

Friday 12th December 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I was blown away once again this week by the high quality of the Year 1 Nativity and the Year 4 Play. Both year groups showed the talents of every child to a very high degree and I am sure that those parents that were able to come along and watch were equally as impressed as me. A huge thank you goes to the staff teams in Year 1 and Year 4, who have put such a huge amount of work into ensuring that every child's talents were nurtured.

This will be the last parent update before the Christmas break, so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing the children back in school on Monday 5th January 2026.

Christmas Fair

Thank you to everyone that came along to our Christmas Fair last week at St John's. It was a huge success and raised over £3000 for our schools. A huge thank you to everyone from Friends of St John's and St Nic's that was involved in organising the fair and volunteering on the stalls. Particular thanks go to Rebecca, who was the brains behind the whole thing and who ensured it was a success.

Sustainability

In our federation, our vision is 'For the Good of All'. As part of this vision, we are committed to taking action on climate change including the following key aims:

- Educating our children on the importance of sustainability
- Taking action to move our schools towards Net Zero

As part of our action, we are working closely with Let's Go Zero, Net Zero Carbon Schools (Church of England) and Sustainability Support for Education. We have completed a carbon counting exercise for each school.

We are already on our journey towards Net Zero, thanks to the new heating system at St Nicolas School, which uses Air Source Heat Pumps to replace our old gas central heating system. Thanks to Oxford Diocese for securing the funding for this. At St John's, all of the lighting across the school is LED lighting, which provides a significant saving on CO₂.

However, we want to go further towards Net Zero in both of our schools. Let's Go Zero have created a sustainability report for us (attached) and this has been used to create a climate action plan (attached), which we are keen to share with you.

We are keen to involve our children in our plans and will be ensuring that parents are kept regularly informed.

Spring Term Menu – St John's

As part of our efforts towards Net Zero, we have made some small tweaks to our menu at St John's for next term, making a decision to experiment with a beef-free menu. This is because beef farming has a considerably higher use of carbon, with significantly higher greenhouse gas emissions per kilogram of food compared with the production of other meats.

If this is successful, we will look to continue at St John's and will speak with our supplier at St Nic's to try to amend our menus.

We would be grateful if parents could complete their Spring Menu choices by the end of this weekend at the latest: [Spring Term Lunch Choices 2025 – Fill in form](#)

Christmas Services

Our Church services are taking place next Wednesday 17th December with the following timings and arrangements:

St John's

Children (including Nursery children) should be brought to St John's Church for 8.45am, when we will bring them in and register them. Children in breakfast club will be walked to the church by school staff.

The service starts at 9am and all parents are welcome to attend. We anticipate that the service will take around 45 minutes. At the end of the service, the children will walk back to school, and **we would appreciate any volunteers to help us walk the children back. Please let the office know as soon as possible if you are able to help with walking the children back.**

St Nic's

The St Nic's service will take place at St Nicolas Church at 2pm. The children will be walked to church from school and we would anticipate that the service will take around 45 minutes. Parents are welcome to attend the service.

If you would like to collect your child from the church, can you please confirm via ParentPay, so that we know how many children will be walking back to school.

St Nicolas School Disco

Apologies for the incorrect times given in last week's update for the St Nic's Disco on Monday 15th December. The correct timings are as follows:

- Year 3 and 4: 5.30-6.30pm
- Year 5 and 6: 6.45pm- 8pm

We look forward to seeing the children enjoying the evening.

Young Voices

If any parent missed the Parent Music Room deadline or are looking for extra tickets to Young Voices 2026, you can now book directly through the box office at OVO Arena Wembley on the link below:

https://youngvoices.co.uk/yv26-tour?_kx=aw36XDZoKadgG8QBn3q6dN2AWcQHJbfqFNlnm3VVbOx9co6DAPoahVNbXzec5WHS.XWrcgY

St Nicolas Morning Drop Off

From the beginning of January, the Link Road (front) gate at St Nicolas School will remain locked in the mornings. All children (apart from before school clubs) should come in through the back gate (near Bartholomew Street). We believe that this will make the school safer for our children.

Additionally, we would ask that parents do not enter the playground in the morning. We are asking this for two reasons: to make sure that children are developing their independence and to ensure that the playground is a safe place for all children, as some children get nervous if an unfamiliar adult is on the playground.

Staffing

In the first week of January, we will be advertising for three roles. If you know anyone that might be interested in these, please encourage them to look for the adverts in the first week back:

- Teaching Assistant at St Nicolas School - 5 days per week
- Higher Level Teaching Assistant to work across both schools - 5 days per week, but with potential flexibility of splitting the role for the right candidate(s)
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator (4 days per week)

Boys Brigade

Attached with this update is a flyer from 1st Newbury Boys Brigade and Girls Association. As a former member of the boys' brigade myself, I would recommend checking it out as a really good out of school option for your child.

Writer of the Week

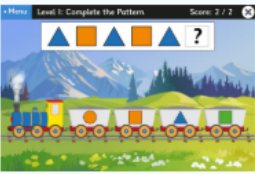
Well done to Iliria in Year 5 and Aarna in Year 4, who were this week's writers of the week.

Year 2 Homework

This week in year 2 we have been looking at 2D shapes and their properties - sides, vertices etc. We have practised trying to draw the shapes and identify them. Have a go at finding 2D (flat) shapes around you and play some games or make some pictures using different shapes.



Shape Monsters
The Shape Monsters game is an introduction to 2D shapes for young children. Children need to feed the monsters with the correct shapes. The monsters then say the name of the shape they've eaten.



Shape Patterns
Shape Patterns is a sequencing game where children from 3 to 8 years of age need to complete the pattern of different coloured 2D shapes. Three levels of difficulty.



2D Shape Reveal
An interactive whiteboard resource to help with the teaching and learning of the names and properties of 2D shapes.



2D Shapes Sorting Using Carroll Diagrams
Sort 2D shapes on Carroll diagrams. There are four levels of difficulty and sorting is by two variable criteria. Squares are classed as rectangles as they are special case rectangles.

WE have also been looking back at all the spelling patterns and red words we have learnt about this year. Find a summary of them on the school website class pages under spelling. How many do you remember? Can you spot the spelling patterns in any books you read?

Year 2 Spelling

Autumn 1

	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Review from Year 1	Compare: long /a/ (/ai/ay/a_e/a/)	Compare: long /e/ (/ee/ea/-y/)	Compare: long /e/ (/ie/e_e/e/)	Compare: long /i/ (/igh/ie/i_e/-y/) Prefix un-	Compare: long /o/ (/oa/oe/o_e/ow/)	Compare: long /u/ (/oo/ue/u_e/ew/u/)
New Skill for Year 2	Adding endings to split digraph words	Adding endings to split digraph words	Adding endings to split digraph words and other words ending in 'e'	Practise adding endings to split digraph words and other words ending in 'e'	Adding endings to split digraph words and other words ending in 'e'	Adding endings to split digraph words and other words ending in 'e'
	shaker waving skates hated latest dozing lazy shaking chased blaming hazy tamer	grating baking shaver chased skating named gazed shady taken hating later waded	wasted flaky shaken chasing taken braver freezing pleased giving loving lived having	flying dryer liked driver smiling slimy smiled frying prized slyest liked filing	broken stony smoking frozen choked closer joking closed rosy exploding spoken nosy	refused glued using snoozing confused truer accusing valued fumed gluing pursuer snoozy
Red words	great, break, steak	because, again	even, people	find, kind, mind, wild, child(ren), climb	old, cold, gold, hold, fold, told	most, only, clothes, both, hello
Special Skill	Contraction: can't	Homophones: see/sea	Homophones: be/bee	Contractions: I'll, you'll, we'll	Contraction: don't	Homophones: blue/blew

Autumn 2

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Review from Year 1	'ph' 'wh'	Compare: /ur/ /er/ /ir/	Compare: /ou/ /ow/	Compare: /or/ /ore/ /au/ /aw/	Compare: /ear/ /eer/ /air/ /ear/ /are/
New Skill for Year 2	Words beginning 'wr'	Apostrophes for possession	Apostrophes for possession	Suffix -ful	Suffix -less
	writes wrecks wrist wraps wrench writer wrong writing wrecked wrenched wrinkles wrens	Oliver's coat... The cat's whiskers... Gran's visit... Uncle Ravi's house... The children's party... Victoria's lunchbox... Mrs Potter's handbag... Jay's painting... The fox's cubs...	Sam's best friend... Grandad's gold tooth... The hamster's food ... Your mum's cooking... The little girl's dress... The big dog's teeth. Your mum's cooking.. The little girl's dress... The big dog's teeth..	forgetful hateful painful cheerful powerful delightful stressful spiteful careful hopeful restful useful	harmless pointless endless useless tasteless mindless careless tasteless sleepless painless speechless sightless
Red words	who, whole, Mr, Mrs	after, pass, grass, class	hour	door, poor, floor, water, beautiful	sure, sugar, Christmas
Special Skill	Homophones: right/write	Contraction: won't	Homophones: hear/here	Homophones: there/their	Homophones: bear/bare

Phonics Books for this Week

Reception only: [https://parents.fft.org.uk/S09 A Trip on the Tram](https://parents.fft.org.uk/S09_A_Trip_on_the_Tram)
<https://vimeo.com/692001972/e8851f27e9>



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 FRANCIS BAILY SCHOOL
 THATCHAM
 10am - 4pm

EARLY/LATE PICK UP AVAILABLE
 SIBLING DISCOUNT

BOOKINGS & INFO:
footyskills4kids.class4kids.co.uk
footyskills4kids@aol.com

Upcoming Dates

Monday 15th December:
 Tuesday 16th December:
 Wednesday 17th December:

Friends of St John's and St Nic's Disco at St Nicolas School
 St Nicolas School choir performance to parents 6pm
 St John's Christmas Service 9am

Wednesday 17th December:

Wednesday 17th December:

Thursday 18th December:

Monday 5th January:

St Nic's Christmas Service 2pm

Choirs singing at Newbury Library for the Living Advent Calendar

Last day of term – St John's finishes at 1.30pm and St Nic's at 1.45pm

First day of spring term

Yours sincerely,

Keith Harvey

Executive Headteacher