as a sign that they wanted to choose good.

As we prepare for lent we are inviting pupils and adults, if they wish, to explore the 40 Acts Generosity Challenge which encourages us to do one small generous act for each day of lent. Details, including the option to download the app, can be found here: <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/40acts>

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## Young Voices 2026

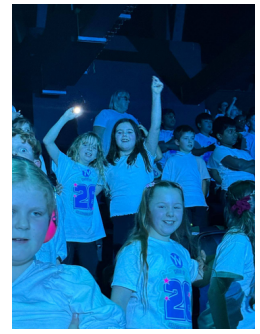
On Thursday 15th January, our Year 5 pupils had the amazing opportunity to perform at the Young Voices concert at the BP Pulse Arena, joining over 6,000 children from schools across the region. The atmosphere was electric, and weeks of rehearsals came together in one unforgettable evening of music and celebration.

After arriving at the arena, pupils took part in a 2-hour rehearsal, running through all the songs they had learned in school. Later, they performed live for families, with the Pop Medley and Sea Shanty Medley being particular highlights. Their confidence, teamwork, and enthusiasm shone throughout, and they represented St. John's superbly.

We were delighted that over 150 parents joined the audience to cheer on the children, making the evening even more special. After such a late night, some pupils enjoyed a well-earned late start the following morning!

A huge well done to Year 5 for all their hard work, dedication, and brilliant performance – we can't wait to see what next year brings!

Miss Kelly

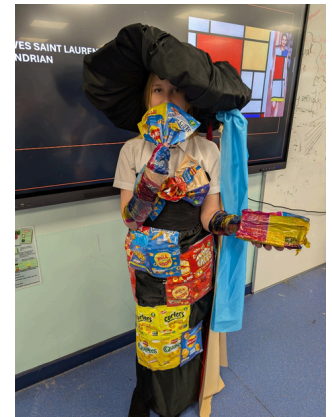


## Year 7 Art

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> February year 7 pupils from St. John's, Walkwood, Aston Fields', Witton and Parkside Middle schools met to create fashion clothing and accessories from recycled goods. They used artists and art movements to influence their designs culminating in a short fashion show. Influences from Pop Art, Piet Mondrian and Art Deco amongst some of the pupil's choices.

The students worked really well together sharing ideas and resources.

Staff from all the schools commented on the team work, resilience and positive attitudes of all the pupils.



## Informative Assemblies

This term, we were pleased to welcome Pete Martin into school to deliver a powerful and informative assembly on knife crime prevention. The session provided our pupils with an opportunity to learn about the serious consequences of carrying knives, while also encouraging them to make positive and safe choices. Pete spoke openly and engagingly, helping pupils to understand the risks involved and the importance of looking out for themselves and others. The assembly prompted thoughtful discussion and reflection, and we are grateful to Pete for sharing his time and expertise to support our pupils' awareness and personal safety.

## Well Done Hannah

A huge congratulations to Hannah, who joined a darts club about two years ago – and she hasn't looked back since!

Hannah has been thoroughly enjoying her journey. Not only has she honed her skills, but she's also made wonderful friendships along the way.

"I started playing darts about two years ago, and I really love it. I've made friends there and I get on well with everyone. There aren't many girls though! I've won over 10 medals and trophies so far."

What an incredible achievement – over 10 medals and trophies already! We're so proud of Hannah's dedication, confidence, and success. Keep aiming high, Hannah!



## Community Holocaust Memorial Service

Some of our prefects attended the Community Holocaust Memorial Service. All of our pupils have also discussed this as part of our Collective Worship and during pastoral time.

Their attendance reflects our school's commitment to remembrance, respect, and standing against prejudice and hatred in all its forms.

We are proud of the maturity and dignity they showed while representing our school and our wider community.



## Tea with Mrs E!

We are excited to launch our brand-new rewards celebration: Tea with Mrs E! Each term, a select group of pupils will be invited to enjoy this special occasion in recognition of consistently demonstrating our school values in everything they do. These are the children who are regularly "getting it right" – showing kindness, respect, responsibility, and a commitment to doing their very best.

We are incredibly proud of the positive example these pupils set for our school community, and we look forward to celebrating their achievements with this special treat.



## Year 7 Poetry Slam

Our Year 7 pupils recently took part in an exciting Poetry Slam workshop. We were delighted to welcome visiting poets Spoz and Dreadlock Alien, who brought high-energy, interactive poetry into the classroom. Through their focus on improvisation, rhythm, and performance, they challenged the perception that poetry is boring and demonstrated just how engaging and powerful it can be.

Pupils worked collaboratively to create and perform their own poems, building confidence and performance skills along the way. The session was full of enthusiasm, creativity, and encouragement.

We are pleased to announce that a winning team has now been selected and will go on to represent the school in a local competition. Well done to all Year 7 pupils involved for their excellent work and confident performances.



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## Mental Health Week

During Mental Health Week, pupils explored the importance of positive mental health through a range of assemblies and pastoral activities.

Ms Birmingham also led a popular lunchtime Wellbeing Club, offering a calm and supportive space for children to relax and connect with one another. It was wonderful to see so many pupils enjoying the opportunity to quietly socialise, play board games, take part in mindful colouring and crafts, and spend time reading together.



# P.E. update

Mr. Cowdrey- Head of P.E.

## Key Stage 2 District Indoor Athletics Competition

A huge well done to our Key Stage 2 pupils who took part in the district indoor athletics competition. They came away with silver medals overall, and an extra congratulations to our girls' team who won gold!

The girls will now go on to represent North Worcestershire at the county competition  
Good luck as well to our Key Stage 3 pupils, who are heading out to compete this afternoon, fingers crossed for them!



## Key Stage 3 District Indoor Athletics Competition

Well done to our Key Stage 3 pupils!  
All of our athletes came away from the Indoor Athletics Competition with silver medals, an amazing achievement and a real testament to their teamwork, determination and effort.

We're incredibly proud of you all!



# P.E. update Continued

Mr. Cowdrey- Head of P.E

## KS2 Champions Again!

An outstanding performance from our girls' football team, who have won the Vertu Primary Schools Cup Group Stage for the second year running.

The team were superb throughout the tournament, demonstrating exceptional skill, teamwork, and determination.

They won all five group games, conceded just one goal across the entire competition, secured a convincing 2-0 victory in the semi-final, and dominated the final with a 3-0 win against Knowle.

A huge congratulations to every player for their commitment, sportsmanship, and fantastic teamwork. The girls will now progress to Finals Day at St Andrew's Stadium – a remarkable achievement and a moment to be very proud of.



## KS3 Boys Football Champions!

Our KS2 boys' football team also took part in the Vertu Primary Schools Cup and delivered an incredible performance, finishing their match with a fantastic 3-0 win!

The boys worked incredibly hard throughout the tournament, showing great determination, teamwork and spirit on the pitch. Their success is a brilliant achievement and something the whole school community is very proud of.

Even better – they will now travel with the girls' team to St Andrew's Stadium for Finals Day, where both teams will get to compete at the home of Birmingham City FC – a brilliant opportunity and a great moment to celebrate school sport and teamwork!





# Dates For The Diary

2<sup>nd</sup> March-6<sup>th</sup> March: Bikeability

9<sup>th</sup> March-12 March: Mock SATs week

11<sup>th</sup> March: Oaker Wood Parents Evening

15<sup>th</sup> March-20<sup>th</sup> March: Bikeability

20<sup>th</sup> March: Red Nose Day

23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> March: Year 5 Archaeology Day

26<sup>th</sup> March: Easter Church Service



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## Careers Day Volunteers

We are looking for a selection of volunteer parents, guardians, friends, or relatives with a range of experiences who would be happy to support our Careers Day.

Volunteers may be involved in one or more of the following activities:

- Delivering a short presentation about their job role or company
- Hosting mock interviews with students and providing feedback using a template
- Leading practical skills demonstrations – something our pupils have said they are particularly keen to experience (for example cooking, plastering, or hairdressing)

The aim of the Careers Day is to give our students valuable insight into a wide variety of professions and career pathways, creating an engaging and enriching experience as they begin to think about their futures.

If you are interested in taking part, or know someone who may be, we would love to hear from you. Please let us know by Friday 21st March if you feel you may be able to participate.

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## Social Media

Our social media pages are officially live!

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date with our latest news and celebrations.

**autism**  
west midlands

**NHS**  
Herefordshire and  
Worcestershire

# Webinars Schedule

Can't attend live? Catch up with a recording available for two weeks following the event. This webinar is open to parents and carers in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire area with an extended invite to professionals. Webinars start 10am and run between 1.5 and 2 hours.

<b>JUN 17</b>	<b>Autism &amp; Anxiety</b> What is Anxiety?, Autism & Anxiety, the circle of Anxiety and managing Anxiety	
<b>JUN 24</b>	<b>Autism &amp; Communication</b> What is communication, Autism & communication differences and strategies that may help	
<b>JUL 1</b>	<b>Autism &amp; Sensory differences</b> Autism and sensory differences, children's differences, addressing sensory differences, and useful resources	
<b>JUL 8</b>	<b>Autism and Behaviour</b> What behaviour is & why it may happen, ways we can analyse behaviour and develop emotional understanding	
<b>JUL 15</b>	<b>Navigating the system</b> Educational issues, online safety, employment and further education, disclosure and benefits	
<b>JUL 22</b>	<b>Autism and the Teenage Brain</b> How the brain changes, how growing up and Autism interact, how to support your teen and useful resources	
<b>JUL 29</b>	<b>Supporting your Autistic Teen</b> How to support your teen and resources.	

For more information or to book a place:

Email - [herefandworce@autismwestmidlands.org.uk](mailto:herefandworce@autismwestmidlands.org.uk)

Scan the above QR codes or visit the Autism West Midlands Events page on our website to sign up.