

St James' Weekly News

St James' C of E Primary School
Earl Street
Blackburn
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Date: 9th January 2026



Doug Stitcher
Mr D Stitcher, Head Teacher

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome back! I hope everyone celebrating had a wonderful Christmas and enjoyable New Year.

I love the spring term. The nights get shorter, the days get longer but most importantly, the weather starts to improve!

However, we are not out of the woods yet so I just wanted to remind you of our snow procedures.

In the event of heavy snow, we will notify parents by text or push notification about whether school is open or not. We operate a 'delayed opening' policy. In the first instance, we will let you know that school will be opening later than usual. We will then update you with further information. We always try to stay open, but it can be difficult as a lot of our staff (including me!) travel in from far away, so we need to ensure that we have enough staff to cover the classes. However, the key message is that you ensure we have up-to-date contact information so we can keep you informed!

As you will know, we have been trialling and before and after school club since

September. At the time, I said that whether we continued or not depends on how many people use it. Unfortunately, the uptake for the after-school club has not been sufficient for us to be able to continue with it next September.

We will continue to operate the breakfast club (as this is much better attended), but from September 2026, the after-school club will no longer be available. I realise this may cause some disappointment, but we simply cannot afford to operate it with such small numbers. In the event that we suddenly see a big uptake in numbers, we will look at this decision again. I will keep you informed with this as it progresses.

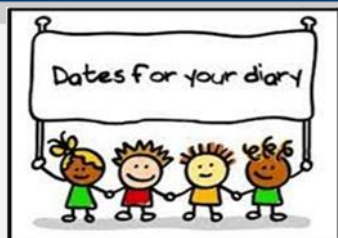
And finally, we are pleased to announce that the church has a new vicar. We look forward to welcoming Rev Daniel and his family to the parish and working with him soon.

Have a lovely weekend.



St James' C of E
Primary School

Headteacher: Mr D. Stitcher BA (HONS), PGCE (Dist), NPQH, NPQEF
Deputy Headteacher: Ms V. Moore BED (HONS), NPQH
Email: office@stjames.blackburn.sch.uk



Monday 9th February & 10th February 2026

Book Fair

Tuesday 10th February & Thursday 12th February

Spring Term Parents Evening

Thursday 5th March 2026

World Book Day Lunch

Wednesday 11th February 2026

Pancake Day (see attached poster)

Wednesday 18th March 2026

Easter Lunch

Wednesday 22nd April 2026

Earth Day Lunch

Year 2 Maths Club Mon 12th Jan – 2nd Feb 3:05pm-3:50pm



Year 4 Kurling and Boccia Club Tues 13th Jan – 3rd Feb 3:05-3:50pm

Year 2 Reading Club Tues 13th Jan – Tue 3rd Feb 3:05pm – 3:50pm

Year 6 Maths Club Tues 13th Jan – 3rd Feb 3:05pm-3:50pm

Year 5 and 6 Wellbeing Club –Thurs 15th Jan – 5th Feb 3:05pm- 3:50pm

Year 6 Reading Club Thurs 15th Jan – 5th Feb 3:05pm – 3:50pm





Pancake Day

American Style
Pancake
with a
Choice of Toppings
Cinnamon Sugar
&
Chocolate Sauce
or
Traditional
Sugar & Lemon



Lancashire
County Council



LANCASHIRE
CATERING SERVICE



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Applying for a Primary school place

You must apply for a primary school place a year before your child can start school. The school starting age is 4.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-primary-school-place>

Your child will be 3 or have just turned 4 when you apply.

Applications open in September each year and close on 15 January 2026.



Child born between

1 Sep 2021 - 31 Aug 2022

1 Sep 2022 - 31 Aug 2023

1 Sep 2023 - 31 Aug 2024

1 Sep 2024 - 31 Aug 2025

Starts primary schools

Sep 2026 Sep 2025 - Jan 2026

Sep 2027 Sep 2026 - Jan 2027

Sep 2028 Sep 2027 - Jan 2028

Sep 2029 Sep 2028 - Jan 2029

Apply






Free Early Years Education

HOW MANY FREE HOURS YOU CAN GET PER WEEK

	2 year olds	3-4 year olds
* Working families	30 hours	30 hours
*Families receiving additional Government support	15 hours	N/A
All families - Universal offer	N/A	15 hours

*eligibility criteria applies
some eligible families of 2 year olds will be eligible for 15 hours Government support AND 15 hours working families

www.blackburn.gov.uk/free-early-education



RENEW YOUR CODE!

Please remember to renew any free childcare codes by signing into your childcare choices account and reconfirming your details to ensure your child remains eligible for their free early years education entitlement. Statutory guidance requires all parents to reconfirm their entitlement for each term. We cannot accept codes that have not been reconfirmed and approved by BwD. For further information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/free-childcare-if-working/confirm-details-up-to-date>

Thank you for your support.





How to get your code

- 1 Visit ChildcareChoices.gov.uk** to check your eligibility.
- 2 Speak to your provider** to understand their arrangements and to see if they can offer your child a place.
- 3 Apply for your code online.** You'll need your National Insurance number (or unique taxpayer reference if self-employed), the date you started or are due to start work, details of any government support or benefits you receive, and your child's UK birth certificate reference number (if available).
- 4 Give your code to your provider.** You may find out if you're eligible straight away, but it can take up to 7 days to get your code.
- 5 Reconfirm your details** on your childcare account every 3 months.

Application deadlines

To get your 30 hours childcare code, apply by:

- **31 August 2025** to use it from 1 September 2025.
- **31 December 2025** to use it from 1 January 2026.
- **31 March 2026** to use it from 1 April 2026.



See what support you could get

You can find out using the eligibility checker on our website. Simply scan the QR code or search 'Childcare Choices'.

Using your childcare hours

- If you meet the criteria, you can **start using your hours the term after your child reaches the right age**. Terms start on 1 January, 1 April, and 1 September.
- **Check or update your details every 3 months** to keep getting your childcare hours. Don't worry, you'll get a reminder when it's time.
- **You can use your hours alongside other schemes** like Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit Childcare. You can mix and match between nurseries, childminders and pre-schools.
- **You may be asked to pay for certain optional additional services on top of your entitlement hours**, although these must not be a condition of accessing your government-funded place. Speak to your provider for more information.
- **Different providers might have their own rules** for using childcare hours. Check that their hours work for you.

Use our **online eligibility tool** to check what options are available to you.





ST JAMES' SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY PATTERN 2025/2026

AUTUMN TERM 2025 INSET 1 & 2 Re-open on Closure after School Mid Term Closure Re-open on Closure after school on INSET 3 Number of openings 75	Monday 1st and Tuesday 2nd September 2025 Wednesday 3rd September 2025 Friday 24th October 2025 Monday 27th October – Friday 31st October 2025 (inc) Monday 3rd November 2025 Thursday 18th December 2025 Friday 19th December 2025
SPRING TERM 2026 INSET 4 Re-open on Closure after School Mid Term Closure Re-open on Closure after school on Number of openings 55	Monday 5th January 2026 Tuesday 6th January 2026 Friday 13th February 2026 Monday 16th February – Friday 20th February 2026 (inc) Monday 23rd February 2026 Friday 27th March 2026
SUMMER TERM 2026 Re-open on May Day Closure Closure after School Mid Term Closure Re-open on Closure after school INSET 5 Number of openings 65	Monday 13th April 2026 Monday 4th May 2026 Friday 22nd May 2026 Monday 25th May – Friday 29th May 2026 (inc) Monday 1st June 2026 Friday 17th July 2026 Monday 20th July 2026



PE Dates

Please note the upcoming PE dates for your child's class. On these days, children should come to school wearing their PE kit.



Class	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Reception RK and RW	Friday 9 th January	Friday 16 th January	Friday 23 rd January	Friday 30 th January	Friday 6 th February
Year 1 1F and 1M	Monday -No PE	Monday 12 th January	Monday 19 th Jan	Monday 26 th Jan	Monday 2 nd February
	Thursday 8 th January	Thursday 15 th Jan	Thursday 22 nd Jan	Thursday 29 th Jan	Thursday 5 th Febr
Year 2 2A and 2K	Tuesday 6 th January	Tuesday 13 th Jan	Tuesday 20 th Jan	Tuesday 27 th Jan	Tuesday 3 rd February
	Wednesday 7 th Jan	Wednesday 14 th Jan	Wednesday 21 st Jan	Wednesday 28 th Jan	Wednesday 4 th Feb
Year 3 3L and 3S	Wednesday 7 th Jan	Monday 12 th January	Wednesday 21 st Jan	Monday 26 th Jan	Wednesday 4 th Feb
		Wednesday 14 th January		Wednesday 28 th January	
Year 4 4A and 4R	Thursday 8 th January	Monday 12 th Jan	Thursday 22 nd January	Monday 26 th Jan	Thursday 5 th February
		Thursday 15 th Jan		Thursday 29 th Jan	
Year 5 5B and 5M	Monday No PE	Friday 16 th January	Monday 19 th Jan	Friday	Monday
	Friday 9 th January		Friday		Friday
Year 6 6H and 6V	Monday No PE	Tuesday 13 th January	Monday	Tuesday	Monday
	Tuesday 6 th January		Tuesday		Tuesday

If your child has recently had their ears pierced, earrings must be removed before school. ☐



attendance **MATTERS**



CONGRATULATIONS TO CLASS 3S WHO ARE THE ATTENDANCE WINNERS FROM LAST WEEK!

WHO WILL BE THE WINNERS NEXT WEEK?

95%
and
above

90% -
94.9%

Below
90%

RG	83.3%
RW	92.5%
1F	96.6%
1M	91.3%
2A	95.8%
2K	94.6%
3L	85.5%
3S	98.0%
4A	89.2%
4R	92.5%
5B	93.3%
5M	87.5%
6H	92.5%
6V	96.7%



If your child is absent due to illness, the office must be informed before 08:35 on that day.





St. James' Stars of the Week!

Well done everyone, we are very proud of you. Who will be receiving a certificate next week?

Pre-School & Nursery		Aydaan A, Ahad K, Izyan H & Romaisa A	
RG	Muhammad Zayaan. A & Zidan H.	RW	Hussain A & Odai A
1M	Syeda-Zaynab Batool & Sadiyah Sheth	1F	Fatimah G & Aliza R
2A	Muhammad P & Zala M	2K	Ajwa F & Yusha D
3S	Hajrah A and M. Aayan H	3L	Hawwa A & Muhammad Isa A
4R	Umaima I & Muhammad Ayaan M	4A	M. Aslam D & Darius D
5B	Fatema P & Ulfah R	5M	Saba I & Anayah G
6V	Umar V & Aiman Z	6H	Subhana S & Amaan M



Year Group Updates

Forest Pre-School & Nursery

"Welcome back everyone!

The children have had a fantastic week and were all very excited to see their friends and teachers again. This week, we began reading the story The Gingerbread Man, and the children have already started to retell the story independently. Well done everyone!"

Action

Please check FamilyApp regularly for updates and observations that will be sent out over the next few weeks.

Reception

"Happy New Year! The cold snowy weather was lovely to play in on Tuesday and we spent 2 afternoons in the discovery area looking at the effects of winter. Our topic at the start of this term is space, the children have enjoyed investigating the new space role play area."

Action

"Please be reading at least 3 times a week with your children. There will be a letter coming home about the Reception Trip to the Sea Life Centre and the Gruffalo experience."





Year Group Updates

Year 1

"Happy New Year and welcome back! We hope you all have had a lovely break and are ready for the new term. This week we have started reading the book The Tiger who came to tea. See link below to listen to the story at home. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjcxZemAxNII> In Maths, we have been learning about number up to 20. Practice writing number up to 20 in words and numbers. E.g 11 eleven, 12 twelve"

Action

"The children will get their reading books next week. If you have any questions please let one of the year 1 team know. Clubs will start again next week!"

Year 2

Welcome back everyone! This week in English we have started to explore our new book, Lila and the secret of the rain. You could ask your child to retell the story to you. In History we are learning about the famous explorer Christopher Columbus and his adventures to new places.

Action

PE will be on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Our unit for this term is gymnastics. Please could you ensure that your child is wearing the appropriate PE kit and that any jewellery has been removed for these sessions. Also, please could your child wear socks on these days as these will need to be removed for PE. Reading books will be given out next week when the children have settled into their new reading groups. Thank you for your support.





Year Group Updates

Year 3

""Welcome back! We hope you had a lovely holiday. This week, the children have been developing their understanding of column addition and applying their skills with accuracy. They have also been planning an imaginative fantasy story and sharing lots of creative ideas! The children have really enjoyed exploring expressive movement in PE this week, where we learned how to move like fierce lions!"

Action

"Please ensure you listen to your child read at least three times each week and remember to sign their planner. As the weather becomes colder, we recommend that children bring hats, gloves, and scarves to school."

Year 4

Year 4 have had a brilliant first week back. In English we have started a historical fiction text 'Journey to Jo'burg' and in Maths we have been multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100. In science we have started our new topic of 'teeth'

Action

Please ensure children are reading regularly and practising their times tables.





Year Group Updates

Year 5

"Welcome back and happy new year. We have hit the ground running this week with some short division including remainders. We have also started reading "Boy in the Tower" by Polly Ho-Yen. We will read this up to March and will base our writing around this.

Action

Century Tech homework is out and will help your child with the work for this and next week.

Year 6

"The children have settled back very well after the holidays and have shown a positive attitude towards their learning. We have quickly returned to our routines and expectations, and the children are working hard across all subjects. In Maths, we have continued to develop our understanding of fractions, focusing on comparing, ordering, and solving problems involving fractions. In English, we have been reading Holes by Louis Sachar. The children have explored the character of Stanley and have written a diary entry from his perspective, using descriptive language and expressing thoughts and feelings. In History, we have been learning about World War II. The children have taken part in discussions and debates about the importance of women during the war, sharing ideas and listening respectfully to different viewpoints. This has helped them develop their historical understanding as well as their speaking and listening skills."

Action

Please ensure your child continues to complete their homework and reads regularly at home. Thank you for your continued support.





Prayer for the Week

Dear God

Help us to love the world we live in.
Help us to have the courage to be exceptional in all we do.
Help us to respect the people around us
Thank you for making our school your home.

Amen



Follow the school on social media to keep up to date on what is happening in and around school!

Facebook: [@StJamesCofEBlackburn](https://www.facebook.com/StJamesCofEBlackburn)

Twitter: [@st_blackburn](https://twitter.com/st_blackburn)

Please note that you don't need to have an account to view our social media pages.

