

Contents

Message from the Headteacher	Page 1	Nativity	Page 5
Football	Page 2	CPC Update	Page 5
Social Enterprise	Page 2	Mental health and wellbeing	Page 5
Rocksteady Concert Success!	Page 2	Carol Concerts	Page 5
A Big Thank You to Tony Medcraft	Page 2	Wonderdome	Page 5
Halo Code	Page 3	Year 4 Valence House trip	Page 6
Anti-Bullying Week	Page 3	Christmas tips for autistic people and their families from the National Autistic Society	Page 6
Road Safety Week	Page 3	Thank You for a Wonderful Christmas Fair	Page 8
Nite Owls	Page 3	Year 6 trip to London Buddhist Centre	Page 8
Bedtime Stories	Page 4	Key dates for next term	Page 8
Attendance Update	Page 4		



Message from the Headteacher

We are really delighted to share with parents that we have recently been awarded the Leading Parent Partnership Award. This is an award that recognises the school's efforts to engage the community, whether through events, coffee mornings, the Parent Forum, the Friends of James Cambell and much more!

I hope you have enjoyed the build-up to Christmas - it has been wonderful to celebrate with our school community, whether at the Christmas Fair or through the nativity performances and Carol Concerts at St Alban's Church. These much-loved events are always a highlight of the term and bring our community together. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Friends of James Cambell for their hard work and dedication in organising the Christmas Fair earlier this week.

The festive celebrations have been just one part of another busy and enriching term at James Cambell. Our pupils have taken part in a wide range of memorable experiences, including a visit from the *Nite Owls* and Year 5 experiencing the Wonderdome. Alongside this, children have continued to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe and happy through Anti-Bullying Week and our work during Road Safety Week.

Reading remains at the heart of everything we do at James Cambell, as it plays such a vital role in children's future success. It was lovely to see so many families joining us for the bedtime story reading sessions last week. We are continuing our Christmas tradition of gifting all the children with a book and I encourage you to enjoy sharing stories and reading together over the holidays.

On behalf of everyone at James Cambell, I would like to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming you all back to school on Tuesday 6 January 2025.

With warmest wishes,
Ms Breakwell
Headteacher

Football

It has been a fantastic half term for football at James Cambell.

The Year 5/6 girls' team played a double header in the Ballerz League, securing two impressive victories. The team beat Five Elms 4–1 and Parsloes 3–1. Jasmina scored an outstanding five goals across the two matches, with Lottie adding a further two.

These excellent results earned the team six points and have all but secured their place in Round 2 of the group stages.

The Year 4/5 boys' team also had a highly successful double header in their Ballerz League fixtures. They recorded emphatic wins against Five Elms (6–1) and Hunters Hall (10–1), earning six points and putting them in a strong position to progress to Round 2 of the group stages.

Well done to all the players for their teamwork, determination and sportsmanship.

Social Enterprise

Some children from Year 5 recently took part in a series of engaging social enterprise workshops, where they learned how businesses can make a positive impact on their communities. Pupils worked creatively in teams to develop their own ideas, building confidence, teamwork and a sense of social responsibility.



Rocksteady Concert Success!

Well done to all the children who performed in the Rocksteady concert this week. They were fantastic! It was wonderful to see their confidence and teamwork on stage.

Limited Spaces for January

If your child would like to join Rocksteady after Christmas, a small number of places will be available from January. Spaces are limited, so please sign up early! The office have letters available.

<https://youtu.be/ou-sqoR3EQQ>

<https://youtu.be/5r3uLAjNO9w>



A Big Thank You to Tony Medcraft

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Tony Medcraft, a Mason of the Old Libertarian Lodge No. 6096, for his generous donation to James Cambell Primary School.

Tony's kind contribution of book bags, school uniforms, and regulation tools will make a real difference to our children and their families. Your support helps ensure that every child has what they need to feel confident and ready to learn.

Thank you for helping us make a positive impact on our school community!



Halo Code

The Halo Code For Schools

Our school champions the right of staff and students to embrace all Afro-hairstyles. We acknowledge that Afro-textured hair is an important part of our Black students' and staff's racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, and requires specific styling for hair health and maintenance.

We celebrate Afro-textured hair worn in all styles including, but not limited to, afros, locs, twists, braids, cornrows, fades, hair straightened through the application of heat or chemicals, weaves, wigs, headscarves, and wraps.

In this school, we recognise and celebrate our students' and colleagues' identities. We are a community built on an ethos of equality and respect where hair texture and style have no bearing on a student's or staff member's ability to succeed.



Anti-Bullying Week



This term, our school took part in Anti-Bullying Week with the theme of promoting kindness and respect. We kicked off the week with Odd Socks Day, celebrating individuality and diversity.

Throughout the week, children explored the definition of bullying and discussed the different roles involved, such as the person bullying, the target, and bystanders. These conversations helped pupils understand how everyone can play a part in creating a safe and supportive environment.

Our Parent Forum also received a presentation of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, led by Mrs. Macleod, ensuring families are informed and involved in our approach.

Together, we continue to reinforce the message: Choose Respect, Celebrate Differences!

For more tips and advice for parents and carers on supporting children, please visit the Anti-Bullying Alliance website. [Anti Bullying Alliance advice for parents](#)

Road Safety Week

This term, James Cambell Primary proudly supported Road Safety Week in partnership with the Brake charity. The focus was on helping children understand how to stay safe on and around roads.

Pupils took part in engaging activities and discussions about the importance of being alert, using crossings safely, and wearing bright clothing in darker conditions. These sessions encouraged children to think about how they can keep themselves and others safe.

Working with Brake reinforces our commitment to promoting safety and wellbeing in our community.

For more information and resources for families, visit [Brake's Road Safety Week page](#).



Nite Owls

On Friday 21st November, we were lucky to have some special feathered visitors at James Cambell to visit Nursery, Reception, Rainbow Room, CPC, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4.

Dotty the barn owl and her owl friends from Nite Owls came to teach the children all about owls, their diets, habitats, and the importance of looking after the environment they live in. They also treated us to a flying demonstration which was spectacular.

Nite Owls visit schools to educate children about owls and raise awareness of looking after the habitats that owls live in. The highlight of the day for many children was having the opportunity to have their photo taken with one of the owls perched on their shoulder!



Bedtime Stories

Our Bedtime Stories event was a wonderful celebration of reading and togetherness, and it was lovely to see our learning spaces transformed into cosy, welcoming storytelling areas. Children arrived in their pyjamas with blankets, teddy bears and slippers, creating a calm and magical atmosphere that made reading feel extra special.

Across classrooms, the hall and our libraries, lights were dimmed and the gentle sound of a crackling fire set the scene as children and parents gathered together to enjoy stories read aloud by our teachers. The relaxed environment encouraged children to settle, listen and enjoy sharing books, with a hot chocolate treat adding to the excitement!

Parents shared some lovely feedback about the event:

- *"It was nice to spend quality time with my child within their classroom."*
- *"The children being able to wear pyjamas all day and gathering together with blankets and teddy bears was wonderful. The highlight was the dimmed lights with the sound*

of crackling from the fire on the screen."

- *"He loved the teacher reading whilst enjoying a hot chocolate."*

Thank you to all the families who joined us and helped make the evening so special. Events like Bedtime Stories remind us how important shared reading is and how powerful it can be in creating positive memories around books.

Attendance Update

Being in school every day, on time is essential for your child's learning, confidence and wellbeing. Each lesson builds on the one before and missing even a single day can mean lost learning that is hard to catch up. Regular attendance helps children form strong routines, feel secure with their friends and teachers, and achieve their very best. Thank you for making attendance and punctuality a top priority.

ATTENDANCE SPOTLIGHT

**Celebrating Strong
Attendance across our
school**

We've enjoyed a fantastic half term packed with learning and special events. A huge thank you to our families for continuing to support good attendance and prompt arrivals — being in school every day really makes a difference.

ATTENDANCE WINNERS

EYFS - C

KS1 - 1B

LKS2 - 3C

UKS2 - 6C



Nativity

Year 2 thoroughly enjoyed performing in the school nativity, The Bossy King. The children worked incredibly hard to learn their lines, songs and actions, and it was wonderful to see their confidence shine on stage. We were so proud of their enthusiastic acting and joyful singing, which helped make the performance a great success for everyone who came to watch.



CPC Update

CPC have had a busy half term learning all about chocolate. We have learnt about the journey of chocolate from cocoa pods to factories and shops, as well as cooking with chocolate and looking at some healthy alternatives! The children went to see Jack and the Beanstalk at the Queen's Theatre and we look forward to further trips in the new year. As part of our enterprise work, the children have baked and grown things to sell at the school fete, helping them to apply their maths and English skills to a practical challenge. We also took our hot chocolate over to the nursery children to share our learning with them. Our next topic will be Mysterious Worlds: Space.

Mental health and wellbeing

We continue to offer Thrive and Nurture in school, as well as providing a space for Hotheads and the local mental health team. In February, we will be celebrating Children's Mental Health Week with our Wear it Bright

Campaign: keep an eye out for updates nearer the time.



Carol Concerts

The children were fantastic at the carol concert, singing loudly and confidently throughout. They worked incredibly hard to learn and perform the Makaton signs, and we are so proud of their effort and enthusiasm.



Wonderdome

Year 5 travelled to space! We were lucky enough to have the expertise from Matt, who taught us about the universe. Year 5 learnt that stars are many different colours. They asked thought provoking questions and showed a real interest in finding out about space.

Did you know that the Milky Way is 105,000 light years across!



Year 4 Valence House trip

As part of our history studies on how children's lives have changed over time, Year 4 visited Valence House Museum this term to learn more about work and leisure in Victorian times.

Friendly and knowledgeable staff welcomed us and led a carousel of three activities: a tour of the museum; a workshop with costumes, props and role play exploring the different forms of work undertaken by Victorian children; and an object-handling session looking at the sports and entertainment available at the time.

As well as the hands-on activities — including chores such as scrubbing clothes on a washboard or beating rugs with a carpet beater — the children enjoyed happy playtime in the surrounding outdoor area.

We returned to school with lots of interesting facts and a fun insight into what life might have been like in the olden days.



Christmas tips for autistic people and their families from the National Autistic Society



Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, but it can be difficult for some autistic people.

With your help, we've compiled a list of autism-friendly tips for the festive period. With good planning and clear communication, we hope these tips will help you to have an enjoyable Christmas.

Preparing

- Many autistic people can find any kind of change difficult. Planning and preparation is key in making Christmas as enjoyable as possible.
- Think about ways you can enjoy the festive season that work for you – don't feel pressured into doing things just because that's what other people do.
- Wherever possible, plan your Christmas in advance with your family, friends and any support services.
- Make sure all plans are shared and you know what you will be doing and when, and who else will be there.
- If it is helpful, use visual aids such as calendars, lists and schedules to help plan your Christmas.
- Think about and plan around [sensory differences](#) that could cause you distress or discomfort. Consider ear defenders for times of potential sensory overload.
- Create or find a quiet space where you can take a break if you get overwhelmed. You may want this to be a completely Christmas-free area, particularly around the main days of

Christmas or at key times when there may be additional stress.

- Don't just plan for Christmas Day. Plan for the whole festive break, and give yourself quiet days to recoup if needed.
- Don't spend money you don't have on Christmas gifts you can't afford.
- Make sure you budget for buying Christmas gifts.
- If you're visiting family and friends, tell them about anything that could help make your visit as stress-free as possible. For instance, turning off Christmas lights, letting you know in advance what the food will be, sharing plans for activities and having a quiet space to escape to.
- "Christmas scents and candles can be super overwhelming sensory-wise so could be avoided when decorating. Flashing fairy lights can be overwhelming."

Schedules

- Many autistic people have a strong need for [routine](#). If schedule and routine is important to you, you might want to:
- Keep your daily schedule the same as possible, including on Christmas Day.
- Gradually introduce Christmas activities into your daily schedule. For instance, you could put up a few decorations on one day and more on another, plan a short Christmas shopping trip or decorate the tree, then switch on the tree lights on another day.
- Keep a copy of your schedule with you. Share it with other people if that would help them understand what you need to do, and if anything changes, change it on your schedule so you've got a new plan.

Decorations

- Many autistic people will have [differing sensory needs](#); decorations for some are great whereas others may struggle and find them really overwhelming. You could:
- Plan the most suitable decorations for you and your home, including where best to have them and how many, if any.
- Consider decorating gradually, for example, you could put the Christmas tree in position, decorate it the next day, and then put up other decorations even later.
- Create Christmas-free areas of the home without decorations.

Presents

- Presents can also be overwhelming: the number of them, the wrapping and unwrapping them; the [unclear expectations](#) about how to respond after receiving a present. You could try telling family and friends what your preference is in advance, including:
- The number of presents – make a list of presents you would like to receive and share this with your family and friends. This also removes any element of surprise, if you find that difficult.
- Explaining whether you want presents to be wrapped or not.

Local Offer

We would like to remind parents that The Local Offer is an information resource for children and young people with SEND living in the Barking and Dagenham and can be accessed via the following link:



[Barking and Dagenham SEND Local Offer](#)

Thank You for a Wonderful Christmas Fair

A huge thank you to all our parents and carers who attended and supported our Christmas Fair. Your generosity, enthusiasm, and festive spirit helped make the event such a success.

We would also like to say a special well done to the children for their excellent behaviour and excitement when visiting Santa and taking part in Santa's Workshop. It was a joy to see so many smiling faces and to share such a magical experience together.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event so memorable for our school community.



Year 6 trip to London Buddhist Centre

Year 6 visited the London Buddhist Centre in Stepney Green. It was a calm and inspiring experience where we learned all about the story of Buddha, explored the symbolism of the Buddha statue, and took part in a peaceful meditation session that helped us slow down, focus, and reflect.

Key dates for next term

Monday 5 January	Staff inset day (non-pupil day)
Tuesday 6 January	First day of term
Tuesday 20 January	Year 5 trip to Jo Richardson
Thursday 22 January	Parent Forum
Friday 23 January	National Dental Epidemiology programme for Reception & Year 1
Thursday 29 & Friday 30 January	Year 5 Bikeability programme (select pupils only)
Monday 9 February	Mental Health Week
Friday 13 February	Last day of term

