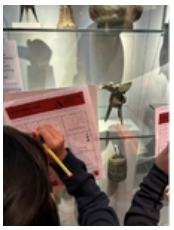
GFS News

13 Nov 2026, Issue no 5

Growing Hearts and Minds

Message from the Headteacher






Year 5 trip to the Ashmolean

On Monday, myself and Year 5 enjoyed a wonderful day at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Year 5 have been learning lots about the Shang Dynasty and were excited to get the opportunity to observe various artefacts throughout the museum, but especially during our workshop when we could handle objects.

Some of the highlights were Guy Fawkes' lantern, Samurai armour, singing songs, Chinese Bingo (scavenger hunt and drawing) and discovering that the Shang had cricket boxes to keep pet crickets in.

"They would meet up with friends to have 'cricket battles!" - Benji

"I enjoyed our workshop because we could touch and feel objects that they had during the Ancient Chinese dynasty. I discovered that tea blocks could be used as currency and were treasured greatly. If you had 30 of them, you could buy a horse!"- Ellie

"I really enjoyed the Ashmolean Museum and I would go there again. I learnt that the Shang believed that dragons were kind and friendly creatures. We also heard a story about the four dragons who helped people by turning into rivers to enable them to get water." – Charlie and Lily

"I enjoyed hunting for the objects, even though it was challenging, it was fun. I loved just being able to look around the museum with my friends." - Monique/Raheema/Jasper

David Walliams Books

In light of the information about David Walliams in the press and media, we have taken the decision to remove his books from circulation. If you have any school books by David Walliams at home please return them to us as soon as possible.

ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE

Antibullying Week Monday 16th - Friday 20th November Break the Silence

Monday 16th November is **odd socks day**. All staff and children to wear odd socks for the day.

The idea is that it's an opportunity to encourage all of us to express ourselves, celebrate individuality and to discuss what makes us unique and special.

For those who'd like to explore this week and theme further, there is a wealth of resources and knowledge on the antibullying alliance website https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week-2026/anti-bullying-week-2026 .

Paul Sutton, Headteacher

Diary Dates

Mon 16 Nov	Odd Socks Days
Mon 16 Nov	Boy's B Team Football vs St Alban & St Stephen HOME @ GFS
Mon 16 Nov	Governing Body Meeting 2
Wed 18 Nov	Netball vs Alban City HOME @ GFS
Thur 19 Nov	Boy's A & B Team Football V Bernards Heath HOME @ GFS
Fri 20 Nov	PTA Adults Quiz Night
Thur 26 Nov	Netball V Bernards Heath AWAY @ Bernards Heath
Fri 27 Nov	Occasional Day - School Closed

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Growing Hearts and Minds

Message from the Chair of Governors

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to share an update regarding the leadership of our school as we look ahead to the new year.

As you know, our Headteacher, Paul Sutton, will be stepping down at the end of this term. We remain deeply grateful for his dedication to our school community and wish him the very best for the future. Looking ahead, we are delighted to be welcoming Michelle Lake as our new permanent Headteacher at the start of the Summer Term, following the Easter break.

To ensure the school continues to flourish, maintain its high educational standards, and operate seamlessly during the Spring Term, the Trust Board has put in place a robust and highly experienced interim leadership team.

For the Spring Term, leadership will be shared by two of our Trust leaders:

- **Clare Cockburn** will lead the school for 2 days each week. Clare is the current Headteacher at Wheatfields Infants & Nursery School and brings a wealth of primary headship experience in leading a highly successful school.
- **Alan Gray**, our Trust CEO, has kindly agreed to delay his upcoming retirement to lead the school for 2 days each week. Alan will provide strategic executive oversight, ensuring complete continuity and stability across all aspects of school life.
- Clare, Alan and other central AET staff will be on call for the fifth day if needed.

Together, Clare and Alan bring decades of proven educational leadership. Their combined expertise ensures that our teaching staff are fully supported, our high standards of care and learning remain uncompromised, and the day-to-day experience for your children remains vibrant, nurturing, and focused on their success.

This temporary structure also provides a wonderfully strong foundation for welcoming Michelle Lake in the Summer Term.We will communicate with you further regarding the separation of responsibilities between Clare and Alan once finalised.

We are incredibly fortunate to have such capable leadership in place for the Spring Term, and we look forward to a successful, positive, and inspiring start to 2027. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the school office.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of our school community.

Warmest regards,

James Latham,

Chair of Governors

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Year 2 Animal Encounters



Y2 had an extra special Thursday last week with a visit from the fantastic Garg's Animal Encounters. The children had an absolute blast getting hands-on with a variety of exotic animals and learning fascinating facts about each creature up close. It was a wonderful, memorable experience that brought so much excitement to our week!

Mrs Carrasco

Governance News

We would like to share a brief update from the Local Governing Board (LGB). Rob Walter has recently stepped down from his role as a governor after joining us in January 2023. During his time on the board, Rob served as Vice Chair and Link Governor for Health and Safety, helping to ensure our school remains a safe environment for all our children.

A former Garden Fields parent, Rob also has a long-standing connection to our community through the 'Men of Fields' cricket group, who generously support our PTA fairs and fundraise for local causes.
On behalf of the board and wider school community, thank you to Rob for his dedication and hard work—we wish him every success for the future.
Whilst we currently have no parent governor vacancies on our board, if you are interested in becoming a governor at another Trust school, please contact Lesley Dunkley, Governance Professional at dunkleyl@aetrust.uk .

Parking and Road Safety at Drop Off and Pick Up



As we settle into to the school year, we kindly ask all parents, carers, and family members to park safely, legally, and considerately during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times.

The areas directly outside and surrounding our school get very busy. To ensure the safety of all our children and to show respect to our local community, please remember to:

- **Park Legally**: Do not park on double yellow lines, keep-clear zig-zags, or across junctions and corners. These rules are in place to ensure children and pedestrians have a clear view when crossing the street.
- **Be Mindful of Our Neighbours**: Please do not block driveways, access gates, or drop-kerbs, even if it is just for a few moments. Our neighbours need to be able to enter and leave their properties safely.
- **Avoid Double Parking**: Stopping in the middle of the road to let children out causes congestion and creates serious hazards for other road users and pedestrians.
- **Consider Walking or Stride & Park**: If possible, consider walking, cycling, or parking a short distance away from the school gates and walking the remaining few minutes. This reduces traffic directly outside the school and gives children a safe, active start to the day!

Our priority is always the safety and well-being of our pupils and community. Thank you for your continued support, patience, and cooperation in keeping our school surroundings safe for everyone.

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GFS Sports News

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Growing Hearts and Minds

Crosscountry

On Thursday 5th November we had a cross country race at Wheatfield Junior School. I came second, Zac came 7th , James P came 15th . We did 3 ¾ laps around their field for the race. Audrey came 2nd in the girls race and Jessica came 13th. It was a great event and we had an amazing time.

Max, Y6 Osprey

A bitter wind swept across the playing fields of Wheatfields School as the boys and girls from our magnificent cross-country team assembled for the 3rd race in the season. Although we were optimistic of a good result, I don't think any of us could quite believe how brilliantly the entire squad performed.

Max achieved a remarkable 2nd place in the boys' race, with Zac sprinting through at the line to finish in 7th and James in 15th. Just outside the top 20 were Alex, Dexter and Ethan, who ran superbly and are getting faster each race.

Sadly, we only had two girls able to compete in their event, but what we lacked in numbers they more than made up for with sensational performances. Audrey ran a hugely impressive race, coming 2nd, with Jessica showing real spirit and determination to finish 13th.

The cross-country fixture list now takes a break until February, when we will be at Mandeville, before finishing the competition at GFS in March. Huge congratulations to all of our wonderful runners - we are looking forward to seeing you back in glorious action in the new year!

Mr Dawes

Girls' Football



On Tuesday 10th November we played a football match against St Albans High School (STAHs). Keira was in goal for GFS and did some excellent saves. We had one attempt on goal by Jasmine which was sadly saved by the other team. We had lots of fun playing together and we tried our hardest. The final score was 5-0 to STAHs. Massive thanks to Mrs Salisbury and Libby's dad for helping.

Jasmine, Y5 Kestrel



Arsenal Training Academy

Lottie, Y3 Thames, has been selected to start a 6 week trial at the Arsenal Training Academy at the Emirates training ground - she's very excited!
Well done to Lottie for getting selected. We wish you all the best in your 6 week trial.

Boys' Football



On Thursday 12th November, Garden Fields A Team played Samuel Ryder Academy. Unfortunately we lost 3-1 but we played well. Olly scored first and then we lost our way and let in 3 goals. We will continue to improve.

Olly, *Y6 Osprey*

GFS Notices

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Growing Hearts and Minds

Save the Date! More details will be shared soon as well as how to sign up to volunteer.



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GFS Notices

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Growing Hearts and Minds

St Albans & District Foodbank
Together with Trussell

Christmas appeal

Help support your food bank this Christmas

In the three weeks leading up to Christmas, the food bank will provide over 1,100 food parcels for local individuals and families facing hardship.



Donate Food - Donate an item or two from our shopping list, ensuring we can provide food for people facing hardship in your local community.

- Bring to our warehouse
- Drop off at your nearest donation point (see our website)
- Order online for FREE delivery to us https://givetoday.co.uk/stalbansfoodbank/

Donate Money - Help to cover the costs of storing and distributing food, as well as developing sustainable projects.

www.stalbansdistrict.foodbank.org.uk
01727 613019
info@stalbansdistrict.foodbank.org.uk
@StAlbansDistrictFB
st-albans-foodbank
@st_a_and_dist_foodbank

Drop donations to our warehouse
Unit 3 Redbourn Industrial Estate, AL3 7LG
Open
Tue and Fri: 10am - 3pm
Wed and Thu: 10am - 12pm

St Albans & District Foodbank
Together with Trussell

Christmas Hours

All foodbank sessions will run as normal on 22nd, 23rd and 24th December

FRIDAY 25 DECEMBER	CLOSED	SATURDAY 26 DECEMBER	CLOSED
SUNDAY 27 DECEMBER	CLOSED	MONDAY 28 DECEMBER	CLOSED
TUESDAY 29 DECEMBER	CLOSED	WEDNESDAY 30 DECEMBER	OPEN - COTTONMILL 1PM-3PM CLOSED - MARKYATE
THURSDAY 31 DECEMBER	CLOSED	FRIDAY 01 JANUARY	CLOSED
SATURDAY 02 JANUARY	OPEN - JUBILEE 10AM-12NOON	SUNDAY 03 JANUARY	CLOSED
MONDAY 04 JANUARY	OPEN - REDBOURN 2 - 3.30PM CLOSED - VERSO		

Normal hours resume from Tuesday 5th January.

If you are unable to get a foodbank voucher, please attend anyway and one will be issued.

For more information call us on 01727 613019 or email info@stalbansdistrict.foodbank.org.uk

@StAlbansDistrictFB @st_a_and_dist_foodbank

St Albans & District Foodbank
Together with Trussell

Drop donations to our warehouse
Unit 3 Redbourn Industrial Estate, AL3 7LG
Open
Tue and Fri: 10am - 3pm
Wed and Thu: 10am - 12pm

Reverse ADVENT CALENDAR

Christmas can be a difficult time for many, especially for those living on a tight budget. With increased winter fuel bills, alongside the seasonal pressures, many will find themselves having to **choose between buying food and heating their homes.**

Can you help someone this year?

For 25 days, **from Monday 16th November**, please could you donate an item daily from the list.
Pop it in a box or bag and drop it at our warehouse by **Friday 11th December.**
Or order online at **https://givetoday.co.uk/stalbansfoodbank/** for FREE delivery to our warehouse.
Your donation will help local people and will make a really big difference this Christmas.

Please follow your School or Organisation's 'Nut-free' Policies!

No mince pies or alcohol please!!

Donate Money Today

Thank you!

https://stalbansdistrict.foodbank.org.uk
01727 613019
info@stalbansdistrict.foodbank.org.uk @StAlbansDistrictFB st-albans-foodbank @st_a_and_dist_foodbank

16th November	Long Life Fruit Juice
17th November	Tea Bags (80)
18th November	Biscuits
19th November	Jam or Spread
20th November	Tinned Meat
21st November	Savoury Snacks
22nd November	Tinned Soup
23rd November	Long Life Milk
24th November	Tinned Vegetables
25th November	Tinned Pulses
26th November	Squash/Cordial
27th November	Tinned Vegetables
28th November	Biscuits
29th November	Tinned Peas/Sweetcorn
30th November	Instant Coffee
1st December	Rice Pudding
2nd December	Cooking Sauce
3rd December	Condiments (Mayo, Ketchup)
4th December	Long Life Custard
5th December	Long Life Fruit Juice
6th December	Tinned Fruit
7th December	Noodles
8th December	Tinned Soup
9th December	Long Life Milk
10th December	Savoury Snacks

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SALA
CINCO
FUTSAL CLUB
FUTSAL CLASSES
IN ST ALBANS
SKILL DEVELOPMENT | CONFIDENCE | TEAMWORK | FUN
ST ALBANS GIRLS SCHOOL (STAGs) | Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans, AL3 6DB
TIMETABLE
MONDAY | Y3 & Y4 | 5:00PM – 6:00PM | PLACES AVAILABLE
WEDNESDAY | RECEPTION & Y1 | 5:00PM – 6:00PM | LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE
Y2 & Y3 | 5:00PM – 6:00PM | LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE
Y5 & Y6 | 6:00PM – 7:00PM | PLACES AVAILABLE
THURSDAY | Y2 | 5:00PM – 6:00PM | LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE
Y4 | 6:00PM – 7:00PM | LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE
FRIDAY | Y5 | 5:00PM – 6:00PM | LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE
Y5 | 6:00PM – 7:00PM | LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE
OTHER CLASSES ALSO AVAILABLE
BOOK AT
SALACINCOFUTSAL.COM