Spread the Wor

St Stephen's Catholic Primary School Where the Word of God, and the service and strength of St Stephen ,guides our steps and leads us in learning

















Welcome to the latest edition of Spread the Word, where we take a look back at what's been going

on in school over the last term. Although it has been a relatively short term, we've managed to pack guite a bit in from visitors into school, visits out of school, sports competitions and fixtures as well as our usual curriculum activity. There have been some events of particular note such as our World Book day celebrations, which lasted a week, and saw some fabulous work produced. Additionally, our 'prayer, song and soup' initiative has been extremely well received and has generated a real sense of community spirit. It is very pleasing to report that our pupils continue to work hard and amaze us with their achievements on a daily basis. I hope that the articles included in the magazine convey just how busy and enjoyable our term has been. At



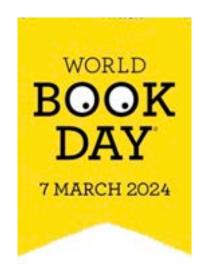
the time of writing, our children are busy preparing for our prayer services to mark the end of Lent and celebrating Easter. Although it is much better to be in school during Holy Week for such services, we are still making sure we pay great attention to this hugely important time in the Christian calendar. Another area of provision which has seen lots of work and activity this term is around curriculum development. We are always seeking to develop our curriculum offer and we have put a great deal of thought into revising the approaches we take in delivering each subject. As a result, we have produced new overviews and unit plans within each subject which you can view on our website (also see the information later in the magazine). One huge change we will be implementing, is our approach to modern foreign languages which, although still based on the national curriculum, will see us move away from the teaching of French to Spanish. This is simply because of resources and the fact that we have two members

of staff who are fluent in Spanish, which is a great help in terms of curriculum delivery and expertise.

As we bring the Spring term to a close, on behalf of everyone at the school, I would like to wish you all you a very happy Easter and we look forward to the summer term, which will, no doubt, be just as busy and enjoyable.

Best wishes S.Fallon





World Book Day – and what a day it was! In true St. Stephen's style, we went all out and had one of the best weeks in school!

We started the week off with a bang...Big Foot Arts Education team joined us for an interactive day of fun! The day started with an exciting assembly/performance where out visitors took on the role of various characters, as we entered the courtroom of Judge Chief. The children then took on the role of jury and together, they explored and analysed all the evidence presented and decided upon the fate of the Big Bad Wolf – guilty or not guilty?

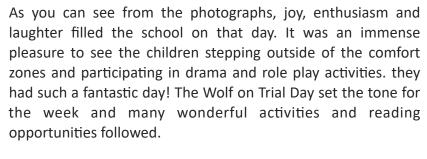


Alexander T Wolf then had the opportunity to share his side of the story, in the bid to convince the jury that he was not guilty. He gave quite the performance — who knew the Big Bad Wolf was such a great dancer — he had better moves than Mr Smith, and that's saying something!

After considering all the evidence, the children came to a resounding conclusion...NOT GUILTY!!!



After the assembly, the children then took part in a range of different workshops, where they completed various activities including hot seating, freeze frames and short role play activities. The children had an incredible time taking on all the different roles, presenting different arguments and in general had a real wonderful time!





As the week progressed, the children then completed a wide range of art and English activities. With the help and support from our amazing teaching assistants, we transformed the school corridor with all their fantastic work! As you can see, our corridor is a real showstopper!

Just when we thought the week could not get any better...official World Book Day came around. The theme this year was 'Reading for Pleasure' which we kicked off with yet

another exciting assembly – led by Mrs Long and Miss Tawse – with a special guest appearance! It would not be a proper World Book Day without a special guest appearance! The children were presented with a secret mission where they would have to stop and read whenever they heard the

DJ Buzzer sound! The children could not contain their excitement to see who had won the reading trophy this year! Mrs Long must have gotten her measurements mixed up as this trophy could go down in history as the world's smallest trophy....It didn't matter in the end as Year 1 proudly lifted the reading trophy this year! Well done, Year 1!

The day ended with our reading café's reopening their doors once again, further reading time with friends and finally...Mr Fallon put together his most famous and riveting World Book Day quiz. The children look forward to his bonus question each year (it's the same question each year but they never can remember!!) The children laughed and most importantly had the opportunity to read LOTS!

It really was a wonderful day that brought home the true meaning of World Book Day. We say this every year, but this year will be hard to top!







Upon arrival at High Borrans, the children were shown to their bedrooms and had some free time to unpack and explore the house. High Borrans is a beautiful country house set in 5 acres of woods and lawns next to its own lake. With wonderful views, plenty of open space and hidden corners, every exploration showed us something new. The most challenging first task was making our own beds! Once that had finally been accomplished, we enjoyed our first evening meal together. The children were tasked with setting up before mealtimes and cleaning up afterwards which they proved to be very capable of.

Our main two full days at High Borrans were spent doing a carousel of different activities, including canoeing, ghyll scrambling, ropes courses, orienteering and a cathedral quarry exploration. Despite some cold temperatures over the weekend, the children managed brilliantly with very little complaining. The canoeing experience showed us how to successfully make a canoe raft by tying ropes together on two canoes. We learnt that this helped the canoes to be steadier and prevent them







from tipping over. We had to communicate with one another to steer the canoes in the correct direction which was a lot more challenging than it sounds! Ghyll scrambling was both physically and mentally tiring, but the children demonstrated outstanding resilience. They had to help one another scramble up some steep rocks with gushing streams of water all whilst remaining well-balanced so that they didn't end



up with wellies full of water... though this may have happened to quite a few of us, teachers included!

Our evenings were spent sharing our favourite memories that we had made that day and some of their fantastic responses even earned themselves bonus points in the nightly quiz. Some of our favourite responses included 'connecting with one another' and 'trying something new that was hard'. We enjoyed movie nights which gave us a chance to relax after our tiring days, followed by a well-deserved night's sleep. We can successfully say that each and every child tried their very best all weekend and I think everyone was able to say that they had tried at least one new thing, even if it was just a piece of food at tea-time.





at St Stephen's

We were absolutely thrilled to invite the Active North Tyneside team in this term to host our first Family fun Afternoon. What started off as a small informal drop-in session, turned into a big event which was well attended by most of our school community. It was a such a roaring success!



The Active NT Team were on hand to share information regarding the programmes on offer in our local area from Bump, Birth & Baby classes to No Limits and Healthy 4 Life programmes, which appeals to all ages and generations. There was also opportunity to sign up for ease cards which was great, as many families were not aware of the benefits of having an ease card.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was the smoothie bike! You'd think that a famous popstar had donned our school grounds as the queue was right out the door at one point! Not only was this fun activity to engage in, but it also highlighted how easy (and delicious!) fruit smoothies are to make! The team had some very happy customers in that section!



There was an abundance of stalls on offer, one of which proved to be a real hit with our adults – the Adult Kit Hub. Active North Tyneside provide an adult PE Kit swap shop. Where adults can replenish their sportswear without having to go to the shops. The kits are practically brand new – it was like stepping into JD sports! The event was a fantastic way to highlight the support that is out there, not just for our children but for our adults too. This is something that we are keen to bring to school on a termly basis – so keep a watch out for further information.

There was a real buzz around the school as children were in and out moving from one activity to next. In the sports hub there was a hive of activity too – from mini competitions, beat the parent challenges to taster sessions of the types of activities Active North Tyneside provide. Clare and her team worked extremely hard to put this event together, alongside Mr Baines and Mrs Long. So, it was exciting to hear all the positive feedback from families and our children, and because of this, we hope to invite the Active NT Team along in the summer to host a similar event.



Thank you to all who attended to ensure that event was such a huge success! If any of the events or programmes caught your eye and you did not manage to speak to a member of the Active NT team, please contact Mrs Long or Mr Baines and they can point you in the right direction.









SPORTS NEWS

Despite the short term, and at times extreme weather, it has still been a busy time for sport and PE in school with many of the children still managing to compete and represent the school in a range of different activities.

Hockey

Following last term's PE topic, hockey, some children from Year 5 and 6 got the opportunity to compete in the North Tyneside IN2Hockey Festival at the Parks Leisure Centre. The event provided some keen children the chance to test their skills and technique in a competitive setting, while also allowing them to further develop their knowledge of the game. All the children gave 100% effort in all of their games and were competitive throughout, but despite their best efforts, they were unfortunately unable to progress further in the competition after a number of narrow defeats.



Regardless of the results, the children enjoyed getting the opportunity to test themselves and should still feel proud of themselves for representing the school to a good standard and showing great sportsmanship throughout.

Netball

This term, a small group of children were selected to represent the school in a High Five / Netball competition at Blue Flames Leisure Centre. The squad was made up of a selection of boys and girls, which were rotated, so that everyone participating would get an equal amount of playing time but also play in a variety of different positions too. The children performed admirably across the afternoon, however the standard was very high resulting in them winning only one game and unfortunately not making the semi-finals and finals. Despite this fact, the children still



commented how much fun they had testing themselves against other schools and how it had allowed them to develop their skills further in a competitive situation.

Football (Cochrane Park NUF and Bishop's Cup)

The football team fixtures began in the Autumn term in a tournament held by our PE partners, Newcastle United Foundation. The event was held on a 3G pitch and was a 6-a-side competition as opposed to the usual 7-a-side format.

The team played well although didn't reach their normal high standards, resulting in only their second loss of the season. Due to the short length of games, they really struggled to find a way back when when falling behind, and this ultimately



prevented them from going forward in the competition.

After another lengthy time without football, due to the weather, the team were finally back in action at the back end of this term in the second round of the Bishop's Cup.

Due to the bad weather conditions, the games had to be played on 3G pitches at Benfield Leisure Centre. This appeared to affect the team as they found it difficult to adapt to the different playing surface. In the first game they started slowly, going two goals down in the first half to a strong St Teresa's team. Despite a better showing in the second half, they were unable to reverse the scoreline and avoid the defeat. The opening game defeat seemed to be a wake up call as the team were far more convincing in their next game running out 6-1 winners against St Patrick's from Consett. However, because of the results in the group, a win in the final game was still needed to ensure qualification to the next round. Although they dominated for long spells, it wasn't until the latter stages of the match when they managed to break the deadlock and get the win to take them into the next round.

Girls Football (Cochrane Park NUF and Northern Cross cup)

Girls football also returned this half term. It began with a competition ran by Newcastle Foundation at Cochrane Park. During the morning, the girls performed brilliantly winning the majority of their games but unfortunately weren't able to progress to the next round of the competition ,narrowly finishing 3rd and going out on goal difference. Despite not



making it into the next stage of the competition, the girls should feel very proud of themselves as they not only performed well but they showed great attitude and were a real credit to our school.

Due to fixture congestion the girls found themselves in the very unusual position of having to play another round of games later that day, this time in the second round of the Northern Cross Cup.

The first game was against St Charles from Gosforth, and despite the girls being tired, they still managed to dominate what was to be a goalless first half. After a brief rest at half time and few girls being rotated, the second half brought about the goal that secured the much needed win.

Before the final game, against St Mary's North Shields, the girls already knew they had qualified for the next round after St Mary's beat St Charles, which was a big relief as many of the girls were exhausted after a day full of football. Nevertheless, they still gave a good account of themselves in a game which they can count themselves unlucky to have lost 2-0.

Dodgeball



At the end of the second half term, some children from Year 5 got the opportunity to represent the school in a dodgeball festival hosted by North Tyneside Phyla Education Partnership at Blue Flames Leisure Centre.

The event provided an opportunity for the children to try something new and a chance to transfer some of the skills they had acquired from more traditional sports and put them into practice in a different activity.

All the children gained a great amount from the event and they thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon, challenging themselves against other schools. Both teams performed brilliantly but a special mention has to go Mr Smith's team, who managed to finish joint 2nd behind a strong Fordley team. Well done everyone!







During the 2nd spring half term, two small groups of skilled and passionate children from Year 5 and 6 worked tirelessly on their First Lego League project in order to demonstrate their STEM skills. They competed against a range of different schools from around North Tyneside, ranging in age from Primary school up to high schools.



The theme for this year's event was called 'Superpower' and was aimed at making better use of renewable energy. Within the project, the children had to make a Lego robot and program it to complete a number of tasks, each scoring points, which would be tallied together over a two-and-a-half-minute period and compared against other schools. Both teams showed a great aptitude for this element of the competition with both scoring the highest points St Stephen's have ever achieved.

In addition to this element of the competition, the children also needed to come up with an idea to improve how renewable energy sources are used and

deliver a presentation about this to a team of experts. For this part of the competition, the children researched various ideas before finally settling on their concepts. Team 1 decided that they wanted to focus on wind energy and thought that a car 'spoiler' could be changed to make it turn when the car is driven, generating electricity like a wind turbine. Whereas Team 2, decided to





try to harness the sun through solar panels, which could be applied to the top of a car to provide it with electricity.

Both teams showed brilliant teamwork to create fun, informative and engaging presentations, which they delivered clearly and passionately, really impressing the team of experts and filling Mr Baines and Mr Smith, who attended the event, with a huge amount of pride.



The children had a brilliant day showcasing their learning and competing against the other schools and despite not winning the whole competition, Team 1 were awarded the 'Judges Award' for their efforts throughout the day.

Raspberry Pi Computing

This term in computing, children in Year 6 have been using Raspberry Pi-Tops to create circuits then program them. This involved a great deal of skill and resilience as they attached the various wires to specific Raspberry Pi pins and into a breadboard in order to create circuits, which also provided a brilliant opportunity for them to apply their knowledge of electrical circuits from science.



After ensuring that their circuits were working, the children then used the text-based coding language, Python, to program the various different outputs that they attached to complete a specific goal. Now, this was no easy feat and required the children to constantly review and debug their programs.





Over the unit of work, the children managed to program: an LED to flash, which could have been used to give a Morse code type message; created and attached a button, which when pressed would display a message; a motor, which they programmed to spin around to create an optical illusion and a reaction time game using a combination of a few of these.













Prayer, Song & Soup

It was our absolute pleasure to be able to invite parents, grandparents and carers into school this half term to join the children on their spiritual journey through Lent. As you are aware, Lent is a time for giving, praying and fasting. A time to clear out the old and bring in the new — with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Not only this, but Lent is also a time for Christians to live as an example of Christ and support those who are in greater need than us.

This year, we chose to support the Turkey & Syria Earthquake appeal as the atrocities witnessed all over social media platforms and news stations, highlighted just how much support and aid was required for the thousands of people who lost their homes, possessions and sadly, their lives too. Thus, Prayer, Song and Soup was born! Miss Celardi and Mrs Long were keen to bring the community together to support those who are in need and what better way to do it through prayer and food – a great combination.

Staff were filled with immense pride and admiration as we watched our pupils take on this especially significant role and be ambassadors for our Lenten appeal, as the KS2 pupils led us in four beautiful prayer services, which was then followed by crafts and tasty, homemade soup. Not only was it a time to reflect on the devastation caused by natural disaster, but it was a time to reflect on our own personal Lenten journeys, too.

It was a lovely opportunity for our school community to come together and pray for the same cause, but also to watch our amazing children lead our services. We really are so grateful for the support you have shown this term. We were absolutely astounded by the donations that came in week after week which

raised over £300 - we cannot thank you enough! The donations from our weekly soup kitchen played a huge



role in raising the grand total too. We have enjoyed celebrating this special time with you all and will look forward to further events which can bring us together as one community.

As Desmond Tutu said, 'Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.' together, we have done just that. So, thank you once again for the overwhelming response to our Lenten appeal.

A message from our new PTA.....

This term has brought the establishment of our school PTA group. A parent-teacher association (PTA) is a group of volunteers separate to the school that work to fundraise for the school to help it to afford resources that the ordinary school budget does not cover. Although in its infancy, our PTA already have some very exciting plans in place including hot chocolate sales, movie night and a summer fayre! Watch out for further details in our upcoming newsletters.

Hi from St Stephen's PTA!

Our new Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is now up and running following some articles in the school newsletter inviting parents to find out more about forming a new group. At the start of December, a meeting was held with parents who had expressed an interest and we're pleased to announce that the first Committee members have been appointed so PTA plans for 2023 can now get underway.

"We're really pleased St Stephen's will have a PTA again after not having one for a number of years. We're looking forward to getting together to think about how we can support the school and the types of activities we can organise and take part in that will benefit all our children".

If you're interested in getting involved, please get in touch with us by emailing pta@ststephensrc.org.uk or coming along to our next meeting in April. To make the PTA a success we will need more Committee members to help with running the group as well as volunteers who can help out at events, so there are plenty of opportunities to get involved and do as much or as little as you are able to.

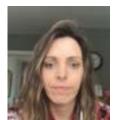
Thanks and we hope to meet more of you very soon.

Vic, Laura, Danielle and Laura (PTA Committee members).









North Tyneside Dance Festival

During the first half term 20 fantastic children joined the KS2 dance club, run by Miss Lightfoot, excited to begin choreographing and rehearsing their entry for this year's North Tyneside Dance Festival. The theme for this year's festival was 'new beginnings' and so the upbeat, disco song 'Wanna be Startin' Somethin" by Michael Jackson was selected. Over the following weeks the dance club created a fun, lively performance with lots of high-energy, collaborative moves. As the evening of the festival grew nearer the dance club performed for their friends and teachers at our whole school dress rehearsal.



Before we knew it the night of the festival had arrived, and all the children made their way to the Whitley Bay Playhouse. The air was filled with excitement and some of the children shared that they were feeling a little bit nervous. Spirits were high backstage in the dressing room as they all wished each other luck before their big performance. The performance was incredible, and all the children's hard work, resilience and dedication had paid off. In years to come the children will be able to look back on this brilliant experience and remember performing on stage.



Talk for Writing in Year 6

This term, the children have thoroughly enjoyed exploring our new Talk4Writing text –

The Caravan! This story is about two friends who ignore the warning from their mother about visiting an abandoned caravan and things take a turn for the worse! This unit of study will cumulate in the children writing their own warning tale, but in the meantime, we have been getting creative! As an exciting way to introduce our new text, the children had the opportunity to work in small groups and use lots of different equipment (such as crates, netting, tyres, cones) to make their own



caravan! They had to think about what each part represents and then present their creation to the rest of the class – they even had an audience from nursery! They had some fantastic ideas and included some great details. A fantastic, creative way to engage the children in our new class text.

'Growing and Marvellous Minibeasts' in Early Years

This term's topic started off with growing and learning about plants and ourselves. The children have enjoyed reading a range of fiction and nonfiction stories relating to Spring and signs of growth in nature. Our first book focus was "Jack and the Beanstalk", where we transformed our role-play area into the giant's castle. Nursery and Reception







enjoyed acting out the story and even planted our own beanstalks and flowers to take care of. Our next topic to follow was "Marvellous Minibeasts", with our book focus being "The Very Hungry Caterpillar". The children started off their Talk4Writing topic by using their senses to explore the different fruit in the story. This allowed the children to be able to talk confidently when describing the fruit and what it looked, smelt, and tasted like. Nursery and Reception have explored supplemented sticks, googly eyes and pipe cleaners in the playdough and creative area to create their own minibeasts. Outside the children enjoyed a mini-beast hunt, using positional language to guide their friends to hidden animals. We particularly enjoyed using the clipboards to keep a record of the minibeasts we found!









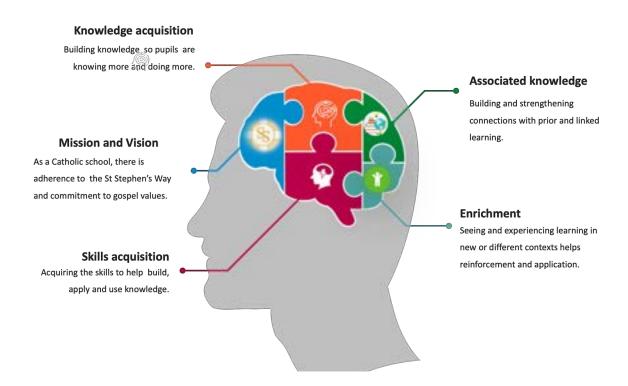






The curriculum at St Stephen's primary school

As mentioned earlier, our approach to curriculum design has been revised and is explained below. For more information, please see our website.



Rationale and intent

In broad terms, we define our curriculum as the lived experience of a child whilst in our school. It is our view that every encounter, interaction and activity (planned, spontaneous or incidental) are components of our curriculum and each has great worth in helping children learn.

Our taught curriculum is the planned element and, as such, we use the national curriculum as the main driver. Subjects are taught discretely rather than within a 'topic' based approach, which enables us to ensure appropriate coverage in a meaningful and authentic manner. This is achieved through delivering units of study by aligning them to specific themes or disciplines within that subject. The planning process enables teachers to draw on meaningful links with prior learning so that pupils can build and add to their knowledge base each time they meet a particular theme. Additionally, teachers ensure that prior, or associated knowledge from other subject areas is drawn on as a way of helping pupils build solid links and connections as a means of reinforcing learning and understanding as well as applying it in different contexts.

Within each unit of study, key knowledge and skills to be acquired by pupils are identified and broken down into smaller chunks so pupils have sufficient time to explore, absorb and understand material presented. This is because the acquisition of knowledge and skills are interrelated and effective pupil learning and retention requires both elements to be present. For example, if pupils are to research a particular aspect of history regarding Roman times to broaden their knowledge, they need to have the necessary skills to carry out and conduct that research.

Our curriculum is constructed so that progression in skills and knowledge are clearly mapped out from Nursery through to Year 6. As part of our planning, we have consulted with colleagues in key stage 3 so that our curriculum helps prepare pupils for transition to high school.

Implementation

This element is essentially focused on delivery and the day-to-day learning experiences we provide for our children. As mentioned at the beginning of this document, it is the lived experience of each child. Therefore, teachers, although autonomous in how they choose to impart knowledge, select and use resources as well as construct and deliver learning sequences, must, while doing this, strive to do so in the spirit of our mission statement. However, there are some key principles to be considered in short term planning and lesson delivery:

- Ensuring that learning is underpinned by specific subject specific themes (*DT &MFL)
- Authentic outcomes punctuate each unit of study
- Key 'learning points' are identified and feed into ongoing curriculum progression
- Study unit intentions and outcomes are summarised in pupil friendly formats.

As well as the principles above, adults should also be mindful of the agreed policy statements relating to the following:

- · Teaching and learning
- Assessment and Feedback
- · Relationships and behaviour
- Equal opportunities
- Special Educational Needs

Teachers use the long-term curriculum overviews to construct logical and cohesive learning sequences. These sequences may, at the teacher's discretion, consist of some overlearning or repeated learning from previous related learning. Teachers will be aware of what prior learning has taken place and what associated knowledge may be useful to draw on. They will also be very clear about how current learning is preparing children for future learning. This effectively ensures progression, appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils and supports the contextual position of the learning within the bigger learning journey. Where necessary, teachers will consult with the SENDCos to ensure that learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs are suitably challenging and inclusive.

Agents for Change - Let's Connect.....

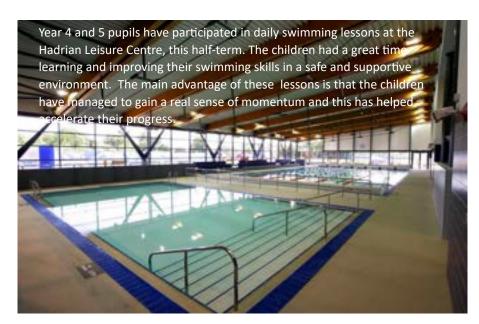
Our Agents for Change continue to beaver away raising awareness of pertinent issues with pupils and staff across the school. Their most recent work involved them working with the North Tyneside Connect Mental Health Support Team and leading the whole school in raising awareness about emotions linked with Children's



Mental Health Week. The main thrust off the work was getting people to connect with each other as a means of increasing socialisation, healthy living and wellbeing. The message came through loud and clear and was very well received by everyone. Our work with Peter Higgins and his assistant Carly Hudson has continued to flourish as part of our curriculum offer through the 'Friends Resilience' programme which helps develop healthier understanding around friendships and developing the emotional tools to make and sustain good relationships.



Swimming lessons



The swimming lessons were led by experienced instructors, who provided guidance and support to the children as they learned new strokes and techniques – building on their swimming development stages from Year 4. The children were also taught about water safety and the importance of staying safe in and around the water.

The children worked hard during their lessons, but they also had a lot of fun, with lots of laughter and smiles seen around the pool.





Holy Week comes early....

Because the term ends for the Easter holiday earlier than usual, we are not in school to celebrate Holy Week as we normally would. As this a particularly important time in the liturgical

calendar we decided that we would bring forward our prayer services to acknowledge the importance of knowing and understanding how our lenten journey ends, bringing us closer to Christ and Easter.

As a result, our children have planned and lead us through some beautiful services in this last week of term focusing on Palm Sunday through to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. The quality of worship and reverence shown



by the children as somewhat made up for the fact that we're not in school to share and participate Holy Week at the appropriate time.



Meet Miss Millen, our Year 4 Teacher



Born: Newcastle Upon Tyne

Family: My Mam, Dad and brother Jamie and of course our dog

Sadie!

Education: I went to the University of Leeds and studied English, Language and

Education

Favourite book: If I had to choose a children's book I'd choose A Series of

Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket

Favourite film: Hamilton

Favourite holiday destination: Crete (Elounda)

Favourite subject at school: Art

Proudest moment: Graduating from University

Biggest inspiration: My Mam & Dad!

If you weren't a teacher, what would you be? A nurse

What would you sing at Karaoke? Dolly Parton 9 to 5

McDonald's or Burger King? Mcdonald's

Dog or Cat? Dog

Newcastle or Sunderland? Newcastle

What's the most daring thing you've done? Moving to Madrid (I taught there)

Biggest fear? Wasps (2)



