

Goodbye and thank you, Dave



Welcome back after the half term break. This week we celebrated the 37 years' service to St John's of our much-loved Head Groundsman, Dave Doughty as we wish him a long and happy retirement. We were delighted to welcome Year 5 engineers and their teachers from six local schools to our Inter-School DT&E Challenge on Wednesday. It was exciting watching the children connecting with each other to create innovative solutions. Earlier in the week, almost forty boys performed in a delightful teatime musical recital for their parents and peers, showcasing their hard work and enthusiasm on a variety of instruments. Outdoors, the sun shone on Year 8 as they enjoyed learning to cycle safely on local roads. Meanwhile, Reception had fun learning about how we keep our local community safe from Police Officers, John and Craig. This was an exciting reward for all the hard work they have been doing in classrooms recently.

Keep dry this weekend!

From the
Headmaster





Goodbye and thank you Dave



Today marks the beginning of what we hope will be a long and happy retirement for Dave Doughty, our Head Groundsman. Dave has been a devoted servant to this School throughout his thirty-seven year career. He was initially employed in January 1989 doing maintenance, cleaning and grounds work. Six months later he became Head Groundsman while continuing to oversee maintenance, cleaning and locking and unlocking the School until the Bursar, Nigel Stone, employed Mark Johnson as Head of Maintenance.

In fact, Dave's whole family has been integral to the life of St John's. His wife, was a member of staff here even before Dave arrived. She helped prepare the lunches that were delivered to school for the Headmaster Peter Norman and the teachers to serve to the boys in what is now the staff room. She went on to work in the kitchen when it was built, as assistant cook for Mr Ramage and Mr Kelly as well as cleaning in the evenings. It really was a family affair as Dave and Jane's son, Christian, was a member of the grounds team starting straight from school in 1994, only leaving after 26 years in 2020.





Goodbye and thank you Dave

The School's transformation between Dave's arrival in 1989 and today is a profound one and Dave will look back with pride at the site he has created and the knowledge he has shared and imparted. He joined the School before the Astroturf was even thought of, the Norman Hall, Art, DT&E, Music and Junior Blocks were non-existent. During his time here he has been responsible for the creation of two nature trails, the Under 10 cricket pitch and outfield, re-erecting the old tennis court, the creation and planting of the golf course, creating the allotment areas for the gardening club and building the bridge to the "Donkey Field." He has also lovingly tended the golf course, sports pitches, rugby pitches, athletics tracks and cricket squares so that the boys can enjoy their sporting activities.



He has managed our woodland areas so that they are now adventure playgrounds, organised tree planting with the boys, managed the Tree House, Outdoor Classroom and Outdoor Instrument projects and it was through his dedication and team management that we have the wonderful Wellbeing Garden. He has also advised us all about our gardens along the way. In his typically modest and self-effacing way, Dave reflected that he has enjoyed every minute of his time at St John's and will miss everyone very much. Dave, we want to say thank you for everything and we will miss you too!

The Keeper of the Grounds

For years you've watched the seasons turn,
Beneath the school's old trees,
Through summer suns that parch and burn
And winter's biting freeze.

The gates stood open, years rolled by,
As children grew and moved away,
But guided by your steady eye,
The garden bloomed each day.

Your fingerprints are on the leaves,
Your spirit's in the ancient oak,
In every web the spider weaves,
And every word the blossoms spoke.

That beauty will not fade away,
Though now you take your leave,
For every bloom that greets the day,
Or dances in the breeze,
Will whisper thanks for all your care
Beneath the school's old trees.



A farewell poem from the Pre-Prep



Year 8 out on the open road

The better weather arrived this week just in time for our Year Eight boys to take part in bikeability. Under guidance from Hillingdon instructors, the boys learnt how to ride safely on the local roads, navigating junctions and other road users. The boys had a lot of fun and enjoyed being out in the sunshine.



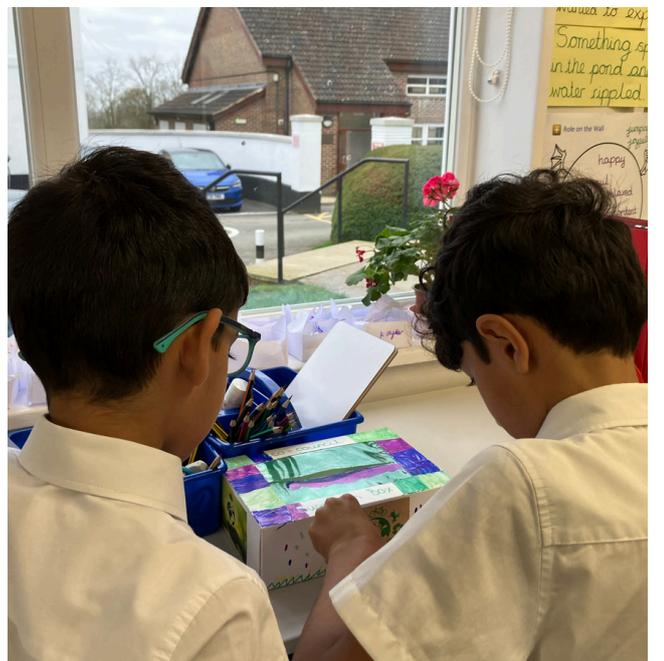


Whole School Eco Council

At Eco Council this week, the boys discussed the forthcoming Big Plastic Count, litter picking and Walk to School Week.



Boys from Years 5 and 2 have made their own suggestion boxes from recycled materials





THE
LEONARDO ²⁰²⁶
 CREATIVE COMPETITION
 For boys in **Years 6 & 8**

Your challenge is to produce an original creative work in one of the following categories:

- 1) Creative Writing
- 2) Art & Design
- 3) Music, Dance, & Drama
- 4) Film, Animation, & Computing



This year's theme is
"Planet Earth"

Closing date:
Thursday 19th March 2026

There are prizes to be won, and every entry counts for your House – which House will show the most creativity?



By the end of their Djembe project, Year 2 could play two different rhythms at the same time in their groups. Well done boys.



Monday 9th February 2026
 Lo: to invent a Dickensian character

Mr. Edwin Marley was the steward of Satis House. He was a thin, quiet man who seemed almost as old as the building itself. He shuffled through the rooms as if he belonged to them more than the outside world. He was tall, but bent forward, with posty hair which in years had not seen the sun. Perched on his head was a grey hair brush back nearly though it never really sat perfectly with thin tufts of hair protruding the rest. Daring from side to side, his eyes normally eyes never missed a movement. He dressed in plain, dark and well worn clothes that had long ago fallen out of fashion but they though were kept in order. His coat was lined smooth, his waistcoat fluted to a tired black and his rapidly fading tie done up somewhat reluctantly. His boots made a low complaining sound upon the floors of Satis house, where he crossed the parais with ease, as he knew every corner and shadows of the mansion. His hunched and red figure seemed to blend well with the dingy, winding corridors. He spoke little, but always careful. His words were another possession of his to be looked away. He strove at his Stewary Service towards Miss Havisham. Swearing papers, guarding rooms and keeping away everything in touch. He was appeared more like he lived in the house than worked in it. He was a recluse like on in the house, along with the science and stopped caring. *Wow...*

20/20

** We need paragraph. Brilliant attempt at writing in true Dickensian style. It genuinely feels like it belongs in a classic novel.*

Mr Russo's award for Excellence - Rian's excellent attempt at writing in Dickensian style.



Blue Lights and Big Smiles!

Nursery and Reception boys had an exciting visit from two friendly police officers who taught them all about the important job of keeping our community safe. Police Officer John and Police Officer Craig showcased their specialised clothing and explained how each piece of equipment helps them do their work effectively. The highlight of the morning was getting a hands-on experience as the boys were invited to sit inside the police van and try on all the clothing. To top it off, the officers gave a demonstration of the powerful siren, which sent a wave of thrill through the group as the loud, rhythmic wail echoed across the playground. A huge thank you for a morning to remember! It was a 'siren-sational' experience that the boys truly loved.





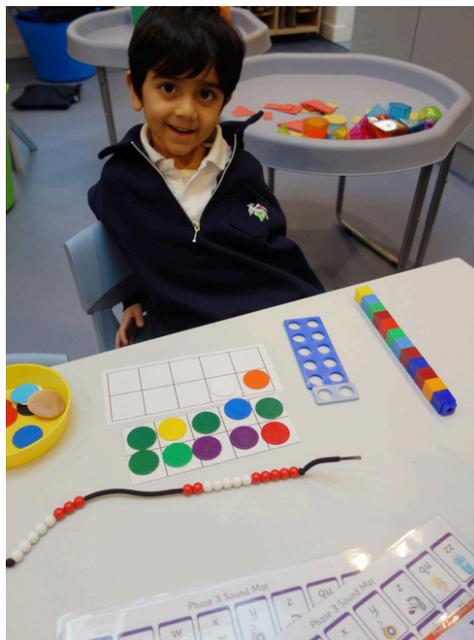
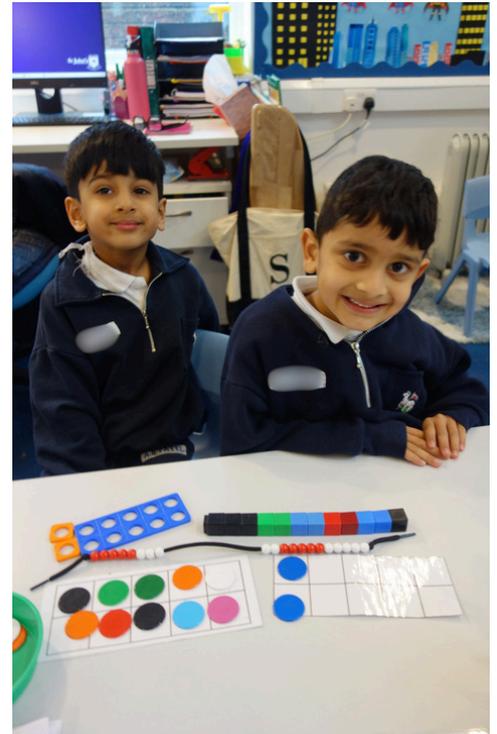
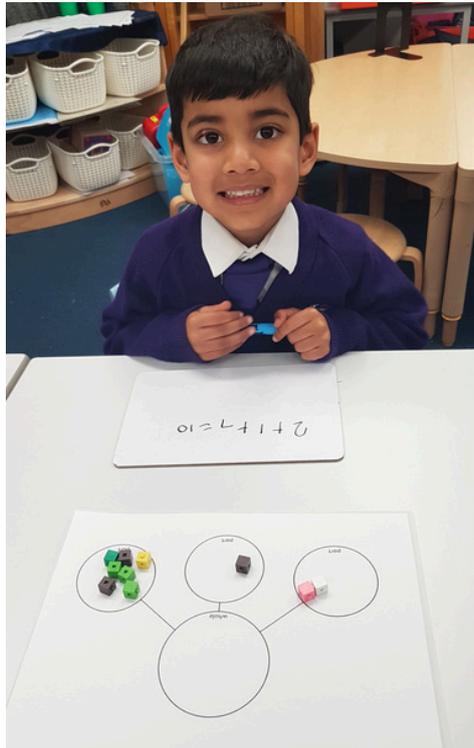
Blue Lights and Big Smiles!





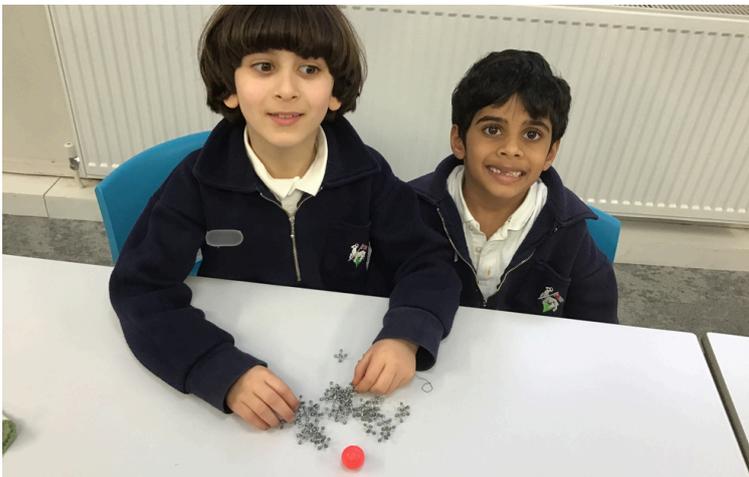
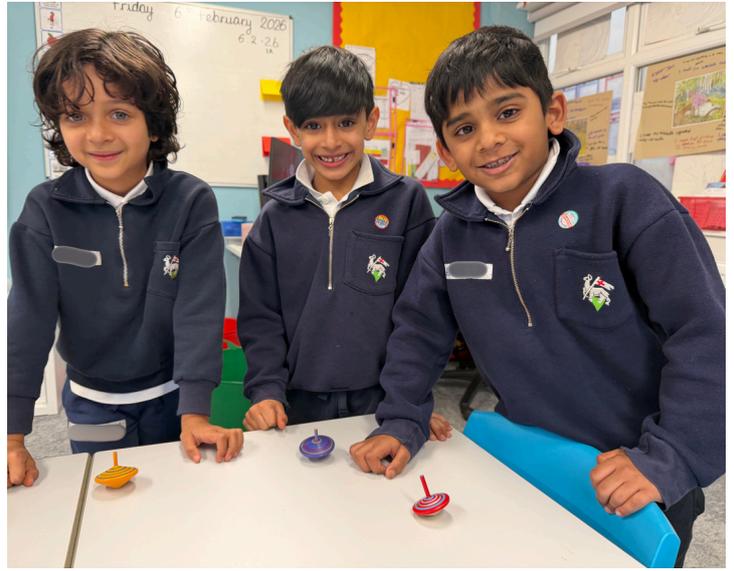
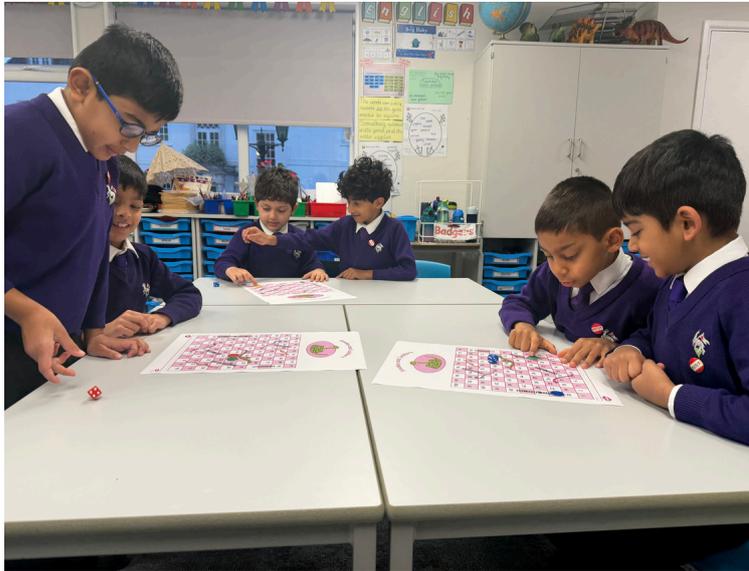
Teen Titans: Reception's Quest to 20!

Our Reception boys have officially become Number Detectives, diving deep into the world of digits to discover how they truly work. The journey began with mastering numbers to 10. Using everything from pebbles to building blocks, the boys have been exploring number composition, proving that a 7 isn't just a 7, but a 5 and a 2 working together in perfect harmony. They have since taken a bold leap into the 'tricky teens', using Tens Frames and Numicon to visualise that 14 is actually one full ten and four ones. This grasp of "ten and some more" is a massive milestone in understanding place value. Whether it's pebbles or place value, one thing is certain: Reception is 10/10!





Year 2 have been exploring Victorian toys





Creating friction in Year 3

This week Year 3 have been learning about friction. They have been testing different materials to find out whether they create more or less friction and carefully recording their observations in their books.





MUSIC



We enjoyed a delightful teatime recital

On Tuesday afternoon thirty-seven boys performed to their parents on different instruments ranging from piano to French horn, oboe to violin and everything in between. All the boys played very well at their differing levels of ability, and it was a pleasure to see them do this with confidence and enjoyment, in front of lots of parents and their peers. Tea and biscuits helped digest the polished performances.





Excitement and skill in the Art Room

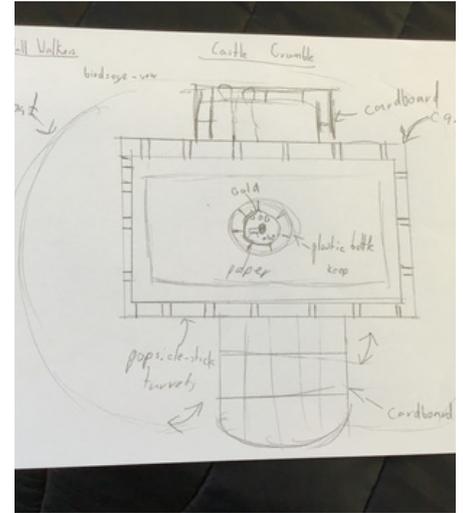
Our Year 4 Roman soldiers are ready for battle....now that they have their shiny new shields! Year 5 have been developing their drawing skills, focusing on tonal value to add depth and detail to their eye drawings. Meanwhile, Year 6 have been mastering their tiling techniques.





Interschools DT&E challenge day

The sun shone on us and the rain stopped at last for our Interschools DT&E challenge this week. Year 5 children from St Martin's School, Hillside Junior, Glebe Primary, Harlyn Primary, Frithwood Primary, Pinner Wood and some fabulous St John's boys battled it out in a Medieval 'Design and Making, Program and Build Challenge.' Mrs McSween thanks everyone who made this such a special day.





Another wonderful Open House

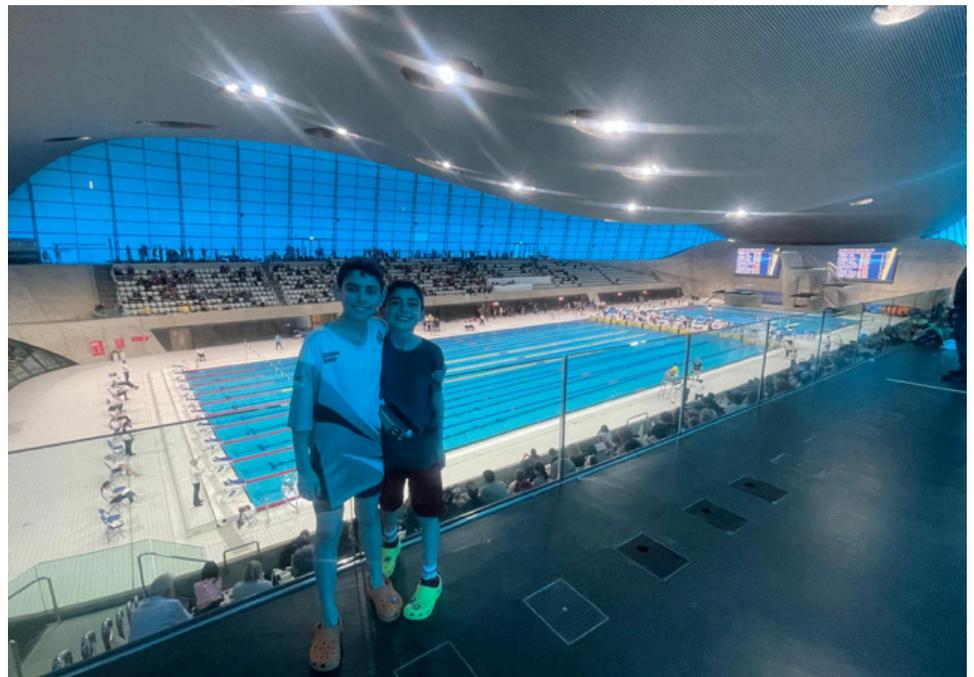
We enjoyed welcoming families from Year 3 this week as the boys showed off the work they are doing in the workshop.





Outstanding swimming success

Shayan enjoyed a standout weekend at the Middlesex County Swimming Championships, held at the London Aquatic Centre in the Olympic Park. Competing at just nine years old, he qualified to swim in the 10/11 age group after achieving the required standard. Shayan raced the 200m Breaststroke, recording a personal best and cutting an impressive 12 seconds from his entry time. He finished 2nd in the county for his age and 15th overall in the combined age group — a fantastic achievement and a proud milestone in his swimming journey.





Under 11A v St Martin's

The Under 11A and B teams hosted St Martin's before half term and had two very good matches. End to end stuff with lots of passes, tackles and tries. Our Under 11As proudly wore their new rugby shirts, which they will wear in the upcoming tournaments culminating in the National 7s at Rosslyn Park at the end of March.





Under 11B v St Martin's





Under 8A at a very wet Lockers Park 12th February



Under 11 Rugby

**SJA
PRESENTS**

**Saturday
14TH
March**

90'S QUIZ NIGHT

GET YOUR BUCKET HATS ON!



**B4 WIFI
WE HAD WISDOM!**

**GET YOUR TEAMS
TOGETHER TO TRY AND
BEAT THE HEADMASTER'S
TABLE!**

**TICKET DETAILS TO
FOLLOW**

- **SPORTS HALL** ▪
- **BAR OPEN FROM 7PM** ▪
- **FOOD INCLUDED WITH TICKET** ▪



Language of Learning at St John's

Our Language of Learning at St John's is an integral part of our teaching and learning across the School as we aim to develop well-rounded, happy, compassionate, and successful boys. We focus on one of our core values each half term. Our current focus is Curiosity.

